

# One

Wednesday 9th November

They always gave her the young ones. This time he was called Asbjørn Juncker, twenty-three years old, newly made up to detective from trainee, now gleefully sorting through the skeletons of wrecked cars in a run-down scrapyard on the edge of the docks.

'There's an arm here!' he cried as he rounded the rusting husk of a long-dead VW Beetle. 'An arm!'

Madsen had a team of men moving out to sweep the area. He looked at Lund and sighed. Asbjørn had turned up at the Politigården from the provinces that morning, assigned to homicide. Fifteen minutes later while Lund was half-listening to the news – the financial crisis, more about the coming general election – the yard called to say they'd found a body. Or more accurately parts of one scattered among the junk. Probably a bum from the neighbouring shantytown in the abandoned dock. Someone who'd scrambled over the fence looking for something to steal, fallen asleep in a car, died instantly the moment it was picked up by one of the gigantic cranes.

'Funny spot to take a nap,' Madsen said. 'The grab sliced him in half. Then he seems to have got cut about a bit more. The crane operator choked on his coffee when he saw what was happening.'

Autumn was giving up on Copenhagen, getting nudged out of the way by winter. Grey sky. Grey land. Grey water ahead with a grey ship motionless a few hundred metres off shore.

Lund hated this place. During the Birk Larsen murder she'd come here looking for a warehouse belonging to the missing girl's father.

Theis Birk Larsen was now out of jail after serving his sentence for killing the man he thought murdered his daughter. Back in the removals business from what Lund had heard. Jan Meyer, her partner who got shot during that investigation, was still an invalid, working for a disabled charity. She'd gone nowhere near him, or the Birk Larsens, even though that case was still unsettled in her own head.

She looked across the bleak water at the dead ship listing at its final anchor. Ghosts still hung around her murmuring sometimes. She could hear them now.

'You're not really going to take a job in OPA, are you?' Madsen asked.

The Politigården was always rife with gossip. She should have known it would get out.

'I get a medal for twenty-five years' service today. There's only so much of your life you can spend out in the freezing cold looking at pieces of dead people.'

'Brix doesn't want to lose you. You're a pain in the arse sometimes, but no one does. Lund—'

'What?' Juncker squealed, clambering through the wreckage. 'You're going to count paper clips all day long?'

OPA – Operations, Planning and Analysis – did rather more than that but she wasn't minded to tell him. Something about Juncker reminded her of Meyer. The cockiness. The protruding ears. There was an odd, affronted innocence too.

'They said I was going to work with someone good... ' the young cop started.

'Shut up Asbjørn,' Madsen told him. 'You're doing that already.'

'I'd also like to be called Juncker. Not Asbjørn. Everyone else gets called by their last name.'

They'd recovered six pieces of a half-naked, middle-aged man's body. Juncker's was the seventh.

There was an old wheelbarrow next to the Beetle. She asked the scrapyards manager for a price. He seemed a bit surprised but came up with one quickly enough. Lund handed over a few notes and told Juncker to put it in the boot of her car.

His hands went to his hips.

'Is someone going to look at my arm or not?'

Stroppy young men. She was getting used to them. Mark was

supposed to come round for dinner that evening with his girlfriend. First visit to her new home, a tiny wooden cottage on the edge of the city. She wondered if he'd make it or invent one more excuse.

Juncker nodded at the photographer now taking pictures where he'd been, then stuck a finger in the air like a schoolboy counting off a list.

'There's no ID. But he's got a gold ring and some tattoos. Also the skin's wrinkled like it's been in water.' He pointed at the flat, listless harbour. 'In there.'

Lund looked at the scrapyard man, then the derelict area beyond the nearest wall.

'That used to be warehouses,' she said. 'What's it now?'

He had a sad, intelligent face. Not what she expected in a spot like this.

'It was one of Zeeland's main terminals. The warehouses were just a favour on the side to the little people.' He shrugged. 'Not so many little people any more. And just a few containers going through. They shut up most of it the moment things turned bad. Almost a thousand men gone overnight. I used to manage the loading side of things. Worked there ever since I left school . . .'

He didn't like talking about this. So he lugged the wheelbarrow over to Lund's car, opened the boot, and set it next to a couple of rosebushes waiting there in pots.

'He's been in the water. He's got tattoos,' Juncker repeated. 'There's marks on his arm that look like they came from a knife.'

The shantytown next door was a sprawling shambles of corrugated iron and rusting trucks and caravans set on the car park to the old dockyard. That was never there when she was hunting the murderer of Nanna Birk Larsen.

'He was a bum who wandered in here looking for something to nick,' Madsen cut in. 'We'll take the photos. You can try writing up the report if you like. I'll check it for you.'

Juncker really didn't like that.

'There'll be trouble if we don't look busy round here,' he said.

'Why?' Lund asked.

'Politicians on the way.' He nodded at the scrapyard manager who was looking closely at Lund's plants, seemingly unimpressed. 'He told me. They're doing a photo opportunity with all them homeless people.'

'Bums don't have votes,' Madsen grumbled.

'They don't have gold rings either,' Juncker pointed out. 'Did you hear what I said? The big shots are going to talk to the men left in the dockyard. Troels Hartmann's coming they reckon. Here in an hour.'

*Ghosts.*

This place had just acquired a new one. Hartmann had been a suspect in the Birk Larsen case, one whose ambition and arrogance almost ruined his career. *Pretty boy*, Meyer called him. The handsome Teflon man of Copenhagen politics. As soon as he was cleared he scored an unlikely victory to become the city's mayor. Then two and a half years ago, after a campaign racked by vitriol about the collapsing economy, he'd emerged victor in a general election, becoming the Liberals' Prime Minister leading a new coalition.

'Hartmann was in that big case of yours,' Juncker added. 'I remember that.'

It seemed like yesterday.

'Were you here then?' she asked without thinking.

Asbjørn Juncker laughed out loud.

'Here? That was ages ago. I read about it when I was in school. Why do you think I joined the police? It sounded—'

'Six years,' Madsen said. 'That's all.'

Long ones, Lund thought. Soon she'd be forty-five. She had a little place of her own. A dull, simple, enclosed life. A relationship to rebuild with her son. No need of bitter memories from the past. Or fresh nightmares for the future.

She told Madsen to keep on looking and make sure nothing untoward came near the media or the approaching political circus. Then she drove back to the Politigården, a small bay tree bouncing around in the footwell of the passenger seat, changed into her uniform, the blue skirt, blue jacket, watched all the others turning up for their long service medals. They seemed so much older than she felt.

Brix came and nagged about the OPA job.

'I need you here,' he said. The tall boss of homicide eyed her up and down with his stern and craggy face. 'You don't look right dressed like that.'

'How I dress is my business. Will you give you me a good

reference?’ She was anxious about this. ‘I know there are things in the past they won’t like. You don’t need to dwell on them.’

‘OPA’s where people go to retire. To give up. You never—’

‘Yes. I know.’

He muttered something she couldn’t hear. Then, ‘Your tie’s not straight.’

Lund juggled with it. Brix was immaculate in his best suit, fresh pressed shirt, everything perfect. The more he stared, the worse the tie got.

‘Here,’ he said and did it for her finally. ‘I’ll talk to them. You’re making a mistake. You know that?’

The forbidding red-brick castle called Drekar was once a small hunting lodge owned by minor royalty. Then Robert Zeuthen’s grandfather bought it, enlarged the place, named his creation after the dragon-headed longships of the Vikings. A man intent on founding a dynasty, he loved the fortress in the woods. Its exaggerated battlements, the sprawling, manicured grounds running down to wild woodland and the sea. And the ornate extended gargoyles he built at the seaward end, fashioned in the fantastic shape of a triumphant dragon, symbol of the company he created.

The ocean was never far away from the thoughts of the man who built Zeeland. Starting in the 1900s Zeuthen had transformed a small-time family cargo firm into an international enterprise with a shipping fleet running to thousands of vessels. Zeuthen’s own father, Hans, had carried on the expansion when he inherited the company. Finance and IT subsidiaries, consulting arms, hotels and travel firms, even a domestic retailing chain came to bear the Zeeland logo: three waves beneath the Drekar dragon.

By the time Hans Zeuthen died, not long before Troels Hartmann became Prime Minister, his clan was a fixture on the nation’s social, economic and political landscape. And then the company fell into the nominal hands of his son as managing owner, heading a corporate board.

Robert, third generation, was cut from different cloth. A quiet, introspective man of forty he was at that moment wandering round the forest outside the family home looking for his nine-year-old daughter Emilie.

Thick woodland, bare in winter. Zeuthen marched through the trees, across the carpet of bronze autumn leaves, calling her name. Loudly but with affection. His ascent to the throne of Zeeland had come at a cost. Eighteen months before his wife Maja had left him. Soon the divorce would come through. She was now living with a doctor from the main city hospital while Zeuthen played the part of single father, looking after Emilie and her six-year-old brother, Carl, as much as he was allowed under the separation agreement, and through the ceaseless pressures of work.

Hans Zeuthen had lived through a time of growth and prosperity. His son was experiencing none of this. Recession and business failures had hit Zeeland hard. The company had been laying off workers for four years and there was still no real sign of any recovery. Several subsidiaries had been sold off, others closed for good. The board was getting anxious. Investors were openly worrying whether the enterprise was best left in the hands of the family.

Robert Zeuthen wondered what else they expected. Blood? The crisis had cost him his marriage. The precious bond of family. There was nothing left to give.

'Emilie?' he cried again into the bare trees.

'Dad.' Carl had walked up behind in silence, dragging his toy dinosaur. 'Why won't Dino talk any more?'

Zeuthen folded his arms and gazed down at his son.

'Perhaps because you launched him out of your bedroom window? To see if he could fly?'

'Dino can't,' Carl said innocently.

He tousled the boy's hair and agreed with that. Then called for his daughter again. Another day and it would be time for the kids to stay with their mother. For the best part of him to leave again. And that meant Maja too.

A figure came racing out of the trees. Blue coat, pink wellies, legs flying, blonde hair too. Emilie Zeuthen dashed towards him, launched herself at his chest, arms wide, pretty face all mischief.

The same old challenge. The one she'd made almost as soon as she could talk.

It said . . . *catch me, Dad. Catch me.*

So he did.

When he'd stopped laughing Zeuthen kissed her cold cheek and said, 'One day I'll miss you, girlie. One day you're going to fall.'

'No you won't.'

She had such a bright, incisive voice. A smart kid. Old for her years. Emilie led Carl a merry dance. Did that for the staff in Drekar too, not that they loved her any the less for it.

'No you won't, Dad,' Carl repeated and got the dinosaur to give him a playful bite on the leg.

'When can I have a cat?' Emilie asked, arms round his neck, blue eyes firmly on his.

'Where were you?'

'Walking. You promised.'

'I said you could have a pet. Anything but a cat. I've got to talk to Mum about it. Between us . . .'

Her face fell. So did Carl's. Zeuthen had never imagined he'd lose Maja, lose them a little too. He'd no idea what to say by way of comfort, no access to the easy words he was supposed to offer.

Instead he took them by the hand, Carl to his left, Emilie to the right, and together they walked slowly home.

Niels Reinhardt was in the drive with his black Mercedes. Another of his late father's bequests. Reinhardt was the family's personal assistant, liaison man between the Zeuthens and the board, a fixer and social arranger who'd been doing this ever since Robert was a child himself. Now sixty-four, a tall and genial man, always in suit and tie, he looked ready to go on for ever.

The newspaper was in Reinhardt's hands. Zeuthen had seen the story already. An exclusive claiming that Zeeland was about to renege on its promises to Hartmann's government and abandon Denmark as its headquarters.

'Where do they get these lies?' Zeuthen asked.

'I don't know,' Reinhardt replied. 'I've told the board you want to convene a meeting immediately. Hartmann's people are going crazy. He's getting questions from the press of course.'

Maja was on the steps of the house, green anorak and jeans. They'd met as students. Falling in love had seemed so easy, so natural. She didn't know who he was at the time, didn't much care when she did find out. He was the stiff, shy, plain-looking rich boy. She was the beautiful, fair-haired daughter of charming hippie parents who ran an organic farm on Fyn. They'd scarcely known a cross word until his father died and circumstances forced him to take the reins of Zeeland. After that . . .

She marched down the steps, the face he'd come to love wreathed once more in anger and resentment. Reinhardt, always a man wise to the moment, took the children by the hand, said something about finding dry shoes and led them into the house.

'What's this?' she said and pulled a piece of paper out of her jacket.

Pictures of a tiny tabby kitten. Small hands stroking the creature's fur. In one photo Emilie was clutching the little creature to her tummy, beaming at the camera.

Zeuthen shook his head.

'I've been to the school, Robert! She was funny with me last week. Wouldn't talk. As if she had some kind of secret.'

'She seems fine.'

'How would you know? How much time do you spend with her when she's here?'

'As much as I can,' he said and it wasn't a lie. 'I told her she couldn't have a cat . . .'

'Then where did she get it? She's allergic to them.'

'The kids are under supervision every hour they spend with me, whether I'm there or not. You know that, Maja. Why not ask your mother? You didn't need to come out here for this. You could have called.'

'I came here to take them with me.'

'No,' Zeuthen said immediately. 'It's on the schedule. You get them tomorrow. I can deal with this.'

Reinhardt and the children were back at the door. He looked as if he needed to talk. Zeuthen went over, listened. Hartmann's staff were demanding a statement. The board would convene within the hour.

'A body's been found at the docks, near our facility,' he added.

'One of our men?'

'There's no sign of that, Robert.'

It happened so quickly there was nothing Zeuthen could do. Maja pushed past him, walked up to Emilie, took her hands.

'I want to know about the cat,' she insisted.

The girl tried to pull back.

'Emilie!' Maja shrieked. 'This is important!'

Zeuthen bent down, said gently, 'Mum needs to know. So do I. Whose cat is it? Please?'



The years fell off her. An uncertain, shifty child again. Emilie said nothing. She struggled as Maja pulled up the sleeves of her blue coat.

Red skin, puffy and swollen.

She lifted the girl's jumper. Her stomach was covered with the same livid marks.

'There's a cat here,' Maja barked. 'What the hell have you been playing at? I'm taking her to hospital now.'

He'd never seen her temper until their marriage began to falter. Here it was again, loud and vicious.

Carl put his hands over his ears. Emilie stood stiff and silent and guilty. Reinhardt said something Zeuthen barely heard about postponing the board meeting.

Responsibilities. They never went away.

Zeuthen crouched down, looked his daughter in the eye.

'Where was the cat, Emilie?' he asked. 'Please—'

'It doesn't matter now, does it?' Maja screamed. 'I'll deal with that later. She's going to hospital . . .'

Emilie Zeuthen began to cry.

Troels Hartmann liked being on the stump. Especially when his opponent was a left-wing windbag like Anders Ussing. The world of Danish politics was a seething stew of small parties fighting for the right to make peace with their enemies and seize a little power for themselves. In the current climate only Hartmann's liberals and Ussing's socialists stood a chance of winning sufficient votes to hold the Prime Minister's chair.

The polls were close. One slip-up on either side could tip them easily. But that, he felt sure, was more likely to come from a loudmouth like Ussing than any of his own, carefully shepherded supporters. Morten Weber, the wily campaign organizer who'd won him the mayor's seat in Copenhagen, had followed into the Christiansborg Palace. He'd recruited Karen Nebel, a slick and telegenic media adviser who'd worked as a political hack for one of the state TV stations. It was as good a team as Hartmann had ever possessed. And he had a few tricks of his own up his sleeve too, though listening to Ussing try to wind up the audience in the run-down Zealand docks terminal he wondered whether he'd need them.

It was a typical turnout for an industrial gathering: women from

offices, a handful of burly stevedores in hard hats, some seamen, few of them interested in politics but glad of a break from work. The platform was on a pickup truck set by a pair of shiny barrel-like containers in an open building beneath a corrugated roof. The TV crews had been positioned at the front, the news reporters corralled into the seats behind.

Ussing was trotting out the same lines he'd been spouting up and down Denmark since the election campaign began.

'This government is starving the ordinary citizens of Denmark to fill the pockets of the rich who bankroll them.'

Hartmann stared straight at the TV cameras, smiled and shook his head.

'And today!' Ussing roared, like the trade union boss he once was, 'we see what Hartmann's weakness has won us.'

He held up that morning's paper, with the headline about Zealand abandoning the country for a new low-tax base in the Far East.

'One of our biggest employers is joining the exodus now. While he sticks us with the bill they ship their jobs to Asia.'

A murmur of approval, white hats shaking. Hartmann picked up the mike.

'A sound industrial policy works for everyone, Anders. If we can keep Zealand happy they'll employ more Danes in return . . .'

'Not any more!' Ussing yelled, slapping the paper. 'You've turned a blind eye to their monopolies. You've sucked up to them with your tax cuts and oil subsidies . . .'

The rabble-rousing was starting to work. He was getting a few cheers and the odd round of applause.

'The only sucking up that's going on here's from you,' Hartmann broke in. 'Easy words. Irresponsible ones. You'd have us believe you can wish this crisis away with a few sweet words while quietly dipping into the pockets of ordinary Danes and relieving them of what money they have.'

Hartmann scanned the crowd. They were quiet. They were listening.

'I know it's hard. For too long we've been reading about layoffs and bankruptcies. About private savings disappearing into thin air.' A long pause. They were waiting. 'If I had a magic wand do you think I wouldn't use it? This is the world we have. Not just in

Denmark. Everywhere. The choice you face is a simple one. Do we deal with these problems now? Or pass this mess on to our children?’

He gestured to the stocky, ginger-haired man next to him.

‘If you want to duck your responsibilities, vote for Anders Ussing. If you’ve got the guts to face them, choose me.’

They liked that. Ussing took the mike.

‘So when Zeeland bleat to the papers about moving you’ll give them more of our money, Troels? Is that how it works? Another bribe for your friends . . .’

‘If we make the climate good for business, the jobs will stay here,’ Hartmann insisted. ‘Our industrial policy looks for growth. But there are limits. We’re in this together. Everyone contributes, just as everyone’s affected. That means Zeeland too.’ Hand to his heart, he said it again. ‘That means Zeeland too.’

They were clapping as he left. Karen Nebel still wasn’t happy as they headed for the car.

‘I specifically asked you to steer clear of Zeeland.’

‘What was I supposed to do? He had me on the spot. I can’t ignore a question like that. Zeeland have to go public and deny the article.’

She was a tall woman with swept-back fair hair and a tense, lined face bordering on hard. Scheming at times but he could handle that.

‘They will deny it, won’t they, Karen?’

‘I keep leaving messages everywhere. No one gets back to me. I think something’s up.’

‘Get it out of them,’ Hartmann ordered. ‘I’ve just about got a deal with Rosa Lebech’s people sewn up. I don’t want anything to get in the way of that.’

She scowled at the mention of the woman who ran the Centre Party.

‘There’s a homeless camp next door,’ she said. ‘I scheduled a stop there.’

‘If I can talk to people, fine. I’m not just doing photo-ops.’

They got to the car. She held the door open for him.

‘Troels. They’re homeless. Pictures are the only reason we’re here.’

Hartmann’s phone rang. He saw the number, walked away from the car for some privacy.

'I just saw you on TV, honey. If I wasn't leading another party you'd get my vote.'

'I still want it,' Hartmann said. 'We've got to close this deal, Rosa. And after that I need to see you. Somewhere quiet.' He looked round, saw he was alone. 'With a big brass bed.'

'Oh my God. And your Dylan records too.'

'The deal first.'

'We'll back you as Prime Minister. So long as we know you're on top of Zeeland.'

He laughed.

'You don't believe Ussing, do you? Or that stupid rag this morning?'

'Let's talk about this later,' Rosa Lebech said.

Then she was gone.

Before he could think straight Karen Nebel was over, calling off the visit to the homeless camp. One of the security people was with her. He said they'd found a dead body round the corner.

'PET think there might be some kind of threat. The security systems have been compromised or something. They think—'

'I'm not giving Ussing more ammunition,' Hartmann said. 'Schedule it for later in the day. Unless PET come up with something concrete.'

'Who was the call from?'

He thought for a moment.

'My dentist. I forgot an appointment.' A shrug, the charming Hartmann smile. 'Elections. They do get in the way.'

The tie was uncomfortable. The shirt had seen better days. Brix had organized the ceremony and for some reason brought in the police brass band. They stood in the corner huffing and puffing at trumpets and euphoniums, making a noise that sounded like a party of drunken elephants.

She was trying to be polite listening to war stories told by an old officer from the sticks, waiting for the ceremony to begin, when her phone rang.

Lund walked away to take it.

'It's Juncker here. I'm still at the docks.'

'Hi, Asbjørn.'

A long pause then he said, 'Forensics have been taking a look at

our bits and pieces. They're sure it's homicide. He was dead when the crane grabbed him. He'd been whacked about with a claw hammer. Looks like he got away from a ship and the bloke caught up with him at the yard. Chucked him in the car. We've talked to the bums here. They're clueless. Zeeland don't know of anyone missing.'

'That's it?'

'Someone saw a speedboat hanging round. They thought it was chasing a seal.'

'Why would someone chase a seal?' she asked, walking to the window, taking a long look at the weather outside.

'The coastguard said they got an interrupted call around two thirty in the morning. They don't know who from. The speedboat was cruising round near the junkyard not long after.'

Lund asked the obvious question. Had any nearby vessels reported a missing sailor? Juncker said no.

'It's probably left the harbour,' she said. 'You need to get all the local movements.'

'What movements? Zeeland have pretty much mothballed this part of the docks. Also . . .' He stopped for a moment as if trying to find somewhere quiet. 'There's all these PET guys here sniffing round. What's it to do with them?'

'It's OK, Asbjørn. They're human too.'

'You're never going to call me Juncker, are you?'

'Talk to Madsen. Do as he says. I'm busy—'

'The PET bloke wants a word. Man called Borch. Got the impression he knows you already. He's on his way.'

Lund didn't say anything.

'Hello?' Juncker asked down the line. 'Anyone there?'

'Talk to Madsen,' Lund said again, finished the call, looked down the long corridor, wondered how many more ghosts were going to come creeping out of the shadows.

She'd no idea what Mathias Borch did any more. Something important she guessed. He was bright, had shown that when they first met more than twenty years before at police academy. Now he looked a little broken and worn. Still had all his hair though, uncombed as usual, and the wrinkled face of a boxer pup.

*Puppy.*

She used to call him that. The memory must have been why she was blushing when Borch strode up, didn't smile, didn't even look her in the eye much and said, 'Sarah. We've got to talk. This body down the docks. Your kid there said—'

'Stop,' Lund ordered, hand up. Then she pointed to the door. Brix had started giving his speech. She could hear him talking about the strength of the corps, year after year, and how its integrity was the basis for justice and security in Copenhagen.

'Heard it all a million times,' Borch grunted. 'This is important . . .'

Lund muttered a low curse and took him in the kitchen.

'I'm sorry to disturb your day,' he said. 'I mean . . . congratulations and all that.'

'Don't overdo it.'

'You look good,' he said. 'Really. Are you?'

'What do you want?'

'I'm involved in this case. I need to know what you've got.'

'Nothing. We've got nothing at all.'

'So you've searched the docks? And the ships there?'

'We're looking. There's only one ship. Juncker got in touch with them by radio. They haven't seen a thing.'

He frowned. The puppy looked his age then.

'I expected more than that . . .'

'Listen! I haven't spoken to you in years. Then you turn up here, just when I'm about to pick up my long service medal, and start throwing questions at me. I'm going back in there . . .'

'I'm in PET. Didn't you know?'

'Why should I?'

'We think there's more to it. Two weeks ago there was a break-in down at the docks. It looked like the usual burglary. A computer gone, some loose change. Details of Zeeland's security system . . .'

'Isn't that their problem?'

He stared at her. It was a stupid remark. Zeeland was a huge international conglomerate. It carried clout, in government and beyond.

'What's this got to do with our man in bits?' she asked.

'There's no CCTV footage from last night. Two minutes after that failed emergency call to the coastguard every last camera got turned

off somehow. He hacked into the system, froze it on old footage, then switched it back on before dawn.'

Borch grabbed a sandwich from a platter prepared for the get-together and took a bite.

'Burglars are rarely that smart,' he said, spitting a few crumbs down his front.

Brix had stopped speaking. Soon the medals and the diplomas would be handed out.

'Leave me your number,' she said. 'We'll keep in touch.'

He stopped her as she tried to walk off.

'Someone's taken down one of the most sophisticated security systems in the country. There's a dead man in the harbour when it comes back online. On the very day the Prime Minister's due to spend some time around there. The financial crisis. Afghanistan . . .' He laughed. 'Irate husbands. Hartmann's got as many people who hate him as love him.'

'I'll pass that on.'

'I don't want you to pass it on. I want you on the case. Brix has already agreed . . .'

'I bet he has.'

'You're better than OPA.'

'Listen! There's no one reported missing. The chances are he was a foreign sailor from a foreign ship and it's out of our waters.'

'I still want you on the case. And so does Brix.'

Applause from the next room, laughter too. The presentations had started. She couldn't just blunder in now.

'You do look good,' he said, and seemed a little embarrassed. 'Me . . .' A shrug, and she could picture him back in the academy, with all his grim humour and bad jokes. 'I just got old.'

She wanted to shout at him. To scream something.

Instead Lund said, 'I'm not getting this uniform dirty. I'm supposed to have an interview later.'

The Zealand headquarters sat on the waterfront near the harbour. A modern black glass monolith with the company dragon stencilled across the top six floors, it was now surrounded by little more than construction sites turning the dockside into cheap housing. One of the few commodities that still sold.

Robert Zeuthen parked his shiny new Range Rover outside. Reinhardt was waiting in the lobby with news about the body in the docks. It was now a murder case but there were no indications Zeeland were involved. PET were working on it alongside the police. Troels Hartmann's presence in the area made their interest inevitable.

'Where did that cat come from?' Zeuthen asked.

'Not the house,' Reinhardt insisted. 'I'm still checking. This incident at the docks looks bad. It seems the security system was breached somehow. We've got a team looking into it. PET want to talk to them.' He frowned. 'Hartmann's more concerned about the newspaper report. He's waiting to hear us deny it.'

'I want you there when PET talk to our security people,' Zeuthen said. 'If there's a breach maybe it's not the only one.'

'I should be with you for the board,' Reinhardt said.

Zeuthen went to the lift, shook his head.

'I can handle that. Find out what's going on with PET. Keep looking for Emilie's cat. Maja's going to kill me for that. We both knew Emilie has that allergy.'

'Robert.' Reinhardt's hand was on his arm. 'I've reason to believe the board could be difficult. You may need me there.'

Zeuthen smiled.

'Not this time, old friend.'

Back in Christiansborg Karen Nebel was worried.

'People are starting to talk,' she said as they sat down in his office. 'They don't understand why Zeeland haven't denied the newspaper report.' Her phone rang. 'Maybe this is it . . .'

Hartmann watched her go out into the corridor to take the call then muttered, 'Are we supposed to jump up and down every time the press publish a lie?'

Morten Weber folded his arms, leaned back in the chair by the window.

'Sometimes.'

Weber had been there throughout Hartmann's career. A diminutive, modest, somewhat shabby man with wayward curly black hair, he'd steered Hartmann into the mayor's chair against all the odds. Then seized the chance to do the same with the Prime Minister's office when the opportunity arose. His knowledge of the Danish



political landscape was unrivalled, and at times underpinned by a quiet, frank ruthlessness. No one dared speak to Hartmann the way Weber did. Even then there were explosions.

'We're dealing with Zeeland,' Hartmann said. 'Karen's on to it.'

'Good. I've cancelled this insane visit to the docks. PET aren't happy with what's going on there. And they don't want us to talk about it either.'

'Uncancel it,' Hartmann ordered. 'Ussing will say I don't care about the homeless.'

'Screw Ussing.'

'We're on the back foot here, Morten! Ussing's using Zeeland to say I'm stealing from the poor to give to the rich.'

'Troels—'

'I'm going,' Hartmann said. 'Even if I have to catch a bus. OK?'

Nebel walked back in, clutching her phone.

'We're not going to get that denial.'

Weber pushed his heavy glasses up his nose.

'You mean the story's true?'

'The board would like it to be. They're trying to work round Robert Zeuthen. They think he's weak. Ordinary—'

'Listen,' Hartmann interrupted. 'Zeuthen's father promised he wouldn't move any more of the company abroad if we helped them out. Robert said he'd abide by that. If they renege on the deal now I'll crucify them . . .'

'No you won't,' Weber said. 'You won't be in a position to.'

Hartmann fought to keep a rein on his temper. It was at times like this that Weber was at his most valuable, and infuriating.

'So what happens?'

'If you give in and offer Zeeland more sweeteners Rosa Lebech won't climb under your sheets. If you don't our own people will start smuggling the daggers in here.' Weber wrinkled his fleshy nose. 'My guess is Birgit Eggert. She thinks the Ministry of Finance is beneath her.'

'If Zeuthen's ousted we've got to give them something,' Nebel said. 'I'll talk to the Treasury. It doesn't need to be much.'

'Christ!' Weber yelled. 'Why not hand Ussing the keys to the office now? Can't you see the posters? If you're rich vote for Hartmann. If you're not—'

'We do nothing until we know where Rosa Lebech stands,'

Hartmann said. 'I can bring her round. Tell PET I'm going to the homeless camp whatever they say. And . . .' He walked to the cabinets, pulled out a clean shirt and a new suit. 'That's it.'

Nebel glowered at Weber when Hartmann strode off to the bathroom to change.

'I don't like losing, Morten.'

'Who does?'

'Why won't he listen?'

The little man laughed.

'Because he's a politician. Troels only feels truly happy when he's living on a knife edge. He likes the rush. The thrill. The danger.' He got up, winked at her. 'Don't we all?'

Brix was on the phone the moment she got back to the docks. He wanted to know what PET were up to.

'They seem to think there could be trouble for Hartmann's visit. It wasn't my fault I missed the ceremony. You told Borch I was on the case.'

'True.'

'So will you explain to the OPA people why I wasn't around?'

'When I see them. Go along with whatever PET want.'

That makes a change, she thought, and ended the call.

Borch and Asbjørn Juncker were marching round with clipboards.

'We need every vessel in the vicinity searched,' the PET man said.

'There's only one off this dock,' Juncker replied. 'It's been done.'

He had a folder of pictures. Lund always relished photographs. She took them off him and started to flick through the set one by one. Stocky dead man. Middle-aged. One of the tattoos had a woman's name, east European forensic thought. Another on his right arm was indecipherable. What looked like a knife wound had taken out the middle letters.

A black Mercedes drew up and a tall, straight-backed man got out, balding with neatly trimmed grey hair. He introduced himself as Niels Reinhardt, Zeeland's link man for the case.

'Robert Zeuthen's taken a personal interest,' the newcomer insisted in a quiet, polite voice. 'He wants you to know we'll help all we can.'

'Is the security system back in place?' Borch asked.

'We think so.' Reinhardt looked uncertain. 'One of our IT subsidiaries runs it. They cover everything from office surveillance to some private properties.'

Lund ran through the obvious questions. Reinhardt said there were no labour problems since the last layoffs. No unusual ship movements.

'They must have been around here before they took down the security,' Juncker said.

'No. We would have seen any intruders,' Reinhardt insisted. He looked down the dockside, towards an abandoned area at the end. 'Unless they came in through the old Stubben facility. That's been dead for years.'

'I have to go back . . .' Lund began, but Borch was pointing to his car already.

It was a few minutes away, a desolate wasteland, rubble and abandoned containers by the grimy waterfront.

'We were going to build a hotel here,' Reinhardt said as he joined them. 'No money for it now . . .'

'Who comes here?' Borch asked as Lund wandered round the gravel lane, hands in pockets, tie to one side, kicking at pebbles and rubbish on the ground.

'Fishermen,' Reinhardt said. 'Birdwatchers.' A pause. 'Lovey-dovey couples sometimes I guess.'

'You said there were no ships.' Juncker was scanning the grey horizon. An ancient rusting hulk sat there looking as if it hadn't moved in years.

The Zeeland man scowled.

'No working ships. That's *Medea*. One of our old freighters. She's mothballed for scrap. We sold her to a Latvian broker but he went bankrupt.'

Borch took Juncker's binoculars. The vessel was a good half a kilometre offshore. He scanned it, offered the glasses to Lund. She shook her head.

'Is there anyone on there?' she asked.

'It's the law,' Reinhardt said straight away. 'Even an old hulk like that needs a minimum three-man crew. We talked to them last night. And this morning too. They said they didn't see anything.'

He looked round at the empty ground, the sluggish Øresund.

'They wouldn't here, would they?'

Lund stepped towards the water's edge, swore as her best boots went into a muddy puddle. A single cigarette butt lay in the dirt. Fresh. Unmarked by rain.

Borch was on the phone.

'If you want to go out there,' Reinhardt said, 'I can call a boat.'

Asbjørn Juncker couldn't wait. Borch came off the call.

'According to the coastguard a Russian coaster sailed along here last night. It's going to St Petersburg. We're talking to the authorities there.'

'Thanks for the offer,' she said to the Zeeland man. 'We don't need it.'

Juncker started squawking. She walked to the car. Borch and the young cop followed.

'We've got to go and look at that freighter,' Borch said.

'You can if you want.'

'I don't have time! Hartmann's coming here. We've got security—'

'I don't need this,' she cut in. 'Asbjørn . . . will you get in the car? We're off.'

He hesitated for a second or two then did as he was told.

Borch crouched down next to the driver's window. Didn't look much like a puppy at all then.

'I hope the job's worth it,' he said.

Robert Zeuthen had inherited the men who ran Zeeland. Hand-picked by his father. Loyal, as long as the old boss was around.

Kornerup, a portly, unsmiling sixty-year-old with keen eyes behind owlish glasses, had been chief executive officer of Zeeland for almost twenty years. He began the meeting with a new version of the presentation he'd been making ever since Robert Zeuthen took over the presidency of the group.

'Moving the shipyard east will reduce costs by forty per cent or more. We can play the exchange rates to finance the move. If we start planning today we should be able to start shifting operations within a year. For the bottom line . . .'

'This is old news,' Zeuthen broke in. 'We know the arguments. We agreed that ten or fifteen years from now it might be appropriate.'

Eleven men around the table, one woman. Zeuthen was the biggest shareholder. But he didn't have an outright majority.

'The world's moving faster than we thought,' Kornerup replied. 'This is a decision for the board. If Hartmann loses the election we've got a red Prime Minister who hates us, and a red cabinet behind him. They'll bleed us dry.'

'Which is why we support Hartmann,' Zeuthen said. 'Why it's against our interests to undermine him.'

'If he caves in and agrees some new deal, fine.' The faces around the table nodded in agreement with Kornerup. 'But let's not fool ourselves. We're just postponing the day. The world won't wait for us to wake up. I know this is hard. This is the company your father created. But if he were here today . . .'

'He'd defend every last Danish job,' Zeuthen said.

'Perhaps we knew him differently,' Kornerup said and smiled. 'Perhaps—'

'No,' Zeuthen said. 'Enough.'

Kornerup scowled.

'There's much more to discuss, Robert.'

'Not with you.' Zeuthen nodded to his PA, got her to walk round the table with the documents he'd prepared. 'Kornerup has spent a lot of time researching how to abandon Denmark. Not much on how best to betray this company.'

A murmur round the board. Zeuthen looked at each of them.

'What our CEO appears to have forgotten is that the newspaper which ran this drivel is thirty per cent owned by my family trust. Also . . .'

A quick smile. 'The managing editor went to university with me. So it really wasn't hard to get the emails you sent to their business editor.'

Kornerup for once seemed lost for words.

'You planted these lies in order to bounce the board into this position,' Zeuthen added. 'Whatever the merits of the case for a move to the Far East – and I'm happy to discuss them at a suitable stage in the future – this is an individual act of disloyalty that can't be tolerated. You're in breach of contract, Kornerup, as you surely know. We may wish to pursue legal action.'

He nodded at the PA. She opened the door. Two security staff there in uniform.

'These gentlemen will see you off the premises now. We will send on any personal belongings once we've examined your files here to see what else you've been up to.'

He glanced round the table again.

'Unless the board feels it wishes to ignore the leaking of confidential documents to the media. And God knows what else.'

Silence. He waved at the door.

'What I did,' Kornerup said, getting to his feet, 'I did for the benefit of Zeeland. This company stands on the precipice, Robert. You'll drive it over and won't even notice until they come to shutter this place.'

In silence they watched him walk out. Zeuthen shuffled his papers, put them in his briefcase.

'I'm sorry. My daughter's been taken to hospital. I have to go.' A pause. 'Unless there's any other business?'

He waited. Nothing.

'Good,' Zeuthen said and left.

Hartmann got his driver to take him to the school in Frederiksberg where Rosa Lebech was setting up her election meeting. She was six years younger than him. A lawyer turned politician. Still dressed for her old profession: cream shirt, dark trousers, black hair tidy and neat. A striking woman, beautiful and businesslike at the same time. He'd first met her when he was mayor and begging for coalition votes.

She was married then.

Nebel waited by the door until she got the message. Then she left the two of them, with just a PET security guard to watch.

'We must stop meeting like this,' Hartmann joked.

'Like what?'

'Like politicians.'

'You think we should find a mattress and a couple of candles? You can get your security man to guard the door.'

Hartmann nodded.

'I like that idea.'

'You're an arrogant bastard. Why am I going through all this?'

Hartmann turned and nodded at the bodyguard. He took the hint and walked down the corridor.

'That's the kind of thing I mean. Troels . . .'

He grabbed her waist, kissed her hard, wriggled his fingers inside her shirt until he found flesh.

Lebech broke away, giggling.

'Rough sex with the Prime Minister of Denmark. It's not as if I've got anything better to do.'

His fingers grappled inside her blouse.

'That was a joke!' she cried. 'Cut it out.'

He stopped then, looked like a little boy robbed of his favourite toy.

Hartmann sighed.

'What is it?' she asked.

'It looks like the Zeeland rumours are true. Robert Zeuthen's with us. The rest of his board aren't.' A short, wry frown. 'I may have to throw something their way.'

She sat down. Politician again.

'How much of a something?'

'Big enough to make them think twice. Small enough to make sure you climb in bed with me.' The big, cheeky smile. 'Metaphorically speaking. I know I don't have to worry about the literal side of things.'

She didn't laugh.

'Don't push me too far. You think I can sell my people on the idea everyone pays except Zeeland? I'm the party leader. I don't own them. I won't even ask the question. No point. I already know the answer.'

'Maybe they'd listen if they knew you were headed for high office. A ministerial post. Something you'd like.'

'Prime Minister?' Lebech said. 'I'd love that job.'

He folded his arms, looked at her, waited.

'My hands are tied, Troels. I can't push my people any further than I have. Some of them think Ussing's a better bet. If Zeeland are packing up they're going to go. However hard you try to bribe them . . .'

She stopped. Karen Nebel had marched in tapping her watch.

'Think about it,' Hartmann pleaded.

'I have. Sorry.' Her hand crept to his knee. 'But this is politics. That's all. Remember.'

Hartmann tapped his nose, squeezed her fingers discreetly, and nodded.

Then got to his feet and for the benefit of the audience of one shook her hand, wished her well with the campaign.

'We'll keep talking, Rosa,' he promised.

Carsten Lassen, Maja's boyfriend, was a doctor in the university hospital. Zeuthen guessed it was inevitable she'd take Emilie there. Inevitable too that Lassen would be waiting for him in the car park with Maja and the kids inside their VW.

'What is it?' Zeuthen asked.

'It's an allergic reaction to the cat she should never have touched,' Lassen snapped. He had on his white doctor's coat and the surly expression he wore whenever Zeuthen was around. 'It'll be gone in a few days if she keeps using the medication. And keeps away from cats.'

Carl started growling through his dinosaur the moment Zeuthen arrived. Emilie smiled and waved. Zeuthen opened the back door and told them to get inside his Range Rover.

'No,' Maja said, closed the door again. 'We need to talk.'

It was a while since they'd had the argument about where the kids were going to live. Zeuthen didn't want a replay.

'If you think this is going to get you custody of them—'

'She's got a rash all over! What the hell's been going on?'

'I don't know. Do you?'

'Either you're lying or you're not taking care of her.'

'No.' He was struggling to keep calm. The kids were watching and these rows upset them. 'I know what they do when they're with me. We don't have a cat anywhere near the house. It's not like this is fatal . . .'

Lassen heard that and barged in.

'It could be serious,' he said. 'If you leave an allergic reaction unattended—'

'This isn't your business,' Zeuthen pointed out. 'They're not your kids.'

A white van pulled in close to them. For a moment Zeuthen thought Emilie had waved at someone. But that seemed impossible. If there was a smile it hadn't stayed. Carl and Emilie looked worn and miserable as the argument grew and grew.

'There's a legal agreement,' Zeuthen pointed out. 'You can't just take my children from me when you feel like it.'



‘The law!’ Maja shrieked. ‘That’s what you’re threatening me with now? Are you going to bring down the whole of Zeeland on us? Will that make you feel like a man?’

The door of the little VW opened. Emilie walked over, stood between them, gave each an accusing look. Lassen retreated to the hospital entrance.

‘I saw the cat when I played at Ida’s. That’s all.’ She looked at her mother. ‘I don’t want to live with you and Carsten. Carl doesn’t either. We want to be with Dad.’

Emilie walked to the Range Rover. Carl was there already. Maja ran after the two of them, voice breaking and that was a sight that tore at Zeuthen’s heart.

The kids climbed in the back, were doing up their seat belts.

‘Look,’ he said to Maja, as calmly as he could. ‘We shouldn’t be arguing like this. Not in front of them. I’ve got something to do. You can go to Drekar with them. Stay there till I get home.’ He shrugged. ‘I don’t know when I’ll be back. I can phone you from the car if you like. So you know when to leave.’

Lund’s home for the last six months had been a two-bedroom wooden chalet in the suburbs. It lay on a narrow hilly road overlooking the city, behind a small, bare garden she was trying to revive.

She listened to the radio while she washed up some plates for Mark and his guest. Hartmann was back in the headlines, expected to make a statement about Zeeland when he visited the homeless camp PET had specifically warned against. He always did what he felt like. Never worked with the police if he didn’t want to, even when he was trying to win an election.

Not that this one was looking good. Ussing was whipping up his troops, warning of fresh concessions to the rich. The Centre Party, whose support would probably decide the outcome, was wavering.

Lund looked in the oven, realized she hadn’t taken the film off the supermarket lasagne, grabbed it, took a pair of scissors to the brown plastic then put the thing back inside and wiped her hands on her jeans.

The phone rang. Mark said, ‘Hi, Mum . . .’

‘It’s not easy to find. You need to turn left at the yellow house at the end of the—’

'We can't come. Eva's sick. Another time . . .'

She looked at the table. The bottle of good chianti. The new wine glasses she'd bought. The candles.

Brix had sent round her long service diploma and a bottle of champagne. There was an envelope from OPA.

'Is it bad?'

'No. Just a cold. See you some other time.'

He couldn't wait to go. She could hear that in his voice.

'Mark,' she said, suddenly desperate.

'What?'

'I know . . . I know I haven't been around the way I should. I was never good at . . .'

 Saying these things, she thought. 'I'm sorting myself out. You've got every right to be mad at me.'

Silence.

'Mark?'

'Yes?'

'I just want to see you once in a while.'

'Things are really busy.'

'How about tomorrow?'

'Tomorrow's not good.'

She sat down. Juncker's photos were on the table. A severed head. A dead mouth set in a grimace. An arm with tattoos. A woman's name probably. Something else, a short word, the middle letters removed by a bloody wound.

'The day after then. You tell me when.'

'I don't know . . .'

The first letter on the obscured tattoo was a capital 'M' in a gothic script.

'It'll have to be another day,' Mark said.

The last letter was a lower case 'a'. Probably five or six letters in the word, that was all.

'Mum? Hello?'

She picked up a pen, hovered over the photo.

'Another day, Mum. Are you there?'

'Yes. Another day. That's fine. Just let me know.'

Then he was gone and she traced in the missing letters. Spelled out the word.

She called Brix.

'Hi, Lund. Did you get the champagne and the note from OPA? They want you to start next week. No need for an interview. Congratulations I guess.'

'Do we still have people at the dock?'

'You called them off. Remember?'

'Well call them back. There's a ship there. *Medea*. I want to see it.'

'You said it was nothing.'

'And send a team out to Stubben. I'm on my way.'

She enjoyed an excuse to drive fast, didn't bother with the light on the roof. A boat team was waiting by the dock. So was Mathias Borch. He said Hartmann and his team were half a kilometre away at the homeless camp.

'Tell him to get out of there,' Lund ordered.

'I tried. How sure are you?'

She passed him the photo, the name 'Medea' outlined in ink.

'When the dock office contacted the ship this morning it wasn't the crew they talked to. I asked them to try again just now. No reply.'

Borch glared at her.

'If I'd known this I could have stopped Hartmann!'

Lund shrugged, climbed into the inflatable with Juncker and the two-man boat team.

'So stop him now,' she said, and the dinghy lurched off into the harbour.

Troels Hartmann was handing out plates of stew to quiet, scruffy men seated at camp tables in makeshift tents. The place stank of cheap food and open drains. Newspaper reporters mingled with camera crews, following him from serving to serving, asking questions he didn't answer.

As soon as a camera came close he smiled. Karen Nebel watched and didn't. She wanted him back in Slotsholmen for a press conference.

Then Morten Weber led in a couple of men bearing crates of beer. A cheer rang out. A couple of the hobos grabbed bottles, stood up and toasted Hartmann.

He grinned, walked out.

Was still smiling when he turned to Weber and said, 'Handing out booze to alcoholics, Morten. Very clever.'

Weber laughed.

'You astonish me, Troels. Such a stiff-backed puritan in many ways. And yet . . .'

He waited for an answer, didn't get one.

'PET want us out of here right now. They think there's an immediate threat.'

'We need to get back for the press conference anyway,' Nebel added.

Hartmann shook his head.

'All the hacks are here. Why put them to the trouble?'

He marched to the car, sat on the bonnet, beamed for the cameras, waved them on. Even the reporters were taken aback.

Men in heavy coats were gathering round. They had earpieces with curly leads winding down their necks and looked worried.

'So,' Hartmann said cheerily. 'Let's not waste time, shall we? You've got questions? Ask me now.'

'Shit,' Karen Nebel muttered, and listened as they kicked into gear.

Weber was talking to the noisiest of the PET officers, a man who'd introduced himself as Mathias Borch. She went over, listened. The conversation was getting heated.

'I told you to get him out of here,' Borch insisted. 'Will you just do it?'

'Troels is Prime Minister of Denmark,' Weber said with a shrug. 'Do you want to try?'

'Just a couple of minutes more,' Karen Nebel added, trying to calm things down.

'We had a dead body round the corner this morning,' Borch replied, grim-faced.

He took out his phone. Called out a name over and over.

*Lund.*

*Sarah.*

No answer. But Karen Nebel saw the look on Morten Weber's face and it was one she'd never witnessed before. White, shocked. Afraid.

'We'll help everyone we can,' Hartmann said loudly from the impromptu press conference. 'But we can only do that if we all

contribute. That means Zealand too. They get no special privileges. You hear that. No more favours.'

She didn't like ships. There'd been one in the Birk Larsen case. A dead man strung up on a rope. One more wrong swerve in the dark.

The two men from the boat team were looking round the deck of the *Medea*. Juncker had followed her inside. It was like a vast, dead iron cathedral and stank just like the other boat. Of age and oil. Freezing cold in the long metal corridors. No sign of a thing until they got closer to the bridge. Then Lund put out a hand and stopped him going any further, pointed ahead.

A long smear on the floor. Blood. The same on the wall. Someone badly injured had lunged along here.

Trying to escape, she thought. The old trick – seeing these things in her head – was coming back however much she fought it.

A man had been hurt in this place. Somehow he'd worked his way free. Jumped into the freezing water and tried to swim for his life.

Must have been terrified for that.

A cacophonous racket cut through the darkness. She almost leapt out of her skin. Asbjørn Juncker was fumbling with his phone, bad rock guitar passing as a ringtone. Lund snatched the thing from him, turned it to silent like hers. Someone had been trying to reach her ever since they got on the *Medea*. She could feel the handset trembling in her jacket. That could wait.

Torch out, high in her right hand, they went down a set of stairs. Storage tanks. Blood smeared on the side. In the corner a dead man, naked except for a pair of grubby underpants, knife wounds all over his torso. Wire binding his arms to chest, his ankles.

'Lund,' Juncker whispered, walking round, torch and gun in his hands, pointing all the time.

She looked. Another corpse. Same condition. Knife wounds. Wire. They'd been tortured.

'You don't need a weapon, Asbjørn.'

'The docks office told us there were three.'

'Yes. The other one we found in pieces this morning. Whoever did this is gone. Too smart to stick around.'

On the bridge the only light came from the screens still alive on

the control desks. There was a laptop near the wheel. She looked at it. A document was open. It seemed to be about Zeeland's computer systems.

Lund checked for a signal, told Juncker to call Brix and bring in a full team. Then phoned Borch.

'I don't know what's going on here,' she said, and told him about the bodies and the breach in Zeeland's security.

He listened, said nothing. Mathias Borch was a star at police academy. Smart and dedicated. But never a fast thinker.

'Hartmann's not there any more, is he?'

'He's throwing an impromptu press conference. Why don't you answer your phone?'

'I've been in the hold of this bloody ship. Whoever they were they're from here.'

She started walking around in the dark, torch in hand, looking.

On the wall at the back there were photographs. Lots and lots plastered on the painted metal.

She stopped. Politicians and industrialists. A face next to a news clipping: Aldo Moro. Former Prime Minister of Italy kidnapped by the Red Brigades, held captive for fifty-five days then shot and dumped in a car in the street. Next to him a news story about Thomas Niedermayer, a German industrialist seized by the Provisional IRA, pistol-whipped, murdered then buried beneath a junkyard outside Belfast. That story was more recent and Lund couldn't stop reading. Niedermayer's widow had returned to Ireland ten years after his death and walked into the ocean to die. Then both their daughters committed suicide. One constant stream of misery from a single brutal act . . .

'I'm looking at pictures of kidnapped politicians here,' Lund said and didn't even know if Borch was still listening. 'Dead ones. You've got to get Hartmann out of there right now.'

The PET people barged into the crowd of hacks, almost picked Hartmann off the bonnet of the car then threw him into a security van alongside Weber and Karen Nebel.

Flashing lights. Sirens. The three of them sat together on a bench seat, two armed officers opposite as the vehicle lurched out of the docks back towards the city.

'They can't treat me like this,' Hartmann complained. 'I won't allow it.'

'The police found two dead men in a ship offshore,' Weber said. 'Another this morning. Some photos of kidnapped politicians. They can.'

He got a vicious, spiteful glare in return.

'Lund's handling the case,' Weber added.

Silence between the two men.

'Who's Lund?' Nebel asked.

'There's history,' Hartmann said. Then to Weber. 'Talk to the Politigården. Not Brix. Go over his head. I don't want her near.'

'Is someone going to tell me?' Nebel asked.

'She made a big mistake once before,' Weber said. 'Nearly cost us an election. It's not happening again.'

His phone rang. The van bounced over rough ground, finally found some decent road.

Nebel turned on Hartmann.

'You should never have made those promises, Troels. You can't invent policy on the hoof. You don't know what Zeeland's response might be. You need to let me handle that side of things. I wasn't hired to watch you scoring own goals.'

He looked amused by that.

'Is that what I've done?'

'I can't work in the dark. I know you and Morten go back years. I don't. Keep me in the picture.'

Hartmann pretended to be puzzled.

'What exactly do you want to know?'

'Are you screwing Rosa Lebech?'

He rolled back on the seat, didn't look at her.

Morten Weber came off the phone.

'Zeeland have just put out a statement denying the article. It looks as if their CEO will be suspended. Robert Zeuthen is going on the record to say he personally, and Zeeland as a corporation, support the government's recovery plan all the way.'

Lights outside. They were entering the heart of the city. Slotsholmen. Soon they would be back in the warm offices of the Christiansborg Palace.

Hartmann laughed. Grinned. Weber wouldn't look at her.

'You both knew that was coming, didn't you?' she asked.

'Morten's got friends everywhere,' Hartmann told her. 'Maybe a little bird told him the paper were going to dump on Kornerup.' He slapped Weber's knee. 'Not that I want to know.'

The van pulled into the courtyard in front of the palace. Two officers came and opened the doors. Hartmann didn't move.

'We need a press release, Karen. You phrase them so carefully. So beautifully. I wish I had that kind of skill myself.'

A hint of a smile at that.

'But let me see it first, won't you?' he added. 'Then pop a copy in Ussing's pigeonhole with my warmest regards.'

She went ahead of them into the building. Weber stopped him on the steps, waited till the security men were out of earshot.

'Is she right? Are you popping something in Rosa Lebech's pigeonhole?'

Hartmann's face fell.

'I don't have time for this,' he said and started walking.

Weber's arm stopped him.

'I zipped up your flies once before with all that Birk Larsen nonsense, Troels. We were damned lucky to get out of that in one piece. Don't ask me to do it again.'

'I'm a single man. A widower. I work every hour God gives for this country. I've a right to a private life. A right to be loved.' Then, almost as an afterthought. 'I had nothing to do with that girl.'

'Oh,' Weber said, with a nod. 'It's love, is it?' He waited. No answer. 'In the middle of an election campaign? Which we may well lose anyway. With all this Zeeland crap, Lund hanging around . . . and you shagging the leader of the party we need to save our skin.'

Hartmann groaned.

'Show some faith, Morten. I'm on top of this. Rosa's bringing the Centre Party to the table. They'll back me as Prime Minister. Zeeland's fixed. And you're going to make sure Lund comes nowhere near.'

He put a hand to Weber's back and propelled him towards the palace.

'Aren't you?'

Maja Zeuthen had never liked Drekar. Before Robert's father died they lived in a former workman's cottage in the grounds, had the



joy of bringing two beautiful children into the world in a small, tidy home meant for a lucky gardener.

There they'd loved one another deeply.

Then the weight of the company fell on his shoulders, and with it a growing sense of crisis. Not just Zeeland's. The world's. They moved into Drekar. Lived beneath the dragon. Got lost in its sprawling floors and cavernous, empty rooms.

Being the Zeuthen who ran Zeeland was a burden too heavy for him to share. She'd offered. Lost the battle. With that defeat love waned. The arguments began. As she drifted away he spent longer and longer in the black glass offices down at the harbour.

And when he was home they rowed. Two little faces watching from the door sometimes.

It was almost eight. The servants had put dinner on the table. She'd eaten with Emilie and Carl, trying to make small talk. Noticing the way they went quiet whenever she tried to introduce Carsten into the conversation.

He was younger. Struggling a little with his medical career. As Robert said they weren't his kids either and sometimes that showed in an uncharacteristic coldness and ill temper.

They cleared away the dishes themselves. Told Reinhardt to go home. He had a wife. Grown-up children. A house near the Zeeland offices by the waterside. But still he stayed around the mansion, watching, worrying. Robert almost saw him as an uncle, a fixture in the house when he was a boy.

Emilie and Carl went upstairs. To play. To watch TV. Mess with their gadgets.

She sat alone on the gigantic sofa, staring at the huge painting on the wall: a grey, miserable canvas of the ocean in a deadly gale. When they were splitting up Emilie said she hated it. The thing made her think of where grandpa had gone. Had Maja stayed it would have vanished before long.

Emilie came down, dressed in her blue raincoat, pink wellies and a small rucksack with childish pony designs on it.

'Where are you going?'

She didn't blink, looked straight at her mother.

'To feed the hedgehog.'

'The hedgehog? Now?'

'Dad says it's all right.'

'Dad's not here.'

'I won't be long.'

'I'll go and get Carl,' Maja said. 'He can come with us.'

Emilie sat down on the stairs. She was gone by the time Maja was back with her brother.

'Emilie!'

She tried not to sound too cross.

Then Robert phoned.

'Emilie's gone off somewhere. She said to feed a baby hedgehog.'

He laughed and she liked that sound.

'She's been doing that every night lately. We've got to work out what kind of pet to give her. I don't think she'll settle for a stick insect.'

'No.'

Did he realize he'd made her laugh too? Did she mind?

'Reinhardt found out about the cat,' she said. 'The gardener said he'd seen one outside the fence. Near a brook somewhere. Emilie was hanging around there one time.'

'Outside the fence?'

There was a brittle tension back in his voice then.

'That's what he thought. It's no big deal, Robert. Carsten said if we keep using the cream she'll be fine in a few days. I'm sorry I flew off the handle.'

'She shouldn't go out like that. We've got security for a reason.'

A short silence. Then he said, 'I'm coming home.'

Maja walked to the front door and wondered how long she'd have to wait this time. It was a tall, elegant reception area. The only ugly thing was the block of blue flashing lights and small TV screens for the security system that ran round the house and out into the grounds.

Eight monitors in all, mostly looking out onto trees moving in the winter wind, bare branches shifting restlessly.

As she watched one screen went blank except for a blue no-signal message. Then the next. Then, in a rush, the rest.

Photographs. Dozens. On the walls. On the floors.

Monochrome faces Lund didn't know. A Canon SLR camera with a telephoto lens. Documents on ship movements. What seemed to

be a graphic description of the Zeeland security network, covering multiple locations. Industrial units, offices. Private premises too.

'I don't get it,' Juncker said, shining his beam on the camera. 'Why would someone hole up here, kill three sailors, all to take a pop at a politician?'

Lund was barely listening. On a desk in the corner she'd found a set of fresh colour prints, straight out of the inkjet there. Some were aerial shots off the web. Lawns and trees. A satellite view of what looked like a grand mansion.

An ordinary-looking man next to a shiny Range Rover. About forty, in a suit. He seemed deeply miserable.

'That's Robert Zeuthen,' Juncker said. 'The Zeeland bloke.'

She flipped over the print, looked at the next one. Zeuthen going to his car, two small shapes inside. There was a date stamp on the print. Four thirty that very afternoon.

'I don't get it . . .'

'So you said, Asbjørn.'

He went quiet after that.

Lund looked at the printer. A red light was flashing. Out of paper, mid-job. She picked some sheets off the desk and fed them into the tray.

The thing rattled and whirred. Then started printing again.

Out they came. Shot after shot.

Every one of them was a girl in blue jeans and denim jacket. Blonde hair. Not smiling much except when she saw her father and seemed to think he needed that.

Then the last one. Up close. This wasn't from a long lens. She was there, laughing for whoever held the camera. A kitten in her arms.

'This isn't about Hartmann at all,' Lund said, and got back on the phone.

Zeuthen slewed the big car on the gravel, left the door open as he ran into the house. The front door was open. Maja was there shivering in her green parka.

Wide-eyed, scared, hurt, she said, 'The police called. They said we had to stay inside. They were sending—'

'Where are the kids?'

'Carl's upstairs. Emilie . . .'

Her face said it all.

Zeuthen ran inside, got a torch, walked out into the grounds, flashing the beam around.

She came and joined him.

'How long?' he asked.

'She said she was going to feed the hedgehog. You'd told her it was all right.'

'How long?' he repeated.

'Forty minutes. An hour.'

Drekar was surrounded by a sprawling estate of ornate gardens, ponds, a lake, a tennis court, a croquet lawn, a picnic area. Then woods, stretching back to the coast.

A high security fence ran round everything, part of the extended surveillance network connected to the Zeeland offices by the docks.

A thought.

He marched back into the entrance hall, stared at the dead screens on the wall.

Then out to the drive. One of the garden staff was nearby, wondering what was going on. Zeuthen grabbed him, asked about the hole in the fence, near the brook. Which brook? There were several.

The man had no good answers. Zeuthen was getting desperate. A nine-year-old girl, lost in the vast gardens and forest around her home. It was like a fairy tale gone bad. Except most fairy tales went that way, for a while at least.

Blue lights down the long drive. Sirens. The two of them watched a car brake hard to stop by his Range Rover. There were more behind.

Two people got out. A young, tall skinny man with a scared face and an anxious demeanour. And a woman, plain, long dark hair tied back behind her head. Sad, shining eyes that seemed to be looking everywhere as she walked towards them.

She pulled out an ID card. A white car with *Politi* on the side swung to a halt nearby, then another. He could hear the relentless slash of an unseen helicopter, its blades tearing the night to pieces.

'Police. Sarah Lund,' she said. 'Where's your daughter?'

Robert Zeuthen turned towards the dense forest, trying to find the words.

That was where she always went of late, for no good reason. He should have noticed.

Through the dark wood where the dead trees gave no shelter Lund walked on and on. She'd set a sweeping path of officers to spread out into the dense, dark areas round the mansion. Left Juncker there to liaise with the rest of the crews arriving from the Politigården. The Zeuthens were no ordinary family. A threat to them was a challenge to the state itself.

She'd tried to tell Robert Zeuthen what to do. It was no use. The man was beyond her, ranting and running, dashing his torch beam everywhere.

Lund followed, dragged Zeuthen out of a low ditch he called the brook when he stumbled into it. Trying to talk. To reason. To see.

After a while they reached a tall, heavy fence. Open rough ground on the far side. There was a hole cut at the base, big enough for a child to crawl through.

He jerked at the wire, made the gap bigger.

'What is this, Robert?' she asked. 'You need to tell me.'

'She did whatever she wanted.'

'I need to know!'

It came out then. How someone had seen her here feeding a cat. How the surveillance system had gone down, not that it would have caught a hole like this in the first place.

Then he was on his hands and knees, scrambling through the gap, muddy suit, filthy smart office shoes, grubby hands.

Lund followed. Somewhere behind she could hear a familiar deep voice calling on her to stop, to wait.

Beyond the wire lay a saucer in the long grass next to a carton of milk.

She didn't bother trying to talk to Zeuthen any more. The bare trees, the cold dark night. The empty, indifferent countryside. None of this was new.

After a while he stopped, let out a shriek of shock and pain. Catching up she saw what was in his hands: a single pink wellington boot, the kind a young girl would wear.

'Please,' Lund said. 'Put it down. Don't touch anything.'

She didn't need to ask the obvious question: was this Emilie's?

More lights now. Brix still barking at her to stop, to wait.

Watching Zeuthen blunder on she wondered how often she'd heard that. How many times to come.

'You have to let us do this,' Lund said.

It's our job, she thought. It's all we do.

The helicopter was close above. She glanced back. A long line of officers, torches out, coming towards them. A tall figure that could only be Brix in front, bellowing.

Then she bumped into something, was confused for a moment.

It was Zeuthen. He'd stopped in front of a low thorn bush, torch on the naked branches. A child's rucksack, ponies patterned on the side, sat in the branches. He reached for it.

Enough. She ordered him to get back, elbowed him out of the way when he didn't, pulled on a pair of latex gloves, reached out and extracted the thing from the branches.

That took a while. It had been thrown there, deliberately. By the time she got it out Brix was with them.

'Do you have any idea where the girl is?' he asked.

Zeuthen couldn't talk. His wife turned up breathless, struggling to speak.

Then Juncker. He said they'd found tyre tracks down a rough lane a short way across the field.

'And this . . .' He held out an evidence bag, shone his torch on the contents. A small silver bracelet. 'It's got her name on it.'

Maja Zeuthen said nothing. Her husband could only stare at the tiny object in the young cop's hands.

A dog barked.

Brix went to the Zeuthens.

'I've got the army joining the search teams. We've got a helicopter in the area.'

'I can hear it,' Lund muttered, struggling with the zip on the rucksack.

'We're doing everything we can . . .'

The woman started sobbing. Zeuthen reached out for her. She pulled away.

Finally Lund got the rucksack open. Looked inside. Nothing but a cheap smartphone. Gingerly she took it out.

The screen came alive straight away. It was set up for a video call she guessed. All she could see was what looked like a van interior:

pale plain walls. Then a figure came in from the left and she knew he was looking at her. Black hood. Slits for eyes.

'I want to speak to whoever's in charge of the investigation,' he said in a cultured, measured voice.

They crowded round, looking, listening.

'Who is this?' Lund asked.

'Your name and rank, please.'

'Sarah Lund. *Vicekriminalkommisær*.'

'The girl's OK.'

'I want to see her.'

The screen went blank. He'd put the phone to his ear.

'I regret that's not possible.'

'What do you want?'

'Nothing unreasonable. I know these are tough times. But debts are debts. I'd like to collect what I'm owed.'

'A debt?' Maja Zeuthen shrieked. 'What the hell's he talking about?'

The voice laughed then.

'I hear we have an audience. Good. Let's all be friends. The question you need to answer's a simple one. How much is a girl's life worth? What exactly will you give to get her back?'

'Tell us what you want,' Lund repeated.

A long pause. Then, 'I just said, didn't I? Are you listening? I'll call tomorrow afternoon. On this number. I talk to you and you only, Lund. I look forward to your offer.'

'Yes, yes,' she said quickly. 'It's important you let me speak to Emilie. We need—'

One click. That was all. She looked at the phone. He was gone.

A bitter wind was winding through the dead trees, scattering its chill breath across the bare land.

Maja Zeuthen, eyes bright with fear and fury, standing, shaking, tipped back her long blonde hair, began to howl.