

# **The Boy in the Suitcase Study Guide**

## **The Boy in the Suitcase**

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## Plot Summary

The Boy in the Suitcase is a crime novel by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. In the novel, Nina Borg unravels a human trafficking plot. Nina works officially as a Red Cross nurse and unofficially as part of an underground network in Denmark. She helps illegal immigrants to settle in the country. Most of these immigrants come from Eastern Europe. In general, Nina has a compulsive need to help other people. In fact, she often neglects her own husband, Morton, and their children in the process. Though deeply annoyed, Morton loves Nina and fights to make his marriage with her work.

True to Nina's nature, when Karin (Nina's friend and fellow nurse) asks Nina to pick up a suitcase at Central Station, she agrees to help. In the suitcase, Nina finds Mikas, a Lithuanian boy near death. Mikas must be protected from Jucas, the thug originally intended to pick up the suitcase. Jucas, who is hoping to get away from the mafia and escape with his fiancée Barbara, was to be paid one million U.S. dollars for the pickup by a Danish businessman, Jan Marquart. While pursuing the boy and the payment, Jucas erroneously believes both are in Karin's possession. As a result, he kills her.

As Nina comes to discover, Mikas is the second son of Sigita, a Lithuanian girl. Aleksander, her first child, had been sold by Sigita's aunt after Sigita gave birth at fifteen. Aleksander was purchased by Jan since he and his wife, Anne, could not have children. Aleksander's kidneys are failing. Mikas will be the donor of Aleksander's new kidneys. Jucas is outraged when he learns that his payment will not be forthcoming, for Anne has stolen the money, intending to leave Jan. Jucas then attempts to kill everyone, nearly succeeding with Jan. He is only stopped by Sigita, who herself kills Jucas. Anne determines that she will cover up the killing by telling the police that it was she who killed Jucas in self-defense.

Nina ultimately learns that Karin, who had been working as a private nurse for Jan, was horrified to learn about what was going on with Mikas. Karin then went to Nina because she knew Nina could and would help. Nina reflects sadly on the fact that there was no one there to help Karin. By the end of the novel, Nina has recommitted to her own family.

"Note: This study guide specifically refers to the Soho Press, Inc., 2011 English Translation Paperback Edition."



# Pages 1 - 67

## Summary

As the story opens, an unidentified woman (later revealed to be Nina Borg) drags a suitcase behind an underground parking lot dumpster. She opens the suitcase and discovers a boy near death inside. Jan Marquart, who is incredibly wealthy, lives with his wife (Anne) and Aleksander (his son) on the edge of a cliff. Jan receives a call from someone who asks him if he has made a decision, and he responds that he has. He then tells Anne he will be headed to Zurich on business. Meanwhile, Jucas and Barbara dream of having a family. They drive to Lake Didziulis, which is the location of a scout camp, where they have sex and go swimming.

On Saturday, Sigitia brings her young son Mikas to the park. She deeply loves her son. There, a woman with a slight accent gives Mikas some chocolate, which concerns Sigitia. Sigitia feels bad when the woman explains she has no children of her own. Meanwhile, Jan is annoyed to be delayed getting home. He calls Karin to head to a Copenhagen bank for the money he has just transferred from Zurich.

At the Danish Red Cross Center Fureso, the Coalhouse Camp, Nina deals with an angry man who comes for his much younger wife. Their relationship is clearly abusive. Magnus, a doctor, is stunned that the wife has left with her husband. Nina then receives a call from Karin, asking for a meeting.

At the meeting with Nina, Karin tells Nina she must go and pick up a suitcase at Central Station. Karin explains she is going to quit her job and go away for awhile. Nina is told she must hurry and that this is her chance to save someone. Sigitia panics about Mikas. Then, she calls her neighbor, Mrs. Mazekiene, who does not have Mikas. Sigitia's husband, Darius, doesn't pick up the phone. At Central Station, in system controlling section 37, locker 43, Nina pulls out a suitcase. In the parking lot, she discovers the boy inside. He is almost dead. She wonders what Karin is involved in. Later, she sees a man angrily kicking the empty locker 43. She knows she must keep the boy away from this man.

When Sigitia wakes up in the hospital after having had her stomach pumped for alcohol, she remembers being in the park. She is released on Monday morning with no idea of what happened to her or her son. Since she doesn't drink much, she doesn't know how she could have passed out, fractured her arm, and received a concussion. She heads home to Pasilaicial, where Mrs. Mazekiene reveals a man and woman had come to pick up Mikas. The woman matches the description of the woman who was at the park.

Nina takes the boy to Allan, a doctor. After examining the child, he explains that the child has been drugged and needs to go to Hvidovre Hospital. He tells Nina he is through with things and not to come back.



Meanwhile, Sigita speaks with Sergeant Evaldas Guzas of the Department of Missing Persons. He doesn't believe Sigita's story because she was in the hospital. He instructs her to go home and wait for her husband to call. Sigita wonders if everything that is happening is a punishment from God; so, she goes to Saint Kazimiero's Church to pray and weep. Darius then calls and says he does not have Mikas.

## Analysis

"The Boy in the Suitcase" is a crime novel by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis, in which Nina Borg unravels a human trafficking plot. When the novel begins, the reader is immediately plunged into both crime and family –themes which will resonate throughout the story. Although he is a family man, Jan has agreed to some sort of underhanded, perhaps even illegal arrangement. He does not give his wife details about what he is planning to do. Here, crime presents a strong contrast to family. Crime is corrosive, harmful, and detrimental. Family is healing, beneficial, and influential. The two themes are mutually exclusive.

The Marquart family is contrasted with Sigita. Sigita deeply loves her son, Mikas. This is obvious not only in the time she spends with him at the park, but also in how quickly she is to defend her son against a stranger giving Mikas chocolate. This contrasts with the characters of Jucas and Barbara, who dream of having their own family. At this point, having a child has not been possible.

Crime and family continue to compete with one another as Mikas is kidnapped and Sigita goes to the police to report his disappearance. As yet, there is no hard evidence to support it. However, it is reasonable to suspect that Jan is somehow involved in the disappearance of Mikas. The role that Jucas and Barbara play in everything has not been explored. Nevertheless, their strange appearance in the novel –including their vacation at an old Scout camp for children –is creepy and ominous. It foreshadows a dark occurrence to come.

In this section of the novel, the themes of human rights and immigration also become apparent. Nina's official work as a Red Cross nurse demonstrates her desire to help other people, especially those in severe difficulty. This is true of immigrants, both legal and illegal. It is demonstrated through the case of Natasha, a young Eastern European bride who is physically and sexually abused by her husband. As an immigrant, Natasha is denied her rights by her husband. At best, she is treated horribly by him. Yet there is little that Nina can do about it beyond caring for Natasha and her daughter when they seek asylum at the Red Cross center.

Nina also participates in an underground network of medical professionals and volunteers who seek to assist illegal immigrants. Nina comes to discover a boy in suitcase at Central Station –just as Mikas goes missing in Lithuania. It is apparent that the boy in the suitcase and Mikas are the same person.



For Nina, it is clear that the boy's human rights have been violated because the boy is drugged and naked. He has also been left in a suitcase in a station. Since the boy is near death, Nina knows she must rely on her underground contacts, including Allan, to help figure out what to do with the boy. While Allan counsels Nina to bring the boy to the hospital, Nina's own compulsive need to help people (and here, the theme of flaws becomes apparent) discourages her from doing so.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Sigita react so swiftly and so strongly to the woman who gives Mikas chocolate at the park? How would you react if you were in Sigita's situation? Why?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What prevents Nina from bringing the boy in the suitcase to the authorities when she first discovers him? Is she to be blamed for this decision? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Nina's compulsion to help people helps to discourage her against bringing the boy to the hospital. Do you think she has done the right thing? Why or why not?

## **Vocabulary**

nostalgia, eradicate, demurred, inebriated, mechanically, parsimony, palpable, idyllic, dubious



## Pages 68 - 134

### Summary

Nina calls Morten, her husband, to let him know she will be late getting home. Morten has picked up their son, Anton, from the after school program because Nina had forgotten. Nina then calls Peter, a member of the underground network which helps immigrants in the country. Peter is on holiday according to his voice mail. Meanwhile, Jucas is furious that the locker was empty. Jucas tells Barbara everything will be alright. Jucas is informed that the woman instructed to pick up the goods and money has a GPS. She can be tracked. Jucas will receive an additional \$10,000 to pick up both the goods and the money. Jucas agrees. Nina then calls Karin, who consents to a meeting with Nina. Karin had hoped that Nina's network could help the child. Sigita goes back to see Sergeant Guzas at the police station, explaining her husband is in Germany and does not have their son. Guzas begins to take notes, realizing something is actually wrong. Sigita cannot imagine why anyone has taken her son. Nina, on the way to meet Karin, makes a stop to buy clothing and food for the boy. A woman near Nina's car complains about Nina leaving a child inside, but Nina drives away as the boy wakes up.

Nina drives to the fishing-tourist town of Tisvildeleje to Karin's wooded cottage. There, she changes the boy's clothing and carries him over to the building. Inside, she discovers that Karin has been brutally murdered. Nina throws up. Meanwhile, Sigita asks Mrs. Mazekiene about the man who came to take her son, and Mrs. Mazekiene says the man had some weight on him. He drove a gray or silver SUV with a luggage bin on the roof. She calls her coworker, Algirdas, asking him about someone else they work with: Pavel Dobrovolskij drives a silver Cayenne with a luggage rack. Algirdas thinks Pavel has sold the SUV long ago. Pavel knows gangsters; but, that doesn't mean he is involved with Mikas's disappearance. Nina, meanwhile, rushes back to her car with the boy, believing they are being chased. The boy screams for his mother.

Jan is angered that Karin has left a resignation note for him. His mother-in-law, Inger, comes to visit, concerned about his marriage to Anne. Inger says she hopes everything works out. After she leaves, Anne calls Jan to tell him Karin is dead. Sigita, meanwhile, goes to see the Dobrovolskij family at their home, which has recently been renovated by Janus Construction. There, Pavel is out, but his fiancée is in. She reveals that Pavel is trying to sell his SUV, but he hasn't been able to do so yet. Nina, meanwhile, cannot believe that Karin, recently working as a private nurse, is dead. Nina wonders what her own children, Anton and Ida, are doing.

### Analysis

When this section of the novel begins, the theme of flaws is easily seen through the character of Nina. Her compulsion to help other people comes, ironically, at the expense of her own family. She is seemingly more worried about other people than her family.



Morten, her husband, is loving but incredibly annoyed and disappointed with Nina's obsessive desire to help others. Nina lets daily, mundane tasks go undone. In her rush to help others, she forgets a very important task in picking up their son from an after school program. She has, in effect, traded the boy in the suitcase for her own boy at home. While it is noble that Nina wishes to help the boy, her refusal to bring him to the hospital or the authorities invites questions. Nina must be held accountable for focusing too much on people other than her family in general.

At the same time, the themes of crime and family continue to manifest themselves. Clearly, Nina's own relationship with her family is strained. In contrast, Sigitia is doing everything she can to help get to the bottom of her son's kidnapping. She cannot imagine why someone would want to take her son –the only real family that she has. It is now apparent that Jucas and Barbara are somehow involved with Mikas's kidnapping.

That Karin has a part in the crime is also made clear by her phone conversation with Nina –but also leads to more questions for two reasons. Karin cryptically says it wasn't supposed to be a child, meaning that some form of highly illegal activity was going to be undertaken. The boy in the suitcase far exceeded the plan. Secondly, when Nina arrives to discover that Karin has been brutally murdered, it is clear that Karin is involved far more than previously realized. Why Karin has been killed is as of yet unknown. Karin's murder also foreshadows greater danger to come, and demonstrates just how serious the ongoing crime is that Nina has found herself immersed in. The reader should also note that the crime –the kidnapping of the boy –has gotten out of hand, as Jucas has been unable to locate either the boy or the money. This causes an increasing amount of desperation for Jucas and Jan, and the reader is easily able to see that Karin's death is a part of things spiraling out of control.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Nina's desire to help other people comes at the expense of her family. Why? Can she be faulted for this? Why or why not?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why is Jucas offered an additional \$10,000? What does this signify? Why is this so?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What questions are raised by Karin's murder? What do you believe the answers to these questions might be? Why?





## Vocabulary

sardonically, disproportionate, corroborated, mundane, pantomime, intelligible, intricate, unprecedented



## Pages 135 - 200

### Summary

Darius calls Sigita, angrily saying the police have been by to interrogate him. Sigita reflects on how her aunt Jolita pressured her to sell her child when Sigita became pregnant at the age of fifteen. Sergeant Guzas and Detective Sergeant Martynas Valionis come to see Sigita. Valionis shows Sigita some photos of people, including Barbara Woronska, a Polish native born in 1972. Barbara is now officially working for a Lithuanian company selling alarm and security systems. In reality, it is a honey-trap. She specializes in luring men into sexual affairs after which they are blackmailed for various deals beneficial to Lithuanian companies. The men are drugged and have their stomachs pumped full of alcohol –apparently what has happened to Sigita, as well. The child of a nurse, Julija Baroniene, was abducted by one of the women in the photos shown to Sigita –and Julija later got her child back. Julija was Sigita’s nurse during Sigita’s first pregnancy.

Jucas, meanwhile, goes swimming and decides to burn all of his clothes. He reflects on how the dying Karin said “Nina,” helping Jucas to hone in on Nina Borg. Nina, meanwhile, finds a group of pretty young prostitutes, including Lithuanian-born Marija. Marija agrees to meet with Nina the next day. Morten, meanwhile, reflects on Nina’s all-encompassing desire to do good, and her relative inability to be part of a family. The police arrive to speak to Nina on a murder inquiry, but Morten tells them she is not home.

Sigita goes to visit Julija Baroniene in person, pretending to be Mrs. Mazekiene from the school board. Julija does not recognize Sigita, who then asks directly about the abduction. Julija says it was all merely a misunderstanding. Aleksas, her husband, contends the same, and orders Sigita out. He says they could not help Sigita even if they wanted to do so. Jan is called in to identify Karin Kongsted’s body and to answer questions about her. He then travels to a private flat where he obtains the Nokia cellphone he has been using to keep in contact with the Lithuanian man. Jan says the deal is off and asks if the man has killed Karin. The man says he did not and that the deal is not off until Jan pays. Jan then flushes the phone’s SIM card down the toilet, wipes the phone clean, crushes it, and puts it in a dumpster. He then burns a photo of the boy he has been carrying.

Julija comes to see Sigita. Julija explains she got her child back in exchange for Sigita’s name. At the clinic that Julija talks about children are sold and birth certificates are forged to make it appear as if buyers are the real biological parents. Sigita’s aunt orchestrated such a deal. Julija explains that a Dane and a bodyguard came to the clinic seeking out Sigita. The Danish man is the one who purchased Sigita’s first child. Julija reveals the Dane to be Jan Marquart. Sigita now believes what she is being faced with is God’s punishment.



## Analysis

The crime of Mikas's kidnapping continues to unravel in this section of the novel. Things are becoming more complicated, and the dimensions of the overall plot are expanding dramatically. The woman and man who abducted Mikas are part of a mafia crime ring dedicated to the securing of lucrative business deals by way of sexually-managed blackmail. This leads Sigita to wonder how her son has anything to do with a business deal. It also brings into the picture a part of Sigita's own past –a flaw –in which Julija Baroniene is factored. Julija's own child was kidnapped and later returned, prompting Sigita to seek Julija out not only because of the similarity in the cases (the kidnapping of small children by people involved in blackmail schemes) but because of the fact that Julija was Sigita's nurse when Sigita was fifteen and gave birth.

Throughout the novel, Sigita has been wondering if God is punishing her for something she has done in the past. It is something for which she is greatly ashamed. As it turns out, Sigita agreed through pressure from her aunt to give up her baby boy after she gave birth to him at the age of fifteen. Her baby boy was purchased by Jan Marquart. The reader now realizes that Aleksander is the child of Sigita, not Jan. Julija also reveals that she got her daughter back by giving Sigita's name to Jan Marquart and a brutish man with him. It is reasonable to believe at this point that the thug is Jucas and the plot around Mikas's kidnapping is far more nefarious than simple blackmail. There is some other motive for the kidnapping that defies explanation at this point.

It should also be apparent about the importance of the flaws of many of these characters and how these flaws ultimately feed into the criminal plot. Julija, for example, is no sainted mother who nearly lost her child. As a nurse, she has been part of a baby-selling black market, a cruel and inhuman business which denies the rights of the babies and the mothers. Many of these babies –Aleksander being a perfect example – are sold overseas where, as immigrant babies, they lose all sense of themselves and their pasts and grow up believing the people who purchased them are really their parents. It is something that Nina is beginning to figure out, through her seeking out of a Lithuanian prostitute to communicate who is known at this point as Mikas.

The situation is now spiraling out of control, even beyond the death of Karin. Jan and Jucas are now at odds over payment. While Jan wants to end the arrangement, Jucas vows he will not rest until he receives the money. It is important to note motives here. Why Mikas has been kidnapped and why Jucas would agree to such a crime have yet to be resolved. The reader should also bear in mind that Jucas is aware of Nina's involvement in things. This is an ill-omen for Nina and Mikas.

Two important events in the novel have unfolded with relation to the theme of family. There is great irony in Julija being a part of an underground baby-selling ring, only to have her own child kidnapped and nearly murdered. She has exploited the rights of countless other people, and has almost had her own child's rights compromised as well. At the same time, Morten reflects on how Nina goes above and beyond to do good for other people, and their families, but she suffers from the inability of being part of her



own family. This deeply troubles Morten. This reinforces Nina's flaw of compulsion, and the theme of flaws as well.

## Discussion Question 1

What is important about the identification of one of Mikas's kidnappers as Barbara Woronska?

## Discussion Question 2

How does the crime of Mikas's kidnapping continue to spiral out of control? How does Jan respond to evolving circumstances?

## Discussion Question 3

Do you believe Morten is fair in criticizing Nina's inability to be a part of their own family? Why or why not?

## Vocabulary

vicariously, lucrative, equilibrium, ambitiousness, bafflement



# Pages 201 - 265

## Summary

Nina knows her husband does not like that she works with illegal immigrants or that their family suffers because of her work. However, Nina believes that Denmark is a haven for broken souls. Morten reveals to the police that Nina was supposed to help Karin in some unknown way and that Nina is a little absentminded sometimes. Nina sees the police at her apartment and does not go home. Jucas and Barbara tail Nina. Nina goes to an indoor pool, where in the locker room she bathes him and dresses him. She wonders if he is potentially being sold, used in a scam, or being held hostage.

Sigita realizes with horror that Jan is collecting her children. She will have to travel to Denmark herself, rather than go to the police. If she goes to the police, it may endanger Julija's family. Sigita confronts her Aunt Jolita. It was Aunt Jolita who gave up Sigita's personal information in exchange for money. Sigita takes this money. Jolita tells Sigita she hopes she gets Mikas back.

Nina goes to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Stenogade where she meets with Marija. Nina offers to pay Marija for her time. They drive to Amager Beach. There, Marija is able to earn the trust of the boy, and learn his name –Mikas Ramoskiene. Mikas reveals that the chocolate-lady took him. Jan later recounts his working relationship with Karin as his private nurse to the police for a third time. He admits to a brief sexual affair with Karin. The police detective, Anders Kvistgard, wants to know why Jan had Karin's car tracked. He warns Jan that charges may be brought against him.

Meanwhile, Jucas goes to see Dimitri Bukovski at Sunny Beach Solarium and Wellness Center, a front for all kinds of illegal activity. There, Jucas buys a Glock and a Desert Eagle. Sigita goes to the home of Jan Marquart, where her biological son answers the door. He does not look well. Sigita speaks to Jan's wife, Anne, who reveals that Aleksander's kidneys are failing. She says he needs a transplant. It makes Sigita realize why her son has been abducted.

Back at her apartment, Nina and Mikas are confronted by Jucas and Barbara. Jucas knocks out Nina. Jucas searches for the money, but he cannot find it. He now knows that Jan has lied to him. Jucas has been acting as a bodyguard and hired thug from Klimka's mafia for Jan. Wanting to get away to Poland with Barbara, Jucas had offered to kidnap Mikas for one-million U.S. dollars. Jucas knows that he will probably have to kill Nina and Jan now.

## Analysis

In this section of the novel, the authors return to the themes of human rights and immigration. Nina reflects on how her husband dislikes her work with illegal immigrants, but Nina truly believes in her heart that she is called on to do this. She also truly



believes that Denmark is a haven for lost souls in Europe –and she looks with sadness at all of the foreign young girls and young women prostituting themselves to survive. Nina longs to be able to help everyone she can –though she fails to see how she is causing her own family to suffer in the process.

At the same time, Sigita's own rights as a mother and a human being have been taken away by others. Though Julija gave up Sigita's name, it is actually Sigita's aunt, Jolita, who gives up Sigita's personal information in exchange for money. This is similar to how Jolita compelled Sigita to give up Aleksander for monetary gain years before. Here, family proves to be an incredibly negative and corrosive thing, for the sense of loyalty so important to family has been undermined by criminal greed. This proves the earlier point that crime and family can never peacefully coexist.

It is also in this section of the novel that the details of the kidnapping plot are fully revealed and the theme of crime is clearly exposed. Sigita's first child, Aleksander, needs a kidney transplant. The only possible option is a second child from Sigita, namely Mikas. It is Jucas who inspired the plot to kidnap Mikas in exchange for the money that would allow him and Barbara to walk away from crime and begin a family. It is the effort to save his own family –built on a lie –that encouraged Jan to commit to the plot. His nurse, Karin, who had worked in underground circles, helped to arrange things. Karin believed that only kidneys –and not a live boy –would be the result of the criminal operation.

Having discovered that a live boy is being transported, Karin panics. It is Karin who brings Nina into things knowing Nina's work with illegal immigrants will be beneficial. She also knows that Nina's obsessive compulsion to help people will be important. Yet, the sins people commit and their flaws always catch up to them. Karin is brutally murdered. Nina's desire to help the boy catches her up in the entire crime as it unfolds. This imperils her own life as she is kidnapped by Jucas. The plot that Jucas has orchestrated, and to which Jan has agreed, is beyond repair at this point. Jan's life is now in danger, as is Nina's.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Nina meet with Maija? What important information does Nina glean from this meeting?

## Discussion Question 2

How do Jan and Jucas ultimately come to find Sigita? How does Sigita respond to this?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Morten dislike the fact that his wife works with the illegal immigrant community? Can he be faulted for his opinion? Why or why not?

## Vocabulary

eluded, heretical, stilted, antagonism, cajole, denigrate



## Pages 266 - 317

### Summary

Jucas finds himself wondering what use there is in trying to get away from the criminal underworld. Sigita rails against Anne, wondering how they could possibly abduct a three year-old child. Meanwhile, Jucas enters the house. Sigita tells Anne that Jucas is the man who took Mikas and that he was paid to do so by Anne's husband, Jan. Jan arrives home, and Jucas demands that Jan pay him. At home, Morten discovers his apartment a wreck, along with bloodstains. Barbara is there, weeping. Barbara tells Morten that everything is over.

Nina, meanwhile, awakens in the back of a van with Mikas. Inside the house, Anne reveals she has taken the money intended for Jucas and her own intent is to leave Jan and take care of Aleksander herself. Jucas then shoots Jan. While chasing Anne, Sigita appears with a toolbox, attacks Jucas with it, and shoots and kills him with his own gun. Nina, now inside, knows that Jan's wound is not necessarily fatal, and she goes to find Sigita. Anne then appears and fires a shot into the door frame. She explains that she will tell the police that she killed Jucas in self-defense. Sigita then reunites with Mikas and thanks God.

Sigita and Mikas leave the house while Anne calls the police. Nina does her best to make the injured Jan comfortable. Nina then hides in the guest apartment where Karin had been living. She realizes that Karin had hoped Nina's involvement would make things right. Nina realizes that, while she has saved Mikas, no one could save Karin. Nina is later brought home by the police, where Morten warmly and tightly embraces her, telling her never to do that again. September comes on. Nina enmeshes herself in normal, daily family life. A call comes early the next morning. Natasha's husband has sexually molested their daughter, and so Natasha has killed him. Nina then heads out to handle the situation.

### Analysis

By the end of the novel, one crime has come to a close, and another has begun –both in conjunction with human rights and immigration. The crime of human trafficking –of moving a person from one country to another against his will, in violation of his rights, and with immoral and illegal purposes in mind –is dispensed with as Jucas is killed and Jan is nearly killed.

Working together, Nina, Sigita, and Anne cover up the crime. Anne decides to tell the police that she has killed Jucas in self-defense. Anne's selfless act protects Sigita, who will already be questioned for having come to Denmark without alerting the authorities as to her movements or intentions. It will also help to protect Nina, who has herself engaged in a number of illegal activities, such as harboring a child being sought in





conjunction with a criminal investigation. At the end of the novel, the immigrant Natasha reappears in the plot, seeking to exact revenge on her husband for having sexually molested their daughter.

The themes of family and character flaws also come to the fore at the end of the novel. Jan's sins and deviant behavior come back to haunt him as he is nearly killed. He realizes that his family has broken apart and is beyond repair. His shady dealings have made such repair impossible. Crime and family are not compatible.

At the same time, Sigita reunites with Mikas, and the two are beyond thrilled to have one another again. The love they have for one another is clearly visible when they reunite. Nina also begins to work on her own flaw –her compulsive need to help other people –by redirecting it toward her own family. She is now taking time to reinvest herself in family life. She understands that she can be both a family woman and a career woman as well –balancing family with her underground work. Though Morten still worries about Nina, he is glad to see she is now making a real effort to be a part of family again.

## Discussion Question 1

Nina, Sigita, and Anne cover up Jucas's death to make it appear as an act of self-defense. Do you believe this is right to do? Why or why not?

## Discussion Question 2

Do you believe Nina was right to harbor Mikas all this time? Why or why not?

## Discussion Question 3

Why has Nina made such a recommitment to her family by the end of the novel? Do you believe her efforts are successful? Do you believe she will continue to be successful? Why or why not?

## Vocabulary

idiosyncratic, ominously, trivial, chignon, domicile, exuberant, abjectly



# Characters

## Nina

Nina Borg is the wife of Morten Borg and the mother of two children in the novel. Seemingly in her thirties, Nina is a Red Cross nurse who also works in the underground network of medical professionals and other volunteers who cater to the illegal immigrant community in Denmark. Nina is a kind and good person, but her obsessive-compulsive desire to help other people comes at the expense of helping and caring for her own family. For example, she forgets to pick up her son from after school programs because she is determined to help Mikas. Morten is not happy with her because of this, though he still deeply loves her and does not want to see their family fall apart.

Nina is tasked by her friend Karin to pick up a suitcase at Central Station, in which she finds a barely-alive young boy, Mikas. Nina harbors Mikas as she attempts to figure out who he is and why he has been kidnapped, ultimately coming to discover the truth. When the novel ends, Nina has decided to recommit to her family. She has realized that she can help others without having to do it at the expense of her own children and husband, for which Morten is deeply appreciative and lovingly grateful.

## Sigita

Sigita Ramoskiene, a Lithuanian girl in her late twenties, is the mother of three year-old Mikas. Catholic and deeply faithful, Sigita comes to believe that Mikas's kidnapping is punishment from God for her past. When she was fifteen, Sigita gave birth to a son who, at the insistence of her aunt, was sold to a couple in Denmark. Sigita is trying to find her son, working with both the police and contacting people who work in the child-selling black market. There, she discovers the man who purchased her firstborn child was Jan Marquart, so she travels to Denmark to see Jan out, coming to understand he is involved in the kidnapping. It is Sigita who ultimately kills kidnapper and murderer Jucas, an act covered up by Anne Marquart. Sigita is reunited with Mikas, who is thrilled to see his mother.

## Mikas

Mikas Ramoskiene is the three year-old second child of Sigita Ramoskiene. Mikas is kidnapped by Jucas for sale to Jan in exchange for a million dollars. Mikas is a sacrificial lamb, who will have his body carved up for his kidneys to be used as transplants for Aleksander. Mikas is stripped naked, drugged, and packed into a suitcase, which is then earmarked to be picked up at Central by Karin and Jucas. Instead, it is picked up by Nina. Mikas has a traumatic time of everything, wanting only to be reunited with his mother. Mikas is able to communicate with a Lithuanian prostitute, Marija, allowing Nina to understand who he is, and that he has truly been



kidnapped. At the end of the novel, Mikas is happily and safely reunited with his mother, Sigita.

## Anne

Anne Marquart is the wife of Jan Marquart. Intensely beautiful and kind, Anne is disgusted by her husband's affair with Karin, and disgusted with the kidnapping plot. She steals the million dollars, intending to leave Jan and bring Aleksander with her. When Jucas is killed by Sigita, it is Anne who heroically steps in and says she is the one who killed Jucas in self-defense.

## Jan

Jan Marquart is a vastly wealthy businessman married to Anne. He purchased his son, Aleksander, from the baby black market in Lithuania. When Aleksander's kidneys fail, he agrees to a scheme suggested by Jucas which involves the kidnapping of Aleksander's brother, Mikas, in order to use his kidneys for a transplant. Jan agrees to the operation, though he later tries to back out when things go wrong. Jan is almost killed by Jucas as a result.

## Jucas

Jucas is a mafia thug who works in sexual blackmail rings with Barbara. Jucas wants to run away to Poland with Barbara to begin a family and put the past behind him. However, he needs cash to make that happen. Having previously worked as Jan's bodyguard, Jucas learns that Jan's son is ill. So, Jucas suggests the kidnapping plot which brings Mikas to Denmark. Enraged when things begin to go wrong, Jucas determines that he will be paid one way or another. He kills Karin, tries to kill Jan, and attempts to kill Anne. Sigita kills Jucas.

## Barbara

Barbara Woronska, a Polish native, is a member of a sexual blackmail mafia who wants to return home to Poland to begin a family with Jucas. Barbara, however, becomes sickened with the entire kidnapping plot which will provide Jucas with the money to take her away. Ultimately, she breaks down in Nina's apartment and confesses to Morten.

## Morten

Morten Borg is the husband of Nina and the father of two children. Morten is kind, patient, and loyal. He is also deeply in love with Nina. He does everything he can to make their family work, despite Nina's consistent devaluing of her family in the face of helping other people. Morten dislikes Nina's underground work and wishes she would



spend more time with her own family. By the end of the novel, Morten is thrilled that Nina has recommitted to him and their children.

## **Karin**

Karin is an old friend of Nina's from medical school. Karin is the private nurse of Jan Marquart, with whom she has a brief, sexual affair. She is made aware of the kidnapping plot, which she ends up becoming disgusted with, especially when she learns that it is a live boy, rather than kidneys, which has been obtained. Knowing that Nina always wants to help people, Karin bring Nina into things by asking her to pick up the suitcase containing the boy at Central Station. Jan outs Karin's location to Jucas, who believes Karin has stolen both the boy and his money –and kills her as a result.

## **Guzas**

Detective Sergeant Evaldas Guzas is the detective tasked with solving the kidnapping of Mikas. Evaldas is at first doubtful that Mikas has been kidnapped. However, when he learns this is really what happened, he triples his efforts to find the boy, cooperating with law enforcement in Denmark and Germany to do so.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Suitcase

Mikas, once kidnapped, is stripped, drugged, and packed in a suitcase which is delivered to system controlling section 37, locker 43. Karin is supposed to go to the locker, pick up the suitcase, and leave payment for Jucas. However, Karin has become disgusted with the plot and encourages Nina to pick up the suitcase instead. Nina is shocked to discover a boy in the suitcase. This discovery becomes the title of the novel.

## One Million Dollars

One million dollars is the price agreed upon by Jan and Jucas for Jucas's kidnapping and delivery of Mikas. The money goes missing early on in the novel. Later, it is revealed that Anne took the money. She announces that she was planning on using the money to leave Jan and take care of Aleksander herself.

## Ten Thousand Dollars

Ten thousand dollars is an additional sum promised to Jucas by Jan when the kidnapping plot begins to unravel. If Jucas can find the boy and the money, he will receive an additional ten thousand dollars.

## Glock

A 9mm Glock 17 pistol is a firearm purchased by Jucas as he begins to realize that he will need to kill a number of people. He purchases the Glock from Bukovski at Sunny Beach Solarium and Wellness Center, a front for all kinds of illegal activity.

## Desert Eagle

A Desert Eagle is an incredibly powerful firearm in the form of a pistol purchased by Jucas as he begins to realize he is going to have to kill people. He purchases the Desert Eagle from Dimitri Bukovski at Sunny Beach Solarium and Wellness Center, a front for all kinds of illegal activity.

## Toolbox

A toolbox is wielded by Sigita when Jucas attempts to kill Anne. Sigita uses the toolbox to slam into Jucas's head a number of times before using his pistol to kill him.



## **Kidneys**

Kidneys are an integral part of the human body. They help with eliminating toxins and other unnecessary liquids from the body. Aleksander is suffering from kidney failure. He needs a kidney transplant. Mikas is a donor match for Aleksander, Mikas is kidnapped to be murdered for his kidneys.

## **Sedative Drugs**

Sedative drugs are administered by Jucas and Barbara to Mikas when he is kidnapped. This puts the child in a comatose-like state. While he is in a coma, he is packaged in a suitcase and shipped to Denmark.

## **Nokia Cellphone**

An old Nokia cellphone is given to Jan by Jucas so they can remain in touch during the kidnapping.. When Jan decides to back out on the deal when things go wrong, he flushes the phone's SIM card down the toilet, wipes the phone clean, and then crushes it underfoot before throwing it out.

## **Photograph**

A photograph of Mikas stripped naked is sickeningly kept by Jan in order to identify the child. When the police close in on Jan, he burns the photograph.



# Settings

## Denmark

Denmark is a northern European country where Nina Borg and her family live. The coast of Denmark is also home to Jan Marquart and his family. It is in Denmark where Jucas kidnaps and smuggles Mikas in a suitcase from Lithuania. It is to Denmark that Sigita travels to get her son back. The novel occurs in Denmark during the summer, during a heatwave. Denmark is a country clearly beset by the issue of immigration, both legal and illegal. Nina believes that Denmark is a haven for lost souls. As such, she commits to working underground with a network seeking to help illegal immigrants settle in the country and receive proper medical care. Work with the illegal immigrant community in Denmark is considered worrisome by Morten, who is primarily concerned for his wife's safety.

## Lithuania

Lithuania is a northern country in Eastern Europe. It is from Lithuania that many illegal immigrants travel to Denmark. Since their country is impoverished, some Lithuanians commit to immoral and illegal acts to make money, such as the selling and trafficking of children. Jolita is a perfect example of a corrupt Lithuanian who forces her fifteen year-old niece into selling her newborn baby. She later sells out her niece's information for several thousand dollars.

## Central Station

Central Station is a major rail and air hub in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is in Central Station, system controlling section 37, locker 43, that the suitcase containing Mikas is placed. It is to be picked up by Karin and exchanged for a million dollars. Yet, it is Nina who travels to Central Station to pick up the suitcase at Karin's insistence. It is in the underground parking lot of the station that Nina discovers the suitcase she has just picked up contains a boy.

## The Cliff

The cliff is located on an isolated stretch of the coast of Denmark. It is where Jan Marquart has built his home. The clifftop home of Jan is where he, his wife Anne, and their son Aleksander live. It is where Jucas later travels, intending to receive payment and kill anyone in his way. It is to Jan's clifftop home that Sigita also travels and kills Jucas. The home has a private apartment where Karin lived during her time as a private nurse to Jan and his son.

## Poland

Poland is a country in central Europe. It is the birthplace of Barbara Woronski and the future intended home of Barbara and Jucas following the conclusion of the kidnapping plot. Both Jucas and Barbara plan to move to Poland to get away from organized crime and to begin a family of their own.





# Themes and Motifs

## Family

Family is an important theme in the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. The concept of family involves love, compassion, loyalty, encouragement, and support of others who may or may not be blood-related, but who still function and behave in the way of the traditional family unit. In *The Boy in the Suitcase*, family proves to be both a positive and a negative thing. The connotation of the word "family" is inconsistent with crime.

In the novel, Sigita's own family is limited to her son, Mikas. Since Sigita's husband works in Germany, her whole world is Mikas, whom she cares for and protects like no other. Her fierce protection of her son is natural; however, it is very significant to the story because as a fifteen year-old girl, Sigita was pressured by her aunt into selling her firstborn son on the black market to Jan Marquart. Sigita panics when she sees Barbara giving chocolate to Mikas and later devotes every bit of energy she has to getting Mikas back after Mikas is kidnapped. The one truly positive and beautiful thing Sigita has in her life –her family through Mikas –has been stolen from her. As she comes to find out, it is family who betrayed her. This comes in the form of her aunt who sold information about Sigita to Jucas. At the end of the novel, Sigita's family is restored to her when she reunites with Mikas.

The theme of family is reflected in Nina's life, too. She is married to Morten, a loving and patient man, with whom she has two children. Unconsciously, Nina neglects her husband and children while she works for the Red Cross and the underground network for illegal immigrants. It is her compulsive desire to help other people that keeps her from being there for her own family. Morten must fill in the gap when Nina fails to live up to her responsibilities as a wife and mother. His deep love for Nina compels him to want to make things work with her rather than divorce. He would rather keep the family together, though he does lose his patience with Nina for her neglect. Eventually, Nina realizes what she has done and recommits to her family by the end of the novel.

While Nina ignores her family and Sigita struggles to get hers back, Jan is scrambling to keep his together. Having purchased his son on the Lithuanian black market, Jan is horrified to learn that Aleksander's kidneys are failing. Out of love for his son, Jan agrees to a plot by Jucas to kidnap Aleksander's brother (Mikas) to provide Aleksander with new kidneys. Jan's obsession with having a model family, however, wears thin on his wife. She ultimately steals the money intended for the kidnapping to financially provide for herself and Aleksander once she leaves Jan. At the end of the novel, not only has Jan's plan failed, but his family is beyond repair as well.

At the same time that Nina takes her family for granted and Sigita and Jan struggle to maintain their families, Jucas and Barbara plan to move to Poland to begin their own family. In a sickening display of irony, Jucas plans to finance this new life away from



crime, but with children by committing one last crime which involves the kidnapping and murder of a child (Mikas) for his kidneys. Jucas is ultimately killed, and the family he dreams of never comes to fruition.

## Crime

Crime is an important theme in the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. Crime involves acts and actions which are immoral and illegal, oftentimes being both immoral and illegal. Given the genre of the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* as crime fiction, there is no shortage of crime in the novel.

The overarching crime in the novel is the kidnapping of Mikas, with the intention of killing him and transplanting his kidneys into Aleksander's body. The scheme was dreamed up by Jucas and agreed to by Jan. Jucas and Barbara, who carry out the kidnapping, are part of an organized crime ring which sexually blackmails people in favor of lucrative business deals for Lithuania.

Other crimes follow and are exposed as the kidnapping plot begins to come undone. Jucas, erroneously believing that Karin has both Mikas and the money he has been promised, travels to find Karin and brutally murders her. Here, a crime that is both immoral and illegal has been committed. While done for good intentions, Nina's decision to harbor Mikas, rather than turning him over to the police, commits a crime herself. Julija's daughter is kidnapped to use as leverage to obtain information about Sigita, which opens up another criminal dimension as well.

At the age of fifteen, an unwed Sigita gave birth to a baby boy. Her aunt forced Sigita to give up her son. He was sold on the black market to Jan Marquart. The fact that Jan has purchased his son is both sickening and disturbing. The act of buying or selling a human being is known as trafficking. It is illegal and immoral.

Another side to crime is presented in the story, too. Crimes are routinely committed against immigrants and people from other countries –such as is the case with foreigner Natasha early on in the novel, who is physically and sexually abused by her Danish husband. Later on in the novel, Natasha's daughter is sexually molested by her husband, leading to Natasha's decision to finally take action against her husband. Physical and sexual abuse and molestation are not only illegal, but also highly immoral, for it denies the basic human rights of the victims.

## Flaws

Flaws are an important theme in the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. Flaws are personality, character, or moral shortcomings and defects in a person. No character in the novel is without a flaw of some kind. These flaws –real or perceived –contribute to the overall plot.



In the novel, Nina has an obsessive-compulsive need to help other people. While it is admirable that she wants to help other people –both in her work at the Red Cross, and in the immigrant community –too much is too much. Her desire to help other people comes at the expense of her time and commitment to her own family, who are put on the back burner while Nina tends to the lives of other people. This flaw not only strains her relationship with her family –especially her husband –but it also leads to her becoming involved in a kidnapping crime that nearly gets her killed.

Jan Marquart also has his own flaws. Seeking a perfect, model family, and seeking to impress others, Jan's desire for perfection leads him to commit crimes and to engage in criminally-related activity in order to achieve what he wants. His ruthless attitude where the ends justify the means ultimately leads to the kidnapping plot. This in turn leads to his own near-death experience when he is shot by Jucas. Jan's flaw –of doing whatever is needed to get whatever he wants –ultimately comes at a cost of disintegrating his own family.

Jucas and Barbara have their own flaws as well. They want to settle peacefully in Poland and raise a family, away from the criminal world in which they operate –but their flaw is how they have lived their lives, engaging in crime to the degree of sexual blackmail and kidnapping. Their life of crime, and their desire to commit one last crime to get away, leads to their undoing. Barbara is arrested and Jucas is killed.

Sigita also has to endure the issue of having a flaw –though hers is more perceived than real. At the age of fifteen, Sigita gave birth to a baby boy that her aunt then pressured her into giving up, and who her aunt then sold. Sigita believes that all responsibility rests on her shoulders for what happened, despite the fact that she was so young and had such little understanding of what was truly going on at the time. Sigita's flaw is more perceived than real, and she believes that Mikas's kidnapping is God's punishment, though she later comes to realize that this is not the case. Instead, she comes to thank God for her son's return –a clear indication to her that her flaws, perceived though they are, have not ended in disaster for her.

## Human Rights

Human rights are an important theme in the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. Human rights are fundamental guarantees and principles of freedoms which are afforded to human individuals in conjunction with their lives. Human rights are seen as natural to human beings as gifts from God, meaning that no other person may take these rights away. In the novel, human rights form the moral backbone to much of the plot.

Working in the Red Cross and in the underground network for the illegal immigrant community, Nina knows all about human rights. She knows that immigrants, both legal and illegal, are often taken advantage of by unscrupulous people who consider people from Eastern Europe to be second-class citizens. Such is the case with Natasha, a woman from Eastern Europe who has married a much older man who physically and



sexually abuses toward her. As a result, her human rights –including her freedoms and the preservation of her own body –are brutally denied.

Another area in the novel in which the rights of human beings are denied is in the black market for children. There, young women and girls who become pregnant –such as Sigita at the age of fifteen –are forced into selling their newborn babes, a violation of not only their human rights, but the human rights of the babies themselves. It is through the black market that Jan snatches up Sigita's newborn baby boy, purchasing him like a commodity, and thereby denying the baby his rights.

Human trafficking at large serves as a major source of violations of human rights in the novel. This is illustrated in the overarching crime of the novel, the kidnapping of Mikas in order to murder him to use his kidneys to use as a transplant for Aleksander. Not only is this an illegal action, but it is also immoral because it denies the life and most basic freedoms of Mikas. Rather than being treated and seen as a human individual, he is being treated as if he were no more than cattle or a product purchased from a store –all for the gain of other people. Mikas's mother never has a chance to say “no”, and is never given the opportunity to have a say at all. Her own human rights as a mother are stripped away from her as well.

## Immigration

Immigration is an important theme in the novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis. Immigration, both legally and illegally accomplished, involves the moving of one or more individuals from country to another. In the novel, Denmark is host to a number of immigrants, both legal and illegal, and the experiences of these immigrants is important to the plot.

Nina has the obsessive-compulsive desire to help people, especially immigrants. She helps out with legally immigrated peoples as a nurse at the local Red Cross Center, and helps out with illegally immigrated peoples through an underground network. Nina views Denmark as a safe haven for lost souls who are seeking hope and a better life, so Nina does everything she can to help them. This often comes at the expense of her own family, however. Her husband is likewise deeply worried for Nina's involvement with illegal immigrants. He knows it is a crime that can lead to serious trouble.

Many legal immigrants come to Denmark as mail-order brides, or in similarly-arranged marriages. One such Eastern European woman is Natasha, who has a daughter by her Danish husband, who is physically and sexually abusive towards Natasha, and later sexually molests their daughter. This underscores the sad truth that Nina knows all too well about Denmark –that immigrants to Denmark are often treated with disdain and contempt at best, and with abuse at worst.

Nina also sees this kind of sadness in the world of prostitution, where immigrant girls, legal and illegal, sell their bodies to earn money to start a better life. Yet, few ever rise above the prostitution for something better. As Nina knows all too well, society turns a



blind eye toward prostitution in general on the grounds that something consensual is not wrong. Society also considers prostitution to be a way of helping the girls. Nina finds prostitution to be immoral and wrong because it is the wrong kind of “help”. Rather than giving them real jobs, getting them an education, and transitioning them into Danish society, men would rather pay to sleep with them. These men believe they have done nothing wrong because that they have done is purely legal and consensual.



# Styles

## Point of View

Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis tell their novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* from the third-person narrative point of view. The third-person mode of narration is used here to follow the actions of multiple characters in multiple places and to follow multiple plots which ultimately tie together. The narration serves as a unifying voice for the disparate ends of the story, weaving them together. Because of this, the reader is able to follow each of the characters individually and independently of one another, knowing things that the characters themselves do not know about each other, or the situation as it unfolds. For example, Nina does not know whom she has been kidnapped by –but the reader knows the kidnapper is Jucas. Likewise, Nina does not know that the boy she has found is Mikas, but the reader does know this.

## Language and Meaning

Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis tell their novel “*The Boy in the Suitcase*” in language that is brief, simple, and straightforward. This is done for two primary reasons. The first is the novel is in the genre of crime, and the brief, simple, and straightforward language lends a sense of motion, action, urgency, and quickness to the plot, underscoring how immediate and important the situation is. Secondly, the brief, simple, and straightforward language also lend a sense of reality and believability to the novel as well, by reinforcing the sense of urgency each of the characters faces in the midst of the kidnapping. Likewise, the novel, translated to English from Danish, is full of occasional phrases and words from other languages, including Danish and Lithuanian. For example, Mikas speaks the word “*aciui*,” Lithuanian for “many thanks” or “thank you.”

## Structure

Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis divide their novel *The Boy in the Suitcase* into 64 unnamed, unnumbered chapters preceded by a short prelude. The chapters themselves are rarely more than few pages long, and each chapter transitions back and forth between different characters, events, places, and sometimes, even different times. The short length of the chapters help reinforce the brevity and urgency of the language employed in the novel, and add to the reality and believability of the various, seemingly unrelated plots unfolding in quick succession to the overall kidnapping.



## Quotes

You have to fetch something for me.  
-- Karin (Page 34 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Early in the novel, Karin first announces to Nina that Nina must fetch something for Karin, that Karin no longer wishes to have any part of, saying Nina will help someone in the process. Nina is instructed to pick up a suitcase from Central Station system controlling section 37, locker 43.

But just what the hell was it she was supposed to be doing?  
-- Nina (Page 44 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** After discovering the boy in the suitcase, Nina is in disbelief. Many questions race through her mind, from why there is a boy in a suitcase in a travel station, to why Karin should know about it, to what Nina herself is supposed to do about things, now. These are all questions which fuel the plot, and which will be answered in time.

She still needed to save the world, still needed to feel that she wasn't powerless.  
-- Narrator (Page 130 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Here, the narrator explains Nina's obsessive-compulsive need to help other people. She sees so much in the world around her that is wrong, that she can't stand it—and it drives her on to want to help other people, to make it seem like there is good in the world, and like someone is making a difference.

If you hurt my boy, she thought, I will kill you.  
-- Sigita (Page 190 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Here, Sigita can only imagine what has happened to her son. She knows someone is responsible, and if the boy is harmed in any way at all, she will kill whoever is responsible. It is a promise that Sigita will come to keep by the end of the novel.

Every single day, she practiced her detachment skills, trying not to care about everything that was wrong with the world.  
-- Narrator (Page 205 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Here, the narrator expands on Nina's obsessive-compulsive need to help other people. It is such an overwhelming compulsion that Nina must force herself not to get caught up in things in the world, but with little success. She continues to devote most of her energies to helping other people, at the expense of helping her own family.

At that moment, Sigita finally realized why Jan Marquart had come looking for her. And why her son had disappeared.  
-- Narrator (Page 254 paragraph 12)



**Importance:** Sigita, after going to Jan Marquart's house, comes to understand the entire plot. Aleksander, her first son, is dying of kidney failure. He needs a kidney transplant. Her second son, Mikas, has been kidnapped to be murdered to provide that transplant. It is a shocking and twisted turn of events that sickens Sigita.

I think I was the one who shot him.  
-- Anne (Page 298 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** Anne, arriving upstairs moments after Sigita has killed Jucas, calmly and clearly explains what will happen. Anne decides to take responsibility for the crime, for there will be enough questions for Nina and Sigita, anyways. Anne decides that she herself killed Jucas in self-defense –an explanation which works.

But as she crouched here, feeling the warmth of Mikas's breath against her skin, she felt that something –life, fate, maybe even God –had at last forgiven her for what she had done.

-- Narrator (Page 300 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** At long last, Mikas and his mother are reunited. Sigita takes tremendous comfort in being able to hold her son again, and at last feels forgiven, as if her past has been erased. She now feels as though everything is right with life, with fate, and with God.

She thought I might be able to save Mikas. And I suppose I did. But where was no one around to save Karin.

-- Nina (Page 303 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** While in Karin's old bedroom, Nina reflects sadly on how things ended up working out. Though Mikas is safe, Karin is dead. While Karin made sure that Nina was there to save Mikas, no one was there to make sure Karin was safe. And as a result, Karin was killed. It is a bittersweet ending.

She let herself go. She let herself fall into him, into the feeling, into the warm zone where time meant nothing.

-- Narrator (Page 314 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** At the end of the novel, Nina has realized she has drifted too far from her family and her husband, and she recommits to them. While making love with, and being close with her husband, everything else in the world, including time, stops mattering, except for her and her husband, there in that moment. It demonstrates how important Morten is to Nina, and how much she means to him as well.