

## How it began

It was a Thursday morning in February. In Tromsø, in the north of Norway, it was snowing. No one noticed when Hilde Johansen disappeared. The 70-year-old was walking home from the shops. A car stopped next to her and a man got out. The next minute she was pushed into the car and it drove away fast.

That afternoon, Margit Berg was at work in Oslo. Her mobile phone rang.

‘I’m calling about your mother,’ said a strange, deep voice. ‘Listen!’

Margit told the people at work that she was sick, and left early. When she got home, she booked a flight to Tromsø.

Fox marched up and down in the hut on the island of Kvaløya near Tromsø. His head was covered by a black hood. It had holes for his eyes and mouth. He looked at his mobile phone, then threw it onto a table and said, ‘It’s Friday now. Where is she? Why doesn’t she call?’

Hilde Johansen didn’t say anything. She sat in a chair and stared at him with sad eyes. Her hands and feet were tied.

Fox picked up the phone again. ‘She *must* answer this time.’ He listened as the phone rang and rang. He looked down at Hilde. ‘It will be very bad for you if your daughter doesn’t help us. She told me she’d booked the holiday on Kvaløya.’

Hilde said, ‘She’ll help you. She won’t want to help but she’ll want to save me.’

‘Perhaps. But she’s not answering.’ Fox tried again. ‘One last chance.’

The ringing began again, then a quiet voice said, ‘Hello?’

‘Where were you, Margit?’ said Fox. ‘I’ve been calling and calling.’

‘I’m sorry,’ Margit replied. ‘It’s a two-hour flight from Oslo to Tromsø. And the taxi picked us up from the airport late because of the bad weather.’

‘Are you on Kvaløya now?’

‘Yes.’

‘Is he there?’

‘Yes, he is.’

‘And did you talk to him?’

‘Yes. On the flight.’ Margit was quiet for a moment, then she said, ‘I think it will work. He likes me.’

‘It must. If it doesn’t work or if you call the police, you’ll never see your mother again.’

‘Please don’t hurt her.’ Margit began to cry.

‘She’s tied to a chair. Her hands and feet hurt.’ Fox laughed. ‘Today is Friday. You have two days. I must have the formula by Sunday evening.’ Fox ended the call. He looked at Hilde. ‘Two days,’ he repeated. ‘Your daughter is beautiful. I hope she’s clever too. I don’t want to hurt you.’

He walked into the bathroom and closed the door. He didn’t want Hilde to hear his next call.

The phone was answered at once. ‘Yes, Fox?’

‘It’s going to be hard. She’s met Smith. But two days to get the formula? We’re running out of time.’

‘We didn’t know earlier that Smith was going to speak at the Institute in Tromsø on Monday. He’s going to tell everyone what he’s found out. He must be stopped.’

‘I understand,’ said Fox, ‘but how do I stop him?’

‘Bear says he doesn’t care how you do it. Just do it without any trouble. No bodies and no police.’

‘Okay. Good. I’ll stop him.’ Fox ended the call. ‘It won’t be easy if I can’t hurt anyone.’

Fox went back into the big room, sat on his bed and waited.

## The arrival

Anders Olsen was studying in his room.

‘Anders, come here.’ His father, Erik, was calling from the bottom of the stairs.

Anders sighed, put down his book and walked slowly out of his room.

Erik said, ‘Thomas just called me. He’s sick so you’ll have to be the other tour guide this weekend.’

‘But I have to study, Dad.’

‘Sorry, Anders. People will be arriving soon for the next tour. I need you. You can study in the evenings.’

Erik Olsen was the owner of Olsen’s Arctic Huskies. He and his old friend Thomas Andersen were guides for family husky dog sled tours on Kvaløya.

Anders sighed again. ‘How many people are coming this time?’

Erik said, ‘Four. Two families called this morning and said they couldn’t come now. But there’s an English man and his daughter. The Smiths. They booked some time ago. And a mother and son just booked yesterday. The Bergs from Oslo.’

‘Not too many people, then.’ Anders was pleased; he was quiet and didn’t like meeting the tourists.

‘Their taxis from the airport should be here soon.’

‘Okay,’ said Anders. ‘I’ll come down when they get here.’

‘Thank you, son.’

Anders’s younger sister Astrid rushed into his room. ‘Anders, they’re here! Come on.’

They walked down the stairs together. Astrid said, ‘The girl looks nice.’

Anders said, ‘She’s a tourist, not a new friend.’

Astrid pushed him. 'You're silly, Anders. You don't like anyone!'

'That's not true,' said Anders. 'I just don't like strangers.'

Astrid was different. She liked everyone.

Two taxis had brought the Smiths and the Bergs to the front door of the Olsens' house. They stood with their bags in the snow. Erik had opened the door and was saying, 'Hello' when Astrid and Anders arrived.

'These are my children, Anders and Astrid,' said Erik. 'Anders will be the second tour guide this weekend.'

A man came forward and held out his hand to Erik, then to Anders and Astrid. 'Ben Smith,' he said, 'with my daughter Jackie. We're happy to be here.' He was tall and thin with brown hair and bright brown eyes behind round glasses. Jackie was short, and had brown hair and brown eyes like her father's. She smiled at the Olsens.

'Pleased to meet you, Mr Smith,' said Astrid. 'And you too, Jackie.'

'It's Professor Smith,' said Ben, 'but please call me Ben.'

Erik turned to the woman. 'And you must be Mrs Berg, with Per.'

The woman smiled at him and held out her hand. 'That's right, I'm Margit,' she said.

She was the most beautiful woman Anders had seen. He could see that his father thought so too. Her blonde hair fell down her back and her eyes were green. Per was tall, with blonde hair. He wasn't smiling.

Erik said, 'Anders and Astrid will take the Smiths' bags and I'll take Mrs Berg's. Follow me, please.' The tourists were going to sleep in wooden huts near the house. He walked towards the Bergs' hut, which was painted red.

Anders picked up the professor's bag. Ben also had a laptop in a smaller bag, and he held this carefully. Anders led the way to the Smiths' hut, which was painted orange.



Jackie said to Astrid, 'Are you and Anders twins? You both have red hair and blue eyes, and you're both very tall.'

'Everyone thinks we're twins, but he's sixteen and I'm fourteen,' said Astrid. 'Anders hates people saying it!'

'I sometimes wish I had a brother,' said Jackie.

'It's okay,' said Astrid, laughing. 'Sometimes!'

Anders pushed open the door of the Smiths' hut. A fire inside kept it warm.

'It's nice,' said Jackie. 'Oh, look, there's a desk for you, Dad.'

Ben put his laptop bag on the desk.

Anders said, 'Dinner is at our house at 5 pm. See you then. Come on, Astrid.'

Astrid smiled at Jackie, who smiled back. 'See you at five o'clock!' said Astrid.

Erik cooked for the tours and Astrid helped him. She loved cooking. Anders loved eating.

Everyone sat around the dining table.

Erik said, 'I hope you like fish. We are starting with *fiskesuppe* – fish soup – then *kjøttboller*.'

'They're meatballs,' said Astrid. 'I think you'll love the food.'

Anders thought, *Jackie won't like the fish soup.*

They were quiet while they ate the soup. Anders was right. Jackie pushed her bowl away. Anders noticed that both his father and Ben were watching Margit while she ate.

When Erik and Astrid were getting the meatballs ready, Margit began to talk to Ben. 'So, you're a professor, Ben? Where do you work?'

Ben said, 'I'm a scientist. My laboratory's in London.'

'What do you do there?'

'I study climate science.'

'That's interesting,' she said. 'I also work in a laboratory. I'm a computer scientist.'

Margit asked many questions about climate science and about Ben's work. Anders noticed that Ben didn't really answer them. Ben looked happier when the meatballs were on the table. He could eat again and didn't have to answer Margit's questions.

Per sat through the meal without speaking to anyone. He didn't eat much. Jackie and Astrid talked a lot.

Anders watched them all. He found Margit, Ben and Per rather strange. *Why is Margit asking so many questions?* he thought. *Why isn't Ben answering them? And why is Per so unhappy? He's on holiday! This tour could be interesting!*

This is the German version of **Running Out of Time**

## Running Out of Time



Created and developed by  
International Language Teaching Services Ltd  
First floor, 1 Market Street  
Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1JB, UK

help@ilts.info  
www.ilts.info

Author: Pauline O'Carolan  
Series editor: James Bean  
Illustrations: Paul Fisher Johnson  
Text design: ILTS Ltd  
Origination: e-BookServices.com  
Audio production: Mike Raggett, Verbalists; Mark Smith, Tally Ho Studio  
Voice actor: Mandy Weston

Der Verlag weist ausdrücklich darauf hin, dass im Text enthaltene externe Links vom Verlag nur bis zum Zeitpunkt der Buchveröffentlichung eingesehen werden konnten. Auf spätere Veränderungen hat der Verlag keinerlei Einfluss. Eine Haftung des Verlags ist daher ausgeschlossen.

Das Werk und seine Teile sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung in anderen als den gesetzlich zugelassenen Fällen bedarf deshalb der vorherigen schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlags.

Eingetragene Warenzeichen oder Marken sind Eigentum des jeweiligen Zeichen- bzw. Markeninhabers, auch dann, wenn diese nicht gekennzeichnet sind. Es ist jedoch zu beachten, dass weder das Vorhandensein noch das Fehlen derartiger Kennzeichnungen die Rechtslage hinsichtlich dieser gewerblichen Schutzrechte berührt.

3. 2. 1. | Die letzten Ziffern  
2026 25 24 23 22 | bezeichnen Zahl und Jahr des Druckes.

Alle Drucke dieser Auflage können, da unverändert,  
nebeneinander benutzt werden.

1. Auflage

Copyright © 2022 International Language Teaching Services Ltd  
© 2022 Hueber Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, München, Deutschland  
Umschlaggestaltung: Sieveking · Agentur für Kommunikation, München  
Cover: © ANADMAN - stock.adobe.com  
Verlagsredaktion: Heike Birner, Hueber Verlag, München  
Druck und Bindung: Friedrich Pustet GmbH & Co. KG, Regensburg  
Printed in Germany  
ISBN 978-3-19-292997-7

Art. 530\_28948\_001\_01