# THE PATIENT

## Trude Teige

### Chapters 1-3

Translated by Angela Amoroso

“*Hic est locus ubi sanguis urinaque arcana vitae aperiant.*”

“Here life´s mysteries are revealed in blood and urine.”

(Quote painted on the ceiling of the laboratory in the Bjørkeli building at Dikemark Sindsyge Asylum in Asker.

*20th April 1993*

*My time is soon over, and this can well be the last entry I write. If anyone should happen to find these notes, then I´m afraid that person might have trouble reading my handwriting. That is now weak I have become, one who has always made a point of neat penmanship.*

*Julia has been in my thoughts the entire time. She is full of questions, little Julia, and she was the one who gave me the desire to share what I have experienced, everything I have seen and heard. But most important of all: She has instilled in me the belief that my life has not been wasted.*

*Anne-Marie has my Will and Testament. I hope that Julia will be happy to receive the painting. She is the only one who knows its true value. Though how much does a 9 year old comprehend about such things?*

*My energy is gone, my source is depleted and now I have no more to tell. It ends here. Nothing matters anymore, by the way; I feel nothing, it is as if I am no longer me.*

*I regret not having shared my experiences earlier, then perhaps all these dreadful things would not have happened. But who would have believed me? Me, a patient, a lunatic, an unreliable person.*

*And so perhaps I will find out if it is true what ancient Krøsus claimed: Count no man as happy until he is dead. Of course I ask myself, how would I know that, when I am no longer?*

*Krøsus of Dikemark.*

*Dikemark Hospital*
*15th May 1993*

Nursing Assistant Anne-Marie Skog had not previously seen the older woman who now stood in the doorway to the kitchen asking for Gunnar Lauritzen. She must have been close to eighty, petite and smartly dressed**,** wearing a black, double-breasted coat**.** Her eyes were somber, expressing sadness but not in a way that was caused by the situation. It was more a general and constant sadness in her appearance. She clutched a red handbag in both hands in front of her.

"I am his sister" she said and stretch out her hand to Anne-Marie, "Lydia Lauritzen."

Anne-Marie looked at the woman in surprise. "Gunnar Lauritzen? There is no one…" she began. Then she realised. The woman meant Krøsus. It was just a coincidence that Anne- Marie remembered his real name, it had never been used, at least as long as she had worked there - for about fifty years.

"May I see him?"

"Of course, but I am afraid he is very weak."

"So I have been told" said Lydia Lauritzen and followed her to the sitting room. "It is nice here" she remarked as she walked up the wide stairway which wound its way along the wall to the second floor. Large colourful coat-of-arms that the patients had made hung on the walls.

Krøsus had been there longer than Anne-Marie. It was said that he came when he was 20 years old, and now he was seventy-seven. She had never heard any talk of a sister. Or any other family member, for that matter. He had never once mentioned a sister or parents, not to her or to anyone else that she knew of, as they had often spoken about it, how strange it was that he never had any visitors. Didn't he have anyone? The doctors surely knew more about him, it probably was in his journal but nurses' assistants didn't have access to this information. And now, when he was

close to the end a sister suddenly shows up. Anne-Mari was upset, but she was careful not to let it show.

Krøsus lay with his eyes closed. Anne-Marie placed a chair next to the bed and the sister sat down. She looked at her brother for a few seconds and then slowly stretched out her hand and placed it over his. It was far too long since someone who really knew him held his hand in this way, thought Anne-Marie as she left the room. Someone who remembered him as a child and a teenager, someone who knew who he was and what had happened to him.

An hour later the sister returned. She looked somber, white face, blank eyes. Anne-Marie wondered it if was because she realised that it was close to the end - or because her lack of caring had given her a bad conscience.

"He whispered something to me", she said

"What was it?"

"I believe he said quite clearly: 'They kill people here.' "

# 2

*Losvika, 14th March 2016*

Kajsa Coren put the brakes on the stroller. She lifted her three and a half year old son Jonas up on to her hip, slung her handbag over her shoulder and went into the hotel in Losvika.

Why in the world did she agree to meet a stranger who wouldn't say what he wanted to talk to me about? she thought as she let Jonas push the button on the lift.

She knocked on the door of room 210 and then opened it when she heard a voice say come in. Curiosity, she thought, one never knows. It had happened before, people contacting her without saying why. Sometimes it resulted in some interesting news articles.

The man stood at the large picture windows, looking out over the fjord. "It is beautiful here by the sea", he said without turning around.

He pronounced the word beautiful in a way that made her think he was Swedish, breathy from inside his mouth.

"Yes, it is nice here", she said and stood waiting in the doorway

He turned slightly, looking at her over his shoulder.

"You are from here originally, correct?"

I was born here, but my family moved to the East Coast when I was ten. A few years ago I moved back here with my husband and child.

He motioned for them to come closer and stretched out his hand. "Gøran Nordin, nice to meet you. And who is this little boy?" he said to Jonas who pressed his face shyly into Kajas' breast.

"Wild and beautiful", he continued and turned towards the view again. "Especially when it storms."

It was then she saw that half  his face was injured. He entire forehead, parts of his nose and one cheek was a reddish colour and covered with scars. His left eyelid hung down over his eye giving him an expression of melancholy. It was difficult to determine his age, in his early thirties, perhaps. He was tall, nearly one ninety. He was shaven bald with the exception of a clump of hair which was a continuation of his facial injury. His ear was deformed, nearly all the cartilage was gone. His chin was covered by a thick, well-groomed beard, and his glasses were modern with thin black frames.

Losvika Hotel was constructed in glass and flagstone, blending beautifully into Losvika´s landscape all the way down to sea, on the outer edge of the Sunnmør Coast. There had been much debate about building the hotel, many believed it would be an ugly encroachment on the area´s natural beauty. But the protests had quieted as the building progressed.

Kajsa looked down at the hotel's outdoor restaurant which was just below the widow. It was mid-March. Spring came early out here by the sea, but this year was cold and wet, and the outdoor furniture had not yet been set up. With the exception of a small fishing boat moored off one of the points, the guest harbour in front of the hotel was empty. The view was magnificent. The expansive fjord narrowed northward between two of the islands. In the far distance, towards the East the pointed, jagged peaks of the Sunnmør Alps stretched towards heaven. A thin mist floated languidly over the surface of the water.

"Boat", said Jonas pointing.

A small fishing boat rounded the corner of the headlands just beyond the hotel. A tail of seagulls trailing after it. A man in orange oilskins stood on the deck gutting the fish. He threw the remnants into the water, to the delight of the gulls. "Do you think he is happy?" Gøran Nordin said and pointed to the man on the boat.

Kajsa glanced at him, surprised by the question. "Who knows?"

"Yes, who knows?" he said lightly. "Even out here where everyone knows everyone else, one doesn't really know if your neighbour is happy.

"No, I guess that's true", answered Kajsa.

Gøran Nordin put is hands on the windowsill and leaned out the window. Kajsa noticed that he wore a gold ring with a turquoise stone on his little finger. He blended into the modern interior with his simple, masculine elegance.

"What did you want to talk to me about?" she asked and put Jonas down on the floor.

"I need your help" he answered and motioned towards a brown and lime coloured chair. "Would you like a soda?" he asked Jonas and took a cola out of the refrigerator. Jonas climbed up onto a chair. "What do you say to the man?" Kajsa said as Nordin gave him the bottle.

"Thank you" , the three year old said shyly.
She took out a tissue and wiped his runny nose. He was home from daycare because he had a cold.

"Coffee?" Gøran Nordin asked and walked towards a little espresso machine sitting on the end of the desk. Kajsa said yes thank you, observing him in the mirror on the wall as he placed a pod in the machine.

"Late October in 2002 a young woman disappeared from Enden in Flatbygda. She was never found." He gave her the cup.

Julia, Kajsa thought. For a long time after she had covered the case she lie awake at night and saw the serious face, the shy gaze in the photograph that was sent out with in connection with the search. In time every journalist has at least one case that they just can't let go of. Experiences which won´t let go. She had several of them. Dramatic election nights, a state council in trouble, a top leader who had to step down due to tax fraud. But none measured up to the unfortunate fates of ordinary people, they carried a heavier weight. And no other case she which had covered was so heavy as the Julia Case. Perhaps it was because she was so easily able to see Julia as a child, as she ran barefooted in the grass and tide pools here by the seaside in the summer, as she herself had done.

Probably the victim of a crime. Never found. Is there anything worse?

After she, Karsten and Jonas moved here, Kajsa had several times considered looking up witnesses from the case, go another round with them, perhaps make a

documentary film, create something that would help someone remember something new, or who wished to ease their conscience. Images would appear clearly in her mind's eye any time the case was mentioned, as scenes from a film: The search party with reflecting yellow vests searching along the shoreline, in shanties, in boathouses and up on the hillside. The young girls who held each other crying in the school yard, the adults who leaned towards one another speaking in muted voices in the shops.

"The Julia Case?" she said surprised. "If course I know about it."

"I wonder if you would consider talking with people, witness from that time.

"But why …"

" I understand that you worked on the case when Julia disappeared? he interrupted. "I tried to get hold of you at Channel 4, talked with your boss who gave me your telephone number."

So that was the explanation. He had checked who worked on the case and found her. And in the very town where Julia disappeared.

"Yes," she said "I was sent to Vestøy the day after Julie was reported missing, and followed the search the first few days. But what …"

"It was surely an advantage to know the area?"

Kajsa told him that at that time she hadn't been back in Vestøy for very long. "And besides the place where Julia disappeared is on the other side of the island. I'm not very familiar with that area."

"What do you remember about the Julia Case?"

"Mostly everything I think. One does not forget something like that," Kajsa said. "Julia had attended a youth night at the local church and left before her friends. She never came home. They looked everywhere, not a trace was found. A week later after she disappeared - I wasn't here then, I had been relieved by a colleague - her brother Allan was arrested. A neighbourhood boy, a friend of the brother as a matter of fact, contacted the police and said that he had seen Julia and her brother together on the road a distance from their house at about 11.30 pm that evening.

"But the brother was released after a few days", Nordin said.

Jonas wanted to sit on her lap, so she lifted him up. “Yes, but there were many who still thought he had something to do with the disappearance.

“Did you meet her family?” Gøran asked.

“No, none of the journalists were able to come in contact with any of them. They all tried of course, but the family would not speak to the press. Her mother never commented on the case, and the father wasn’t around, her parents were divorced. But with what do you specifically want my help?”

“I think someone who looks at the case from a new angle can discover something the police haven’t found - or overlooked. His voice was insistent. “There must be something.”

“Why are *you* interested in this case?”

He avoided the question. “I think that someone knows something they haven’t told, it is always like that. You know the case better than most people, you are a local, know the area and as a journalist you are able to speak with people in a way other than a police interrogation, and you have contributed to solving other cases before. Someone *must* know something”, he added.

“Why are you so sure?”

“That´s how people are. *Everyone* has secrets!

Kajsa observed him silently for a few seconds. “But it may not be possible to …

“I will pay of course,” he added quickly.

“I am not a private investigator, I am a journalist.

He smiled briefly. “Exactly why.”

“But why are you interested in the case? Aren´t you Swedish?”

“Well, my role is a kind of a private investigator.”

“And who is the client?”

“We can get back to that.”

“So the person wants to be anonymous?”

“There is a reason for that. People start to talk, rumours spread quickly in a small town, it complicates things. The case is an … what shall I say? A kind of

abscess. You know since it was never solved. He made a gesture with he hand along with an expression of slight resignation.

"I can agree with you there", Kajsa said. "Unsolved cases like this are painful and one must tread carefully. But can´t you speak with the people yourself?"

"People will not talk to a stranger who comes around asking questions about an old criminal case. It is easier for you."

She meet his glance. And again she thought that he looked somewhat melancholy, or perhaps vulnerable was a better description.

" I would appreciate it if you didn't mention this to anyone", Gøran Nordin said.

"And what will you be doing?"

"I will be conducting a number of other investigations.

Kajsa looked at him thoughtfully. She had heard rumours about private investigators who had been hired by editors to do jobs that where illegal, broke in to places to obtain documentation that journalists could not get a hold of. Could it be for example Cold Facts on Swedish TV4, Sweden's popular investigative journalism documentary program? she wondered? Since he was Swedish. Or was it Julia's family who had asked for help? But why now, over thirty years after her disappearance? "I will speak with people on one condition," she said.

"Which is?"

"If I find out something new, I can use it as a journalist."

He was thoughtful a few seconds, then smiled." You are just like I imagined", he said. "But okay, that´s fine.

"Is there anything in particular you would like me to focus on?"

"The neighbourhood boy, the friend who claimed he saw Julia and her brother together late that night. The police believed his testimony, but they found no evidence that the brother had anything to do with Julia's disappearance. What if he was *not* telling the truth?"

“Frode Olsen”, she said and he nodded in confirmation. “Everyone tried to get an interview with him, but he would never come forth.

“Exactly! said Gøran Nordin. “I believe Frode Olsen is hiding something.”

“Why is that?”

Gøran Nordin tapped the side his nose. “Just a feeling one gets after many years in the game. But I need something concrete. As I said: I don’t think he will talk to me, but you on the other hand … you can figure out some sort of excuse, you’re a journalist.”

“Even if  Frode Olsen was lying, what would be his motive?”

“That he was hiding something of course.”

“Do you think he was involved in Julia´s disappearance?”

“Perhaps. Who knows.”

# 3

When door closed behind Kajsa he went to the window again and leaned against the window still, briskly rubbing his face. It had gotten darker, the sea was calm, hardly a ripple. He stood until the outdoor lights came on in the restaurant below. Then he made himself another cup of coffee, turned on the tv and sat down. Every so often he would look at the clock, but did nothing. Later that evening he went over to the closet, took out some clothes, and put on a pair of dark trousers and an all-weather jacket. He rummaged around in his suitcase until he found a flashlight which he put in a backpack along with a pair of binoculars, a cap and gloves.

He followed the deserted road from Losvika to Flatbygda on the other side of the island, past a sign which read Enden, and continued to the very end of the bay, Kistevika. He parked on the pier near an abandoned fishing gear supply warehouse**,** between a junked camping wagon and a rusty snowplow, and sat for a while looking out over the water. The surface shimmered and shown like smooth metal in the moonlight.

He put on his cap and gloves before he got out, then put on his backpack. A short ways up the road leading to the closed-down Kistevika Neurological Sanatorium he turned onto a path along the side of the mountain, a wispy trail

between moss and heather and clusters of juniper, bilberries and crowberries. After a while the thicket gave way to taller trees, mostly pines which were planted just after the war to provide shelter and to make the scanty landscape more abundant. He walked slowly, but without hesitation even though the trail gradually disappeared. After a little while he came to a clearing. He continued straight ahead until he reached the building, where he sat down on a rock. It was deserted, darkness surrounded him on the mountainside, in front of him he could see the entire town. The closest house was just fifty metres away. He felt an inner trembling when she came into view in the bathroom window. She didn't bother to close the curtains. Who could see her she thought since the bathroom faced the deserted mountainside, where there was no one around this time of day, in the dark, on a chilly evening in the middle of March. He held her captive with his gaze while she brushed her teeth, put night cream on her face, undressed and hung her clothes on a hook on the wall, put on her nightgown and closed the light as she went out. Shortly after, a light went on in the bedroom, and he look right at her for a few seconds before she pulled down the shade. He sat motionless, he was good at that, sitting motionless in the dark. Even fifteen minutes after she had turned out the light, he sat quietly for a few minutes more, breathing in the pungent freshness of the air, the scent of the open sea. He could just barely hear the sound of the waves in the distance, splashing against the shoreline**.** It had a calming effect.

After a while he got up and put on his backpack. He followed the same trail a little ways back before the crossed the road, and ran across a small field down towards the sea, to a green painted house standing alone. Slowly he crept along the wall of the house and looked in the cellar window.

A man sat at a desk. His face was lit by the computer screen. On the wall were posters of a football player and a pop star, reminiscent of a boy´s room, but the man was an adult. It was as if time had stood still for him. In a few days he would bring him back to the point when time had stood still. But there was no rush, a few other things had to be taken care of first. He went back to the car with quick steps, took out

a shovel from the boot and walked up to the closed-down sanatorium, passed the main entrance, continued with determined steps across the parking area, past the greenhouse and barn until he came to a stone wall marking the boundary of the old graveyard. He didn’t rush, but walked slowly between the rows of gravestones, stopping by a large rock, like those found down by the tidal pools. He gripped the shovel and stuck it firmly into the ground.