

Atle Berge:
ROUGHNECK (Puslingar)

Sample translation

SECTION 1: pp24-31

The priest came out to visit the Lange family in the dead of night. Although Jonny hadn't yet been named as one of the survivors, nor dredged up by the deep sea divers, it was now beyond doubt that he had been aboard the *Kielland* at the time of the accident. Astrid was therefore forced to make the call of whether to arrange a memorial service now, or whether to wait for the remaining bodies trapped in the wreckage to be retrieved. The priest explained that this latter option was normal practice after someone had lost their life at sea, while there was still hope of discovering the body of the deceased. Astrid nodded. She wanted to wait.

“I don't have the strength right now for such a fiasco. The whole village will want to be there to make sure they don't miss anything.”

Astrid could see that the priest was clearly disappointed. But she couldn't be expected to arrange a whole funeral just because he wanted to fill up his church for a change? Yet again, she was reminded of the couple next door she had chased out of the house. She felt her cheeks turn red and buried her face in her hands. The priest crouched down in front of her and asked whether she wanted to go back to bed. She nodded and showed him to the door. Once he had left the house, however, she realised it might have been a good idea to have someone staying with her after all. It struck her as peculiar that Trygve hadn't come by, yet. He could have at least called to see whether everything was alright? He must have taken it for granted that Jonny was out working on the *Eldfisk* oil rig, since she would have tried to get a hold of him if something had happened. Yep, he was most probably going to fly off the hook once he found out that she hadn't tried to contact him straight away. Unfortunately, he wasn't answering the phone. The morning after it happened, after Ottar Lange had called to say that everything was alright with Marita, someone finally answered the phone at the Trygve household. Astrid felt faint, and had to sit down. This was the

first time she needed to say it out loud: Jonny had been onboard the Alexander Kielland. They still haven't found him.

She could hear bubbling, gurgling sounds coming from the drainpipe outside, when a woman's voice suddenly answered at the other end:

"Trygve?!"

This must have been Trygve's mother.

"No, it's me, Astrid. Jonny's wife."

"Oh, so it is."

"Is Trygve not there?"

Glug, glug.

"No. We can't get hold of him. Which makes it more than certain he was aboard the Kielland."

"What are you talking about?"

"Trygve was onboard the Alexander Kielland."

"What? But Trygve doesn't even work offshore!"

"Well no, not normally, but he was supposed to install some lights and things on a brand new rig. I think she was called the Foxtrot. Yes, Foxtrot, that was it. The problem was that his transport from Kielland to the new rig was cancelled. And now we can't get a hold of him."

Astrid slumped down in her seat and tried to get her head around the news. Trygve had been on the Kielland with Jonny? Now her two best friends were probably dead? She had known that Jonny had been trying to convince Trygve to work offshore, of course. His dream was to get them both matching rotas, so they could get up to no good together on their weeks off. But nobody had told her anything about Trygve getting an electrician job on this new oil rig. A hollow moan escaped from her mouth. She wiped away the snot with the back of her hand and curled up in her chair, while this strange wail kept coming and going at an ever increasing rate.

He gave a sudden start as he felt someone lay a hand on his shoulder. Next to the bed was a rather short police officer, accompanied by the prettiest of all the nurses in the hospital.

“Would you mind saying a few words about what happened?” asked the miniature policeman.

Trygve felt himself drawing in a deep breath. He lifted his hands up to cover his face. An awful scream was building up inside him. If he let it out, it would blow the policeman’s hat off and knock the pair at his bedside flying head over heels, as if they had been hit in the face by a leaf blower. It would make daffodils in the jar on the windowsill wilt. Tear off limbs. Guts sent flying. Oh yes. If he let this scream escape, he had no idea what they would do with him.

“Well, at least you can tell us whether you have any family we can let know about this?”

Trygve realised he needed to pull himself together. He was just about to tell them they should call his parents, when the lovely-looking nurse beat him to the punch.

“Leave him be. He’s in shock.”

He fell asleep the moment they left the room and woke up the following night, well-rested and starving hungry. He pulled on the thread that was dangling above the bedside table, and shot the nurse a grin when she swiftly appeared at the door. For just a few seconds, he imagined the two of them running off to a Mediterranean island somewhere. Palm trees, colourful drinks and hammock sex. He bounced out of bed without the slightest effort.

“I feel ready to head home. Could I borrow a telephone? I need to call my parents and tell them I’m alive. And then I’m going to need some food. Lots of food! You wouldn’t believe how hungry I am right now!”

He was left feeling a little bit sheepish when the nurse, chuckling, stopped him in his tracks in the corridor and sent him back to bed.

“You should probably wait here until the doctor examines you tomorrow. We need to see how you manage without medicine, and we should really find something for you to wear, too.”

He must have answered correctly to all of the doctor's questions during the morning round, because the nurse came soon after to tell him they were willing to discharge him when he felt ready. And so, by lunchtime, Trygve found himself standing in the hospital's reception in slightly too loose velvet trousers, a far too tight hawaiian shirt, a hole-ridden knitted jumper and a blue, worn-out bubble jacket. Clothes that quick-thinking and generous locals had donated to the hospital so that the survivors without family in Stavanger had clothes to travel home in. The front page of the VG paper on the newstand read "A NATION IN MOURNING - flag half-mast - celebrations cut short - funeral music on the radio and TV. Norway is a land in mourning: 38 people found dead after the inconceivable tragedy in the North Sea - 101 still missing. There is sadly little hope of finding any more survivors."

There was a queue to the telephone box, but at long last he was able to ring up his parents. Mum began crying and asked whether he was with Jonny. She had spoken with Astrid, of course, so he promised to call Jonny's wife right away. But when he lifted the receiver to do so, he buckled. He gritted his teeth, and decided to catch a taxi into the centre. From there, he would catch the Flaggruten foot ferry to Bergen.

Sitting inside the taxi, he began to imagine the waves breaking, but before long found himself picturing the men he had seen drowning as they drowned again outside the boat window.

"Actually, could you drive me to the airport instead?"

He suddenly realised that he didn't have any money, and started rummaging through the pockets of the donated clothes.

"And could I get an invoice? It turns out I don't have a wallet on me."

At first the taxi driver didn't respond, just sat there staring blankly. Then he turned round to face him.

"You were on the Kielland, weren't you?"

Trygve nodded.

"Well in that case, the trip is on me. Don't worry about it."

"No, I..."

"Hell man, of course it is! All I've been thinking about over the past few days is how I can help out."

Trygve hurriedly dried the tear streaming out his right eye.

“By the way, it’s completely crazy when you read all those stories about all the people who should have been aboard, but for some or other reason were on land at the time,” said the driver. “This one guy I read about should have been out there until the day after, but he had just had a kid, so he tantrumed his way into coming back to land the day before it all went down. He must have flown on the last helicopter to take off from the Kielland.

Trygve pictured Jonny in the helicopter cabin.

“Yeah. I was on the last helicopter to ever land on the Kielland.”

He started thinking about Jonny again. Back in the cinema, in the seconds before the lights went out. Before the almighty boom. Then the crashing sound.

“So have you got your flight ticket, then?” asked the driver.

“Huh?”

“You must have your flight ticket, right?”

Trygve shrank in his seat. He felt so utterly stupid.

“I assume you’re headed for Bergen?”

He nodded. The driver turned off the ignition, then vanished out of the car and into the terminal.

Five minutes later, he was back with a ticket to Bergen.

“Your company can have the honours of paying me back for this one.”

The driver grabbed a pen and wrote some names, addresses and phone numbers on the back of a lottery ticket. While the driver was scribbling, Trygve imagined how jam-packed his parents’ living room probably was right now with family, friends and neighbours, now that mum had spread the good news about her son coming home again - alive. They were bound to celebrate, chat about how worried they had been, then say all’s well that ends well. Almond cake and coffee. It didn’t bear thinking about.

SECTION 2: pp143-147

When Marita came to school the day after the funeral, there was a note in her locker: *His name is Trygve Littlehovden. He was on the Alexander Kielland together with your father.* At first, Marita didn't understand who "he" was, nor who had written the note. She could just about remember Trygve, who was one of Jonny's many friends who just vanished after her father's passing. When she came into the classroom, Settembrini had his nose buried deep into his book. His neck turned so red when she came in that it was clear who the anonymous notewriter was.

The first free period she got, she rushed into the teacher's room to borrow the telephone and an address book. When someone finally picked up at the other end, it was instantly obvious she was speaking with someone who wasn't used to being called up on the phone.

"Uh... Hello?"

"Yes, hello! This is Marita Lange. Is that you, Trygve?"

"Erm, okay... Does your mum know you're calling me?"

"Why would you ask me that?"

"I think you should find out from her whether it's okay for us to speak to one other."

"Do you remember me?"

"Of course I remember you."

"I didn't know you were on the Kielland with Dad."

"I thought that might be it. But you should still go and speak with Astrid first. We can have a chat later."

He hung up. Marita snatched a pen from the receptionist's desk and noted down his address. Then when the school day came to an end, she set course for Osterfjorden. She didn't know this part of Knarvik so well and had to ask several busy umbrellas about how to get there. The last one she asked had a lot of time.

"Are you bound for Trygve or for his parents?"

"Trygve."

"Alone?"

She nodded.

“Okay, then. It’s right round the corner. Red house on the cliff, fjord-facing, with its front door on the first floor. Trygve lives in the basement apartment. His door is at the front of the house.”

Marita said thank you before lightly jogging the rest of the way. She walked round the house just as she had been told to, landed three raps on the door knocker on the ground floor apartment. It was a long while before he opened up. He gave her a skeptic look before extending his right hand.

“I have to admit, I’ve been wanting to meet you ever since I saw you at the centre.”

“I hardly even recognise you. Do you know how bloody awful you look? I thought you were a paedo or something. You know that beard of yours makes you look completely psycho, right?”

He looked down.

“I don’t give a damn.”

“You won’t get yourself a girlfriend looking like that, you know...”

“I’ll never get a girlfriend regardless.”

“Are you gay?”

“No! It’s just enough work taking care of myself.”

“Do you work?”

“Sometimes.”

“You should cut your hair, by the way.”

He grunted and started rubbing his right earlobe with his left hand. Marita tried to send a suggestive look at the door. Wasn’t he going to invite her in?

“I could see that you were both afraid of me then, you and boyfriend,” he said. “I was thinking about introducing myself, but then you turned tail and ran.”

“He’s not my boyfriend, though. He’s just a mate. I mean, well, now he hates me because I turned him down. What a complete drama queen!”

“Hm.”

They stood in silence for a long while. Marita nodded at the door, and Trygve kind of woke out of his stupor, let go of his ear and made way for her to come inside.

“Yes, of course. You should come in.”

She walked right into a stench of smoke and booze, and gave a start when he closed the door behind her. She should have brought mum along. No, actually, she should have brought Vegard. Astrid would have just killed the conversation with her

“no, that’s quite enough of that sort of talk”. What’s more, it was a little bit weird that Astrid and Trygve hadn’t stayed in touch after the accident. She needed to ask about that.

The man, who was still a stranger when it came right down to it, smiled nervously, then stepped into the flat and asked her to take a seat on the sofa.

“I imagine you’re hungry, right? Came right from school?”

Marita sat down on the worn, woolen sofa he had pointed to before he continued into the kitchen. She noticed how well-organised the apartment was, although that was most likely down to just how few things he owned. After all, if the layer of dust on the table was anything to judge by, he wasn’t that particularly concerned about keeping the house clean. She closed her eyes and could hear margarine begin to sizzle in the frying pan in the kitchen, and she tried to figure out what was awaiting her. Maybe some kind of conclusion. Was today the day she finally got rid of that feeling of this bogeyman always dogging her footsteps?

“It’s great to meet you,” he said once the two plates of fried egg on toast had arrived at the table. “I remember you well. You were devilishly good at building lego.”

“I don’t understand why Mum never invited you round.”

He shook his head, and his cheeks turned a deep, blueberry purple.

“No, me neither... Well, I suppose she probably hasn’t had it too easy either?”

“I haven’t the foggiest! She never says anything about anything unless I force it out of her. So tell me, then! I want to know everything about what happened.”

He nodded, sat up and cleared his throat.

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