

The Human Flies Study Guide

The Human Flies by Hans Olav Lahlum

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Plot Summary

“The Human Flies” is an historical detective novel by Hans Olav Lahlum, and is the first of his “K2 and Patricia Series”, which focuses on the efforts of Norwegian Inspector Detective Kolbein “K2” Kristiansen and his brilliant young amateur assistant, Patricia, to solve a murder. On April 4, 1968, K2 is called to 25 Krebs’ Street where the body of Harald Olesen, a national hero and Resistance fighter during World War II, has been found dead in his locked flat. K2 begins his investigation, believing the murderer to be among the other residents in the building. He meets them all. There is Randi, wife of the hospitalized superintendent, Anton; there are Kristian and Karen Lund, a young married couple with a son; there is the stunningly gorgeous blonde Swedish student Sara Sunqvist; there is wheelchair-bound Andreas Gullestad; an American diplomat named Darrell Williams; and an ex-Nazi named Konrad Jensen.

K2’s initial interviews yield relatively little information. The motive, murderer, and murder weapon are all unknown. How the killer got in and out of Olesen’s apartment without being seen is also unknown, given the sound of a gunshot seconds before residents responded to the sound. K2 is contacted out of the blue by Ragnar Borchmann, an old family friend, who entreats K2 to meet with his brilliant, wheelchair-bound daughter, the 18-year-old Patricia. Patricia reveals a knack for reason, logic, and good mystery stories, so she wants to help K2 with his work. K2 is skeptical at first, but Patricia’s insights and assistance help lead to major breakthroughs in the case.

It is revealed, ultimately, that all residents of 25 Krebs’ are human flies. A “human fly” is a term of Patricia’s own coining, which refers to a person who cannot get past a tragedy in life, causing them to dwell on that tragedy the way flies circle a rotting corpse. Randi is deeply in debt due to her husband’s alcoholism brought about by traumatic experiences during World War II, when he worked with Olesen to help refugees escape. Sara Sundqvist, then a baby, and her parents were among those refugees helped. Her parents ultimately disappeared, leading her to be adopted after she was taken to safety in Sweden. Kristian is the illegitimate son of Olesen, conceived with a Nazi party official that Olesen cheated on his wife with. Andreas Gullestad reveals his own father was arrested and executed during the war, and a subsequent hit-and-run left him paralyzed in a wheelchair. Darrell Williams explains he fell in love with Olesen’s niece while working for the American OSS during the war, but the relationship was ended by Olesen. Konrad Jensen has been forced to live his life in shame, running from his past as a Nazi where he worked for six months as a driver. Since then, he has largely been able to escape his past. Things are complicated when Konrad is found dead with an apparent written confession to the murder.

K2 and Patricia realize that each of the residents have something in common with, or a reason to kill Olesen. The discovery of Olesen’s diary, which reveals panicked meetings, payoffs, and confrontations with the ghosts of his past mean that anyone in the building may have a motive for murder. But as K2 and Patricia gather evidence and apply reason to the case, they realize the killer was Olesen’s wartime partner and guide in the mountains helping refugees to escape. The killer is Andreas, who has been faking his



injury long after it has healed. K2 and Patricia confront Andreas, who confesses. Andreas went by the codename "Deerfoot" during the war. While escorting the baby Sara and her parents over into Sweden during the war, a team of Germans and a bad snowstorm closed in on them. In desperation, Sara's father began to argue with Olesen, who shot him. When Sara's mother went after Olesen, the then-teenaged Andreas reacted by shooting Sara's mother. He then had to kill three Germans, and bring Sara to safety in Sweden because Olesen was too stunned to move. The incident has eaten away at Andreas all his life. Wanting to keep his own role in Sara's mother's death a secret, Andreas killed Olesen to prevent him from telling Sara, then killed Konrad to cover his own tracks. Andreas is arrested, and kills himself in jail by taking a poison capsule.

K2 and Patricia are happy to have solved the case. Patricia confesses that her true reason for helping K2 is that she wanted to prove she could make a difference in the world despite her handicap. She believes she is inadequate, but K2 assures her that she is not. Patricia explains she will be happy to help K2 on future cases, but that she does not want to have to go out into the world to help him.



Day One – Day Three

Summary

Day One: Murder Mystery in 25 Krebs' Street

I – It is April 4, 1968 in Oslo, Norway. Detective Inspector Kolbein Kristiansen, known as K2, has learned of the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis, Tennessee. K2 leaves his office at the police station at 19 Moller Street to handle a murder case reported at eleven that evening by Constable Asbjorn Eriksen at 25 Krebs' Street. Harald Olesen, a well-known and well-respected elderly Labour Party politician and Resistance fighter against the Nazis during World War II has been shot and killed in his flat at Number 25. When K2 arrives, he discovers that Olesen has definitely been murdered, but there is no motive, weapon, suspect, or way the killer could have possibly escaped the flat.

II – 25 Krebs' Street was built in the 1920s in the Torshov neighborhood, and is a simple three-story apartment building with a simple lift in the stairwell, while each bathroom has a flat. K2 considers the details of the night of Thursday, April 4. At a quarter past ten, a shot was heard from Room 3A on the second floor by two neighbors conversing on the stairs. Rushing up, they could hear no sounds inside beyond the locked door. A man from the first floor, leaving his wife and baby son in their apartment, rushed upstairs, followed by the elderly caretaker's wife. Another first floor resident in a wheelchair came up the lift. The only other resident, a young Swedish woman, locked herself in her apartment until the police arrived.

No one enters the room until the police arrive. Olesen's body is found lying in the middle of his sitting room with a bullet wound, on the left side of his chest, with the bullet embedded in the wall behind him. The windows only open from the inside, and there is no fire escape balcony past them. The only entrance and exit was the door, with only seconds between the shot and the arrival of residents. The only fingerprints apart from the caretaker's elderly wife in the apartment were Olesen's. A search of the entire building yielded no suspect. Two cups have been set out for coffee, and an untouched meal has been prepared as though Olesen was expecting a guest, but only one cup has been drunk from. K2, in reviewing these facts, can only consider that one of the residents of the building is the murderer.

Day Two: Seven Neighbors –and a Blue Raincoat With No Owner

I – As this is K2's first murder investigation, he hopes it will bring him honor and glory. He is a young and ambitious detective. K2 first meets with Randi Hansen, a woman in her early sixties, and wife of the caretaker. Her husband is away for the week, and their children are grown and live elsewhere. Randi is sharp, intelligent, and knows the comings and goings of the residents well. She reveals that Olesen has had fewer and fewer visitors, especially since the death of his wife five years before. Randi speaks of



all the neighbors. There is Darrell Williams, an American in his forties attached to the American Embassy who lives on the second floor and never has visitors. Sara Sundqvist, a beautiful Swedish girl and student lives directly below Olesen whose well-behaving friends visit every so often. K2 suspects that Randi isn't tell him everything about Sara.

Randi explains that Kristian and Karen Lund live with their baby son on the first floor left flat. Karen is twenty-five, and is the daughter of a wealthy factory owner, while Kristian, a few years older, manages a sports shop in Hammersborg. Konrad Jensen, a fifty-something taxi driver, lives on the ground floor. He has never had a visitor, and only goes out once in a while to a sporting event. K2 suspects Rand isn't being entirely forthcoming about Konrad. Andreas Gullestad, wheelchair-bound, lives in the other room on the ground floor and lives on an inheritance. Andreas is in his forties, lonely, seldom has visitors, and has a strong intelligence.

Randi, who mans a desk by the front door, notes that Olesen went out to the shops the morning of his death, came home around midday, did not go back out, and had no calls or visitors. No strangers were seen in the building that day, Randi explains. She then shows the detective a blue raincoat and a red scarf, both apparently washed and on top of the backdoor rubbish bin. They do not belong to any of the residents, and were not on the rubbish bin the previous afternoon.

II – K2 meets with Darrell Williams in Flat 3B. He is forty-five, kind, and professional. A New Yorker, he is also a veteran of World War II. He is a divorcee, his wife having cheated on him. His role in diplomacy has allowed him to fulfill his childhood dream of seeing Asia and Europe. Darrell, who works long hours, doesn't know the other residents very well, but only has nice things to say about them from what he does know. Upon learning of Olesen moving into the building, Williams befriended him, and came to believe something weighed upon his mind. Williams did not see Olesen on the day of the murder, but was one of two men –the other being Jensen –on the stairs who responded to the gunshot. Williams has no guns, having sent his .44 caliber Colt revolver, and .36 caliber pistol home to the States. He knows nothing about the raincoat and scarf.

III – K2 meets with Sara Sunqvist in Flat 2A. She is beautiful, thin, and very tall. She is very shaken by the murder. Sara reveals her life revolves around studying, school, and theater. She has nothing bad to say about any of the tenants, noting that she doesn't know everyone very well apart from the caretaker's wife. K2 doesn't strike her from the list of suspects, but doesn't find her a likely murderer. She knows nothing of the raincoat and scarf.

IV – K2 meets with Kristian and Karen Lund in Flat 2B. They are seemingly deeply in love with one another, and very happy to be parents to a 13-month-old son. Kristian is strong and muscular, but very unhappy with the murder situation out of fear for the safety of his wife and son. Karen is less nervous, trusting in her husband's protectiveness. They know nothing about the raincoat and scarf. Kristian explains he came home at almost nine the previous night due to bookkeeping tasks that kept him at



work late. This is in contrast with something Darrell told K2, in that while speaking with Konrad Jensen, he remembers seeing and greeting Kristian around eight.

V – K2 meets with Konrad Jensen, middle-aged taxi driver in his fifties. He insists he got home around eight the previous evening, just behind Kristian and Darrell. There, he says he and Darrell greeted Kristian and spoke on the stairs. Konrad has never seen the raincoat or scarf before, and admits to having supported the Nazis during World War II as a driver. He explains he served a six-month prison sentence for it. Konrad explains he never met Olesen before or after the war, and says the man's death is the worst thing that could happen to him because everyone will blame him. It will ruin his life, because no one will want to hire or associate with a collaborator. He has spent his life trying to overcome the past. He explains that even his family will not associate with him. Konrad explains that he did not particularly like Olesen, but had no reason to kill him. He speaks well of the other residents in the building, though he doesn't know them well. He explains he finds it ironic that he, a former Nazi, should live in the same building as Sara, a Jew, and Olesen, a Resistance fighter.

VI – K2 meets with wheelchair-bound Andreas Gullestad in Flat 1A. Andreas is 39, bright, and has been in a wheelchair for four years. He reveals all fellow residents have been helpful and kind toward him, and does not believe any of them could have murdered Olesen. He even does his best to be friendly toward Konrad, despite Konrad's past, because Konrad's current behavior is good. Andreas explains that he believes Sara has a male caller in the afternoons, for he can hear them having sex through the floor. Andreas also reveals he recalls seeing a tall man in a blue raincoat with a red scarf over his face in the building a year before, but doesn't remember exactly when. He thinks it could have been the weekend of the Whitsun festival. Andreas requests and receives permission to head out of town for the weekend to visit his family as had previously been planned. K2 then double-checks with Sara about a boyfriend or fiancée, but she denies having anyone ever stay the night.

VII – K2 returns to his office to go over reports. Olesen has been killed by a single shot from a .45 caliber Colt revolver at close range. He has no close relatives, but does have a niece and nephew who live on the other side of Oslo. Joachim Olesen, the nephew, agrees to come down with his sister to the station for an interview. He works as an economist and advisor to the Ministry of Finance. K2 learns from the records that Konrad did indeed serve six months. Heading home, K2 reveals to the reader that he had no idea the murder investigation would bring him into contact with the most calculating criminal he has ever met, and the most remarkable person he has ever had the pleasure of working with.

Day Three: The Princess of Erling Skjalgsson's Street – and Her Sensational Discoveries

I – It is Saturday, April 6. K2 receives a call from a friend and coworker of his father's named Ragnar Borchmann, a Professor Director at the university. Ragnar offers to help with the case. K2 agrees to meet with him at 104-8 Erling Skjalgsson's Street at eleven a.m.



II – The press begins picking up the murder story in earnest, sensationalizing it. Joachim Olesen and his sister, Cecilia, an Oslo Cooperative Housing Association office manager, meet with K2 at the station. Joachim is married with two children, while Cecilia is divorced with one child. Joachim and Cecilia say that, although they didn't always keep in touch with Olesen, they did get along well with him. They relate that Olesen had been saddened by a cancer diagnosis, with a year or less to live. They also reveal that a student named Bjorn Erik Svendsen has been working on an official biography of Olesen. K2 later calls Ronning, Ronning Ronning, a law firm at which Olesen had placed several calls before his death. Edvard Ronning Junior, to whom K2 wishes to speak, is out of the country in West Berlin. Ronning will be handling Olesen's will on Wednesday. Olesen's doctor confirms a bowel cancer diagnosis, but says Olesen took the news with dignity. Olesen's bank statements reveal him to be rich, but over the past few months, 250,000 kroner had been withdrawn from his account. There is no accounting for where the money went, so K2 suspects the money to be hush money for blackmail.

III – K2 meets with Ragnar Borchmann, a large, tall widower, who serves as both professor of economics and runs his family's very wealthy, very successful business empire. At 64, he is one of the most admired businessmen and intellectuals in all of Norway. He has only one daughter – Patricia Louise Isabelle Elizabeth Borchmann, now 18. In a car accident years before, Patricia was paralyzed from the waist down while her mother and driver were killed. Ragnar suggests contacting Supreme Court Justice Jesper Christopher Haraldsen about Olesen's wartime years, and Party Secretary Haavard Linde about politics and the party relating to Olesen. Ragnar insists that the best help will come from Patricia, who is brilliant.

IV – K2 meets with Patricia. She is very thin and faint, but pretty and dark-haired. Patricia explains she is intrigued by the situation of the murder, including the locked room and no suspect. She has gotten all of her information from the newspapers. Drawing on Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie, Patricia cautions K2 about placing too much trust in the other residents, for there could be a conspiracy among them. She finds it hard to believe that nobody will complain about a crying baby because of how well insulated the walls are, it strikes her as odd that a gunshot could be heard two floors down. She believes two shots were fired – one with a silencer that killed Olesen, allowing the killer to escape unnoticed, and a second which everyone heard and believed to be the death shot. Patricia believes the second shot came from a sound recording designed to alter the timeline of the murder. Olesen is impressed and decides to look into Patricia's theory.

V – K2 returns to 3B, where he discovers a record player with a tape cassette player. Playing the tape, K2 jumps when he hears a recorded gunshot. He calls Patricia immediately to confirm her theory. She reminds him to check the player for fingerprints, but not to be surprised if there are none, because the criminal is clearly brilliant. He and Patricia agree that the two-hour time of the cassette means anyone who did not have a rock-solid alibi for the time between eight and ten-ten are suspects.



VI – K2 returns to meet with Patricia. She is delighted to have company and that her theory has worked out. K2 reveals all he knows about the residents. Patricia poses the Christie question of motive: who had the most to gain from killing Olesen, and why now given he was dying anyways? She believes it is because Olesen was dying that the murder had to happen so fast. She also believes the killer deliberately did not leave the gun behind so that suicide could not be considered as a means of death. She also thinks the money is a factor, and urges K2 to check with the financial situations of the residents. Patricia contends they are looking for a “human fly”, a term of her own coining, meaning one who experiences a tragedy of such immense pain that they never get over it, and so circle around it all their lives like a fly. She believes the killer is a human fly, and believes that Olesen himself was a human fly. She does not believe Konrad could be the fly unless a direct wartime link between him and Olesen could be found.

Patricia thinks the blue raincoat and scarf will put them hot on the killer’s trail. Patricia finds it strange that so many of the residents – especially those seemed oriented toward wealth – could find themselves in a neighborhood like Torshov. This is especially true for the American. She has a theory, scribbles it down, and has the maid, Benedikte, mail it to K2 so that her theory will not influence K2 in the next stage of his investigation. Patricia also believes that Kristian arrived at the building at eight, but did not actually arrive home until nine – an hour after sleeping with Sara.

Analysis

“The Human Flies” is a historical detective novel by Hans Olav Lahlum which focuses on the efforts of Norwegian Inspector Detective Kolbein “K2” Kristiansen and his brilliant young amateur assistant, Patricia, to solve a murder. On April 4, 1968, K2 is called to 25 Krieb’s Street where the body of Harald Olesen, a national hero and Resistance fighter during World War II, has been found dead in his locked flat.

From the very start, readers are confronted with a classic mystery setup – the locked room – as Patricia herself later notes. The setup is fairly simple: a dead man has been found in a locked room. The killer has not been seen entering or leaving the room, and residents responded instantly to the sound of a gunshot. The locked room will become a theme, as its puzzle will become central to the murder.

The locked room mystery will heavily rely on the use of reason and logic, which will become a major theme through the novel. This is because the locked room in which Olesen is found lacks important things: a murder weapon, a murderer, a motive, and the method by which the murder was carried out. With no hard clues or physical evidence, reason and logic can point the way inductively and deductively to such information.

Patricia’s reliance on reason and logic pays off immediately. She suggests that the gunshot heard at the suspected time of death may not have actually been a gunshot at all, but a recording of a gunshot. This means the murder was carried out hours earlier. Upon investigation, K2 discovers this to be true. The locked room mystery now has



breathing room. It is now a question of murder, motive, and why Olesen let his murderer into his room in the first place.

Motive will itself become an important theme as much of the novel will examine the lives of those associated with Olesen, either as building neighbors or as friends and relatives. K2's initial sweep of the building's residents reveals all to be seemingly straightforward, though obviously unnerved by the murder. They all speak well about Olesen, except for Konrad who seems to be more obsessed with himself than the killing.

There are oddities among the residents: The Lunds are wealthy enough to live elsewhere, but do not. Olesen is wealthy enough to live elsewhere, but does not. Darrell Williams, as such an important figure, should live elsewhere but does not. And Konrad's presence in the building at all – as an ex-Nazi – is strange given Olesen's own residence in the building. K2 and Patricia consider that everyone in the building may have had some motive to murder Olesen, even if that reason is not yet known.

Under Patricia's guidance, K2 says he will undertake another round of interviews. This is because of Patricia's surmising that Olesen was a human fly. She believes this due to his present living conditions, large sums of money missing from his bank account, and because he withdrew from public life rather than finishing his life in the public eye. Something from his past haunts him, Patricia believes. And here, the past will become utterly crucial to the murder, the investigation, and present and recent events. Yet it is only through the investigation that K2 and Patricia undertake that the past – and potential motives for murder – become known. So far, only Konrad Jensen comes clean about his past as an ex-Nazi.

Discussion Question 1

Based on what is known so far, what resident of the building appears to be the most likely suspect? Why?

Discussion Question 2

What is the setup of Olesen's locked room murder? How do K2 and Patricia at least account for the killer getting in and out so easily, and without being noticed?

Discussion Question 3

Patricia believes that she and K2 that Olesen was a human fly, and that his killer is also a human fly. Explain, noting what a human fly is.

Vocabulary

racialist, unpretentious, indisputable, conspiracy, diligent, impeccably, fortuitously, demure, somberness, morose, exorbitant, sedentary, paradoxically



Day Four – Day Five

Summary

Day Four: The Residents Refine their Memory

I – It is Sunday, April 7. K2 begins a second round of interviews, starting with Randi. He explains that false statements are punishable with prison. She admits that she lied about Kristian coming home earlier than she noted because his business is his own, and because he paid her to vouch for him. She confirms the affair with Sara. Randi then says her own husband, Anton, a good man, was also in the Resistance during the war, but due to being unable to cope with the experience, cigarettes and alcoholism led him to the hospital where he will be until he dies. Her debts mounted, so she accepted the money from Kristian to help pay them down. She proudly says it was Olesen who encouraged Anton to join the Resistance. Despite how Anton's life turned out, neither ever harbored any anger toward Olesen for getting Anton involved in the first place. War is war.

II – K2 goes to the sports shop Kristian runs. Kristian seems confident and sure here, leading K2 to suspect the man is a chameleon, adapting to whatever situation he is in. Kristian, smoking cigarettes, explains his mother was in the NS during the war, having worked for the Nazis. He is angry he must always account for his single mother's actions when he himself had nothing to do with her decisions. It cost him friends in childhood, he explains, and made growing up difficult. It still makes life difficult. He reveals his baby was born three days after his mother died. Despite her being a Nazi, he only ever knew and loved her as a mother. His father-in-law, Kristian explains, dealt with the occupiers financially, but because he is rich no one bats an eye. Kristian reveals that he did not know who his own father was. Kristian also confesses to the affair with Sara. Desire and the prospect of a challenge enticed him. Later, he came to love her, believing Sara to be his dream woman. Kristian has considered leaving his wife, but knows it will be difficult. Kristian goes on to say that he might be an adulterer, but he is not a murderer. When K2 asks to see Kristian's financial records, he refuses and says he must get back to work.

III – K2 briefly meets with Karen Lund to see what else she can remember about the night of the murder, but there isn't anything. K2 says it is evident now that her husband did indeed come home at nine. K2 then meets with Sara. Sara reveals she had been born Sara Rozenthal, that her birth parents – Felix and Anne Marie – were registered dead in 1944. She has no idea how she ended up at a Swedish adoption agency in Gothenburg in 1944. She hopes her parents are still alive. She willingly gives up her financial statements, totaling more than 55,000 kroner due to a college grant. She also explains she has no alibi for the afternoon of the murder, and confesses to the affair with Kristian. She says she and Kristian are working-class in origin and, therefore, deserve one another, whereas his wife has everything already.



IV – K2 visits Konrad Jensen in 1B. Konrad is in a panic. He explains his taxi, Petter, has been smashed to pieces and the words “Nazi murderer” spraypainted all over it. He has also received threatening letters. He urges K2 to find the killer as fast as possible. He says he feels close to the end. K2 volunteers to post a constable outside to make sure everything stays peaceful. Konrad is very grateful. He explains he was in the hallway the night of the murder with Darrell, hoping to talk about football. He also reveals that he did actually briefly know Olesen as a man who picked up an attractive blonde from a political meeting in 1939 in a 1932 or 1933 black Volvo. Konrad thinks either Sara or the American are responsible for the murder.

V – K2 meets with Darrell Williams, the American. Darrell explains he has no one to vouch for his alibi, explaining he did some reading, went for a stroll, and returned to the building where he spoke to Konrad about football. Darrell can neither confirm nor deny he was or is involved in any American intelligence agency, such as the CIA, during or after the war, or in the present. Likewise, Darrell says he has no idea why the Embassy has placed him where he lives, but he has no complaints. K2 asks Darrell if he has ever killed anyone. Darrell explains that he did during the war. He says he has never killed anyone since then, and has received no orders to do so. Darrell looks K2 directly in the eye when he says he has no idea who killed Olesen, leading K2 to believe him. He offers to help K2 however he can. He also mentions he had a Norwegian girlfriend during the war as well, but does not wish to speak about it.

VI – K2 meets with Andreas, who has returned from his family trip as promised. He willingly hands over his bank books, which list more than 800,000 kroner. He explains it was all inherited, with some coming from woodland he later sold for a good profit. He also admits he has changed his name from Ivar Storskog to Andreas Gullestad based on his christened name Ivar Andreas as a result of wanting to make a clean break with the past following the accident where he was struck by a young motorist in a pedestrian crossing. He then provides evidence, including doctors' records, to prove his injuries. While Andreas is forthcoming about everything, he is less inclined to talk about his father because it is a painful memory for him. His father, Andreas explains, was a kind and wonderful man who fought for Norway and then joined the Resistance. Andreas reveals his father was arrested on his thirteenth birthday, only to be shot a week later. People gossip about how Andreas never became anything important like his father, so it was another reason to change his name.

VII – K2 calls Patricia to give her the details of the day's investigation. He agrees to keep in touch.

Day Five: A Diary and Its Secrets

I – It is now Monday, April 8, 1968. K2 meets with Bjorn Erik Svendsen, the history student working on the biography of Olesen. Bjorn looks like he is one of the Beatles merged with a Vietnam protestor. He explains he first met Olesen while working on a paper about the Resistance movement. While others had refused to meet with him because of politics, Olesen had agreed even though Bjorn is a member of the Left, and Olesen a member of the Right. Bjorn remembers Olesen as friendly and very intelligent.



He relates that Olesen's wartime cover was blown, and that Olesen continued to fight against the Nazis. He also reveals that Olesen worked with the Americans after the war to spy on, and counter Communists. Bjorn believes it is merely a coincidence that there was an American diplomat in Olesen's building, and that Olesen never spoke much about his neighbors at all. He reveals that Olesen was saddened by the fact he and his wife could never conceive children, and that Olesen had kept diaries in his later years that Bjorn borrowed for his book. The diaries are full of dry information – facts about Olesen's day, calls he received, and so on. One entry, however, stands out in Bjorn's mind. He points it out to K2. The entry, dated 1966 November 17, refers to an unexpected and "unsettling" encounter with "S" and the "ghastly N" which brings up "strong memories". "S" is a shadow of his former self from "all those years ago", the entry states. Bjorn also says that Olesen was working on a new diary for the years 1967 and 1968, but that he would not give this diary up. K2 explains that no such diary was found in the apartment.

II – K2 fills Patricia in on the diary. She believes the diary is directly related to Olesen's death, in that it contained important information. It is either with the killer now, or has been hidden in the apartment. She tells K2 to check the bookshelves for a hidden diary, and to bring Bjorn with him.

III – The missing diary is found hidden within a volume of history about World War I. K2 immediately begins reading entries. On March 20, 1967, Olesen recorded news of the death of "S", related to him by "N", with "S" confessing "in the end" and with "N" now demanding money. On May 2's entry, "N" makes contact again, demanding money and threatening "to tell". On May 15, Olesen reported receiving a visit from the dangerous "D", and being happy to still be alive when "D" left. On August 12, "N" demanded more money. On August 27, Olesen relates a second heated meeting with "D", in which Olesen admits to wishing he could "speak out" but can't due to "D's" threats. On September 21, Olesen writes that "O" has contacted him to keep all the events of the past a secret, with Olesen agreeing to handle the papers. On September 29, Olesen writes that "J" has now contacted him.

The entries through the winter continue, with Olesen confirming his cancer diagnosis, thinking of death lightly, and of the decision he must make being compared to a lead weight upon him. The entries reveal Olesen is in pain from his cancer, "N" wants more money and a part of Olesen's will, "D" looms, "O" is worried about his health and helps oversee the burning of papers with Olesen promising to take "all our secrets" to the grave, and that evil shall be expelled with evil. By February, "D" is violently threatening Olesen, "J" is threatening to go the press, and the situation getting out of control. Olesen writes about changing his will and how everything will be sacrificed "upon the altar of my greatest sin". The final entry, for March 30, reveals Olesen calling for a final meeting on Thursday, April 4. Bjorn is sworn to silence over the diary.

IV – K2 meets with Anton, caretaker and husband of Randi. Anton is near death, and says he can't understand who would want to kill Olesen so long after the war. Anton admits to it being strange to having Konrad in the building, but that Konrad has not harmed a fly since. Anton explains that he helped hide refugees in his building cellar,



beginning in 1943. He remembers one lad of 16 or 17 who brought back gifts ten years later in thanks. The last refugees were not so lucky. They consisted of a strange foreign couple who were picked up by Olesen in his 1932 Volvo when it became too dangerous. Anton does not know what became of them, because Olesen did not wish to speak of it, telling Anton never to ask again. The following morning, the Gestapo arrived. Anton was arrested and tortured even though no refugees were hiding in his building. Anton can only guess that the couple and their baby were delivered to Deerfoot, who arranged ski-escapes over the mountains. He believes Deerfoot, the couple, and their baby to have died during the escape. He never knew or met Deerfoot, he explains.

V – At 25 Krebs', K2 learns that every member of the building has received a telegram to be present at the reading of Olesen's will on Wednesday. K2 visits all the other residents. Most claim to have ever heard of Deerfoot, though Sara gives a start at the mention and Konrad sneers at the name. Darrell says the name "Deerfoot" can be attributed to Cooper's books. Andreas believes the name "Deerfoot" to be literary in origin, in a book by Ellis rather than Cooper. As K2 heads home, he glances back at 25. Sara is watching him through the window.

VI – K2 has a light supper with Patricia. She is very impressed and intrigued by the discovery of the diary and its contents. Patricia asks about the name of Kristian Lund's dead mother. K2 reveals it to be Nathalie, but that she was called "Sonja" during the war because she looked like film star Sonja Heine. Patricia lays out her thoughts: "S" could be Sonja, the gorgeous blonde that Olesen picked up from the meeting that was attended by Konrad. "N" could very well have been Sonja's son, Patricia explains, with "N" standing for "Nazi child" or something of the sort. That child could be Kristian, who extorted Olesen for money which is why he would not let K2 see his bank statements. The blackmailing, Patricia advises, could have arisen out of Olesen's desire to keep his affair with the blonde a secret, due to her Nazi connections and his own heroic image.

"D", "J", and "O" must still be identified. Patricia believes it to be possible that there may even be a fifth person involved. When K2 confirms the statute of limitations on a murder in Norway is 25 years, Patricia explains that it is possible the killing of K2 occurred in response to a wartime murder or some kind of wartime crime whose legal window is about to close. It occurred in French-Belgian writer Simenon's novels, Patricia explains further. She also reveals that Whitsun occurred on May 13 to 15 of the previous year, where Andrews claims to have seen a man in a blue raincoat and red scarf on that weekend. It is the same day Olesen recorded a visit from D, meaning Andreas probably saw "D". Patricia believes Deerfoot to be "D". She urges K2 to ask around about Deerfoot. Patricia thinks it is possible that Darrell Williams may indeed have been Deerfoot. Patricia is annoyed but understanding that K2 has asked around already about Deerfoot, including of Darrell who claimed the Deerfoot children's books were written by Cooper. She thinks it is now possible whoever Deerfoot or "D" is will now lash out somehow. She urges a policeman be posted on each floor, but it is too late to round them up.



Analysis

Through the past, nothing is what it seems to be in the present. The affair between Kristian and Sara shatters the idea that the reader, or K2, can take residents at face value. Kristian contends that the emotional trauma of his childhood, losing his mother, and belatedly finding his dream girl in Sara in turn lead to the affair, while Sara admits to the affair because she sees protection and a person of a similar class in Kristian. The reader should note that Sara has an alarmingly large amount of money in her bank account for a student, especially given her working class background, and that her parents were Jewish refugees who seemingly died in 1944. Kristian himself apparently seems to be Olesen's illegitimate son who was blackmailing his father for money, according to Patricia.

Through Randi and Anton, K2 learns that Anton served with Olesen in the war, using the building as a way to help refugees escape. It is clear that Olesen considered the building a safe house not only for refugees, but for himself long after the war as well. K2 considers that Randi and Anton may have a grudge against Olesen for having gotten Anton involved in the war in the first place, leading to trauma, postwar alcoholism, and mounting debts.

Andreas is likewise not untouched by the war. His own father fought for the Resistance, and was later arrested and executed when found out. His name change is noteworthy for K2, but Andreas explains it away as a chance to start over and to get away from those who believe he never made anything of his life the way his father did.

Darrell Williams, too, was deeply touched by the war. He is as forthcoming as he can be about his past. As both a veteran of the war, and clearly a member of a secretive American organization working with the Norwegian Resistance, he did indeed have to kill someone, but explains he has not killed anyone since, and has received no orders to do so. What is unusual, however, is that Williams mentions he had a Norwegian girlfriend, but doesn't want to talk about her.

As K2 considers the people who have come to inhabit the building, he understands that each one of them has been touched or scarred by World War II. The reader should note that Konrad, ex-Nazi, fears for his life. While he is selfish and self-pitying, he is straightforward about his past and the present. Konrad's residency at 25 Krebs' seems coincidental –but the presence of the other residents appears more and more suspicious. All were connected to the Resistance and to Olesen in some way, shape, or form.

The discovery of Olesen's diaries – including the secret diary – reveals a trove of frustratingly obfuscated information that K2 and Patricia commit to cracking. The diary demonstrates that Olesen feared for his life in his final days, and noted that the "ghosts of his past" were "crowding him into his grave". The past had come back to haunt Olesen. It is clear that Olesen was indeed a human fly, and those circling him were also human flies. Important clues are given relating to Deerfoot, payoffs to an illegitimate



child, and burning important papers. Of note is his decision to have a “final meeting”, meaning that he indeed invited his killer straight into his apartment.

Discussion Question 1

Based on what is known so far, what resident of the building appears to have the likeliest motive for murdering Olesen? Why?

Discussion Question 2

What important information is gleaned from Olesen’s diaries? What does this reveal about his final months and days?

Discussion Question 3

The codename “Deerfoot” begins popping up frequently among those who worked with Olesen during the war. Who was Deerfoot? What was his role in the Resistance? Why does Patricia believe “D” in the dairies to be Deerfoot?

Vocabulary

perjury, dubious, indignation, theoretically, tentatively, gimlet, monotone, conciliatory, astuteness, profusely, spontaneously, spontaneous, ominously, vacillates, erratic, intonation, benevolent



Day Six – Day Seven

Summary

Day Six: A Mysterious Death

I – United States Ambassador George Adams requests a meeting with K2. K2 immediately agrees to meet at the requested time. Before that, he heads to meet with Kristian Lund. Kristian confirms he received money from Olesen, but not as blackmail. Rather, he says, it was what was merely owed to him. Kristian explains that when he moved into the building, he had no idea that Olesen was his father. Only a chance encounter between him, his ailing mother, and Olesen led to this. Olesen admits to having felt let down by his father for all the years he was not around to support them. Upon confronting Olesen, Olesen referred to Kristian as the “NS boy”, which angered Kristian to retort that he had never been in the NS, was not even old enough, and that if Olesen was so morally pure, why did he sleep with an NS woman –which in turn caused Olesen to slam the door in his face. Kristian pressed Olesen for inheritance money, which Olesen ultimately gave up. Kristian also explains he has stopped his affair with Sara, and says he has broken off all contact with her.

II – K2 next meets with one of the heroes of his youth, Supreme Court Justice Jesper Christopher Haraldsen in his office on Youngstorget. Haraldsen explains he knows of no strife among members of the Home Front, the Resistance movement in which he and Olesen were a part. He also says he knows of no man called Deerfoot, believing it to be an unlikely name for a Norwegian fighter. Haraldsen says that there is no use in making Darrel Williams a suspect, as America is a valuable friend and ally, that Olesen loved and helped the Americans, and that the Americans would have no reason to kill him.

III – K2 next meets with Haavard Linde, Labour Party Secretary, and another childhood hero of K2. Linde does not think anyone in Labour would have had Olesen killed. Olesen, Linde explains, was not a divisive politician. Linde says one never knows with Communists, however, but cannot even for them think of a reason why they would want Olesen dead. Linde denies knowledge of Olesen ever having any contact with the Americans. Like Haraldsen, Linde calls the Americans good friends and allies who would never do such a thing. K2 will not drop his suspicions yet, however.

IV – K2 meets with George Adams. K2 sizes Adams up as suave, handsome, but dangerous if needs be. Adams relates concern that an American is suspected in Olesen’s murder. Adams suggests that the American in question be allowed to freely leave Oslo as needed to avoid conspiracy theories and insinuations leaking out in the press and embarrassing both American and Norwegian officials. K2 does his best to be diplomatic, saying he cannot release anything relating to the investigation to anyone, the press included, and that no one associated with the investigation is allowed to leave the country. K2 then makes the mistake of asking Adams why Darrell Williams was



placed at 25 Krebs's, to which Adams sternly explains that he hopes K2 is not insinuating anything. K2 excuses himself quickly.

V – K2 believes he will be fired, but a call comes from Randi instead. Randi reports that Konrad is not answering his door, even though she had an appointment to pick up a grocery list from him. K2 rushes over, and brings Constable Eriksen inside from his post on the corner. Andreas, and Karen are aware of the situation by now. K2 knocks Konrad's door, but there is no answer. K2 proceeds inside, and finds Konrad dead in his armchair with a bullet hold in his head. The bullet is embedded into the chair behind him. A Kongsberg Colt .45 is at his feet. A typed, hand-signed murder confession and suicide note is found on the coffee table. Everyone is thrilled by this. Even K2 is happy about what seems to be the end of a murder mystery. Even Darrell Williams is friendly toward K2 after K2's appearance at the Embassy. Everyone at the station congratulates K2 as well, believing the murder has been solved. By now, K2 is feeling very happy and self-assured.

VI – In K2's office is the finally-delivered letter of Patricia. It states that Konrad is the only person in the building who has told K2 the truth. K2 calls Patricia, who in turn curses at herself. She claims the killer has struck again, and that the killer is very cunning and sophisticated. K2 reminds her that he lives in the real world with the police, not in the world of fiction and novels. This doesn't deter Patricia in the least, who in turn asks about unanswered questions: What of the blue raincoat and red scarf, what of the diary, and what of "J", "O", and "D"? K2 begins to suspect his assumption about the case being closed is wrong. Patricia goes on to say that Konrad lacked the intelligence to plan a murder like Olesen's. Further, the typewritten note and the lack of a typewriter in Konrad's apartment are highly suspicious. K2 is stunned. Patricia asks for a meeting.

VII – K2 travels to meet with Patricia, bringing the note and the suicide weapon. Examining them, Patricia makes several conclusions. First, Jensen's own signature on the note means he was cooperative and did not know what he was signing because the paper was folded over the confessional half. The note itself is well-written and grammatically correct, Patricia says. Second, the murder weapon is a common gun with two bullets missing – seemingly one for Olesen, and one for Konrad. The gun's serial number has been removed. Third, Patricia wants to know where the gun was hidden as the building was searched by the police and no guns were found. She asks to have testing done on the bullets in Konrad and Olesen to see if they were fired from the same gun. She is also curious as how the killer managed to get into Konrad's locked room. She believes the killer was let in, that the killer was someone Konrad knew. Finally, there is still an additional 50,000 kroner paid out by Olesen that is unaccounted for.

VIII – The press surrounds K2 with questions. K2 says there are still a few details to be followed through on before he will officially declare the case closed. He heads into Konrad's apartment. He sees no evidence of a break-in, and does some thinking. In an old suit jacket of Konrad's K2 discovers a stack of papers – evidence that he was writing something of a memoir. It is an attempt to justify himself and defend himself. Olesen and Deerfoot are never mentioned. The first sentence catches K2's eyes: "I Konrad Jesnen hearby start my life story that I do not regret." In the suicide note, "hereby" and



“regret” are spelled correctly, and the grammar is perfect. K2 realizes there is now a serious problem. He phones Patricia.

Day Seven: A Will –and It’s Impact

I – The station ballistics expert reports to K2 that the bullet that killed Konrad definitely came from the gun found at the scene, but the bullet that killed Olesen came from an older gun, probably a .45 Kongsberg Colt from around 1920. The pathologist reports that the shot that killed Konrad came between ten and noon.

II – K2 arrives at the law offices of Ronning, Ronning & Ronning. The young Mr. Ronning enters the room, full of Olesen’s relatives, friends, and the neighbors from 25 Krebs’. He notes that the will has been changed several times. He then begins to read the will. 100,000 kroner is left to Randi, which stuns everyone in the room. Ronning goes on to read that originally, the remainder of the estate was to be divided between his niece and nephew, but then this was amended in favor of Kristian Lund, after which time it was amended once more a few days before he died in favor of Sara Sundqvist, “for the great pain” caused to her and her parents. Sara is now a millionaire. The room erupts in chaos. Kristian curses Olesen to Hell. Sara tells K2 she did not kill Olesen. K2 announces that he will be taking statements from everyone before they leave.

III – Sara is interviewed first. She explains that she did not murder or have anything to do with Olesen’s murder, but had been in contact with him previously. She had gone to him, seeking his help in the mystery of her parents because he was in the Resistance, only to have Olesen pale and close the door in her face. She goes on to explain that it was not until later, after her sexual affair began, that she learned that Kristian was Olesen’s son. She had long hoped that Olesen would know something about her parents, but his will makes it seem as if they are truly dead. She asks K2 for his help in finding out what happened to her parents.

Kristian is interviewed next. He is enraged. He says Sara will not get a single penny, and that he will go to court to see to it. He has nothing new to add. Karen is called in next. She explains she did indeed have suspicions her husband was having an affair, but had no hard evidence with which to confront him. However, a recent confession and apology to her, along with how Olesen’s will turned out, has encouraged Karen to stand beside her husband and stay with him. Joachim and Cecilia are summoned next. They are upset about the will, but not very bothered by it because they are both financially secure. They explain their relationship with Olesen was strained by the past in which he tried to tell them how to live their lives, but that they did their best to get past this in the end. Darrell Williams is then summoned. He has nothing new to add other than that he sympathizes with Sara and supports the payout to Randi. Neither Darrell, nor Andreas, knew about Olesen’s family connections or Kristian being his son. Randi is interviewed next. She is still stunned by what has happened, happy that her financial troubles are now over. K2 then calls Patricia, who invites him over.

IV – Patricia and K2 both surmise that “J” in Olesen’s diary refers to “Jewess” for Sara. It is clear to them that she was the baby with the couple hidden by Anton in the



basement of 25 Krebs', but what happened between the escape and her ending up in an orphanage is unknown. K2 agrees to contact Sweden about the details of Sara's adoption. Patricia also finds it strange why Sara should say she did not murder Olesen even though a murderer has been named publicly. Patricia believes this means that either Sara killed Olesen and Konrad, or she doesn't believe Konrad is the murderer. Patricia also believes that Cecilia Olesen was the girlfriend of Darrell Williams during the war, but that Olesen forced them to break it off. It would explain the especially strong resentment from Cecilia. K2 agrees to talk with Cecilia about this. She also notes the escape route of the 25 Krebs' refugees was through Hedmark to Oppland, where Olesen was leader of the Home Front. It is not far from where Andreas grew up, Patricia explains, and where his father was shot for being in the Resistance. She also reveals that it is clear that Olesen had a very strong conscientious feeling relating to Sara.

V – K2 goes to see Cecilia Olesen in Ullern. It is clear she is wealthy, and she kindly receives K2. She immediately confesses to having been in a relationship with Darrell during the war, and that seeing him again at the will reading was unbearable for her. For three years beginning when she was 19, Cecilia saw Darrell while her uncle discouraged such a relationship with an American military OSS operative. Darrell was suddenly recalled to the States in 1948, leading Cecilia to believe her uncle used his influence to make it happen. Her subsequent marriage was one of heartbreak rather than love, which is why it ended in divorce. She is happy to have had a daughter from the marriage, however. She explains that Darrell returned home to his own failed marriage as well, but without children. Cecilia then explains she learned she was pregnant with Darrell's child after he was sent home, and her only choice was to have an abortion. She confessed in a letter to Darrell twenty years before.

VI – K2 calls Patricia. She urges him to speak with Darrell, believing that he is the "O" for "OSS" mentioned in Olesen's diaries. Patricia also thinks it important to ask about the burned papers mentioned in the diary. This means that "D" is still unknown. Patricia further urges contact with Sweden over Sara's adoption. K2 gets to work. He begins by sending for information from Sweden. He then calls Joachim to ask if Olesen had any friends in the area where Joachim lives, to which Joachim confirms that there are many, including one possibly named Storskag – the father of Andreas.

VII – K2 meets with Darrell. Darrell confesses to the wartime and postwar relationship with Cecilia, and with being angry at Olesen at the time. However, he has let the past go. Seeing Cecilia at the will reading, however, brought back a flood of bittersweet memories. K2 makes the jump – that Darrell cannot confirm or deny without permission – that he was posted in the same building as Olesen to help Olesen destroy old papers which included evidence of now-high-ranking American and Norwegian anti-Communist agents whose identities cannot be revealed for issues of secrecy. As K2 leaves, Darrell asks about Cecilia's life. K2 reveals all he knows, after which time Darrell closes the door and sounds as though he is crying. K2 does not believe Darrell to be the murderer.

VIII – K2 meets with Andreas to ask him about his childhood. While Andreas may have met Olesen as a child, he cannot remember anything about him at the time.



Analysis

Armed with evidence from the dairies, and the reason and logic of Patricia, K2 begins yet another round of interviews with the human flies who have settled into 25 Krebs' around Olesen. Kristian admits he is indeed Olesen's illegitimate son, and that he was not blackmailing Olesen for money. Rather, he was insisting on what he considered to be lawfully his. Sara admits to having been in contact with Olesen previously, wanting information about her parents and their disappearance. Her residence at 25 is entirely coincidental, and her questions about her parents directed to Olesen only because he was a member of the Resistance. As K2 and Patricia are beginning to surmise, Sara may very well have been the baby refugee Anton and others have spoken of that passed through 25 Krebs' given her inheritance from Olesen's will.

Interestingly, K2's investigation brings him into contact with American and Norwegian officials. Both of these men – Adams and Haraldsen – give what information they can to K2, but in no uncertain terms make it known that K2 needs to back off. K2's investigation is flirting with the edges of highly sensitive information and secret past operations. Adams and Haraldsen flatly tell K2 that Darrell Williams had nothing to do with the death of Olesen.

Through reason and logic, K2 and Patricia ultimately come to eliminate Darrell as a suspect. K2 still isn't entirely convinced of what he has been told by Adams and Haraldsen, but can only go up against the powers that be so much. As Patricia later comes to reason, Darrell was clearly the "O" mentioned in the diaries, with "O" standing for "OSS" – the American Office of Strategic Services.

It would not make sense for Darrell to be helping Olesen only to kill him afterwards, but he is still not crossed off the list of suspects. This is because Olesen's niece was Darrell's wartime girlfriend, something which Olesen bitterly opposed. Indeed, Olesen was so against the relationship that he went to extraordinary lengths to break them up – by having Darrell transferred out of the country. This could easily be motive for murder – but the lack of fear around Darrell in the diary, Darrell's helping Olesen, and their mutual agreement to put the past behind them and let it go, mean that Darrell is not the murderer. Ironically, Darrell may have been the only human fly to do Olesen any good before his death.

As K2 continues to delve into the past, he learns a number of important things. Andreas's father lived near the route for smuggling refugees into Sweden, that no strife among members of the Home Front group is known, and that Konrad is obviously not the murderer. Patricia employs the powers of reason and logic to come to this conclusion. Given the presence of a typewritten note, the absence of a typewriter in Konrad's apartment, and another locked room mystery, it is clear that Konrad is not Olesen's killer. Hard evidence soon follows, as the ballistics of the bullets found in Konrad and in Olesen do not match. It is obvious that Konrad, rationally and empirically, is not the killer.



It is also obvious that the past has a tremendous bearing on Olesen's will, as the will was changed several times before his death. This is most notable with the fact that 100,000 kroner is to be left to Randi, while everything else goes to Sara. But the mystery of what became of her parents, and why she ended up in an orphanage, is still unknown. It stands to reason that Olesen's efforts to atone for the past through his will relate somehow to what happened to Sara's parents. Only a trip to Sweden, however, will make sense of this.

Discussion Question 1

Based on what is known at this point in the novel, what resident of the building appears to be the most likely murderer? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Patricia and K2 ultimately come to eliminate Darrell as a suspect. Why?

Discussion Question 3

What is unusual about Olesen's will? Which are the only two people who end up benefitting from the will? Why do you believe this is?

Vocabulary

exasperation, convoluted, circumstantial, redundant, piqued, forensic, aforementioned, pragmatic, meekly, timorous, succinctly, brusquely



Day Eight – Day Nine

Summary

Day Eight: A Disappearance –and a New Clue

I – It is April 11, now a few days before Easter. Supreme Court Justice Jesper Christopher Haraldsen calls K2 to congratulate him about the case. He goes on to say that he finds it unlikely the investigation should continue seeking more evidence when the answer has already been found in the form of an ex-Nazi's written confession. K2 realizes he is being told to back off without Haraldsen coming out and saying it. He goes on to say that he hopes another murder over or after Easter will cause K2 to redirect himself, and hangs up. K2 then rushes into his boss's office to explain the situation and the direction the investigation is now taking. K2's boss fully supports his efforts.

II – K2 calls Darrell Williams to ask about Haraldsen, but receives no reply. He then asks Randi to check on Darrell. She says there is no response from his room although the lights are all on. K2 then drives over to his apartment. He and Randi fear the worst. There, a note is found saying that Darrell has been ordered out of Norway by his superiors. Darrell stresses he had nothing to do with Olesen's murder, and wishes K2 luck in finding the killer. K2 then angrily heads to the American Embassy.

III – K2 confronts Ambassador George Adams about the disappearance of Darrell. Adams says that Darrell Williams is now the American ambassador for the new country of Mauritius. K2 says this is regrettable given important evidence that has come to light about cooperation between Norway and America during and after the war, and that K2 doesn't want this information to end up in the press as a warrant will be issued through Interpol. Adams asks how he should proceed. K2 says that Darrell Williams must be returned to Oslo by the following day. Adams immediately agrees.

Back at the office, a telegram arrives from Sweden for K2. It states that Sara was taken in at a small police station in Salen in February 1944. The Chief of Police at the time, Hans Andersson, is still working and remembers it all well. He also remembers Olesen and Deerfoot, but does not know Deerfoot's real name. He invites K2 for a meeting, and K2 agrees to a meeting the next day.

IV – K2 dines with Patricia. While he believes Darrell Williams to be innocent, Patricia is still suspicious given the events of the past between him and Cecilia. She advises K2 to pay special attention to any details relating to Sara and Deerfoot. K2 secretly begins to worry how much credit Patricia will want for her role in things, and begins to worry just how soon he'll be able to find the killer. He also wonders how far he would have gotten without Patricia's help.

V – K2 makes his rounds at 25 Krebs', letting the residents know he'll be gone the following day, and to ask them if they have anything new to report. While visiting with



Sara, both notice a man in a blue raincoat standing in the doorway of the neighboring building outside. She explains the man has been standing there for several hours. K2 rushes out, following the man on a bus. It turns how not to be a man at all, but Cecilia. She explains she had been hoping to catch a glimpse of Darrell Williams.

Day Nine: On the Trail of a Light-Footed War Ghost

I – It is Good Friday, April 12, 1968. K2 cross the border into Sweden. He arrives at the Salen police station, which resembles a farmhouse, soon after. There, he meets with Chief Hans Andersson, a man in his sixties. He reveals he is a native Norwegian, but met and fell in love with a Swedish girl, prompting the move. He trained as a police officer in Gothenberg, and was posted to Salen. He assisted with refugees coming across the border by registering them as citizens of Sweden and then then giving them a place to rest and stay overnight if needed. Andersson first met Olesen and Deerfoot on December 23, 1942, when Olesen went by the codename “Hawkeye”. Olesen and Deerfoot always traveled together, Andersson recalls. He explains that Olesen admitted to having a horrible sense of direction, which is why Deerfoot always accompanied him as a guide.

Deerfoot, Andersson recalls, spoke Norwegian without any accent. He also recalls a refugee boy at the time of 16 who returned ten years later with thanks and presents. In K2’s mind, this is clearly the same person who thanked Randi and her husband. Andersson then pulls out an old blurry photograph of Deerfoot. It is clear that it is not Darrell, but that Deerfoot is a boy in his mid-teens who wore a silver pendant around his neck. He explains that Deerfoot never gave any personal details, and that it was clear Olesen was almost something like an adoptive father to Deerfoot, making Deerfoot an orphan. Andersson then brings K2 outside.

II – Andersson points out the mountain passes in the distance. One includes a cliff that requires a steep path to get around. Andersson points out that youthful skiers often try to make the jump on very snowy days. Often they are injured. Deerfoot looked at the challenge the same way, Andersson explains. He then reveals that a series of coded messages between Norway and Sweden would be sent to Andersson when refugees were on the way, beginning with his uncle I in Elverum. On the evening of February 20, 1944, it was noted that Olesen, Deerfoot, and three refugees – a married couple and their baby – were on the way, but were being followed by a squad of six German troops just as a horrible winter storm set in. The next morning, Deerfoot came rushing over the mountain on the wrong skis alone, and jumped the cliff. Andersson recalls meeting Deerfoot outside. Deerfoot carried a baby girl with him – Sara.

Andersson explains that Deerfoot revealed a gunfight that resulted in the deaths of three Germans and the married couple. Olesen, who covered Deerfoot’s escape, arrived himself a few hours later. Andersson reveals that he watched Olesen and Deerfoot arguing outside, with Deerfoot pointing at Olesen’s face in a threatening manner. Afterwards, he watched Deerfoot follow Olesen back up the mountain. Andersson briefly met with Olesen years later in Oslo while visiting family, at which time Olesen said what became of Deerfoot was a sad story. K2 asks about the teenager



Olesen and Deerfoot first brought with them. Andersson responds the teen was an Austrian named Helmut Schmidt, and lived in Vienna when last Andersson heard from him. He explains that few years before, he told the very same stories to Sara, who had come to learn more about her past and about Deerfoot. Stuningly, K2 realizes that Sara has lied to him about knowledge of Deerfoot.

III – K2 calls Patricia. She is thrilled with what he has learned. She invites him to dinner, and K2 accepts. K2 knows Sara has a lot of explaining to do. As K2 drives, he considers the fact that Deerfoot could be a brand new figure in the case, and wonders if it might be Joachim since Joachim was about 15 at the time of the war. Joachim is prone to mood swings, was unhappy with the reading of the will, and disliked how his uncle tried to run his life and his sister's life. He also finds it strange that his sister should have a raincoat so similar to the one found at the scene of the crime.

IV – K2 and Patricia have dinner. Patricia believes that Olesen carried lifelong guilt with him about the gunfight with the Germans. She also finds it interesting that Deerfoot, the guide, should follow rather than lead Olesen back to Norway. This, she says, means the trust between them was gone. She notes how it is very sad that Olesen, himself a human fly, should attract so many other human flies in relation to his own life. She urges K2 to return to 25 Krebs' the following day to ask specific questions which should lead to the murderer. K2 agrees to this if Patricia pretends to play the part of his injured secretary, and to come with him. She agrees happily. They will begin with Sara. K2 invites Joachim and Cecilia to the scene of the crime the following day.

Analysis

K2 continues the investigation, relaying clues and evidence to Patricia for analysis. The sudden disappearance of Darrell is alarming to K2, and makes him second-guess whether or not eliminating Darrell as a suspect was a good idea. However, the willingness of Adams to recall Darrell to Norway given K2's threats of going the route of a public warrant via Interpol leads K2 to return to his previous consideration that Darrell is not a suspect. It is possible that Darrell may have important evidence from the past that K2 and Patricia can use, so it is important that he is present in case he is needed.

The investigation into the past relating to Sara is given symbolic physical manifestation in K2's journey into Sweden. Crossing the border into Sweden is crossing the border into the past. There, K2 learns a number of important things: Sara was indeed the refugee baby kept at 25, smuggled through the mountains into Sweden, and brought to Chief Andersson by Deerfoot. Olesen arrived on the scene hours later. Andersson explains that a gunfight resulted in the deaths of three Germans and Sara's parents – but the details remain vague. Relying on reason, Patricia finds it strange that the guide, Deerfoot, should follow Olesen back up the mountain into Norway.

Some of the motives of the players are now becoming clear. Whatever happened on the mountain, it affected both Deerfoot and Olesen greatly. Olesen's changing his will to benefit primarily Sara is clearly an indication that Olesen deeply regrets what happened



on the mountaintop. Likewise, Deerfoot's postwar visits to Olesen were not happy ones, stemming back to the mountain incident and the argument Andersson observed between them outside. Clearly, the war was not only a bad memory for Olesen and Deerfoot, but something about the actual fighting – resulting in the deaths of three Germans and Sara's parents – needed accounting for.

The reader should also pay attention to a number of important clues, beyond the argument and Deerfoot's refusal to go first back up the mountain. The first is the blurry photograph of Deerfoot. A silver pendant worn around Deerfoot's neck stands out. The second is that Deerfoot is very young at the time, being about 15 or 16 years of age. This will help K2 and Patricia to determine who the murderer is based on age. Third, K2 learns that Sara indeed knew about Deerfoot, had followed up trying to find out about him, and had lied to K2 about it.

Discussion Question 1

It is increasingly becoming apparent that Deerfoot holds the key to the murder of Olesen and Konrad – and may indeed be the murderer himself. Why?

Discussion Question 2

What important information does K2 learn about Deerfoot, Olesen, and Sara while in Sweden? How does it appear to relate to Olesen's dairies and will? Why does it matter for the investigation?

Discussion Question 3

What important evidence does K2 gather about the last time Andersson saw Deerfoot, and Sara's arrive in Sweden? How does Patricia explain this? Why?

Vocabulary

reiterate, drawling, blithely, evasive, enthralled, mull, aesthetically



Day Ten – Day Eleven

Summary

Day Ten: The Story of a Human Fly

I – It is Saturday, April 13, 1968, the day before Easter. When K2 picks Patricia up, her father quietly tells him that he has not seen his daughter so happy and focused since before the accident. K2 and Patricia both agree that all residents should once again be considered suspects for the purposes of elimination.

II – K2 and Patricia enter 25 Krebs'. Patricia is warmly welcomed, with K2 explaining she was injured in a skiing accident. K2 and Patricia first meet with Sara. Sara immediately comes clean about her visit to Salen, explaining that she was worried about being pinned as a suspect, and merely wanted to thank Deerfoot for saving her life. She also explains that she was given some 50,000 kroner by Olesen during one of her visits to find out about her parents. This sums up the missing money from Olesen's account and why Sara has so much in her account.

III – In the lift, Patricia tells K2 that Sara still knows more than she is letting on, and that she is clearly terrified of something. They head next to Darrell Williams's flat, discussing what they will ask him.

IV – K2 and Patricia meet with Darrell Williams. Darrell explains he did not feel any sorrow for Olesen's death, as Olesen was a great rather than a good man. Darrell goes on to explain that all his issues with Olesen, personal and professional, were settled by the time Olesen was killed. Darrell explains that due to ensuring the safety of the Embassy, he did not previously mention that he saw Kristian Lund in a winter overcoat heading towards Olesen's door the night of the murder, just before Darrell went for his walk. It annoys K2 that Darrell did not give this information sooner, but K2 also knows now definitively that Darrell is not involved in the murder scheme. They shake hands as K2 and Patricia leave. K2 lets Darrell know that Cecilia is downstairs.

V – Patricia finds the love story between Cecilia and Darrell to be sweet. K2 and Patricia then decide to meet with the Lunds.

VI – K2 and Patricia meet with the Lunds. Kristian comes clean about meeting with Olesen just before his murder, saying Olesen was surprised to see him because Olesen was expecting someone else. Kristian also confesses that he ran into Sara on his way downstairs after this. He knows Sara to be the murderer, and agreed to protect her because he did not want word of his affair to leak out, or his payments from Olesen to leak out. Karen slaps her husband across the face as hard as she can. He apologizes for everything as K2 and Patricia exit the apartment.



VII – Patricia is amazed by the fact that Karen could forgive Kristian for murder, but not for protecting another woman. They then return to Sara’s apartment, with Patricia curious to see if her original theory holds up.

VIII – K2 and Patricia confront Sara with Kristian’s confession. Sara immediately breaks down and says that she went up to see Olesen about her parents and Deerfoot again, but he refused her, saying he had a very important meeting. On the way down, she says she ran into who she presumed to be his guest, wearing a blue raincoat and red scarf but no shoes. She says the man was very light on his feet. She says she felt a premonition, like Judgment Day had come. She says she then ran down and hid in her room until she heard the gunshot. Patricia then exclaims she knows who the killer is. She, K2, and Sara rush into the lift.

IX – Downstairs, Patricia is happy to see Cecilia and Darrell talking to one another. Patricia then leads the way to the final resident in the building.

X – K2, Patricia, and Sara meet with Andreas Gullestad, who K2 realizes is wearing a silver pendant around his neck. K2 brings up the name “Deerfoot” once more, but Andreas denies all knowledge of him. K2 asks about Andreas’s raincoat, which he points toward on the back of his door. When everyone turns to look, Andreas leaps from his wheelchair and pulls out a .45 Kongsberg Colt.

XI – Andreas explains the gun belonged to his father from his own days in the army. Andreas also explains the gun has been hidden in his seat cushion, so he has literally and figuratively been sitting on the murder weapon for ten days. He reveals that it was he who killed the three Germans, and the mother of Sara. He reveals the refugees were slowing them down, but Olesen would not leave the refugees, and Andreas says he would not leave Olesen. An argument broke out between Sara’s father and Olesen, Andreas reveals, leading to Olesen shooting the father. The wife then charged at Olesen, during which time Andreas shot the wife. Olesen was stunned and dazed by what had happened, Andreas explains, by which time the Germans came upon them. Andreas says he then proceeded to kill the Germans. Andreas explains one of the Germans, very youthful, was one of the men who arrested his father and later tried to comfort Andreas. Having to kill the German has also haunted Andreas.

It was then, Andreas reveals, that Olesen considered killing him – but stopped because the refugee baby still could be saved. Andreas explains that Olesen stayed behind to bury the dead in a cave. Sara forgives Andreas for killing her mother, and asks for the location of the cave. Andreas says he can tell her where it is. He goes on to say the incident has haunted him all his life, and is the fault of Olesen. Upon learning that Olesen intended to tell Sara the truth, Andreas then killed Olesen because Olesen was going to talk no matter what. Andreas goes on to say he killed Konrad as a sacrificial scapegoat because the idea of an ex-Nazi killing a Resistance hero could so easily be believed. Andreas aims his gun at K2, and tells him to never trust a cripple. It is then that Patricia pulls out a gun and aims at Andreas’s head, telling him to back down. He then swings the gun toward Patricia, but K2 leaps to action, taking out Andreas just as



he fires and misses Patricia. Constables arrive for Andreas, who quickly surrenders. K2 hugs Patricia.

XII – As Andreas is read his rights and reasons for arrest, he adds the murders of the war as well. K2 is roundly congratulated for his efforts and his work. K2 then drives Patricia home. She seems subdued, but then thanks K2 for such a wonderful day. K2 is then roundly congratulated at work.

Day Eleven: Tidying Up and Conclusions

I – It is Easter Day, Sunday April 11, 1968. K2 receives a call that Andreas has committed suicide in his prison cell, but has left behind a detailed note and map of the location of events in the mountains during the war. The note is confessional, thanks K2 for saving Andreas from himself, and apologizes to Sara for his role in the death of her mother. His note also explains he committed suicide by a poison pill he secretly smuggled into the prison cell.

II – K2 meets with Sara and Patricia. Patricia is her old self once again. Patricia explains she realized that the one person they sought as the murderer, who could walk in and out of the rooms as needed, was the one person never seen walking at all – Andreas. Sara then takes her leave at Patricia's request.

III – Patricia finds Sara to be crafty and willing to use her body to suit her purposes. Patricia and K2 both discuss how they suspected Joachim of being the killer at some point, but later moved on. The pendant necklace worn by Andreas, K2 explains, contained a suicide pill. Patricia, despite knowing that justice had to be done with Andreas, feels badly that someone so obviously gifted and intelligent was drawn into a terrible situation is a tragedy. Patricia, wheelchair-bound, feels intelligent and inadequate. K2 assures he she is not inadequate. Patricia explains she has been smoking cigarettes for the first time since getting home last night, feeling helpless in her wheelchair during the confrontation with Andreas. She reveals she got involved in the investigation in the first place because she wanted to make a difference. She believes she no longer can, that she does not belong in the real world. She asks that she be given as little credit as possible, and says that she will be happy to help consult on future cases so long as she does not have to become personally involved in them. K2 agrees. Patricia then begins laughing, brings in Benedikte, whispers to her, and asks K2 to follow Benedikte.

IV – Benedikte points through the window to where K2 can see Sara impatiently waiting for him, sitting on his car's hood. Years later, K2 learns that Patricia had whispered to Benedikte that he had many good qualities, but intelligence is not one of them.

Analysis

K2 and Patricia begin the final phase of their investigation when they head to 25 Krebs' together. Patricia has had no reason to be out in years, and she has never had a purpose like this before. As she later relates to K2, her insistence on helping out was



not merely a question of reason and solving puzzles, but because she genuinely wanted to help someone and know that she could make a difference in the real world. However, the near shooting of Patricia compels her to believe she does not belong in the real world because she was herself powerless in that situation. Nevertheless, she agrees to continue helping K2 in the future.

As the reader learns, Andreas is the murderer. Reason and evidence have come to eliminate all other suspects. Andrews is not only the right age, and not only has the pendant from the photograph still hanging around his neck, but has actually recovered from the auto accident injuries and now only uses the wheelchair as a prop. As Patricia wryly notes, the person they were looking for who walked in and out of two locked rooms was someone who they never thought could walk at all. It is someone so light on his feet, so much like a deer, that he isn't actually walking at all.

Andreas reveals that his motives for killing Olesen were rooted wholly in the past, specifically the war. Desperation, panic, pursuing Germans, and an argument with Sara's father led to Olesen shooting him – obviously a rushed and panicked reaction given the paralyzing stun that overtook Olesen. Andreas in turn killed Sara's mother to stop her from going after Olesen – the work of a desperate youth – before killing the three pursuing Germans. This tragedy was what Andreas spent his life circling around, as did Olesen.

Ultimately, Olesen was circled around by Andreas and a number of other human flies directly related to the experiences of the war. Olesen left nearly everything to Sara to atone for the deaths, which obviously haunted him greatly. Andreas, in turn, could never get his life back together, and he blamed Olesen for it. Seeking to protect his own involvement, Andreas killed Olesen and then killed Konrad to make it appear as if the murder was simply open-and-shut. It is clear now that Patricia's idea of the human fly is quite reasonable, and quite correct.

The reader will note at the end that a locked-room mystery is fitting for the novel's core. In the end, it wasn't so much the mystery of the locked room itself, but in that in many ways, Olesen had locked himself in a room, trying to shut out the rest of the world. Only when he refused to leave, ran into the past, and then directly began to deal with the past did he open up the door to his locked room – and his murderer. The reader should also bear one more thing in mind. Upon seeing Andreas in the raincoat and scarf on the stairs just prior to Olesen's murder, Sara had a premonition of death. Given the strange attire masking Andreas's identity, it is no surprise that Sara's instincts should be of death, as Andreas was present at the death of her parents years before.

Discussion Question 1

Why did Andreas kill Olesen? Why did he kill Konrad? Why does he ultimately kill himself?



Discussion Question 2

Why does Sara choose to forgive Andreas for the death of her mother? Why does she sympathize with Andreas rather than hate him for what was done?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Patricia believe she is inadequate and does not belong in the real world? Do you believe she is correct? Why or why not? What does K2 think of Patricia's belief? Why?

Vocabulary

omitted, consummate, cursory, antipathy, palaver, aback, imperceptibly, profusely, premonition, dithering



Characters

Kolbein "K2" Kristiansen

Kolbein "K2" Kristiansen is a Detective Inspector for the Oslo police in Norway. He seems to be in his late twenties or early thirties. As a young man, he is ambitious to the point that he primarily looks for the quickest and most straightforward solutions. As a result, he is often fooled, such as by the typewritten note left by Konrad. His work with Patricia proves to be beneficial, as he becomes more rational and objective in his work, ultimately coming to a number of conclusions about the case at the same time as Patricia. Unknowingly until the end of the novel, he gives Patricia a renewed lease on, and purpose in, life.

Patricia

Patricia Louise Isabelle Elizabeth Borchmann is a brilliant, sharp, sarcastic, pretty, and thin young woman of 18 bound to a wheelchair due to an auto accident that also killed her mother years before. As a result, she confines herself mainly to reading in a large, lonely library. Wanting to know she can make a difference in the world, she urges her father to contact old family friend K2 so she can offer help on the unfolding investigation. Patricia is thrilled to be a part of the investigation, and uses reason and logic to help K2 sort through and solve the case. She is present during the final confrontation with Andreas, and is nearly killed. Feeling helpless, she says she does not belong in the real world, but knows she can help K2 with future cases.

Harald Olesen

Harald Olesen is the man murdered hours before the novel begins in his flat at 25 Krebs's. In his late sixties, Olesen was a member of the Norwegian Home Front Resistance, which battled the Nazis and helped refugees flee into Sweden during World War II. He has held elected and appointed political offices, and is well-loved and well-respected by the public. Nevertheless, he is haunted by the inadvertent killing of Sara's father and mother during the war. Over the last months of his life, frequent encounters with people associated with wartime events compels him to change his will in favor of Sara to atone for the past, and to pay out money to his illegitimate son, Kristian. Olesen is ultimately killed by his old partner, Andreas, to stop him from confessing the truth about Sara's parents.

Randi Hansen

Randi Hansen is the wife of Anton Hansen, and his partner in owning and operating 25 Krebs' Street. Randi is a sweet, gentle, middle-aged woman who struggles with paying the medical bills her husband has run up based on trauma suffered during his



involvement with the Resistance during World War II. She is briefly but never seriously considered a suspect in Olesen's killing, though she is held to the fire for trying to keep the lives of her boarders private during K2's investigation.

Darrell Williams

Darrell Williams is a resident of 25 Krebs' Street. An American, Darrell is a World War II veteran and former operative with the OSS now attached to the American Embassy in Oslo. He has been assigned to help Olesen destroy old records from the war to protect the identities of people now working against the Communists. Darrell dated Olesen's niece, Cecilia, during and after the war, but Olesen broke them up by having his contacts reassign Darrell to the States. Darrell hated Olesen for this for years, but by the time of Olesen's death, the two had made peace and put the past behind them.

Sara

Sara Sundqvist is a resident of 25 Krebs' Street. She is in her early twenties, and is a stunningly gorgeous blonde in Oslo for college. A Jewish orphan, Sara is nervous, insecure except in her sexuality, and discovers that Olesen is living in the same building, and seeks his help in finding her parents without knowing at first his actual role in things. Sara follows clues across Norway and Sweden, but never learns the truth about her parents until K2's investigation into Olesen's murder. At 25 Krebs, Sara begins an affair with Kristian Lund, ultimately choosing to break up with him during the investigation. At the end of the novel, Sara forgives Andreas for his role in the death of her parents, thanks him for saving her life, and ultimately seems poised to begin dating K2 at the end of the novel.

Kristian and Karen Lund

Kristian and Karen Lund are residents of 25 Krebs' Street. A young married couple with an infant son, they are extremely loyal to one another – a loyalty only broken when Karen discovers that Kristian has cheated on her with Sara. Kristian, incredibly selfish and narcissistic, discovers he is the illegitimate son of Olesen, and so comes to hound him for money because he believes Olesen owes it to him.

Konrad

Konrad Jensen is a resident of 25 Krebs' Street. A middle-aged man who is extremely self-interested, bitter, and lonely, Konrad is the first suspect considered in Olesen's death. Konrad is an ex-Nazi driver whose six months working for the Nazis have made his life after the war incredibly difficult. Konrad is ultimately killed by Andreas because he is the perfect scapegoat for Olesen's murder.



Andreas

Andreas Gullestad (originally Ivar Storskog) is a resident of 25 Krebs' Street. He is formerly known as "Deerfoot", and worked with Olesen and the Resistance during the war as a teenager, helping refugees to escape. Andreas lost his father, who also worked with the Resistance, to the Nazis. During the refugee mission with Sara and her parents, Andreas witnessed Olesen inadvertently kill Sara's father, after which time Andreas killed Sara's mother to stop her from going after Olesen. Andreas then went on to save baby Sara. But the incident has haunted him all his life. He used the auto accident he was involved in to change his name. Upon learning that Olesen planned to go public with the truth for Sara's sake, he killed Olesen to protect his own role. Olesen avoids suspicion by pretending to be wheelchair-bound, and by hiding the murder weapon in his wheelchair cushion. He goes on to kill Konrad as a scapegoat, and upon being found out and arrested, Andreas commits suicide by poison pill.

Chief Andersson

Norwegian-born Police Chief Hans Andersson is the long-serving police chief in Salen, Sweden, just a few miles from the border with Norway. He and his fellow officers and family provided the first stop for refugees as they crossed the border into freedom in Sweden. Andersson meets with K2 later in the novel, providing important evidence about Sara, Oleson, and Deerfoot.



Symbols and Symbolism

Blue raincoat and red scarf

A blue raincoat and red scarf is discovered by Randi on top of the back door trash can. The raincoat and scarf were not there the night before, leading her, K2, and Patricia to believe that these were worn by the murderer. Andreas reveals he saw a tall man in a blue raincoat and red scarf on the stairs yearly a near before the murder. Sara herself saw a man in a blue raincoat and red scarf moments before Olesen was killed, and says the man's presence gave her a premonition of death. As it turns out, the coat and scarf belong to Andreas, who wore them to conceal his identity while committing the murder.

Detective novels

Detective novels by Doyle, Christie, and others are read in great number by Patricia in her library. These novels allow Patricia to rely on her mind, as it is the one part of her body that still functions fully following the accident years before. These novels represent a challenge and solution in reason, which in turn help Patricia to more fully and objectively understand the murder of Olesen.

Human flies

"Human flies" is a term coined by Patricia in the novel, and gives the novel its title. A human fly is a person who, for whatever reason, cannot move beyond a tragic event or circumstance in his or her life, and as a result, lives their life based on that event, circling around it like a fly. Patricia and K2 come to realize that Olesen, and every other resident of the building, is a human fly. Patricia even concedes that she herself is a human fly.

Gunshot recording

A gunshot recording is used by Andreas to alter the timeline of the murder of Olesen. Andreas kills Olesen with a silenced pistol, then plays a tape cassette recording of a gunshot which sounds hours later. Patricia inducts that the timing of the murder must be off since the killer could not be seen entering or exiting the room. As a result, based on her reading, she suspects a recorded gunshot is what was used. Upon examination, K2 does indeed discover a gunshot recording.

Bank account statements

Bank account statements are thoroughly examined by K2 during the course of his investigation, as Olesen paid out 250,000 kroner just before his death to unknown



parties. Checking bank account statements, K2 discovers that Sara has an unusually large amount of money for a college student, while Kristian refuses to hand over his bank books. As K2 learns, both Sara and Kristian have large amounts of money in their accounts because they were paid by Olesen.

Olesen's diaries

Olesen's diaries, including a secret diary hidden in a book about World War I, provide major clues to his death. The diaries reveal, especially in the final months and days of Olesen's life, frequent encounters with people from his past. He describes them as ghosts "crowding him" into his grave. The diaries reveal Olesen's growing fears about dying, reference his "greatest sin", and panic about dealing with Deerfoot in the particular. The people referenced in the diary are referenced by code letters – "D" for "Deerfoot", "O" for OSS for Darrell, and so on. The diaries help K2 and Patricia to understand more about Olesen's frame of mind and motives for his actions just before his death.

Confession note

A confession note, typewritten and hand-signed, is found in Konrad's room on the table beside his dead body. The note admits to killing Olesen and explains Konrad has committed suicide. K2 and everyone else except Patricia believe this closes the case – but as Patricia points out, Konrad has no typewriter. As K2 learns later as well, the spelling and grammar in the confession note are perfect, while Konrad's other handwritten documents, including a memoir, are horribly written.

Kongsberg Colt .45

A Kongsberg Colt .45 from the 1920s is used during peacetime military service by Andreas's father. It is also used by Andreas's father during his work with the Resistance. Following the death of his father, the weapon passed into Andreas's hands. It in turn becomes the murder weapon with which Andreas kills Olesen. The Kongsberg is hidden in the seat cushion of Andrea's wheelchair, leading him to gloat in the end that he has literally and figuratively been sitting on the murder weapon for ten days.

Christmas 1942 photograph

A Christmas 1942 photograph of Olesen and Deerfoot is produced by Andersson for evidence for K2. The black-and-white photograph is blurry, but gives the impression that Deerfoot is only in his mid-teens. The photograph also demonstrates that Deerfoot wears a silver pendant around his neck, which stands out to K2 more than anything else in the photograph. Patricia believes the photo, and its clue of a pendant necklace, are vital to learning who Deerfoot is.

Silver pendant necklace

A silver pendant necklace is worn by Andreas while working as Deerfoot during World War II, and is worn by Andreas years later when he is arrested and imprisoned. The silver pendant contains a poison capsule designed to allow the user to commit suicide in the event of capture by the Nazis. Andreas uses the pill while in prison after writing a confessional letter to K2 and Sara.



Settings

25 Krebs'

25 Krebs' Street serves as the primary setting of the novel. 25 Krebs' Street is located in the Torshov neighborhood of Oslo, a lower-middle class area. 25 Krebs' Street was built in the 1920s in the Torshov neighborhood, and is a simple three-story apartment building with a simple lift in the stairwell, while each bathroom has a flat. The building is owned by Anton and Randi Hensen, and contains three floors of rooms, as well as basement living quarters for the Hensens. On the night of April 4, 1968, K2 is called to 25 Krebs', to Room 3A where the body of Harald Olesen is found. From there, K2 begins a deliberate process of interviewing residents in their flats. The residents who live at 25 include Kristian and Karen Lund and their son; Swedish student Sara Sunqvist; wheelchair-bound Andreas Gullestad; American diplomat Darrell Williams; and an ex-Nazi named Konrad Jensen.

The Locked Room - 3A

The locked room, Room 3A, is the flat belonging to Olesen. It is where his body is found. Located on the second floor (the Norwegian way of counting floors differs from the American way. The ground floor in America is counted as the first floor, whereas in Norway, it is counted only as the ground floor. In America, the next floor would be the second floor, while in Norway, it would be the first floor, and so on), Olesen's room presents a locked-room mystery. The door is locked, and responding residents saw no one in the lift or on the stairs leaving Olesen's room. Likewise, the windows to the room have no fire escape, and lead to a thirty-some foot drop to the sidewalk below. This leads Patricia to believe that Olesen knew the killer, and actually invited him in. It also causes her to believe that the gunshot heard by everyone was recorded and played in order to alter the timeline of the murder by the murderer. The locked room itself becomes symbolic for Olesen. In the end, it wasn't so much the mystery of the locked room itself that mattered, but in that in many ways, Olesen had locked himself in that room, trying to shut out the rest of the world. Only when he refused to leave, ran into the past, and then directly began to deal with the past did he open up the door to his locked room – and his murderer.

Norwegian-Swedish Border

The Norwegian-Swedish border is located west of Oslo. The particular part of the border used for refugee crossings during the war is several miles northwest. It is to this part of the Norwegian-Swedish border that K2 travels when he visits Salen, Sweden. Crossing the border is symbolic of K2 crossing the threshold into the past. It is in Sweden that he learns the most yet about the wartime experiences of Olesen and Deerfoot on the Norwegian-Swedish border. It is not until K2 confronts Andreas later in the novel that he

learns about the tragedy on the border mountains, in which Sara's parents were inadvertently killed in a panic and desperation.

Salen, Sweden

Salen, Sweden, is a small, sparsely populated, largely rural hamlet a short distance from the Norwegian-Swedish border. The closest building to the border is the isolated, farmhouse-like police station where Police Chief Hans Andersson and his family live, and where Andersson works. During the Second World War, the Salen police station was the first stop for refugees from Norway when they made it into Sweden, and marked a place of rest and point of return for Olesen and Deerfoot. K2 journeys to Salen to meet with Andersson, and there learns much more about Olesen and Deerfoot, and learns that Sara herself had been to Salen in the past few years to learn about the past.

Borchmann library

The Borchmann library is a massive library located in the Borchmann residence in a very wealthy area of Norway. There, Patricia spends most of her time lost in books, reading fiction and learning from nonfiction. Her favorite books are detective novels, and these help give her keen insights into the criminal mind which in turn help her to help K2 solve the murder of Olesen. The library plays host to a number of meetings and meals between K2 and Patricia, and is where Patricia does most of her work on the case.



Themes and Motifs

Locked room mystery

A locked room mystery serves as an important foundational theme for the novel “The Human Flies” by Hans Olav Lahlum. Locked room mysteries, credited with being invented fully by Edgar Allen Poe, involve a mystery or murder committed in a room that is locked, with no seeming way in or out for the individual who committed the crime. The murder of Harald Olesen is such a locked room mystery.

When K2 arrives at 25 Krebs’, he discovers that Olesen has been found dead in Flat 3A, his home. The residents report responding to the sound of a gunshot seconds after it was heard, only to find the door locked, and to have passed no one on the stairs or in the lift on the way up. The windows are also locked, and with no fire escape, stand thirty-some feet above the sidewalk. This, is begs to be answered how a murderer made his way into a totally locked, isolated room, killed Olesen with a gun, and made it out within a matter of seconds and without being seen by anyone.

Patricia identifies the murder as a classic locked-room mystery upon reading about it in the papers. Using her extensive knowledge of detective fiction, she encourages K2 to check for a sound recording of a gunshot, which he discovers on a tape cassette. This means that the killer used a silenced pistol to kill Olesen, then played the tape, giving the killer an amount of time to escape without being detected. The delayed sound of a gunshot meant that the timeline of the murder was thus altered. This means that the killer could have been out of the room for up to two hours before the sound occurred, and the murder was believed to have happened. With this in hand, K2 and Patricia have solved the locked-room portion of the mystery, but the murderer and the motive still remain to be found.

The reader should note that theme of the locked room in general is also immensely symbolic when it comes to Olesen and the past relating to the novel. In the end, it was not so much the mystery of the locked room itself that mattered with respect to Olesen, but in many ways, Olesen had locked himself in his room, trying to shut out the rest of the world and escape the past. Only when he refused to leave, encountered the past, and then directly began to deal with the past did he open up the door to his locked room – and his murderer.

The Past

The past is an important theme in the novel “The Human Flies” by Hans Olva Lahlum. The past essential involves a person’s history, and events of history in general that relate to that person’s past. In the novel, the past is critical for K2 in understanding the people who reside at 25 Krebs’ Street and in seeking to understand what motives they may have for murder (also see the themes of War and Motives). This in turn ties directly



into Patricia's concept of human flies – of people who live their lives circling around one past event that they cannot move beyond. Patricia admits she herself is a human fly, for the auto accident that has left her paralyzed has left her emotionally and physically unable to move past it. As a result, she seeks to help K2 solve the case to demonstrate she can still make a difference in the world.

Olesen's past is the most well-known at the beginning of the novel, and the least known as it turns out. A Resistance hero who fought the Nazis and helped refugees flee Norway in World War II, Olesen was also a politician who united rather than divided, and also helped to root out Communists later on. As it is revealed, Olesen inadvertently killed the then-baby Sara's father during a panicked argument on the border with Sweden as a bad snowstorm and Germans closed in. It was because of the past that Olesen withdrew into himself and sought to atone through reworking his will in Sara's favor. Indeed, Olesen becomes a human fly around which other human flies collect.

It was also because of the past that most of the people in 25 Krebs' either came to live there, or ended up seeking out Olesen in his final weeks. Kristian, due his wife's wealth, has no reason for living in the Torshov neighborhood, but does so because he knows it puts him close to Olesen. Kristian, Olesen's illegitimate son born to a Nazi mother, seeks to avenge Olesen for growing up without a father and with everyone hating him because of his mother's past by demanding Olesen give him the money owed to him for never being in his life. It is because of Kristian's recent past –his affair with Sara – that he and Sara are both short in coming with answers to K2's questions. Sara herself ended up at the building unintentionally, but upon learning who Olesen was, sought him out for information about her parents. Once she knew Olesen was in the building, she stayed.

Olesen sought out the building as a safe place to spend his final years because the building itself was a safe house during the war, where it was still then run by Anton and Randi. Because of his past working with Olesen against the Nazis and Communists, Darrell Williams is given the assignment of helping Olesen to destroy documents to protect the secrecy of agents still working against the Communists. It is because Olesen lives at the building that Andreas himself directly moves into the building with the intention of making sure Olesen does not speak to anyone about what happened during the war. Andreas's own past has haunted him since the day Sara's parents were killed, and seeking to protect his own part in things, Andreas kills Olesen.

War

War is an important theme in the novel "The Human Flies" by Hans Olva Lahlum. War is open conflict that occurs between two or more combatant sides. The war specifically referred to continually in the novel is World War II, specifically the European theater where Nazi Germany invaded and conquered much of Western and Eastern Europe until the countries were ultimately liberated by the Allied Forces, including the Americans.



Among the countries that Nazi Germany conquered during the war was Norway. While Norway surrendered itself to German occupation, many thousands of brave Norwegians fought on in the Resistance, the Home Front movement, which did everything it could to help refugees escape and to foul up the occupation of the Nazis. Olesen, along with Haraldsen, were leading figures in the Resistance during the war. They were joined by Andreas and his father, Anton and Randi, and contacts in Sweden including Police Chief Andersson. When the United States entered the war, American operatives – including Darrell Williams – worked with the Norwegian Resistance, offering them manpower and resources they did not have before. After World War II ended, Williams stayed on to help the Norwegians undermine the Communists, who sought to take over Norway.

Among those people that Olesen's local group of Home Front operatives sought to help were then-baby Sara and her parents, all Jews. For years, Olesen and Deerfoot successfully managed to help refugees escape into Sweden, an unoccupied country, but by the time of helping Sara's parents to escape, the Nazis had caught up. Between the Nazis and a snowstorm, panic and desperation set in for Olesen and Deerfoot, who in a tragic situation, killed Sara's parents. It is this wartime experience which haunts Olesen and Andreas to their deaths, and drives Andreas on to murder Olesen.

The war affected others as well. Some went on to positions of power after the war, such as Haraldsen, who became a Norwegian Supreme Court Justice. Others did not fare well, as in the case of Anton. So shaken up by his wartime service in the Resistance, Anton turned to heavy cigarette smoking and alcoholism, leading to the ruin of his family financially. Still others did not survive the war. Andreas's own father was arrested, tortured, and executed by the Nazis for his part in fighting against them in the Resistance. Sara herself grew up as an orphan without any idea about what happened to her parents for years.

Reason and Logic

Reason and logic form an important theme in the novel "The Human Flies" by Hans Olva Lahlum. Reason and logic – essentially the process of determining things by evidence, facts, and even inducting from warranted belief – are key tools used by Patricia as she assists K2 with his investigation. She gives K2's investigation a decidedly objective aspect, whereas K2 had previously been seeking the easiest and most apparent answer to things.

It is through reason and logic – as well as Patricia's understanding of the criminal mind through detective fiction – that she helps K2 eliminate the locked-room portion of the mystery of Olesen's murder. It stands to reason, she explains, that if the killer was not seen leaving a locked room seconds after residents responded to the sound of a gunshot, that the killer was not in the room at all to begin with when the gunshot was heard. By inducting reason and logic, Patricia contends the sound was actually only a sound – a reasoned belief that is validated by the discovery of the tape cassette.



Reason and logic come in handy during the evaluation and study of Olesen's diaries. His cryptic references to "S", "J", "N", "D", and "O" are ultimately explained away in due time based on evidence and reasoned belief. "S" is discovered to be Sonja, the woman with whom Olesen had a wartime affair and with whom he fathered an illegitimate child – Krisitan – referred to as "N" for "Nazi child". Based on the timing of entries and Sara's visits to Olesen, "J" is confirmed to be Sara, with "J" standing for "Jewess". Based on evidence from the American Embassy and Darrell, Darrell is ultimately identified as "O" for "OSS". "D" is later confirmed to be "Deerfoot", who is in turn identified as Andreas. It is through reason and logic that the trail leads to Andreas by way of evidence such as his age at the time of the killing.

Reason and logic also help K2 and Patricia to determine that the two primary suspects – Konrad and Darrell – are not suspects at all. It stands to reason, Patricia explains, that Konrad could not type a confession note before killing himself if he did not have a typewriter. As K2 reasons, Konrad could not have written the note elsewhere due to the note's perfect spelling and grammar, and Konrad's own horrible spelling and grammar. K2 and Patricia later conclude from reason and evidence that Darrell is not the killer due to the fact that Darrell was helping Olesen to hide the identities of secret agents working against the Communists, and because the two men made peace before Olesen's death.

Motives

Motives for murder form an important theme in the novel "The Human Flies" by Hans Olva Lahlum. Motives are a person's reasons for doing something, in this case, committing a murder. The motives in the novel are entirely traced to past events, in particular, wartime Norway in the 1940s. (Please also see the themes of The Past and War.)

As K2 and Patricia come to discover, almost every person in the building has a motive to murder Olesen. Some motives are stronger than others. Only Karen Lund, a young mother who dotes on her child and remains loyal to her husband, is never seriously considered a suspect. Her husband, however, is. Kristian Lund's insistence on lying about his bank account, affair with Sara, and with knowing Olesen previously to move into 25 Krebs', lead to scrutiny. It is theorized that Kristian wanted Olesen dead for abandoning him and his Nazi mother during the war, and because Olesen denied Kristian as his son for so long.

Randi is briefly considered a suspect, for her husband lost his health and mind to the war after being recruited by Olesen to fight in the Resistance. Sara herself is even considered a suspect given that Olesen and Deerfoot killed her parents. Joachim and Cecilia are considered suspects given their terse relationship with their uncle Olesen, and his insistence on trying to run their lives before. This is especially true when it comes to Cecilia and Darrell. Darrell risked his life for the Norwegians, only to have Olesen forbid his relationship with Cecilia, and have him deported from the country under the auspice of being "reassigned". Darrell has a strong motive for murder for having the entire course of his life changed by Olesen.



As it turns out, Andreas is the one with motive for murdering Olesen. The groundwork for the murder of Olesen was laid with the death of Andreas's father while serving in the Resistance. This created something of a trusted father-son relationship between Andreas and Olesen. This trust was utterly destroyed on the mountaintop when Olesen and Andreas killed Sara's parents in panic and desperation, only for Olesen to turn his gun on Andreas. Between the murders and this betrayal, Andreas lived the rest of his life unable to move beyond the event. When he learned that Olesen intended to tell Sara everything, Andreas moved in, not wanting his own role in Sara's death exposed.



Styles

Point of View

Hans Olav Lahlum tells his novel “The Human Flies” in the first-person reflective limited-omniscient perspective from the point of view of K2. This is done because it is K2 himself who is recalling the events of his own past years after the fact. This is evidenced in many places, such as in the final chapter of the novel where he talks about an event which occurs “several decades later” after Patricia has died. The first-person aspect of the narrative gives the reader intimate insight and personal glimpses into the mind frame and thought process of K2 as he attempts to solve the case, collecting and sorting through evidence and information with Patricia. The limited-omniscient aspect of the narrative means that the reader only learns about things as K2 reveals them to the reader. This creates a sense of suspense, drama, and mystery, which is fitting given the novel’s genre as detective fiction.

Language and Meaning

Hans Olav Lahlum tells his novel “The Human Flies” in language that is simple and straightforward. This is done for at least three reasons. First, the novel follows in the tradition of classic mystery novels and their detectives, including the hardboiled detectives of the 1940s and 1950s who seek solutions primarily in action and legwork. Because the novel is told from the point of view of K2, who is in that tradition as a detective, it is only natural that he should be a man of few, simple, and straightforward words. (Patricia provides K2 with an invaluable asset by way of her brilliant mind, a throwback to earlier generations of detectives such as Sherlock Holmes. Together, K2 and Patricia form a modern team of detectives in which both hard evidence and legwork, and reason are needed to solve crimes.) Secondly, the uncomplicated language of the novel allows the reader to focus on the mystery, clues, and investigation themselves. Third, the simple and straightforward language creates a fast-paced sense of brevity as the eleven days of the novel speed by wherein K2 and Patricia race against the clock to catch the killer.

Structure

Hans Olav Lahlum divides his novel “The Human Flies” into eleven major parts, with each part further subdivided into chapters. Each of the major parts of the novel comprises the events of a single day. Each part is therein labeled according to the day, and a set of circumstances specific to that day. For example, the fifth part is titled “Day Five: A Diary and Its Secrets”. Within each part are chapters divided with Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, etc.). Each chapter deals with a specific set of events or situations particular to that part’s (or day’s) events. For example, Day Ten, Chapter I deals with K2

picking up Patricia from her house in order to head over to confront Andreas at 25 Krebs'.



Quotes

We had a body, a crime scene and an indisputable murder, but not only did we not have a motive, a weapon or a suspect, we had no idea how the murderer could possibly have fled the victim's flat after firing the fatal shot.

-- K2 (Day One, I paragraph 4)

Importance: Detective Inspector Kolbein "K2" Kristiansen responds to a murder called in by Constable Asbjorn Eriksen. As K2 learns, there clearly has been a murder, but how Harald Olesen has been killed, why, and how the killer has managed to escape are entirely unknown. A classic locked-room mystery has been set up by the author, which K2 must now proceed to solve.

The most pressing question therefore was, how had the murderer managed to leave the flat in those few seconds between the shot being heard and the neighbors arriving at the scene?

-- K2 (Day One, II paragraph 5)

Importance: K2 probes the locked room mystery that has now unfolded surrounding Harald Olesen. The only possible way in and out of Olesen's apartment is through his door. The only realistic way in and out of the building is the front door. K2 is now confronted with the question of how a suspect could have escaped within seconds of the shot being fired, and residents responding. This will be crucial in solving the murder.

In fact, his death is the worst thing that could happen to me.

-- Konrad Jensen (Day One, V paragraph 6)

Importance: While interviewing Konrad Jensen, K2 learns that Konrad worked for the Nazis during World War II. He says he would never kill Olesen, had never known Olesen before, and says that Olesen's death is the worst thing that could happen to him. He contends this is true because everyone will blame him for Olesen's death, with Konrad being a former driver for the Nazis. It will make him a moving target and make life next-to-impossible for him, as no one will want to hire or help a collaborator.

The notion of using a sound recording to alter the time of a murder is familiar enough, from one of Agatha Christie's earlier novels in particular.

-- Patricia (Day Three, IV paragraph 28)

Importance: Meeting with the daughter of a friend of his father's, K2 is amazed by her brilliance and insight. She is fiercely intelligent and well-read, and explains – based on her reading of Agatha Christie – that the timeline of the murder is intentionally off. A silenced shot, she contends, killed Olesen, while a recording of a second shot made everyone think he was killed later than he actually was. Olesen is impressed.

I believe we are looking for a human fly.

-- Patricia (Day Three, V paragraph 25)



Importance: K2 and Patricia meet to discuss the case. Patricia contends they are looking for a “human fly”, a term of her own coining, meaning one who experiences a tragedy of such immense pain that they never get over it, and so circle around it all their lives like a fly. She believes the killer is a human fly, and believes that Olesen himself was a human fly. These people may have attracted each other, and this could be where the motive begins.

Unexpectedly bumped into S, accompanied by the ghastly N. S is ill and a shadow of what I remember from all those years ago, but still aroused strong memories. A very unsettling encounter.

-- Olesen’s diary (Day Five, I paragraph 9)

Importance: When K2 meets with Olesen’s biographer, Bjorn, K2 learns of diaries kept by Olesen. One entry stands out, which references an unexpected and unsettling encounter with “S” and “N”. Their identities and the importance are revealed later, but it is enough for K2 to realize there is something important in the final diary, missing from the apartment. Patricia believes the diary is directly relatable to Olesen’s death.

The evil spirits from my past are crowding me into my grave... In desperation, have called a final meeting on Thursday evening, despite the obvious risks.

-- Olsen’s diary (Day Five, III paragraph 25)

Importance: Olesen reveals in his dairy a situation rapidly spiraling out of control. A number of people are harassing him, seeking money, or threatening his life. In desperation, Olesen calls a final meeting, but to what end is not known. What is known is that the final meeting has been called for on the same night that Olesen was murdered.

I agree that we are dealing with a particularly cunning murderer and another exceedingly sophisticated murder.

-- Patricia (Day Six, 6 paragraph 11)

Importance: When Konrad is found dead with a pistol and a signed confession, K2 and everyone else believe the murder has been solved – except Patricia. Patricia insists that Konrad was murdered and did not commit suicide. She argues that the murderer is cunning and his techniques are sophisticated. She is proven to be correct even when K2 himself has been fooled.

I do not like to say so, but thinking about where the investigation might have been today without Patricia’s vision was a terrifying thought. If I would ever have managed to work out how the murder was committed was an open question.

-- K2 (Day Eight, IV paragraph 11)

Importance: Here, the ambitious K2 makes a bold confession to the reader. He explains that it is troubling to him that his own faculties may not have allowed him to progress in the case as far as he has without Patricia. This also demonstrates that



Patricia is well worth the time K2 has spent with her, and that she knows what she is talking about. It proves that Patricia has become an invaluable asset to K2.

It was clear that Sara Sundqvist would have difficulties explaining herself.
-- K2 (Day Nine, III paragraph 9)

Importance: K2 follows up leads on Olesen and Deerfoot in Sweden, where he meets with Police Chief Hans Andersson. Andersson reveals his wartime history of helping Olesen and Deerfoot with refugees. He reveals how Deerfoot served as a mountain guide for Olesen, and brought baby Sara to them. He then reveals that years later, Sara came around to ask about Olesen and Deerfoot – things which Sara expressly denied previously. K2 now begins to look at Sara suspiciously, and seeks to uncover more about Deerfoot.

I have literally been sitting on the murder weapon for ten days!
-- Andreas (Day Ten, XI paragraph 1)

Importance: K2, Patricia, and Sara zero in on the murderer of Olesen and Konrad. It is Andreas, who reveals he has hidden the murder weapon in his wheelchair cushion. He has figuratively and literally been sitting on the murder weapon for ten days with no one the wiser. He quickly changes from a kind, wheelchair-bound man to an angry, hostile monster ready to kill again.

I asked my father to call you that morning eight days ago because I still thought and hoped that I could make an important difference to someone out there.
-- Patricia (Day Eleven, III paragraph 35)

Importance: Patricia explains that she was feeling helpless in her wheelchair during the confrontation with Andreas. She reveals she got involved in the investigation in the first place because she wanted to make a difference. She believes she no longer can, that she does not belong in the real world, that her handicap prevents her from having any effect. K2 assures her she has had an effect.