

DEATH ON THE BANKS OF THE DANUBE



András László

BERSERKER

BOOKS



László András
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Translated from Russian by ŽIVILE RUKŠENAITE

1

— Twenty-ninth? Wednesday?

— Yes. Around midnight. Yes, twelve o'clock and one o'clock.

— Who did you commission to investigate? Jeromes?

— Yes. And I appointed that young interrogator as his assistant. If he's already a jerk to us, let him at least smell a bit of gunpowder.

— OK. Yes, a masterful work. Or so it seems. You'll have to do my work for me.

— After all, you've already worked for me, Bela. What does the doctor say?

— They promise to discharge me in a week, at worst in ten days. If there are no complications. But if there are really no complications, I'll be up in three or four days.

I don't like bandages. I can't even read in bed.

On the table next to the bed, Rauder saw three books. Three detective books - two in English and one in Hungarian.

— How to qualify? - laughed.

— Yes. Except I can't read lying down. I suffocate.

He reached out, grabbed a paper napkin on the table, folded it awkwardly, and chucked it away. He dropped the napkin in the

the basket, grabbed a bottle from the table and pulled out the rubber stopper. Then he took pipette of liquid from the bottle and carefully poured it into one, then a second spout. He sniffed quietly and breathed in air.

— It will be easier now," said, but it sounded "window".

Rauder laughed.

— It must look to you like a barrel on your shoulders, not a head, doesn't it? - he asked.

— And still full. Well, enough. Tell us in detail what is known. At least you'll distract me from my boredom.

— So far, we don't know much. His surname is Hunjor. Jene Hunjor. I think I told you. At dawn this morning, the policeman on duty was inspecting his bar on the Danube and pressing the door handles out of idleness. And why did he think to check whether the gates were locked? In winter, these fishermen's huts are empty. Only two are permanently inhabited in the cottages upstairs in Erdesor. And here is one gate appeared to be open, but the door was locked. At first, the policeman did not notice anything suspicious and only after taking a closer look at the door did he see a few brownish spots around the lock. He went to the station, called the duty officer, who came in, looked at the door and said that it was blood. He knocked again, but the house was quiet.

— Where are the windows? To the Danube?

— No. To Erdésor. And from the house to the shore is a garden. The shore is covered with rushes, with a path between them to the pier where the boat is tied up in summer.

— It seems clear. Did the policemen break down the door?

— Manding, they had reason to think. After all, it could be that the person locking the door was spraying something hand and left bloodstains. However, they decided to call a locksmith, who unlocked the door.

— And you couldn't look out of the window?

— No. Inside, the window was covered with blue paper, the kind of paper that students usually use to fold their textbooks. The corpse lay

on the floor. The deceased was wearing shorts under an old greyish-green dressing gown. His clothes were neatly folded on a chair, and two hundred dollars was found in the inside pocket of his jacket.

Seventy forints. Under the book on the shelf - another ninety forints. A little change in my trouser pocket.

- Did the fisherman's hut belong to him?
- No. To his sister Dezhena Balog. She has a daughter and a son.
- And was the murdered man married?
- Yes. He has a daughter. But I will tell you more.
- Yes, yes. Tell me.

— The bed was not made; it was not possible to determine whether he slept alone. The room is the whole house, in truth, one room with a small summer kitchen next to it, which, by the way, it was locked and not used in winter - in other words, there was no clear indication that there was more than one of him in the room. A detailed inspection was carried out by Jeromoš's team at noon today, but I have not yet been informed of this.

The doctor's preliminary assessment is that the corpse has been lying for four days. That means since the 29th. The results of the post-mortem will be known in the evening. The head was struck with a heavy metal object. From behind. The egg was punctured. The corpse was lying on the bed with its head.

- In other words, feet in the door?

— Not quite. You're stuck between the door and the window, with your arms thrown back. The bed is against the wall in the corner to the right of the door. Can you get the picture from my story?

- I can, I can. Who else was in the room?

— There were fishing rods and a net on the wall to the left, and three old oars in the corner. Two more were under the bed. According to that on the wall, there was a table with an empty cup and saucer on it. There was tea in the cup, because there was some tea leaves and a little bit of sugar on the bottom. There was a stool next to the table and a bucket of dirty water next to it. And two chairs, in addition to the one on which, as I said, the clothes were piled.

- No lights on?

- The house has no electricity. There is what looks like a buffet along the window.

It contains utensils, spoons, forks. A clean ashtray on the buffet, a kerosene lamp nearby, half burnt out.

- That means the lamp has gone out.

— Yes. Someone put it out. Maybe the killer. We took fingerprints.

- Right. How is the house heated? Is there a furnace?

- There is a small cast-iron stove. There are several coal fires lying nearby

briquettes and a huge hunting bag. The briquettes are stacked neatly, side by side.

- Where is the furnace? Where is ?...

— To the right of the door. Between the front wall and the bed. Hangers and nails on the wall and on the inside of the door. On them hang dressing gowns, old women's clothes and worn men's trousers.

- Did you find any strange, unusual objects?

— No. By the way... I already mentioned the shelf. There were books: a handbook called "The Fish of the Rivers and Lakes", four novels that were very shabby, including one published before the war - and one published after it ninety forints. They were clearly visible, sticking out from under the book. And then there was the Penal Code.

- Criminal Code?

— Yes. The only thing that seemed strange was that it didn't fit in with the surroundings.

- Maybe it's a coincidence.

- Gal.

The phone rang. Rauder involuntarily reached out his hand to pick up the receiver, but he was too late.

- Alia! Yes, Bela Keleman (sounded:

"Bedakedebed"). One hour. This is for you. From the board.

- Be good, tell me to come back in half an hour.

- In half an hour, he will come. Okay, it's a deal.

Thank you, Jeromoš. Bye.

The white horn.

- The material is ready. Jeromáš wants to inform you.

- I thought so.

— It's good that you've been so thorough about everything. It's something to think about before going to sleep. It is true that many details are still missing. Before you go, tell me what's on your mind

known about the murdered woman.

— He was forty-five years old, working as a foreman in a mechanics' cooperative. He was married and lived on Samuel Desege Street, where his sister owns the fisherman's cottage. There is a daughter, aged seventeen.

— How tall are you? I mean Hunjor.

— About one metre seventy-five centimetres.

I saw it by eye. A man with a sturdy build, but not very thin.

— How did he die? Suddenly?

— In the doctor's opinion, suddenly. He collapsed on the floor like a sack. The impact was strong. The worst part was the broken shell.

— No metal yoke was found, of course.

— No. In fact, it's possible that it has already been found. Jeromoš's group spent the whole day, until dusk, exploring the surrounding area.

Bela closed her eyes.

— Did you tell them to search the shelters and the river bed along the shore?

— Yes, how about.

— How could the gate to the river have remained open if the murderer had not come through it? The upper gate was close?

— Close. Even locked. No keys could be found.

— Well, here it is. One more question. Any traces left?

— How can I put it to you. Even though it hasn't rained for ten days, the ground along the Danube is always a little damp from fog and steam.

The paths from the house to the upper gate and the coastal fence are paved with . And the path along the shore through four Many people have passed through during the days, although it is not very lively at the moment. Maybe there's something on the porch and steps. There have been frosts and thaws over the four days. I will check with Berboćio. And now it is time for me to go. Bye, Bela. Make it right. And remember to take your medicine.

– They help me like a dead man's poultice. You need a good lie down, my friend.

– Then lie down.

– I'll try. Just remember. When you have time, come by.

Tell me how and what - anyway, it will give me food for thought. Well, go on. They are waiting for you. Bye.

– Bye, Bela.

Rauder left. Bela listened to his footsteps at first, then got up, threw back the blanket and ran barefoot to the bookcase. He pulled out a thick album, took some pieces of paper and a ballpoint pen from the table and with all these trophies he shuffled indoors, shook out the headboard, put the album and the paper on his knees and started to draw a diagram of the area, reproducing from memory the details told by Rauder.

The double line at the top is the tracks of an electric train. He remembers it well: trains leave from the slaughterhouse every half hour.

There is a bus stop near the fishermen's huts. From here, a narrow path leads to Erdeshorus, and there are houses on both sides of the road. On the side of the Erdeshoro closer to the river is the Balogh house where Hunjor was killed. Kelemen knows the area well, having worked here before on the Snyder case, where he was shot in the back by his wife while fishing on the shore. Not so long ago, it seems,

Sixty-third. Or is it the 64th? Hence the double line - the electric train, with the Dunašor suburban road below and the Erdeshor in the middle. Or is it not this road that is called Dunaszor? He is not sure of that.

A small square - a house. Too bad he didn't ask Rauder which side of the house had the summer kitchen. Although it is not so important. For now. In another, larger rectangle, Bela arranged the furniture, marked the window, the door and - as it lay corpse. Even with a good memory, a diagram can be very useful. He knows this from experience. Next to the rectangle, Bela has written down the most important information about the murder victim.

Then Bela looked at the drawings for a long time, but had something else on her mind. He took a second piece of paper and started to write:

"The Hunjoro family. Workplace. The environment around him. Interview Dezhena Balog. If necessary, the children. What did Rauder say? The Balogs have a son and a daughter. But Hunjor has only a daughter. Why did Hunjor end up in the fisherman's cottage? If he did not live there permanently, why did he stay that night? He had brought coal with him to build a stove. Did he not bring the coal, perhaps his sister or her children? What did he come for? An electric train? The conductor should be questioned, because there are many regular passengers on that train on their way to work in Budapest. On this particular day - it was a Wednesday - especially in winter, they would probably have paid attention to it.

an unassuming man with a hunting bag stuffed hard over his shoulder, stepping off the train alongside those houses. Someone will still remember. Unless, of course, he came on an electric train. Anyway, we need to find out from the taxi drivers if they had to take a passenger to that stop. What if he came in his own car or in a car that happened to be on the way? Of course, Jerome has already questioned the neighbours. We will wait for the results.

Rauder said that two of the houses are permanently occupied. And in winter. It's possible they know something about Hunjor.

He started rattling the napkins again. He sniffed and tried to pee, but nothing came out. Let the devil take that stuff.

The murder does not appear to have been committed for the purpose of robbery.

Ninety forints left under the book. Two hundred seventy in your pocket. And small ones. By the way, this is not a demonstration. Why did the killer need to give the appearance that the murder was not committed for the purpose of robbery? The opposite would have been more logical. Someone who kills for personal reasons to misdirect the investigation, only tries to make it appear that the murder was committed for the purpose of robbery.

A woman? . The daughter of Hunjor, aged seventeen. That means he has been married for at least 18 years. For him

Forty-five years old, of sturdy build, tall. At this age, men often begin to fool around. ("I, too forty-nine...") What if the killer is a woman? But such a strong blow to the head with a metal object is not the work of a woman. On the other hand, who knows - maybe she's an athlete. For example, pushing a ball or throwing a discus or a javelin. Or maybe a basketball player.

Although that doesn't seem very plausible.

— Mance! Mance! - called out loudly, and out he went, "Bace! Bace!"

My wife comes in.

— Bela, did you call me?

— What's on TV?

— Today is Monday. No programme.

— So what do you do?

— Knots.

— OK. What's for dinner?

— I'll fry up some sausage and breadcrumbs. What do you think?

My son likes it.

— Has he arrived yet?

— Not yet. But it should be here soon.

— I'd rather eat a couple of soft-boiled eggs.

— Okay, I'll cook it. Will you cook it ?

— A little later.

— As you wish. Then you'll tell me. Today I need to finish the second sleeve of a sweater.

— OK, darling, go and finish.

As soon as she closed the door, his mind drifted back to the fisherman's house. Although, to be honest, he hadn't even been there.

"Well, of course, the compression is an essential detail. More important than the dressing gown. The dressing gown could have been in the cottage, just like the other shawls. But the gown says something. First, that Hunjor had neither pyjamas nor a nightgown, which means, he is in the house for a time, for an occasion. If he had a suitcase or rucksack, it would probably have contained underwear. Rauder would hardly have forgotten to mention it. It is true that the killer could have taken the rucksack."

Kelemen rolls over on his side, leaning on his elbow, trying to reach the stack of newspapers on the bookshelf with his left hand. Here's a little more. Just a little. He bends down and finally uses two fingers to close the edge of the newspaper. He pulls gently, and the whole stack leans the shelf for his link is sliding with a shuffle. He pulls the top six or seven issues closer, removes them and puts them on the blanket. He leans back and rests. He breathes heavily. One by one takes newspapers: thirty-first, thirtieth, twenty-ninth - this one!

On Wednesday it was overcast almost everywhere. Not that. You need to watch the thirtieth day's issue! "Strong north wind in places in the Transdanubia region... Temperature at four o'clock from three degrees warm to one degree cold. So it's probably freezing overnight. He thought so. Never mind synoptic wisdom of Berbocio. A summary is quite sufficient. Doubts about the glaci. Hunjor, of course, had no such doubts, but no one knows his motives.

It's a pity that there are still so few pieces on the chessboard. Five-six instead of thirty-two. And there's Rauder!

The only thing he found strange was the Penal Code. Of course, it is possible to determine whether this book has anything to do with the incident. It was on a shelf among other books, probably belonging to the lady of the house, like other things. Sometimes you find the strangest and most unexpected things in fishermen's houses like this.

He looked at his watch. It was fifteen minutes to eight. Rauder left at half past six. It was unlikely that Duris was home. Probably still squatting in the compartment. Maybe he call? If no one picks up the phone, it's not there yet. Or Janka will come to the phone. If she is at home, tell her to call Diouri as soon as she gets home. Bela takes the phone off the table and dials the number lying down, squinting because he is too lazy to take his glasses off. Sounds. Nothing seems to be happening. How much longer? Aha, picked up the horn. Janka. That's her "alio".

— Janka, here? Hello, dear. This is Bela.

— Oh, is that you, Bela? - Her crisp voice is simply deafening. - Duris said you were sick. And it sounds like it. Put a heating compress on your neck. Tell Mance I'm giving advice.

A compress helps.

— I need to talk to Duris, Janka. Has he arrived yet?

— In the bathroom. Shower. We'll have dinner, and he'll go out again. Don't you dare to kill my poor boy! Wait, Bela, I'll call him. Hello. And don't forget to put on the compress. Bye.

Pressing his horn to his ear, he waits. The temperature seems to have risen. And Janka will betray him to Mance! The devil has tempted him to get involved in this case. Why did Diuri need to join his group for a year? For a candidate's thesis...

"Psychological aspects of homicide and criminal offences motives." And for me, with this guy, now remember to be official, "you... you". Always a friend to Sipeka and a friend to Sipeka. So that he doesn't realise he's my nephew. It's a good thing I didn't have to take the exam - Rauder was checking his written work. Of course, his truth. It would have been unfair if the best candidate hadn't won the competition just because he is my nephew.

— Alio, Uncle Bela? How are you feeling?

— Disgusting. Is there any news on the Hunjoro case?

— The room, it turns out, was swept and the old carpet shaken, but some cigarette ash was found under the corpse and on his coat. There is no other evidence of smoking in the room. The ashtray is empty and clean. There were no cigarettes in the pockets either, but Hunjor had smoked - tobacco crumbs were found in the corners of one pocket.

— And the bedding! Have you looked at the bedding?

— We looked around. So far, we have no reason to believe that Hunjor was not alone in bed that night. But it could be otherwise.

— Did you find the broom?

— Radome. Behind the bed. An old mop, worn, but clean to look at. Deliberately cleaned, I think. Well, that's, like

said to be negative showing.

— No matter. After the autopsy, a lot will become clear. Now about Hunjor himself. Any news?

— After 20 years of family life, he suddenly left home. He did not tell anyone beforehand.

After packing his suitcase with the essentials, he left no one was home. That was on the 17th. For three days stayed with a friend, slept on a mattress in the kitchen, asked his sister for the key to the fisherman's cottage and left.

— Has he lived there since the 1920s?

— He left on the twenty-first, but it's hard to say whether he lived there. In any case, there is no way to prove it. Not even a suitcase.

— Of course. How are his money matters?

— According to his wife's testimony, Hunjor took away a savings bank book with forty-two thousand forints in his name. Without him, no one can take the money.

— And you're just now telling me this? Which till is the money in?

— In the district hall, but you can't get there until tomorrow. When we found out about the savings book, the cashier was already

Closed. Naturally, both the booklet and the salary disappeared.

— What is your salary?

— His workplace pays salaries on the 13th and twenty-ninth. But from the thirteenth to the eighteenth he had a sick note. According to the law, as it should be. He had a cold.

— So do I.

— Yes. On the 19th, he received the money, locked it in his desk drawer, and on the 29th, according to the testimony of a worker who shared a room with him, he took out his entire salary - two thousand six hundred twenty-one forints.

— Did he have a mistress?

— As if not. At least, that's what everyone says, except for his wife, who swears that he left his family for some woman.

Hunyor defending himself against his sister. His co-workers had not anything amiss either. Neither did the daughter.

— Everything?

— That's all that to me. The laboratory analysis is being done now, the post-mortem report will be finished at night. After dinner I will go back to work.

— Wait! Not a word to Rauder about our conversation. Also warn your mother not to tell anyone sometimes. I don't want to get in trouble because you are my nephew.

— OK, Uncle Bela. Let's get on with it. Everything will be fine.

— Watch me. Thanks for the information. I'll call Rauder in the morning. Keep in mind: you don't know anything about me. All right, Diuri.

— All the best, Uncle Bela. I'll call you too. Secretly.

White grandfather's horn. He snoops. Lack of air. He snorts droplets, then shouts loudly:

— Mance! Mance!

— What, dear? - My wife comes through the door. - Can I get you something to eat? - Bring it.

2

This can hardly be considered a coincidence. And if it is, it is, in fact, a small coincidence. It will be a coincidence if, for example, while swimming in the Adriatic Sea, a man is bitten on the leg by a "crocodile", and then, after some questioning and describing, it will be found that the man's surname is Bamberger, and that he lost his senses when he was submerged and found himself two steps away from his wife, who wanted, like the a crocodile, biting his leg. Then it also turns out that Comrade Bamberger is a captain in the Leipzig People's Police,

a criminal investigator and therefore a colleague; , his sister-in-law is the niece of Frizio Romhani, and before

In the summer of two years, Bela did not meet him at Fricj's only because he had to go to the Bala ionsentderda in the afternoon for the Roza Humbrik case. Now there is a coincidence.

If all this chaotic confluence of circumstances, the unexpected and unforeseen time and distance of thousands of kilometres the entanglement can be considered a coincidence, the fact that Andris is dating Vilma Hunjor cannot be considered a coincidence in any .

And for many reasons. Firstly, they are only one year old - 17 years old. Secondly, what is so special about two one-year-olds having the same, or at least similar, interests, and both attending the same maths club in a city of two million people. How many 17-year-old boys can there be in Pest who are interested in mathematics? Not in Buda and Pest, but only in Pest, in two adjacent districts. It would be rather strange if they did not know each other, or did not know about each other.

Andris is eating, chewing .

— Hello, Dad!

— Hello. Bring me another napkin, dear - I've got yolk all over my mouth.

He leaves. He brings a napkin, Bela wipes her mouth.

— How do you feel?

— That's too bad," replies Bela.

— A pity. Very sorry...

— Thank you.

— No, that's not why... , it's also because you're sick.

It's just that it's very ...

— Be good, put the tray on the table.

This is a deliberate manoeuvre. There is no need to ask a person if you can see that he will talk anyway - he will tell you more.

— I'm on the Hunjor case," says Andris, putting the tray on the table and sitting down in the chair where he was sitting before.

Rauder. Bela is silent. - I read in the newspaper that he was killed. It's a pity you're ill just now, because I wanted to give you a lift... I know his daughter. We go to the same school.

— Do you think she's a killer?

This was, of course, an unacceptable manoeuvre, but Bela cared about her son's feelings. And to arouse them, he needed to provoke them.

— Vargas. Even more. It's impossible," he replied with surprising calm.

— Are you grinding with Judas? - Bela also picked up this from her son's jargon.

— Unfortunately, no. Believe me, it's not my fault.

— I believe. It means she's grinding with another.

— Tell me, Dad, have you never thought of becoming a detective? You think so logically. She doesn't polish with anyone.

— And have you ever thought about how jerkily you talk to your father? And that you don't seem to have inherited my logical thinking? I was just complimenting you on your cavalier qualities.

— I have a proposal, Dad.

— Naked?

— Let's not go into details. Let's look at the substance, ask questions.

This is your profession.

— I accept the offer. I just won't ask questions. Tell me. If anything is unclear, I will interrupt. Besides, I'm sick.

— OK.

Andris told us. For a year and a half, he and Vilma have been attending a math club. Vilma is not only a beautiful and educated girl, she is talented, a good mathematician, an original thinker, and Andrišas immediately started attacking her, but to no avail.

— I made a mistake. I didn't know anything about women yet.

— Now you know?

— Better than ,," replied.

Last summer, Vilma met and fell in love with a young artist, but things soon ended. Since then, she hasn't been interested in anything. Neither has

Andris. And for more than half a year he has been gushing about Clara Wilhelm and saying that he has a good time with her. Vilma and he have nothing but good friendship. Like a group of visitors. In all the time they have known each other, he has only been to Hunjoro's house twice, and that was a long time ago. Almost a year ago. He hasn't even seen Vilma's father, only his mother.

— What does it look like?

— Subcutaneously.

— Working?

— A cook in a factory canteen.

— Did you know that Hunjor left home last month?

— I knew. Vilma said. How?

— In the evening, when we walking together from a training session.

— 's not what I mean. How did she say it?

— I'm very embarrassed. But she said her father was right and she would have done it a long time ago.

— This is how! So she doesn't love her mother?

— I don't know. . , she's not keen on it.

She once said that if she were a man, she couldn't live with her...

— I understand. Didn't she say that the father has a woman?

— No. He didn't. But she loved her father very much.

— Didn't he warn her that he was going to leave the house?

— No, but the next day he was waiting for her outside the school and they were talking about something.

— About what? Maybe about why he left home?

— I don't know.

— OK. Well, could you tell from the speech why he left?

— How do I... I don't know... Maybe because they used to cause scandals. Or rather, my mother did.

— Jealous?

— How do I know... Probably. I don't know. And I don't want to lie.

— Right. No need to lie. What else do you know of their family? Know Dezhena Balog?

- Who is ?
- Sister of Hunjoro. He was murdered in her cottage.
- A-a... I heard. I know her daughter Borisha... I didn't know her last name was Balog. She's a model. A beautiful woman. I saw her once at the university cinema when I was watching a Jancz film. Vilma came up to her, and they talked about something. She was wearing this little mini skirt.
- Well, you are very observant.
- Yes?... Just don't believe me, Dad, that you don't notice these things yourself.
- Am I sure? Now tell me why I seem to be so ill-timed.
- Ah, yes... It's about Vilma. She knows that you're my father, that is, she knows that this is your area, that you're investigating crimes there...
- Well?...
- He asked me to tell you that he would like to come to you.
- But it will be pronounced without me. And probably already has.
- Yes. But she only trusts you.
- Me?
- Yes. I told her you were a very tough old man.
- Thank you. Very nice to hear. Just be good, don't advertise me.
- OK, Dad. So she can come?
- Here? ?
- Well, if you're not at work...
- How simple it all seems to you, Andries... After all, I'm sick right now and have no right to interfere in the investigation.
- I had no official investigation in mind. It's just that, *private*.
- *Private*? And do you know what *private* is?
- Latin word. Means private.
- Thank you for explaining. OK, let her come tomorrow at five.
- We will be on exercise until half past six.
- Then after the exercise. But you don't have to attend.

— I'll bear with it, Dad.

- Now get out of here, because I'm going to let something loose on you... And take the tray with you!...

That was back on Monday.

On Tuesday, the first half of the day was full of all sorts of chatter. The doctor came out at fifteen minutes past ten. Bela read half a chapter of the novel "What Happened to the Carpet Merchant from Aleppo", but the bookworm was bored and he fell asleep. At fifteen minutes to twelve he spoke to Rauder on the phone, and after

Half an hour later, my friend Banga brought a huge package with two folders - one containing copies of the research material, the other containing photos. Mance gave Banga a black coffee, they talked, then the guest left, and Bela spent the afternoon - Mance served lunch at fifteen minutes past two - studying the material. Then he took his medicine and fell asleep again. At half past three he woke up, got up, went to the bathroom, took a shower. On the table he found a note from his wife: 'I went to the knitter. I'll be back about five.'

Bela put on a warm burgundy waistcoat and, taking a pile of new napkins, sat down in his favourite armchair by the stove, turned on the radio and listened to the programme

"For young people only", he looked again at all the material.

An electric train attendant was interviewed. He did remember that Hunjor was on the train when it left

Eighteen hours and fifty-five minutes. The train stops at the fishermen's huts only if required - in other words, anyone wishing to get off must warn the attendant in advance. Hunjor warned. The huge hunting bag was on the floor at his feet.

The attendant asked why it wasn't on top of the luggage rack.

Hunjor replied that he didn't want coal dust to fall on passengers' heads. He remembered that his briefcase was still packed solid, although he was not sure,

that it was him with the briefcase and that it was Wednesday, in the second half of the day. At the fishermen's huts, without

Hunjoro, no one else got off. The satellite recognised Hunjor - he picked out a picture of him out of six.

Attendants from other trains were also interviewed, but all of them agreed that no one got off at the fishermen's huts - otherwise they would have remembered, because the train doesn't stop at the fishermen's huts unless the passenger warns the attendant in advance. And nobody got off the night electric trains here. The taxi fleet also reported that there were no passengers to the place that day: forty kilometres there, forty kilometres back - no such orders were received.

Jeromoš and Duris Sipek drove Dezhena Balog to the scene by car. First they drove to Martiras Avenue to Balog's daughter's to pick up a bundle of five keys. Two of the keys were for the gate on the of the Erdősor and Danube, two for the door and one for the summer kitchen. Hunjor had the same bundle of keys, which his sister had given him when he left her. The second bundle of keys was always with Balog's daughter. The keys that Hunjor had disappeared, so he had to go to Balog's daughter, a twenty-eight-year-old model, a divorced woman who lived in a one-room flat.

This means that Balog's daughter could have been in the house on the night from Wednesday to Thursday. Especially since she has her own car, a coffee-brown Fiat.

Jeromoš works consistently, to the best of his ability. He doesn't go into details yet, but for good measure, he doesn't forget to mention Balog's daughter in the report. Right.

According to his sister's testimony, Hunjor came to her with the keys and when he told her why he wanted to move, he had a black lacquered suitcase containing what she said were his belongings. Balog knew then that her brother had left the family; his wife had come crying two days before and told her everything.

Hunjor didn't tell his sister that he was leaving his family for another woman. He complained that he had nothing, but he could not accept the idea that his life was over at forty-five years old. His wife

hates her eternal jealousy, loves her; the daughter is grown up, and now there is no need to be always to it; he wants to start all over again. Isn't that life: go home from work, have dinner, go to bed, and go back to work in the morning. "I have nothing," he said to his sister, "I have nothing, but I'll divorce Beze." He repeated this several times. His sister would give him a bunch of keys and tell him which key was for which lock. He knew the way to the fisherman's cottage - in the summer, on Sundays, he would sometimes go there and drive away. Balog told her brother that there was a hunting bag in the house that he could use to carry coal. They always did that in winter.

Well, Hunjor could have told his sister the truth. But he might not have told her. Or say something like the truth. 's quite possible that he had a casual fiancée he had no intention of marrying. The man does not remember saying "I have nothing". But it is quite possible that he did have a woman and hid it from everyone. However, it was not worth worrying about that now.

Among other things, everyone in the office says he had nothing. Not even friends. Hard-working, polite, a good professional, he was likeable, but he was not very willing to make friends, and nobody was willing to be friends with him. He living on his own, his co-workers talked about him. On the phone he was rarely invited, and if he did talk about personal matters, it was only with his family. For many years, like all the staff, he had a subscription lunch at the nearest canteen, but he had not been seen there for some six months and no one knew where he had lunch now. However, when the break was over, he was at his place of work as usual.

He was a proforg for two years, but when he was appointed a brigadier, he no longer fulfilled this public duty. In a word, he was kind of a dull, incomprehensible man. In his desk drawer, apart from his official papers, there was only a photograph of his daughter, two packets of "Symphonies" and a box of matches. One packet of cigarettes

has been opened. At the very back of the drawer, an envelope containing a postcard with a landscape of the resort of Balatonfüred was found under the paper. The envelope was addressed to work, the address was typewritten, the postcard contained a few words of cipher text and the address was in the same font as on the envelope. Jeromoš gave them to be deciphered, having first photographed the envelope and both sides of the postcard. OK. So the examination of the scene was carried out in the presence of Balog, the sister of the murder victim.

The black lacquered suitcase was not found there. That was to be expected. Hunjor made his tea in the kitchen in a large teapot and his coffee in a two-cup café, but did he cooked for two - this could not be established. Balog found a tin of tinned meat (who brought it, we don't know), two packets of biscuits, a piece of stale bread, rubbish in a bucket - greaseproof paper, which must have contained rolled bacon or sausage. "Nothing is missing", Balog kept saying, by sniffing every corner. From time to time she would croak, "Poor Jenč, you should have stayed at home!" Several times she reproached herself: "And why did I give him those damned keys!" As the inspection was coming to an end, Balog suddenly exclaimed, "Scales! Where are the scales with weights?"

There were scales in the kitchen. Her husband always weighed the fish he caught on it. There were five kilograms in total. The small copper weights were thrown in a wooden box, but the scales and large weights were missing. They have not been used since the man died.

At the end of the report, Jeromoš added that, in the opinion of the doctor who carried out the autopsy, it was almost certain that the metal object used to hit Hunjor could have been a two-kilogram weight. This is indicated by the force of the blow and the outline of the wound. The chemical analysis continues.

Photos. Photo of the house from the Erdeshorus. Another one from the Danube. A photo of the blood stains on the door. Around the handle they are clearly visible. The door to the summer kitchen is closed... open... room, beds, shelves, table photos. Photo of corpse. Head,

taken from different locations. The wound. Clothes of the murdered man. The garden - from the house towards Danube. On the left a path. On the right - fence. Ladder in the marsh. Danube, taken from the pier. The water is not frozen. The ground appears dry and rough. But that does not mean anything. Along the wall of the summer kitchen, to the right of the door, is what looks like a thick, dark-coloured pile.

Kelemen gets up from his chair, walks over to the table and takes a large magnifying glass out of a drawer. He puts the photograph under a hundred-watt lamp and looks through the loupe. The scroll rolls away. The lower end is unrolled and the edge of the sheet lies on the ground. Crime It happened at night, and the killer may have accidentally stepped on the edge. Then it would be betrayed by a half-sock or a backstage. The grains of gravel that have been scraped off the far side of the road are evidence.

But first we need to find the murderer. Jerome does not mention this scroll in his report, but perhaps he has not forgotten it. We need to ask.

Little is known about the killer. It is believed to be a tall man, either taller than Hunjor or the same height, like him. Strong, perhaps stronger than Hunjor. Although all indications are that the blow was unexpected. There is no sign of a struggle or a fight, and the cigarette ash found under the corpse suggests

the conclusion that the corpse had not been moved, even with great care in the room. The deceased was lying in a natural posture. Moreover, it is clear that the killer is a man of intelligence, who had a very good idea of how to hide the traces. He had to work for at least an hour to remove everything that could give him away. He even threw in the need to remove the scales and weights. And to take out the black lacquered suitcase containing all of Hunjoro's belongings, probably including the money taken from the savings bank. About forty-four thousand forints.

According to the cashier's testimony, he paid Hunjor the money second to last, just before the cash desk closed. Therefore, it is not necessary to go

another savings bank, he could not. Of course, he could have given the money to the post office for safekeeping under a motto or in his own name. When Hunjor left the savings bank, before the electric train

departure was almost three hours away. If he took the money to the post office, the killer also took the savings book.

My God, what drudgery! To question all the savings banks and post offices, which are open after four o'clock, as to whether they had deposited forty-two to forty-four thousand forints on the twenty-ninth day, from four to half-past six. Show photo for identification. To find out if anyone took money from the cash register on the following day. Ask them to remember who took it. And besides, it is unlikely that cashiers who worked from in the evening, the next day they would have gone on the morning shift. If, of course, that's how it was. But it could have been different. It is a pity, but all this work still needs to be done. Poor Jerome.

On a piece of paper, Bela wrote: "Roll tolio." Below the question: 'Who was the last customer at the savings bank at the cash desk?'

At half past four, Bela clears his nose and takes his medicine, reclining head on the back of the chair. He snores with his eyes closed and in his mind's eye he sees a blue sky, a clear blue sky with ball clouds like a naked woman, like in a painting by Siney Merche "Vievers". Young birch trees all around, leaves rustling and spreading in the gentle breeze. For an hour, he falls asleep, but only for an hour. And then he wakes up. Where's the postcard with the cipher text? Bela looks through the photos in the folder again and finds the envelope.

It opens. Three photocopies. The colour and reverse sides of the envelope containing the postcard. Rauder's note attached to the photographs:

"I wanted to give Bela to Sereni, but he has the flu too. I know it will be fun for you. Unscramble. Correct. Ferris."

- Twenty-four, we need to try to get to five. If Mance sees it, he'll take me to bed. And at half past six, Vilma Hunjor will come. Here you ! - Bela thinks.

But he is happy with the encryption. He goes to the kitchen, fills the kettle with water. The coffee will refresh him.

He stands in Andris's room, puts a pinch of calmopyrine on his tongue, takes a sip of coffee, then takes another pinch of the powder and takes another sip without hesitation.

On the left-hand wall is a nearly half-metre-long photo of Hemingway that Janka brought back from Paris for his son. A beautiful intelligent face. Next to it, on the other photo, Hemingway and Fidel Castro. Hemingway has a grey beard, dark glasses and a baseball cap with a small bill. Checked shirt with open collar.

A stark contrast between Hemingway's grey beard and Castro's thick black one. Opposite the door, along the window, is a photo of Che Guevara. Characteristic shaded outlines of hat, beard, face, eyes.

Below is a map the South American continent.

Kelemen sighs. Parental worries. "I should talk to Andris more often. Bela hasn't seen these two photos yet. Where did Andrisch get them? And why? What meaning do they have for him? Is this also a fashion among young people today? Is this fashion has a political foundation too? Not happy with us? We are unhappy with . But what is the reason for their dissatisfaction?

Again, the thought comes to mind that I should have a frank talk with Andris. Only there is no time. Left wall above is littered with solutions to maths problems, but most of it is empty. Andris painted the wall himself with yellow oil paint to make it easy to write on. "Inherited from me," mutters Kelemen, his voice ringing

Pride - I like to have a broad horizon. I prefer to work on the board."

He puts a pot on Andris's table, takes a black felt-tip pen out of its clay pencil case, walks to the wall, and with

starts copying the cipher marks from the postcard with his breath.

The secret list is simple. What's more, at first glance it even looks very simple. It is the cipher used by boys and girls in schools for secret correspondence. No special tricks or tricks. Each letter has its own sign. In her childhood, Bela also used a similar cipher. Four characters after the text - the signature, of course. Eighty percent chance that the card was written by a woman, which means that the signature is a woman's name.

"The spirit of language, the logic of language! The skeleton of a word is made up of consonants, and that skeleton is made up of vowels. Evenly. The vowels of Hungarian are repeated in the text according to a certain rhythm.

This vowel rhythm also makes the task easier. The repeating marks in a word are apparently vowels. There are two such signs. In Hungarian, the vowels are the most repeated "e", "a" and, less frequently, "o". Let's replace the repeating signs with these and try the exception method.

Before encryption can begin, the subject of the text must be determined. This can be a greeting, a message, a message. For the being, the following three topics are sufficient for the search.

Let's draw a diagram, and write in it the hypothetical vowels."

Kelemen threw himself into his work, even sticking out the tip of his tongue,

as children do when they get involved.

Found it! I finally found it! He looks at the signs the is plastered with. A mark left by a felt-tip pen on her face.

When I catch a fish, I send a million kisses. Edita. - That's what the card says. Wrong, Edith.

— Bela! Lord! What are you doing here? Why not in bed? The wife is in the doorway.

Kelemen slowly turns his blotchy face to her and smiles in puzzlement.

— I was shuffling through the image.

He obediently follows Mance, who leads him to the bath, they are washed with warm water, put on a warm vest, dressed in clean pyjamas and escorted to their room. He stands by the sofa until

Wife changes the bed linen, then goes to bed. Ten minutes past five.

- Bring the phone.
- Don't, Bela. You're sick!
- Bring the phone.

Mance is a good wife, and she cannot understand this.

The passenger dials a number, waits.

- Please friend Rauderj. This is Bela Kelemen. He closes his eyes, but immediately flinches.

— I have decoded it. Yes. In a primitive way, but I decoded it. Yes. Write, I dictate: "Fishy, fishy, I send a million kisses. Edith." No, not a trillion, a million. Less, less. I can't - I have a runny nose. Yes, yes. That's right.

- Who do you think Edita is? - Rauder asks.
- I don't know. Stay well.

He puts the horn down. He closes his eyes.

- I'm going to fall asleep. Wake me up at half past six. That girl will come.
- Which girl? And where will she come from?
- With us. Her name is Vilma. She is friends with Andris.

He has a happy smile on his face. Lying with his eyes closed, like a saint in a sarcophagus. He is grateful to Edith for the pleasure she gave him. She has a sense of humour. He was playing fish and ciphering a postcard. A crazy little girl. Who is she?

4

"I will die!" Driving through the Sahara - where, in fact, there is not even a road, it's sand all around - he takes a left turn with his turn signal on. This land is completely uninhabited; now a car, a battered grey taxi with a tarpaulin top, is being knocked on the right and in front by a samoum. He remembers that in Aleppo he needs to be there at half past six, and in the Sahara it's still noon - to only he would get out of that sandstorm, so that he wouldn't get stuck

sand the radiator and keep the water from boiling over from the infernal heat. A thick woolen sash protects your nose and mouth from the sand as it presses down on the pedal for lack of air. A sip of water would be good, but water must be conserved. "It's okay, I can take it! No,

I probably won't last. The radiator should be covered with newspaper, but now I can't get out of the car, the door won't open, and the weather..."

— White... Bela... It's nearly half past six...

He rolls over on his side, yawning, convulsively catching his breath - his mouth is dry, his throat is raw, his tongue is stiff.

— I'm getting up! Give me some water...

He greedily drinks warm water with lemon.

— I thought I would suffocate...

— Because you had your covered.

— I must have a fever.

He tilts his head, his hand with the pipette hovering in the air, aiming for the splash.

— Will Vilma... come yet?

— Not yet. Maybe tell her to come back another time?

He pours the medicine into one spout, then another.

— Don't say anything, bring him to me if he comes. I am better now. Have some more tea.

— Available in thermoses.

— OK.

Medicines make you feel better, which means your mood will improve.

His wife leaves and immediately returns with a sponge and towel - Bela is as docile as a child while she washes and wipes his face.

— Give me the comb...

— Yet, imk...

He does his hair.

— Now leave me alone for an hour. I need to think.

Thank you. You are my angel.

— I know, I know," she nods and leaves.

"If I have any happiness in my life, it will come. Of course it will come. I'm a good step ahead of everyone. And Jerome has not too much time to catch me. What if they go to Hunjor's wife? And I won't be able to stop them? They'll go to her and ask her if she knows any Edith. It would be a pity. There's no need for that. And I didn't say anything to Rauder. And what could I have say? That the daughter of the murdered man is coming to see me tonight? Let's just hope they have the tact not to ask his wife about his relationship with Edith. They would do the logical thing if tomorrow they tried to find out if Edith is among Hunjoro's associates. This is common sense. That is what I would do. And the fact that Vilma is coming here today - if, of course, she is coming - is pure coincidence. It's her personal matter. And they probably won't go to see Hunjor's wife until tomorrow. That would be most convenient.

In general, I don't behave . I lie in bed, with a nose swollen like a painter's and pretending to be a private investigator. To whom? For empty honour? I found the criminal myself, you hear. But I'm not the only one. It's a collective. I can't stand smart-headed private investigators. Find me a novel in which the famous detectives themselves have explained all the details. For example, going into shops and factories to find out where the victim was made or The killer's cloak. We went to all the post offices in Pest, asking if anyone had deposited two or forty-two thousand forints on Wednesday, and withdrew this sum Thursday? Showing a photo to identify yourself, or checking your mail and so ? And they always come brilliant conclusions. They are all brilliant. Overall, we are lucky: it is mostly primitive people who kill, people who do not think of hiding the traces of a crime or of preparing a murder plan in advance. , thank goodness, the criminals have not yet taken advantage of the technological advances. Even so, sometimes we have to search for a criminal for years.

Still, it's nice to guess a cipher in your spare time, even if it's a schoolboy one. Turn your head.

Half an hour spent in the Sahara in a dream seems to have helped Bela Kelemen. Secretly, he hopes to get up tomorrow and go to work. Is it better not to go? He will probably go anyway, but he won't stay long.

However, much will depend on the weather.

— 'Darling, make us some coffee,' he said to his wife, who was letting a girl pass in front of him. Then he asked Vilma:

— You will, of course, drink?

— Yes. Thank you.

He asks Vilma to sit three steps away from his sofa. To avoid catching the flu. Vilma is beautiful. Very beautiful. She is dressed simply - in a dark blue school dressing gown with a white collar and a green pullover underneath. She's wearing black faux-leather shoes, plain black socks. She was not dressed in mourning. She is a stunningly beautiful girl, not so much beautiful as exciting.

Brownish, honey-coloured. Lime blossom honey. . Large mouth with plump lips. Large eyes. They look green from here. Only not blue. Grey or green. It's hard to tell under electric light. But it doesn't matter. In her school gown she looks bulky, but the eigast suggests a graceful torso. She is probably of the same height as Andris. He, of course, does not yet understand, that this girl, though his age, is a grown woman. And Andrišas is still a boy. It is possible that this is a criminal opinion. Parents are reluctant to notice their sons becoming adults.

Bela Kelemen cannot tell Vilma why her father was killed. It is obvious that the girl is not prepared for the interview - she has no clearly formulated questions, she probably does not know where to start. Vilma is embarrassed. Kelemen understands her.

Overwhelmed by the disaster, she had nothing to fall back on. She cannot turn to her mother. And who can? Her friend Andris has a father who is also looking for her father's killer.

Or rather, he could have looked if he hadn't fallen ill. Still, she needed someone to talk to, so she came. Vilma does not have a loved one. It is only logical that she turned to him,

Bela Kelemen. These thoughts immediately popped into his head as soon as they started talking.

— It is possible that Vilma killed him for money.

Forty-two thousand he took from the cash register. He also had a month's salary with him. So far, we do not know exactly anything, at least nothing worthy of note.

— Yes.

— We have a lot of small facts, clues, traces, assumptions, but everything is still loose, without a system.

— Yes.

They are silent for a long time. Kelemen knows he must speak. But he also feels confused. What to talk about?

— I can't comfort you, Vilma," he says at last. - And you understand. If I were to die, no one could comfort Andris either. In such cases, words mean nothing.

— I understand. I don't need to be comforted. That's not what I came for. I came to ask if there is anything I can do to help you. I would like to know who killed my father and for what. And it would be good to find that money. We need it badly.

— Of course you can help. Have you been interviewed?

— Yes. But that's different. You know. It's one thing when you talk to Andris's father, and it's another thing when you talk to the militia.

He was saying something, but at the last moment changed his mind. Of course, he has to explain to this girl that the police are to be trusted and so on. But not now. Her faith in man must be cherished. One must rejoice in it. And he is happy. Although it is a little painful, because Vilma's words were critical. Well, so much for that.

— Thank you, Vilma. Can I ask a question?

— Please.

— Who is Edita?

— Which Edith?

— Your father was acquainted with a woman or girl called Edith. Do you know her?

— There are two Editas in our class - Edita Vezer and Edita Kovač. My father knew both. He probably knew Edita Kovač better, because she was with us more often.

— And...

— I am sorry to interrupt you. He still knew Edith Chaus.

— Who is Edita Chaus?

— The Chaus lived on our floor for a long time - Edita and her uncle.

Then her uncle died, and Edita sold the flat and rented a room somewhere. Her father knew her well.

— Was your father friends with any of the three Editas?

— I don't know. I can't guarantee. Possibly with Edita Kovač.

Once last summer, my father and I went to the

"We met boys and girls from our school at the Sečenis swimming pool. Kovač was with them. Then I found out that she had come to us two or three times when I was wasn't at .

— And your mother? Was she at home?

— Mothers are never home in the afternoon. Except on Saturdays and Sundays. But even on those days, she's not sitting at home - she's at the horse races. And on some days, she's always at the factory until 8 o'clock.

— Does your mother work as a chef?

— Yes. In the factory canteen. We also eat food from that canteen - my mother always brings home food.

— Your parents, Vilma, didn't get along? I mean, between themselves?

— What are you doing! It's not enough to say they didn't get along. My father suffered only because of me. And I told him a long time ago: you don't have to suffer for me.

— So, if I have understood you correctly, your father had relations with women.

— Of course. It's just not accepted to talk about it. My father was a very good man. And young. He was forty-five years old. I'm saying this only to you. I don't want everyone to know about these things.

- When you gave your testimony, you didn't talk about it?
- I was not asked about it. My mother was asked.
- Listen, Vilma, you are a smart, grown-up girl.

Let's be honest.

- And I am speaking out.
- Good. Do you have any idea that your father and Edita Kovač were intimate friends?

- My father never admitted this. But maybe he did.
- And the girl? Has she said anything to confirm your assumption?

— He once said. Two days we were in the pool, she came up to me in the corridor and said:

"You have a corporate father, Vilma."

— How did you find out that she was visiting you when you weren't home?

- My father said: "There was a Kovac, looking for you."
- You didn't ask what she had for?
- No. She would have told me herself if she wanted to.
- But she didn't say?
- No.

"Gudraja. Or maybe not. It's just that you have to pull every word out of it like pliers. Why? Ashamed? Ashamed to tell about her father's love affairs? Is there something in the way? Maybe so. Maybe. Something is missing from our conversation. But what?"

- And you, Vilma? Were you friends with the boys? After all, you are beautiful!
- No, I wasn't. And please don't compliment me. I know what I am.
- With anyone? Never?
- No.
- I don't understand. Why?
- Very simple. I wanted to be friends with one, but nothing came of it.
- Cheated?
- Let's say.
- From the same class?
- What are you doing!

- Don't want to talk about it?
- Probably... Not really. And yet I am speaking. Although that hardly has anything to do with this matter.
- I'm only asking because I want to get to know you better.
- And recruit?

Kelemen laughed out loud.

— It never occurred to me. You see, it's just because that's my profession. You have to talk to a lot of people, and it's good if you can guess who the person is that you are talking to.

- Well, okay. If we've already agreed, I'll be frank.

She looked at Kelemen, waiting for him to ask questions. But Kelemen did not ask. There was an awkward minute of silence. Vilma lowered her head, then raised it.

— Well, that's it. I will say. He's a painter. Not yet famous. Thirty-four years old. The name doesn't matter. By the way, everyone calls him Alfred Schomer. I would have been friends with him. But he wouldn't. He said he couldn't get involved with anyone.

His only love is art. We dated for five days, and on the sixth day he beat me to it. I mean, he didn't seduce me, he just told me it was over.

— Your coffee must have taken a long time to brew, Mance," said Kelemen to his wife, who was in the living room with a tray in her hands. Did the coffee pot break again?

Living with Bela for almost twenty years, Mancé developed an extraordinary sense of smell that could tell her when it was best to serve coffee, while listening to her husband's conversations with visitors.

— Probably very finely ground. So it will probably be tasty and strong.

She smiles kindly at Vilma and asks:

- For you with sugar?
- Thank you, by the way.

The kélemen shall add five teaspoons of sugar to the pot and stir it.

- Thank you, Mance.

– Cheers.

She leaves immediately. Mance knows when to leave, too. After coffee, we talk about Vilma's heart matters again could be discontinued.

– Tell me, Vilma, how did your father manage to save Forty-two thousand forints? By the way, that's not so important.

– He didn't save. He gambled them away. Three years ago, he won the lotto, but he didn't tell us until he left home.

Guessed four numbers.

– Who else knew? Apart from you?

– No one. Although, to be honest, I don't know. We didn't know anything ourselves until he left. The next day he met me outside the school and said. He also wrote about it in a letter, which I passed it on to my mother. He wrote that he would start a new life with the money. He will file for divorce, but promises to continue to help his family and take care of me, but asks my mother not to stand in his way.

– Did he bring home his salary for this month?

– No. On the twenty-ninth, payday, my father always gave my mother one thousand six hundred forints. But this time he didn't go home. And by the thirtieth he was no longer alive.

Now there must be a leap. An unexpected return to a former theme.

– Do you sometimes know if Edit Kovač had a holiday Lake Balaton last year?

– No, he didn't. All summer, she went to the Sechenis pool.

– Maybe she went to Balaton for a few days?

– I don't know that. She might have gone. I don't know.

He sighs secretly. It's hard for him to do that - lack of air. You can't do much of anything that way. Kelemen puts a folder on top of the blanket, takes out a postcard.

– Look, Vilma. Who do you think could have sent your father this card?

The girl takes the card, looks at it and returns it to Kelemen.

— It was written by Edita Čaus: "When I see a fish, I send a million kisses. Edita." Apart from me and my father, only Edita Čaus knows this cipher. I taught her. And I taught her father. You and me we corresponded with this cipher so that my mother wouldn't understand. But that was a long time ago. We came up with the cipher in eighth grade. That's when I taught Edith how to use it.

Kelemen removes an envelope from the folder.

— Judging by the postmark, the postcard was sent last summer, on Saturday 8 July.

— Only Edita Čaus could have written it. Or me. But I didn't.

— Did you know, or did you just guess, that the relationship between your father and Edith Čaus was such that it allowed her to send your father "a million kisses"?

— No.

— And you are not surprised?

— Why, I am very surprised.

Nothing came out. And it won't. Kelemen felt this very clearly. He understood that the postcard had made a difference in the girl's behaviour. He has many years of experience. He sees that Vilma is thinking, that she wants to untangle some threads, that she is guessing something.

But what? Will they tell me? You have to be careful here. Or ask quickly and decisively. How better? If only he knew now what to ask, it would all be clear and resolved immediately. But he did not know. And he was overwhelmed by the tormented contradictory feeling that he knew so well.

— What are you thinking about now?

— About Edith.

— And what?

— Just for ... I don't know myself...

— That's bad.

Of course, she doesn't want to talk. Ask questions? Pull on the tongue? Approach it with tongue in cheek? We need facts, facts. Feelings in the country. They are like snares. They can deceive. We need to find facts. This is the real way. It may be long, but it is real.

— How old Edita?

— Soon to be twenty-four. She's a shade over a year older than me.

— Blonde? A chatelaine? Brunette?

— Brunette, of Turkish origin. Her surname is also Turkish.

Uncle Lipis told me that.

— And who is Uncle Lippy?

— Edith's uncle. He is already dead.

— When was the last time you saw Edita?

— About two ago. At half past ten my father sent me for cigarettes and I went to the Boulevard Circle, the shop where she works. Because all the tobacconists were closed, but her shop is open until ten o'clock. She was studying at the technical school of food industry. Edita is very pretty. When they lived in our house, she was my best friend. I've known her since I was a child. We were like sisters. I remember I used to ask her to give me a haircut.

She laughed and let me. But I never thought my father would... that she and her father had such a relationship.

— Has she visited you since moving to another apartment?

— No. Not . At least I don't know anything.

Her words were still ringing out, and Kelemen thought he heard the horn honking at a frantic speed a police car. The questions were running through his mind, and Kelemen already knew in which voice they should be asked - harsh and loud, military stern, but kind. With a squeal of the brakes, the police car stopped, Kelemen jumped out and calmly, decisively dispersed the gathered crowd of cripples.

A private conversation. Not a quota. Not. I wish I could, but I can't. Professional diligence and human curiosity, these two factors combine to give his profession all its beauty. And if you don't have that, everything goes to hell. And yet you cannot.

He couldn't look at his watch. It would have been rude.

She sat with her arms crossed. The left sleeve of her school gown was rolled up - her watch read ten minutes past eight.

They remained silent. Kelemen felt his pulse. Amy counted. The girl was a little embarrassed and wanted to stand up, but Kelemen stopped her with a nod.

- One last question, Vilma. Don't be offended my sensitivity...
- What do you... I this...
- What kind of cigarettes did your father smoke?
- "Koshuta".
- And Edita Chaus?
- When she lived in our house, she smoked "Symphony".

And now I don't know.

— Thank you, Vilma. There will be no further questions today. And these were informal. If anything comes to mind, I will ask Andris to forward it to you. By the way, I have also deciphered the postcard.

He couldn't refrain from boasting.

— Yes? It wasn't hard, was it? Mathematically, it can be done in ten minutes. We have already tried it in the troop.

— Of course, it's easy. Child's play.

And yet Bela Kelemen was a little disappointed.

5

- Bercis?
- Yes.
- Chamdulilach!
- Chamdulilach! How are you, Bela? Any news?
- Lots of news.
- I thought so. How do you feel?
- I'm flustered. All in all, not bad.
- How is Mance?
- Thank you. OK. How about you?

— We're not bad either. Tell me, you have something important to do, because I'm almost out. We're going to the cinema.

— I'm sorry, Bertie, but you're going to be late for the film magazine. I'm telegraphing: a girl called Chaus, Edita Chaus, works in one of the shops on Boulevard Circle. First question: which shop? Second: the name of the store manager? Three: where a girl on shift? And if I could find out her home address, that would be great. That is the fourth question.

— Can't postpone until tomorrow?

— No.

— The devil take that girl!

— I've been grabbed. I have the flu. I have a temperature. And a sick note.

— Well, okay. If you're at home, you'll get a call from Kulin or Herencher in half an hour. They'll tell you everything. Did something happen to her?

— I don't know. . But I don't know anything for sure.

— I remember something. It seems that she works in the Sixth District.

A beautiful black girl. On the fourth of April last year she received a cash prize of two hundred forints. But I am not . Maybe her name is Taus. I'll check right away. Chamdulilach.

— Chamdulilach. Thank you, Berci.

— You're welcome. For the being.

The steamboat is rocking nicely. Kelemen puts down the phone, then picks it up again, dialling a number. The sun shines over the sea. Morning. In half an hour they will anchor in Ozan. He is standing next to Bertius, leaning his elbows on the gunwale, enjoying the city in the sunshine. The husband and wife bought the three-week Mediterranean trip themselves, and he got it as a bonus. It was here, on board the GDR ship, that their friendship began, where they first heard this Arabic greeting and took it into his arsenal. Four years have passed since then. It will be four in April. Bercy is good at chess. Bela has never been able to beat him. And Bela is a little nervous about it because, according to him,

a criminal must be the best chess player of all. After all, chess is an exercise for the mind. It is necessary to anticipate many moves ahead. And does not a salesman in a managerial job need this?

— Comrade Rauderj, please.

— He's not here, Comrade Kelemenai. He has just gone .

— And Jerome?

— Available. I am handing over the horn.

It was Samphai. A great guy. Finishing up tonight university. She is studying Hungarian history. A gifted interrogator.

— Jeromoš listens.

— Hi, Tibi. I just wanted to ask if there is any news on the Hunjoro case.

— No special ones. I sent Zengerel to Edita Čaus for a look. She works in a grocery store. You see, is the girl who apparently sent the postcard to Hunjor.

Kelemen was momentarily . He didn't even think, that his staff can work so quickly. That's what got to him a bit. And yet, it's good. That is what he needs. Lying in bed, imagining the aftermath. With an empty shell, empty as a barrel. And with a runny nose, with a temperature.

— How did you manage to find her?

— By chance. When we went to Hunjoro's apartment to talk to his wife, Shomfaye stopped by the house manager's office and looked in the house book. He is good at remembering names. So he remembered that Lipot Čaus lived on the same floor as Hunjor and

Edita Čaus. So far, she is our only Edita. He got in his car and drove back to the manager. From him he found out her address and her former place of work. The old Čaus is already dead.

— He was the girl's uncle.

— And how did you find out?

— By chance. Hunjoro's daughter is studying with my son. She was already with me. You haven't spoken to Hunjoro's wife yet?

— Not about that. It seems to me that Gengeler needs to have a good look at the shop first.

— Right. Don't move Hunyor's wife for now. And Vilma.

— Hunyor's daughters?

— Yes. And Edith, I think, should be followed. It would be good find out where she goes, who she meets, what she is interested in.

— Do you think she was involved in the murder?

— I don't know. I just find it strange that she is still in the shadows. She was the one who sent Hunyor a million kisses eight ago. Maybe it all means nothing, and yet it is a little strange.

— I understand, of course you are right.

— Just watch out, Tibi, that you don't fall into the eyes. Don't frighten her. Let her think that she is not suspected. Tomorrow we'll take her on.

If I can talk the doctor through it, I'll come too.

— Rather, lie down and heal.

— Okay, okay, we'll see. What is the disease here? Thank you, I'm waiting for a phone call. So long, Tibi. Have someone call when Gengeler returns.

— Even at night?

— And at night. You won't be disturbed. I sleep alone, and the phone is next to me.

— OK.

Well, that's over for now. Bela pours tea with lemon from the thermos, drinks. She swallows two tablets of germicide and calmopyrine, puts some drops in her nose and rests on her head. But then she gets up again - the phone rings. He picks up, writes something, thanks, puts the receiver down. He closes his eyes, trying to fall asleep. The table lamp is on.

Halfway through, he hears the door creak open and someone comes in - he guesses it's his son, but pretends to be sound asleep. The door closes quietly. Silence. It's a good thing he doesn't have to talk to Andris about Vilma. Bela is really tired and wants to sleep.

Very tired... He thinks of Jeromash, sees him talking to Shomfaye, sees Shomfaye taking his cloak and

goes to look in or near the shop in Gengelero and gives him instructions or follows the girl himself.

And Jerome was left alone? Probably. Maybe his friend Sipek hasn't left yet? Jeromoš reads messages from other groups, looking for connections that might have something to do with the Hunjor case. Reports from groups fighting robbery, immorality, transport disorder, drug addiction. Are there any criminals among those arrested or wanted who could have any connection with the Hunjoro case? Jerome's chin is illuminated by a desk lamp, the upper part of his face in shadow. His hand is also illuminated by the lamp, the ashtray a cigarette...

Finally Bela falls asleep, he sleeps soundly and dreams nothing! His wife comes in and turns off the light.

At 12:20, Bela is woken by a rattling noise - the phone, covered by a headrest.

The rapporteur is Šomfajis. Edita Chaus was working second shift. She is very nice. The shop closed at ten. The employees went out the big door to the Boulevard Circle. At half past eleven Edita got on the 12 A bus, Shomfayi . They drove to the end. Then she went to Gabon Street and tried to make a phone call from the phone booth, dialling from memory. But she couldn't get through, apparently no one came to the phone. She waited for a while, put the chip back in, dialed the number, but there was no answer. Then she left the booth and turned towards the Boulevard.

They boarded the bus. Shomfayi followed. On Levehaza Street, she went to the house where, according to her former landlord, she had moved to live. From the pavement in front of the house, Shomfayi watched to see if the light in any of the windows would come on, if indeed she lived there. The silhouette of a woman - it must have been Edith Chaus - glimmered in one of the windows and pulled the curtain. But the light came in through a crack between the edges of the curtain. At twenty past twelve it went out. Shomfayi waited another ten minutes to see if anyone would come out of the shelter. Then he went. He is calling from work.

Kelemen thanked her for the information, asked if anything else had happened in the meantime. When he heard no, he put down the horn, poured himself a glass of tea, drank it greedily, and fell back asleep, reclining on his headboard.

In the morning, at ten o'clock, the doctor came. A man told him that he was getting up and going to work. After a short discussion, the doctor retreated and allowed him to leave for three or four hours. Kelemen was lucky - it was not raining or snowing, otherwise he would not have been allowed to go. Thank you for that too. He put on some warm underwear and, taking the opportunity to tell his wife that he had gone to the shop to do some shopping, which meant that unnecessary arguments and reproaches could be avoided, he sneaked out of the house, trying not to run into her in the street. He left a note on the table in his room. He threw it from side to side, and in general his temper was nasty, probably from germicide. He went to a pharmacy, bought some ascorbic acid, and in the nearest café drank strong black coffee, took the car out of the garage and drove to work.

He called Rauder from and he was already at half past nine. Edita Chaus was sitting on a bench in the reception area. Gengeler had gone to her house and, after introducing himself to her, summoned her to the police for questioning. According to Gengeler, the girl was calm, or rather, she was no worried than any other person to whom a policeman comes in the morning and call the police.

Kelemen went to the office and said hello to Rauder. No, he would not take over any business for the time being, and the doctor had given him permission to get out of bed for no more than three or four hours. And he is not feeling well, although he is holding on to legs - the fresh air must have helped. Rauder handed him the messages he had received the previous day and briefly described their contents.

A lot of work has been done with post offices, savings banks, banks, and all the institutions to which Hunjor was able to hand over money for safekeeping. But no results. Only in two of the cash offices were there deposits of forty-

forty-five thousand forints. One depositor's stamps do not match and the second is an old woman. And neither has anything to do with Hunjor. That has been verified.

— Who was the last customer at the savings bank from which Hunjor withdrew money? The cashier seemed to say that Hunjor was the penultimate. Have you checked that?

— Yes. The last one was a craftsman carpenter, living in the neighbourhood. He was paying two thousand forints. The savings bank staff knows him.

— Can you see what's going on in the Savings Bank from the street? Has anyone been watching Hunjor and seen him withdrawing large ?

— Hunjor stood with his back to the window, which was closed with a metal curtain. The grey curtain did not cover the window blindly, Hunjor was blocking the cashier's window with his body. He put four hundred and twenty forints in hundredth notes in his briefcase.

Anyone watching from the outside would only have been able to see the movement of his hands when Hunjor was making the money cakes. The observer could only have understood that the amount was large.

— That was enough for him - to dare to rob a man. He followed him, got on the same electric train...

— Wait. Not like that, Bela. At the bus stop by the fishermen's huts, Hunjor got off alone.

— Right.

Kelemen began pace around the room thoughtfully. He walked over to a speaker on the wall and switched it on. The voice of Jeromáš was heard:

— What was the relationship between you and Hunjor?

— I was his fiancée," a woman's voice replied. Of course it was Edita Chaus.

— You're just in time," said Rauder. - That's interesting.

— But was Hunjor ? - Jeromoš asked again.

— He left home and we decided to get married as soon as he got his divorce.

— Now, tell us as precisely as possible about your last meeting with Hunjor. It was a ago.

— He went to the shop in the second half of the day. I served him.

— What did he buy?

— This is for breakfast. Sausage, bread. A bottle of wine - in the next section.

— Did you talk about anything?

— Yes.

— About what? Tell me. Don't make me pull every word out of you.

— We agreed that I would come to his fisherman's cottage in the evening after work.

— And you went?

— No.

— Why? Did you agree with me? Silence.

— Please reply. Why didn't you report everything to the police? Your groom is murdered by your, please, grown-up and intelligent women, and you do not even try to look for him, do not go to his house, and only find out from the newspapers that he has been murdered. Why?

— No, it wasn't like that. It wasn't. I thought that Jenny was offended that I hadn't come to see her that night, and that's why she hadn't been in my sight. Besides, we had agreed that I should never go looking for him - he would find me if he had to. It used to happen that for weeks on end we didn't see each other. He used to say that we both had to keep our relationship a secret, so that his wife wouldn't find out and hurt us.

Kelemen and Rauder listened to the quota without making a sound. The phone on the table chirped. Nervously and quickly Kelemen raised his horn.

Referred by Gengeler. The Teve Street office reported that a patrolman driving a radio-telephoned car had found the body of a man in his thirties on Margita Island, near the water. The man must have been drunk, as his head was bent over in the water. Nothing was found in his pockets.

Is possible that he has been robbed. Is this a violent death -

is difficult to determine. Please send someone to examine the body at the scene.

— OK," says Kelemen and turns to Rauderj:

— Send Glik and Jaster to have a look!

Rauderis nods. Kelemen puts down his horn.

— I know you were afraid," Jeromoš's voice comes again. - You had reason to be afraid. But if you claim that you were not in the fisherman's hut, that must be shown. Where did you spend the night of the 29th to the 30th?

— Well, that's all for now. Jene is dead. I'm staying with my ex-cavalier. He was waiting for me in the street when I came out of the shop and begged me to come with him. I told him I didn't have time. He asked me what I was doing here, and at first I told him off: "What are you doing!" Then I confessed that I was going to see Jeni.

— Did your former cavalier know Hunjor?

— He knew that Jene was my fiancé.

— Tell me. He's been bugging you to go with him.

— Yes. But I told her I was late for the train and that Jene would wait for me at the bus stop, as we had agreed. Then he said that I could take the next train, later. We would not stay with him long - only an hour.

— And you agreed?

— Yes. I stayed with him all .

— Where does he live and under what name and surname? You see, we have to check everything.

— Of course, it's all the same now. Now I won't marry Jenny. He's dead.

— His name? Tell me.

— Alfred Schomer. He is a painter. His workshop on Gabon Street.

— Yes. Please tell me, what time did you learn of Hunjor's death?

— Yesterday morning, the first half of the day, actually. Around half past 12. I had to go to work at two o'clock. I had breakfast at about eleven and was in the kitchen looking at the newspaper.

The hostess subscribes to Madjar Nemzet, and I read the news in it. I was very scared. I ran to the bathroom, changed my clothes, ran out into the street and called Freddie from the nearest phone booth. But he was not at . Then I tried to call him again. Then I called again from the shop. Again and again. But nobody answered. After work, I got on a bus and went to Gabon Street. There was a light on in the window of his workshop. I saw that there was a light on, but I didn't dare to go up to him - I was afraid that there might not be one.

I called, but he didn't pick up the phone. So he was not alone. I got back on the bus and went home. Early this morning, at about seven or half past eight, I went downstairs again and called. He did not answer. Or he was not at home. I was very excited and I rushed home. An hour later you came.

A passenger walks up to the loudspeaker, turns it off. Rauderis flips through the phone book.

— Chomlas, Shomayei, Shomer... Alfred Shomer is not in the phone book. And there is no one with the name Shomer living on a street in Gabon.

— Perhaps a declassified phone number. Rauder calls the Central Telephone Exchange.

— In general, it doesn't matter. Jerome will find out his exact address from the girl.

— There is no artist Alfred Schomer and no other subscriber with a classified phone number on Gabon Street.

— Strange. By the way, it's nothing like that. Let's search by address. Right away. Hold the girl. Call her at work and tell her she won't be in today or she'll be back later. If Shomer confirms that they were together on Wednesday and Thursday night, she should be released. Temporarily.

Jeromos and Sipek will come with me. Gengeler will stay. Protect the girl.

Together with Rauder, they walk the door. Kelemen stops in the doorway.

— Complicating matters is the fact that Shomer was the first love of Hunyor's daughter. They were in close contact.

Rauderis stands puzzled.

— And you're just now saying that, Bela?

— Yes, just now. And when could I have said? And yet, you should search the flat. For all the evil.

6

Surprises. And what surprises! Hail of surprises! Lava!

The house manager lived nearby. He had four houses on Gabon Street. Each resident had a key to the big door. As it later turned out, Shomer was here lived there temporarily while his kitchen was converted into a workshop. The owner of the flat, the artist Endre Corban, left for a two-year creative assignment abroad, leaving the flat to Shomer, who was permanently registered on Aurora Street. Among other things, he is not a painter but a photographer or photojournalist, as indicated in the house book.

No one came to answer the door when I rang the bell, even though light was coming in through the keyhole. The house manager wanted to go to get a locksmith, but Jeromoš easily opened the door with the latch. It turned out to be simply closed. There was no one in the apartment.

— Someone's been here," said Rauder. Kelemen nodded his head - of course there was.

— He was looking for something. Just what? - asks Jeromoš.

In the centre of the room is a large square tachta covered with a tiger-skin cover, with photographs of nude women in various poses on the tachta. In the pile of photos are the tools of a photojournalist's trade: lenses, a magnifying glass, two cameras, empty cassettes. The doors of a carved chest of drawers are open, the drawers have been pulled out. Papers thrown on the floor,

cartridges. The wardrobe is also open, with a row of men's cassettes hanging there, and two more on the floor. The men's laundry is a shirt, socks, tracksuit bottoms, pullovers, handkerchiefs - scattered on the shelves. There are three spotlights in the corner and two more on the wall. Almost at the ceiling in the living room surrounded by a pleated drapery. Sipek looks under the drapery. -

A hidden camera! Another one! - exclaims.

There are three cameras in the corners behind the drapery.

Books are thrown off the shelves and onto the floor. A large basket of rubbish is overturned in the bathroom.

No one pays to Sipek's findings.

Kelemen, Rauder and Jeromoš stand by the tachta and look at the photos - Jeromoš holds them up with a white handkerchief and puts them away, one by one. One hundred - one hundred twenty photos. Beautiful nude and semi-nude young women. Two or three shots of each model. Two famous young actresses. Jerome says their names. Rauder nods his head. Two pictures of Vilma Hunjor and only one of Edita Chaus.

— And this is Balog, the daughter of Hunjor's sister," says Jeromoš.

Everyone recognises three dancers from the opera theatre and one other a nightclub dancer. Sipek approaches them. Silence, just the sound of Jeromoš's photos.

Rauder's voice is heard, colourless, muffled:

— And here's my niece...

Everyone is silent. Jeromoš takes his time to add this photo to the others. Then he lifts his head, looks around the room, shakes his head and continues to put the photos together.

— What are you looking for? - Sipek asks.

— Artist's attributes. They are there.

There are actually several jugs of paintbrushes on a small table. There's also a palette, tubes of oil paints. Next to it, an easel covered with a cloth. Sipek walks over to it, lifts the cover.

All three look in his direction.

— A sketch," says Sipek.

— In the canvas - the unfinished kind. The woman's face is unpainted, her hair is . The main tone of the painting is green.

Sipek touches the paint with his finger, then pulls back the curtain.

— The paint is dry. Completely dry.

— Yes. It's all familiar to us. We've seen this sort of thing before," says Jerome, nodding at the photos.

He ties a thick stack of photos with a handkerchief and puts them in his briefcase.

A hostile construction guard awakens in the soul of Sipek.

— But there is nothing illegal or criminal here?

— There is nothing. Of course there is nothing, friend Sipek. We know that.

Kelemen's voice sounds calm and even indifferent, not instructive at all.

— But there is an element of crime," says Rauder, "we just don't know where it is yet.

Rauder must be embarrassed, it seems to him that everyone is now thinking about his niece. Frankly, it makes everyone uncomfortable, reflects Kelemen. In any case, he is no less puzzled than Rauderj. He may be old-fashioned, but he is happy to have a son. He felt it especially clearly when he saw a picture of Hunjoro's naked daughter. Apparently, this reflex is innate in him. Young people think differently.

— It is not clear to me, at least not yet," says Jerome, "what this Shomer has to do with the murder of Hunjor.

"My head is heavy. Sick. I am no longer able to think logically, coherently. Jeromoš is probably telling the truth, his head is sober", Kelemen thinks, then asks:

— Maybe you have a magnifying glass?

Rauderis pulls out a small, ornate leather case from his pocket and gives it to Kelemen after removing the loupe.

Kelemen goes to the bath. There he notices two pairs of shoes. Turning the soles of the shoes to the light, he looks at them carefully through a magnifying glass. The black Italian-made rubber boots

the soles of his feet appear him. The soles seem to stick to the some bits and pieces. He takes out a handkerchief and scrapes them off. The crumbs fall on his palm. In the strong light of the lamp, Kelemen examines them through a magnifying glass.

— Tolis? - Jeromoš asks.

— It seems so. Let's see what the pieces are. By the way, it is difficult to say whether they are thallium or not. It can only be determined by laboratory analysis. But it could also be a coincidence.

Bela Kelemen is filled with pride. He is pleased with Jerom, who has grown under his wing, pleased that he understands his every move.

He wraps the croutons in a leaf torn from a notebook and puts them in his pocket.

— Well, let's go. If Edita Chaus was telling the truth and her testimony is consistent with Shomfajo's report, then this apartment has been left as we found it since last night, empty, with a burning light. Shomer didn't stay overnight at home. And if the light was left on by those who overtook us, they must have left before 10 pm.

— Yes, it's quite plausible," says Rauder, putting the loupe in the tray.

— If it turns out that the crumbs are really from the scroll by the door of the summer kitchen, then Shomer and Edith Chaus can be accused of murdering Hunjor. If not, we need to look further. It seems to me that this is a simple, primitive murder, but a well-designed one.

Kelemen does not even notice that, with his sick leave, he has essentially taken charge of the investigation. Rauder does not show that he has moved. He is, after all, officially in charge of the investigation. Habit. But here Kelemen puts on the brakes and expertly returns the helm to Rauder.

— I suppose you'll take care of their fingerprints?

— Yes, definitely. I'll ask my friend Sipek to come with me to the High Authority - we need to check whether those

photos reproduced or taken for personal use only. I ask you and Jeromoš to take a look at Shomer's apartment on Aurora Street, where he is a regular.

If you feel well, of course. In the worst case, Jerome can go alone. And frankly, you should go to bed.

— I feel great. When I'm working, I forget I'm sick. By the way, take this and give it to the experts," says Kelemen, handing Rauder the paper-wrapped shoe soles.

Rauderis nods his head and puts the folded paper in his pocket.

— Interestingly, Shomer doesn't have a single photo of himself or any of the men. All of them are of women. I'd like to see that heart-eater," Sipek laughs.

— You're right," says Jerome. - It's really strange. We don't even know what he looks like. You meet him face to face in the street and you don't know him.

— Everyone laughs.

Suddenly, Kelemen sits down on a tachta with a tiger-skin cover.

— What's matter, Bela?

— A little dizzy. I should probably go home. I'm afraid it might get worse. - He remained silent. - The Hunjoro case seems to be pulling at me.

Of course, it starts to pull. Pulling passionately and persistently. He no longer thinks about anything but this case. To her it cannot get used to, it cannot go away, and it cannot be compared to ordinary cases. Or can it? Of course it can. Only Kelemen is incapable of it. How many years has he toiled, trying not to show his face or his gestures an unbridled passion for investigating crime.

Tyla. Warm room, warm bed. Mance finally stopped grumbling and moaning that he had run away from home sick, and served him a light lunch of chops with spinach sauce, two oranges and tea with lemon. He obediently endured while she stuffed him with a blanket, then fell asleep, breathing heavily,

woke up several times, fell back asleep. Jeromoš called twice. Mance talked to Janka. Rauder called once, said that Duris Sipek would come in the evening, and that the cresses were not from the toli roll. The photographs have not been published anywhere, none of them have been seen by photo experts. So they were taken for personal purposes?

Shomer's grandmother. Jeromoš spoke about her with humour, imaginatively, but without missing the point. "My Freddy," she said, "is a very good boy. He has no daddy and no mummy - they were taken by the Nilachans and it was up to me to bring him up."

In March it will be two years since he moved in with an artist friend, but he has been coming home regularly and working here. In the lab. He turned the laboratory into a former

in the maid's room, where she was developing the tapes.

Jeromáš unlocked the door with a padlock, searched the lab, but found no negatives anywhere - so they are stored somewhere else, so that

an old lady sometimes... Landscapes, photo essays, scenes from plays, foreign celebrities visiting Hungary. Green box. Jeromoš could not open it, and he did not dare to take it - he would open it tomorrow and see what was in it, before someone diverted the old lady's attention. In fact, that's why he called the first time.

Yes, he has seen the photos of Schomer, the old lady showed them to him.

Beautiful photos, here he is, in tennis pants and a T-shirt, waving his hand to someone, and here is his portrait - black wavy hair, strong facial features, white teeth, a wide smile. Jeromoš understands why women cling to him.

Rauder reported on the news of the day, confirming that the news of the man's corpse being found on the island of Margita was true. The man was drunk and his head was slightly scratched, from a flush. However, during the autopsy, the nose traces of ether were found in his mucous membranes - he had apparently been drugged and laid on the steps leading to the water, but for what purpose is unclear. Identifying the deceased

No personality has been found so far - nothing was found in his pockets. It is possible that the man was robbed.

Rauder also reported that Borisha Balog, a model, had been summoned for questioning and her photograph - alongside those of Vilma Hunjor and Edita Chaus - was also found in Shomer's possession. And, , she is Hunjor's niece. Rauder enquired about Bela's health, was glad to hear that was better, and advised him not to fool around, to get some sleep, to without harming yourself. Bela said that the doctor had promised to be there at six, which meant he had to come soon.

After taking the temperature, Kelemen went back to sleep. The doctor came at half past seven. He stretched and listened to his back and chest, looked at his throat, and pressed a spoon to his tongue. "Still poorly," said the doctor. - But it's going for the better." To Bela's question whether he could go to work tomorrow, the doctor mumbled something, then, making an exception, promised to come back early in the morning, before the reception hours, and then he would decide. Kelemen frowned. He felt relatively well, and his nose was not as stuffy as yesterday, and his breathing was easier.

As he was eating kefir mixed with apricot jam and a little rum, according to Mance's recipe, his phone rang. It was half past eight. Jerome, very excited, which was unusual for him, reported that Golig had seen a picture of Alfred Schomer on his desk and immediately recognised it as the man whose body had been found on Margit Island. There can be no mistake.

— That's what I was afraid of," Bela Kelemen sighed. - I felt, but you don't always have to believe in feelings. You let Edith Chaus go?

— Yes," replied Jeromoš. - The same day, after having broken out of Shomer's apartment. But Shomfaye is following her. She went to work. She will not be able to see Shomer again.

— Yes. She will never see him again. The only witness who could have corroborated Edith Chaus's alibi is dead.

Rauder says autopsy says he died yesterday

in the evening, between 7pm and 8pm. And we have no evidence as to whether or not she slept with Shomer. You were able to find fingerprints in Shomer's apartment?

— Lots of prints. But it has not been possible to determine whose they are. At least the most recent ones.

— There was one murder, now there are two. The idea is that Shomer was murdered by someone who was looking for something in his flat and left it behind.

lights out.

— I think so too," said Jeromoš. - But so far we don't have a single hammer.

— No," said Kelemen thoughtfully, looking at the glass of kefir mixed with apricots according to Mance's recipe.

jam and rum. - The situation gets more complicated. Tomorrow I will come. Goodbye.

— Goodbye, Comrade Kelemenai.

He put the ragelj down, grabbed a teaspoon of kefir and swallowed. Now he did not find it as tasty as before.

Then Kelemen swallowed two tablets of germicide, turned out the light and slept soundly through the night, without dreams. But before he fell asleep, he asked Mance to call Sipek and tell him not to come - Kelemen was not feeling well and needed to sleep.

7

He woke up early. It was still dark outside the window - the crack between the curtains was pitch black. Kelemen rolled over a little, by listening to yourself. "I'm all right," he murmured in a half-voice.

He put a folder of papers on his lap, clicked the button on the ballpoint pen and started writing quickly.

"I'm basically a systematizer," he mused. - I always start trying to sort out the mess. Putting everything on shelves. When there is a system, the order of things

has a clear form, a place in space and time. So far we have been dealing with a difficult but simple structure an equation with one unknown, and suddenly another unknown appears. If something like that happens in a detective novel, I yawn. Imagine, in the middle of a novel, another murder comes to light. It collapses the ending of the first task, the internal balance of the form breaks down, and you feel as if someone is trying to trick you. With the murder of Hunjore, a more or less clear version has already started to form in my mind - and, by golly, you have to start all over again.

Deadlock. And here we have what is known as a zeitgeist. By The end is still a long way off, but the end of the thread is in our hands. Hunjor did not leave his family because the cup suddenly filled to the brim. He had a woman, a young, beautiful woman, whom he was going to marry. And she was not averse to marrying him. Of course, Edith Chaus's love for Hunjor wasn't very hot, if she was determined, as soon as Shomer waved...

But what about the reality - was he determined? What if they discussed everything beforehand? Edith Chaus might have known about those

forty-two thousand forints and was able to come to an agreement with Schomer... But this cannot be shown. Edith Chaus will have to be thoroughly investigated. And more than once. She doesn't look like an experienced a criminal, and will probably get confused if they lie.

Women were milling around Shomer. Let's say that Shomer killed Hunjor, even though it can't be proven. O Shomer was killed by someone else. And both murders were the work of men. Both were committed on the banks of the Danube, at least near the water. Is there any logic here? Probably. Or it can be assumed that Hunjor and Shomer were killed by the same human? He hit one of them on the head, after he had fallen asleep in the ether, laid him upside down on the steps of the quay in the water so that he would drink. But why in my heart am I unwilling to accept this premise?"

Kelemen sits up in bed - a folder on his lap, a pellet gun in his hand, silence all around him - and feels well rested,

rested.

It breathes easily. "Yes, all these murders, unfortunately not a detective novel."

The Schneider case. This is a real detective novel. He was also murdered on the banks of the Danube, in the mud, Schneider was an upholsterer from the Jozefvarosh district. A bullet pierced his egg, hit him in the the brain and off it went. She could not be found. Snider fell into the water, and only four days later, his body was pulled far away, near barrier. It could only be hit from the opposite shore, even with a rifle with a telescopic sight, by chance. On the shore where he was fishing, he was covered by rushes. The expert shooters were unanimous that the shots were fired from a range of thirty-five to forty metres at most. At first, everyone thought it was from a boat. From boats

the pier where he had been fishing and then capsized in the water, only a pigeon-fish was visible. It was not possible to determine his posture - sitting or standing - at the time of the shot, as

it was not possible to tell where the shots were fired from - from the shore or from the river. Snyder was forty-eight years old and my wife is 26. Six months later, she was married. And a year and a half after the murder, when she was in her eighth month of pregnancy, it turned out quite by chance that,

At the age 17, in the national junior competition, she was a shooting champion. When she was interrogated again, she confessed to shooting her husband. She took a rifle, climbed a ladder to the cowshed, aimed, fired, and hit him. The sniper fell into the water. It was an ordinary day, not a around. They were fishing because their workshop was being repaired. After shooting the man, she got on a boat, swam to the middle of the Danube and threw the gun into the water. And so he got there and has not been withdrawn. This is a real detective story. But in this case, too, it was only by chance that the killer was found. To be precise,

a regular coincidence. Schnyder's wife even told me that he saw her climbing the ladder to the cowshed, aiming for it, and waved at her. He thought she was joking.

"We need to focus on what needs to be done. It's complicated - so many threads, so many people.

Try to find your way among the one hundred and twenty nude and semi-nude women photographed by Shomer! What if there is just the right one missing among these photographs? After all, it is quite possible that there was a woman in Shomer's apartment who wanted to find and take her photograph so that Shomer could not

compromise or blackmail. Or maybe it was a jealous husband, lover or father who somehow found out that a naked picture of his wife, lover, daughter was in Shomer's apartment. And if this woman or man got into the apartment, or he took the very photo that could have helped track down the perpetrator. Try to get a grip here!

But let's not wait any longer. There can be guesses. What did Edita Čaus do from Thursday, 30 January, to Wednesday, 5 February? What was Shomer doing on the same days? Or rather, until Tuesday evening, when he was killed. Is there any connection between Hunjoro and Shomer

murder? And which one? Both cases involve Edita Čaus, Vilma Hunjor, daughter of Balog. What is her name? Yes. Borisha Balog. Did Hunjor know Shomer? Of course he might have. We need to find out. Maybe Jerome has already made it clear. Or Rauder. What was Shomer doing on Tuesday night, February fourth, in the freezing cold, in the most desolate part of the island of Margit.

Was he first put to sleep somewhere and sleeping taken? However, this is not borne out by the findings of the investigation and the examination of the crime scene. Murder for the purpose of robbery? Why did the bandit or bandits decide to choose Shomer as the victim? Maybe they were following him? Why him? How did they know that he would go to the far end of the island, where they would be able to put him to sleep and rob him? This is totally implausible.

This means that we need to find out what kind of environment Shomer lived in, if possible, until his death.

We are back to where we started. One hundred twenty naked women. Or his grandmother. Who

kept in its green box? It was foolhardy not to take it immediately. But why take it? After all, it was not yet known that a man had been found on Shomer and Margit Island
a corpse is the same person. Does the prosecutor's office have any knowledge of him? Has he been convicted?

All this is, of course, an improvised systematisation of tasks and problems. Today's Borisha Balog poll. A number of small partial questions have probably already been answered. A week has passed since Hunjor was murdered in the fisherman's hut. And we still, as before, know nothing.

The situation has become even more complicated. Simple, primitive Murder? A joke! And that's what I said when Rauder reported the murder to me. Where are you going!

But where did Schomer's killer get the airtime? That alone is cause for concern. After all, Hungarian authorities have reported such robberies using ether or chloroform
nothing has been heard in the Crime Chronicle since the 1930s. In fact, there are only two or three incidents. Incidentally, today even in surgery

ether is no longer used in narcosis. It is possible that it was not ether, because an unsuspecting person might have called chloroethyl ether. Was he put to sleep with knowledge? There are also some conclusions to be drawn from this. After all, knows that ether is very rarely used today, except in gynaecology.

In a word, the question remains open.

Besides, what could the robbers have taken from Shomer? Was the murder really committed for the purpose of robbery? Or did the killers turn out their pockets and throw away everything in order to prevent the corpse from being identified for as long as possible? Why does the idea that the murder was committed by a jealous husband or a father who loves his daughter and is trying to defend her honour persist against my will?

Maybe because it's the most tangible. Thinking about it this way, Hunjor may have had a reason to kill Shomer. Even two reasons. Edita Chaus and his daughter. Or vice versa... Foolishness. Hunjoro was already dead when Shomer was killed. True,

among one hundred and twenty women, there would have been more than one woman whose husband, lover or father...

Only one is known for sure. The centre of gravity of this confused case has shifted from Hunjor to Shomer. Shomer has become the central figure in this case. Although maybe not. There is also some kind of coincidental connection. And Shomer's murder may have nothing to do with the Hunjor case. It could be yes. Could be. Unfortunately, it could. By the way, I have no temperature, I am breathing easily, my mood is good.

The doctor also agreed with his diagnosis, though he grumbled a bit that, he heard, it would be a good idea to stay in bed for another day... But who needs that?

The reports did answer a number of questions, which of course changed the overall picture of the case somewhat. Shomer, for example, had applied to the Ministry of the Interior for a foreign passport for travel to Europe, and had received one. The passport was dated 23 January, which means that he received it shortly before the assassination of Hunjor. It later transpired that the passport had an Austrian visa was found in the green box. The visa is valid for two weeks. So Shomer was preparing for a tourist trip. What's behind this? Maybe the intention not to go back? In , escape? But there is no evidence.

Five thousand forints in hundredths of a forint were also found in the box, but unfortunately this tells us nothing. The savings bank had paid Hunjor the money from that day's money, and it is impossible to determine from the bank numbers whether the money found in the box belonged to Hunjor. It also contained some documents: an identity card, a permit, a diploma, a birth certificate. In the box, two bundles of letters tied with string were found among the linen. Mostly love letters from women, including several from abroad.

On the basis of branch data, the Central Savings Bank reports in whose name or under which motto the money of between 20 000 and 40 000 has been spent between the 30th of January and the 2nd February. Listed at

only private depositors are listed, and deposit numbers are also given here. What a job we have given the savings bank, thought Kelemen. Then it occurred him that Schomer's grandmother must have already been informed of her grandson's death. Yes, that's the message. The grandmother had suffered a heart attack,

a doctor was called, and somehow managed to revive him. But the doctor did not allow her to breathe that day.

"Here you go, please. I thought so. A chemical analysis, based on medical reports, showed that Shomer was put to sleep with halothane - not by injection, but through the respiratory tract. I thought it was not ether. According to the doctors, Shomer had been under the influence of the drug for five to ten minutes, and that was enough to get him drunk. Where did the killer get halothane? This drug is used in surgery, gynaecology, otolaryngology and urology."

The full minutes of the interrogation of Edita Čaus, including the part that Kelemen had already heard over the loudspeaker, where she had been and what she had been doing after the night of the 29th to the 30th, from Thursday morning to Tuesday evening.

Did she meet Schomer during this time? Yes. At three o'clock on a Sunday, she came to see Schomer, stayed with him until five o'clock, invited him to the cinema, but he wouldn't go, said he didn't have time, and at five o'clock he almost drove her out of the house.

According to Edita Čaus, Šomer was not a constant friend of hers either, they met only occasionally. He was a square one, stubborn - if you were invited, you couldn't answer. Did she know that he didn't have his own studio, but had rented a room from a friend?

an artist? No, I didn't. And what did she know about his relationships with other women? That he had a lot of them - the painter needs posers, he's always on the lookout for the perfect model, he may never find one, but

he must search. This is what Shomer told her. And she not jealous? And how! At first she was very jealous, but then she had to accept it. Freddy hated the jealousy scenes. She had to accept him as he was or disappear from his sight.

No, he has never invited her to his friends' houses, except for the two times they went to a club to dance. They met a lot of his acquaintances there, but he never introduced her to anyone. Did she know that Shomer was dating Vilma Hunjor? She knew. Last summer, on her way home from Lake Balaton, she went with to the Youth Garden with her friends and saw Vilma at a table with a guy. She walked up to them and sat down next to them. Meanwhile, Vilma left for an hour, and when she returned, Edita had already arranged to meet Freddy the next day. Everything happened quickly. She liked Freddy very much. But she was already in contact with Hunjor? Yes. She had. And did Vilma Hunjor know that she was close friends with her father? No, she didn't. At least Edith hadn't said anything to her. Jene had strictly forbidden her to meet anyone from his family. He had kept their relationship a secret. He was afraid his wife would find out.

Here Jeromoš delivers a moral sermon to Edith Chaus. Unnecessarily. He needs to be warned. By the way, when a person asks questions and listens to the answers, it is very difficult for him to refrain from playing the role of educator. So the most important thing of all is that Edith Chaus was with Shomer on Sunday from three to five. If she was telling the truth, it is now known where Shomer was for those two hours. It is also possible to assume that he had another date after that. With whom? A man or a woman?

In the evening, for the second time, Edita Chaus was again called by Jeromoš. Does she know any of Shomer's posers? No. Vilma Hunjor. Did Shomer show Edith's photographs to her? Yes, he did. And how did she react to that? How did can you respond? The photos are very good. How many photos of her did Schomer take? Many. And yet, how many approximately? Forty or fifty? But Shomer had assured her that he was a painter. Had she seen him paint? No, she hadn't. He needs photographs for that. He only paints from photographs. He told her that sometimes out of a hundred or a hundred fifty photographs, he chose one that captures

an expressive gesture or movement, just the way he needs it. A live model even posing against her will. And he expects the most subtle inclination of the soul from the poser, and he is interested in only one thing: how to transfer this inclination to the canvas. Did she know that Shomer had applied for a foreign passport, that he was about to leave for the United States?

Behind the scenes? No, I didn't. Maybe he ever talked about this your intention? Never. Did she know that there were three secret cameras in Schomer's apartment? Yes, she did.

On several occasions, Jeromoš forces Edita Chaus, with her consent, to return to the night of the twenty-ninth to the thirtieth of January. What time did she arrive at Shomer's? Did anyone see her climb the stairs? Did she meet anyone? For example, with the inhabitants of the house? No. Then, like a pop with a smile, Jerome makes her tell him the smallest details of the night. He asks again. Talks about another subject and again he goes back to that night, asks to retell it all over again. No, there is no contradiction in Edith's words. Did Shomer take her picture that ? No, he didn't that night. And not once did Jeromáš mention that Shomer was dead, that he had been murdered. And Edith talks about him as if he were alive.

There is no contradiction in this material. Edita answers more or less calmly, without getting upset. A person is always nervous and worried when he is questioned by the police, and that is quite natural. O

there is a certain stubbornness in this woman's words, which is quite evident in the transcript of the interview. Edita clearly does not want to help the investigation and only answers questions because she is forced to do so. She is not stupid and, of course, she loves, or rather used to love, Schomer. Or maybe she does now, because she does not know that he is dead. And primitive. She does not see that Shomer is using her love for evil, deceiving her.

Even at the end of the interrogation, when Jerome announces that she is being arrested on the basis of serious suspicions that she was involved in the murder of Jene Hunjor, even then she defends Shomer, screaming that it's not true, that Jerome wants to deceive her, that she didn't participate in the murder and that Freddie couldn't have said anything like that, because it is not true. Under

in a brief but unpremeditated fit of hysteria, she gradually calms down without admitting anything. Jerome orders her out.

"I don't understand," grumbles Kelemen, "I don't understand Jeromoš.

After all, he never blew his eyes out. Why is he doing so now? After all, the interrogation material does not provide any basis for such a decision. What prompted him to arrest Edith Chaus?"

He rummages through the papers, looks at new reports, but finds nothing. Then he comes across a note in Jeromoš's handwriting, or rather a message received by phone at two o'clock four minutes. After a second heart attack, Sandor Haupt's widow, whose maiden name is

Aranka Ferenci, Shomer's grandmother, was taken to hospital where she died a few hours later. Under her nightgown, a canvas bag hung around her neck, containing a savings bank book with a deposit of thirty thousand forints.

The personal account was opened a year and a half ago, but by January 31, only ten forints were in the book. Thirty thousand forints were moved that day.

Incidentally, this contribution, under the motto "Nadji", also appears on a list sent to the police after the request.

"Now I understand you, Jeromoš." Kelemen thoughtfully flips through his notes in his notebook. Here is one of them: "Who did Schomer talk to in German on the phone at half past five on Sunday, within earshot of Edith Chaus?" Yes, this detail is also mentioned in the protocol, Kelemen noticed it. But now, when he was looking through Jerome's notebook, it seemed much more important to him. Edita Chaus does not understand German and does not know who and what he was talking to.

Kelemen smiles. It is rare for him to receive and review unstructured, unsummarised reports. Usually he receives ready-made material with precise summaries and conclusions. It all reminds him of his younger days. Jeromáš must be very tired and is now still asleep. One has to sleep sometime. Sixth of February, Thursday, nine o'clock in the morning.

Thus, on Tuesday, the fourth of February, Alfred Schomer was murdered in the second half of the day, and is suspected of having murdered Jenny Hunjor on the night of Wednesday, the twenty-ninth of January, and Thursday, the thirtieth of January. Edita Čaus is alleged to have been his accomplice. This needs to be established precisely. There are still a great many unclear questions, but they also need to be answered. That is the essence of his work today.

But who killed Shomer? And why?

8

Methodologically, it would have been more correct to swap these questions. Why is more important. Knowing the reason for Schomer's murder would also help interrogators get to the killer himself.

Edita Čaus? But she's out. She was working in the shop for the second half of the day on Tuesday - that's been established. She could not have ended up on Margaret Island. The press hasn't announced yet that

the corpse found on Margita Island has been identified and that it is the photojournalist Alfred Shomer, as this would have been useless for the investigation.

For the same reason, right now, at ten o'clock, Jeromoš asks the first question to Borisha Balog, a model who was married to Adam Tartak and is now divorced, born in 1940, and lives on Martiri Avenue.

- Are you acquainted with Alfred Schomer?
- It's a step forward.
- What is your relationship like?
- Friendly.
- When was the last you spoke to Schomer?
- Thank you, I thought my uncle...

— Don't be offended if I interrupt you. It is very important that to answer my questions. When was the last time you spoke to Shomer?

— Wait. Today is Thursday. It seems... Yes, yes, really, day before yesterday morning, Tuesday, on the phone. He woke me up about half past nine. I was a little surprised, because he asked me if I hadn't told anyone that last week he had asked me for a car for a while. I replied that I had not spoken to anyone about it. Which end? Then he asked me not to tell anyone for the time being, at least for this week, because he had delivered the taxi bills to the editorial office and he had to pay them. And, of course, he doesn't want to get in trouble. In other words, he said something like that. Then I said to him: "Perhaps you're mad moved out? You wake me up with the darkies for such a trifle!" And he laughed: "All right, all right, don't call, go back to sleep, but don't tell anyone about the taxi." Did he what happened?

— And here you are, telling me about taxis. Why?

— But you warned me that it is very important that I answer your questions in detail. Right?

— Yes. When and under what circumstances did Shomer ask you to lend him a car?

— If you'll bear with me for a moment, I'll remember. Last week on Tuesday, no, Wednesday... Yes, Wednesday. I'm I was in a restaurant and I got home at 10:00, so it's Wednesday after all. On Wednesday evening, around eleven o'clock, or maybe later, Shomer called me and told me that he had to go to Tatabane to take pictures for a night report, but the editorial car was broken, so he would like to borrow it from me - in the morning the car would be there, in front of the house, and he would put the ignition key under the mat by the front door. Twenty minutes later, he was with me, and I handed him the key in the hallway, but he did not even come into the living room. In the morning, the car was indeed . And the key was placed under the carpet, as promised, and an envelope was left in the car,

a hundred forints and a note: "For petrol and washing. Thank you. Kisses." That's all.

After that, did you have another meeting with Schomer? Did you talk to him on the phone?

— After all, I've already said. On Tuesday morning, he called me. He did not call again before or after that time.

— How do you think, given your relationship, was it natural for him to approach you from time to time?

— It's only natural. We were good but not close friends. - Have you known Shomer for a long time?

— Would you be so kind as to tell me why I have to answer these ?

— Unfortunately, I can't yet. Donate. Please remember when you have known Shomer.

— I met him last summer. In the swimming pool. He was there with my cousin. I offered to give them a lift and we went together. They got off at the corner of Barosh Street, and I was still in the centre. An hour later, I was at home, and as soon as I walked through the door, the phone rang.

Shomer called, he wants to take a series of photos of me and asks for permission to be photographed - he needs a model like me right now. I noticed in the pool that he liked me.

— And you went to him?

— No, I didn't go that time. Is Freddy involved in my uncle's murder?

— Why did you think that? Answer!

— My God! I told Freddie that I might have the next week off. Then he asked what I was going to do Weekend. I said I would go to the Danube. "Alone?" - he asked. "Yes, alone," I replied, "I will work there."

Then he asked me to let him come in, he wouldn't disturb me, he would just take pictures. I said I didn't mind, but I work is needed. The next day we went to our fisherman's house, where my uncle was killed.

On Monday morning, we drove home. Don't you think Freddy...

— We have good reason to believe that your uncle was killed by Shomer. Apparently, last week, on the night of Wednesday to Thursday, he drove your car to the fisherman's house and committed murder.

— In my car... That's terrible! You arrested him?

— Unfortunately, no. On Tuesday, in the second half of the day, someone killed Shomer.

— Murdered?! No, that's terrible...

— Please calm down. Keep this at a maximum secret. For now, don't tell anyone. Your alibi is proven - we know that you were at the cinema on Tuesday from six to eight in the evening. Therefore I am not hiding anything from you. We'll have a look at your car. Until then, you must not drive it. Do you have something to say?

— Weights... My mother called me to tell me that she had informed the police that the weights were missing. But they weren't gone. They're in my purse. I took them the last time I was there, two weeks ago. I needed them at home...

Weights in a wooden box on the table. Copper ones - hundred-gram and half-kilogram, kilogram and two-kilogram. This means that Jene Hunjor was not killed with a two-kilogram weight after all.

— One hour," says Kelemen. - How did the Penal Code come to be on the shelf in the fisherman's cottage?

— Criminal Code? What is the Penal Code!? A-a, that book. Last spring, a friend of mine - a law student - was studying for her exams with us. And she forgot it.

— Thank you," says Kelemen. - Thank you for the information.

Borisha Balog leaves. She is not tall, but very well built. You probably wouldn't call her beautiful: short blonde hair, round face, but long, slender legs, with black callouses. "That boy of mine knows a thing or two about women, thinks Kelemen, who first heard about Boris Balog from

your son. - She is trustworthy, sincere and doesn't seem to hide anything." Kelemen knows about such things.

Of course, he could be wrong. That's also something to keep in mind. But it is unlikely that he is making a mistake here.

It seems to Kelemen that before starting to interrogate Edita Chaus again, a brief meeting is needed to summarise and evaluate the new material - the suspects have a particularly sensitive sense of smell and a kind of sixth sense that allows them to see where and to what extent their accusation is based on facts and corroborated evidence. Moreover, everyone is now in their place, except Jaster, who is gathering knowledge about Corban, the painter, who has rented an apartment to Shomer.

Golig reported on Schomer's correspondence: mostly love letters from women, without any facts that could be useful for the investigation. Seven or eight foreign postcards and telegrams of congratulations, also from women, and only two from men. One of them was sent by a certain Karoj Hendrik from Stockholm. According to the information gathered, he was also a photographer who had escaped abroad in the 1950s. In a letter written two years ago, he reports that his boss, Mr Olafson, is coming to Budapest, through whom he sends a small gift and asks for

To meet Shomer. One letter was from a classmate in Uruguay, asking about the traditional reunion of their graduating class - he was going to Europe and wanted to visit his home country. Golig also managed to find two of Schomer's notebooks, one for this year and one for last, and both "H" sections had the hotel number of Margit Island written on them. This gave Golig the idea to check if Mr Olafson and a friend of Schomer's from Uruguay were staying at the hotel. Sig Olafson in this hotel

four times: two years ago in September (just at the time mentioned in Hendrik letter), then in February, then again in September, and finally recently. Yesterday he left for Vienna on the morning train. Mr Olafson was negotiating in one of the foreign

a trading company to which he delivers small batches of special photographic equipment. Mr Golig spoke to the commercial representative of the company and learned from him that Mr Olafson was publishing three or four illustrated magazines in Sweden, printing photographs of naked women. He had been to Sweden himself and had negotiated with Mr Olafson in Malmö. Of course, pornographic magazines have nothing to do with trade deals.

— It all makes now: the island of Margit, and telephone conversation in German on Sunday after midday, because that was probably when it was agreed to meet the Swede on Tuesday. That's why Schomer ended up on the island, - makes Kelemen concludes: 'Apparently he offered Olafson negatives and forints for photographs of naked women. We know that Schomer was preparing to go to Vienna and had already obtained a passport with an Austrian visa. There is little that Schomer wanted to escape and killed Hunjor, deciding to leave his grandmother the money for a period of time until he was firmly established. This is confirmed by the savings bank book found at his grandmother's house. The motive for Hunjor's murder becomes clear - Shomer was a loving grandson. But who killed him on Tuesday afternoon? We don't know anything about that yet.

Jaster is coming back from the ministry. Corbanp on a mission for two years expires in March, he informed me, and he has no other apartment, so Shomer would have had to move to his grandmother's place or elsewhere in March, leaving his artist's apartment behind.

— Here's more proof that he was about to flee abroad. Anyway, one more fact," says Jerome. - Just try, Bela, to put yourself in the shoes of this Shomer...

— And is it
worth it?

Everyone
laughs.

— Well, don't take my words .

Pornography is not enough for us, but in the West it is possible to make a living, especially since he has the kind of looks that attract women. Three cameras hidden under the drapery

provide high incomes. And here, he can't even sell the finished photos. What is left for him? Blackmail? But this dangerous, easy to compromise. Incidentally, of the cameras found on , two were stolen - their numbers are on file with us. Both were taken from cars: one from a Kraisler belonging to a Canadian citizen, together with a cheque book and seven hundred and twenty dollars in the summer of last year, and the second from a Folksvagen belonging to a Hungarian photojournalist in March. In both cases, the cars were driven away and abandoned a few hours later at the other end of town.

— You think Shomer also drove cars?

— No, I don't find that very believable. But the fact remains that both cameras were stolen from cars. The numbers match.

— OK. Of course, that is something to be reckoned with. Only, manding, you have to look for the needle in the haystack among the posers. Unfortunately, the wagon will have to be moved under a straw. It's a tricky job. Boring.

— I was talking to my niece," said Rauder. - On a Saturday in early October, she was invited to a party. At half past eleven, Shomer came, alone. He looked around and walked over to his niece. They jumped up and together went straight Shomer. She stayed with him until Sunday evening. "Just Freddy dragged me out of the party," that's what my niece told me. What jargon! She didn't know anything about Shomer taking pictures of her. Apparently he was manipulating hidden cameras.

— Well, of course," says Kelemen. - And now it's time to go. We won't disturb Jeromas. It would be good if Edita Chaus would make a sincere confession. I think she needs to be told Shomer is no longer alive. It will be much easier this way. Maybe she will tell us what she suspects after Shomer was killed.

— Vargas. Finally, it will come out in the interrogation.

— Even so. That doesn't matter either. The important thing is that we can finish the Hunjoro case today, and the details are

is already the normal job of an interrogator. The problem is only compounded by the fact that Hunjor's killer was also murdered. Therefore, and also because we have only one thread in our hands leading to the murder of Hunjor, it is now imperative we concentrate all our efforts on finding Shomer's killer or killers. That is our ordinary task, my friends. Thank you. The meeting is closed.

9

"I will start with Montesquieu. In his work "On the Spirit of the Law", he says that the police is an organisation that helps justice, independent of the , and called to protect citizens above all. How is this justice independent of the to be understood? No way. Fiction. Ideal. A good idea which, international practice confirms, nowhere and never it has failed to realise the ideal in its pure form. The West provides ample evidence of this. Very recently. For example, in Montesquieu's own country, the Ben Barka case. In the United In the USA, the assassination of Kennedy and his brother and the Warren Commission report. The ideal formulation of the principle and the practice are strictly different. Of course, all this is not to say that... Yes, to continue in this way of reasoning is to reveal the concept of "citizens' advocacy". Then to move on to the criminal problems of today's society, based on crime statistics in capitalist and socialist countries, including including in this country. To group this data and then to select the most important questions on the topic of "Punishment for criminal offences", with a particular focus on crimes that endanger human life. The main types are murder, attempted murder,... The important role of criminal tendencies and social conflicts should be further highlighted

interconnectedness, as well as the individual one in each the drama inherent in crime, which in the takes on greater or lesser social significance and threatens the shame of citizens.

Kelemen is resting. This is his way of resting - to concentrate on some extraneous thing. Now he reflects on his a lecture at the Academy of Internal Affairs. In this way, he is gradually disconnecting himself from the Hunyor murder case and extinguishing the spotlight that had shone blindingly bright on the circumstances of Alfred Schomer's death.

Time for lunch. Kelemen eats leisurely, carefully chewing the pork schnitzel with lentil garnish, wipes his lips, drinks mineral water, then reaches for a plate of custard tarts, takes a scone, examines it and takes a careful bite, taking care not to get icing sugar on his jacket; the icing makes his fingers sticky. Bela looks around, and the cafeteria and his colleagues who eat there seem like an auditorium where he is about to give a lecture. In his mind, he restates individual statements, straightens his a logical chain of reasoning, leading listeners to precise and irrefutable conclusions. The formulations must always be precise, each phrase must have a connection with the preceding and following idea...

"There must be a taxi driver somewhere!"

The hand with the last bite of the scone stops short of the mouth. The reflectors in Kelemen's brain automatically light up, illuminating the murder of Hunyor.

"Could Shomer have got from Gabon Street to Martiros Avenue in twenty minutes by any other transport? After all, he went to see Boris Balog in a car. By bus? That means the eleventh or the twelfth "A". 's a possibility, but not very plausible. To get to the Boulevard roundabout you need

at least five minutes. If he succeeded sometimes: the bus came right away, and if he succeeded again: the bus had green lights everywhere and there were few passengers at the bus stops, then,

Of course, he could have made the journey in twenty to twenty-five minutes.

And yet, you need to find a taxi driver. If there wasn't one, there's nothing you can do. But if he was, if he remembers Shomer and recognises him from a photograph, then... And if Edith Chaus didn't tell the truth? What if she didn't go with Shomer to his flat on Gabon Street, but waited somewhere for him to run to Boris Balog for the key to the car?"

The last bite of the scone disappears in Kelemen's mouth. He wipes his lips and fingers with a paper napkin, swallows another sip of mineral , and looks towards the buffet, meets eyes with Irmuška. She winks at him and points her finger at the coffee pot. Kelemen stands up, walks to the buffet - Irmuška has already added a cup of sugar and stirred it.

"Well, of course, Jerome also thought of the taxi driver. Or the Wailer. Probably around five o'clock he will hear a heartfelt confession from Edith Chaus - it is unlikely that she will continue to deny everything, it would be pointless, especially when Jerom will tell her that Shomer is dead. In such cases, everyone confesses. In any case, she will try to shine the best possible light on her role.

It's natural. And so are our efforts to recreate as accurate a picture of events as possible. To put reliable material in the hands of the prosecutor. And evidence. And the rest is a matter for the court. The second organ of justice. I'll go home on the fifth, return on the seventh, and we'll finish the Hunjoro case and all the efforts

let's move on to the murder of Shomer. Tomorrow we will start with a clean slate."

Bela Kelemen works until 4:00 pm, locked in his office. Since last Saturday, a whole pile of unfinished business has accumulated.

Someone is knocking. Jeromoš enters.

— He does not confess. He does not want to admit that they left the apartment and went to the fisherman's house with Šomer.

— Did you tell her that Shomer was killed?

— Yes. That's where I started. She didn't believe it. Then I told her to bring Shomer's clothes - a rumpled and wet coat, trousers, jacket. "Do you recognize it?" - I asked. "I recognise it," she said, "but that's no proof that Freddy is dead." I felt. I put her in the car, drove her to the morgue and showed her Shomer's corpse. Forty-five minutes there and back. And she just stood there and was silent. She didn't cry and said nothing. "Do you believe me now?" - I asked. "I do." - "Then there's no point in pushing," I said with a grimace, "We know that on Wednesday evening Shomer asked for a car from Borisha Balog. You drove it to the fisherman's house." She was silent, then asked: "Did Borisha Balog tell you that?" - "Yes," I replied. She was silent again.

"So she's lying," he said after a while, "or she's wrong." When we collapsed, he took off his coat before bursting into tears. She was quiet and did not act for long. At that moment, I received a report about the car inspection and the results of the laboratory analysis. On the jack found in Borisha Balog's car, they had detected a tarry stain. As the analysis showed, these were traces of blood and particles of brain tissue, and the blood type matched that of Hunjor.

— How could Shomer drive from Gabon Street to Martiri Avenue, where Borisha lives, in twenty minutes?
Balog?

This question was raised early in the morning by my friend Sipek. In agreement with Jaster, they went to investigate. No one of the taxi drivers working on Wednesday evening had taken a passenger to Martiros Avenue. Only one driver brought an old woman to the house where the Europa cinema is located. They were also shown pictures of Schomer, a passenger who was not served on Wednesday evening. Only one driver, who was working that night, could not be reached.

lives on the outskirts of the city, in the "Erzebeta" area, and is ill. They did not go to see her. They postponed it for the evening. By the way, it is hard to believe that he would have driven Shomer.

— This means that Edita denies everything.

— Denied. Rather than denying it, he stands by his earlier testimony.

— Maybe it was that they went upstairs to see Shomer, where she fell asleep and didn't see when Shomer left and when he came back. That's why she doesn't know anything. You didn't ask her about it?

— I asked. Shomer was up all night, and they both fell asleep only at dawn, at half past five. That's what she said in the first quota. They were listening to the radio. I asked what they were listening to. First the Luxembourg radio, then the German station, which streams music all night long. I asked her what music stuck in her , and she said two at once: "The Yellow " by the Bitlų ensemble, and "Dilaila". She remembered those two because she liked them very much.

— Is there radio in Borisha Balog's car?

— Available. At Shomer's, you yourself saw a big transistor receiver of some western brand. There is also a Hungarian-made transistor at Edith Chaus's house.

— There is a tape recorder in Shomer's apartment. Why didn't they listen to the tapes?

— And that's what I asked. She said it was broken. And it is broken. I showed her Schomer's foreign passport with an Austrian visa and told her that he wanted to escape, we had proof. No jspud. She just shrugged her shoulders. Then I told her that a savings bank had been found at his grandmother's a booklet with a deposit of thirty thousand forints and that the money was deposited on Friday. She knew nothing about this. And in general, she only knows what she has already told me. I asked her about the tobacco crumbs.

— What tobacco crumbs?

— You may remember, during the second quota, she said that she had been wearing an olive-green winter coat, green suede pumps and a hat that . We managed to find tobacco crumbs in the seams of her pocket. Laboratory analysis showed that it was Cigarette tobacco from "Koshuto" cigarettes. Hunjor smoked "Koshuta" and Edita Chaus smoked "Symphony". I asked her how her pocket got Crumbs of "Kossuth" tobacco. She replied that she had no knowledge of this

understanding. Then, without waiting for me to ask the question again, she seemed to remember that one evening, around New Year's, Hunjor had accompanied her home and she had just run out of cigarettes. Hunjor had given her the pack he had already started, which she put in her pocket. There were probably some crumbs of tobacco left.

— This is an important consideration. Did Shomer smoke?

— No.

— There were no cigarettes in the fisherman's cottage, and ashes were found on Hunjor's coat. The ashtrays were clean and, if memory serves, there were no empty cigarette boxes among the rubbish.

— Yes, definitely. You have a great memory, Uncle Bela.

— Have you inspected the suede shoes? Where are they?

— To the shoemaker. She said she had given the socks to be hung.

We went to a shoemaker. Unfortunately, the soles are already white and he threw away the old ones.

— What a find that would be for the author of a detective novel!

- Kelemen laughs out loud. - If only the weather that night would change, the writer would immediately notice the distinctly visible feet of the torn soles of the women's shoes!

Can you imagine the treasure? Unfortunately, my dear, we are dealing with reality itself. The earth and the weather have been such that there are no feet left, the shoes have been repaired, and the old half-soles, which could be scraped out of the ground, somewhere in a dump. I think you asked where she was on Wednesday afternoon?

— Yes. She repeated the thing: that Hunjor had come to shop between five and half past six; that he had withdrawn money from the savings bank and how much he had, without saying anything to her. Having bought this. They exchanged a few words, Edita Chaus promised to come to him after work, Hunjor left. The girl stood behind the counter and did not come to the cash register, so she could not see the money he paid with. The shop is self-service, so he had already put his purchases in his briefcase behind the counter. is possible that the money was also in that portfolio.

— What a bastard! - Kelemen was angry. - And here I thought this case was simple.

— Not at all. All our jokes are indirect. We didn't even find any fingerprints on the jack - apparently the killer was wearing gloves, which he used to rub off even old prints.

Borisha Balog's words that Shomer asked her for a car on Wednesday evening cannot be verified - Shomer is not present alive. The savings bank book with a deposit of 30 000 forints is also circumstantial, though potentially probable. There are no direct witnesses who saw Edith and Schomer anywhere between Gabon Street and the fisherman's hut or between the shop and the fisherman's hut. A confusion, or at least a contradictory word in Edita Chaus's testimony, would have been enough to turn these indirect jokes into direct ones. But there is no such word either. By the way, the girl is much smarter than we first thought.

— I have also noticed this. Listen, Tibi...

— I'm listening, Uncle Bela.

— Perhaps we have chosen the wrong path? Maybe the whole is the concept wrong? That Borisha Balog... After all, she also has the key to the fisherman's hut. What if she was with someone in the house that night? For example, with Shomer?

— It is unlikely, but we will have to investigate this as well. This will require a new understanding of the circumstances, a new assessment of the facts. Maybe yours is true. But I am very tired.

— I know. You hardly slept today. Did you at least have lunch?

— I ate two sandwiches. But I'll still have time for lunch.

— Right. Except that Borisha Balog did not know and could not have known that Shomer was not alive, and of course hoped that Shomer would not lie and confirm her testimony.

— Yes.

— And now... Well, enough. Go home and get some rest. Have a nice dinner. Sleep. The problem is that I can create a really plausible version that the role of accomplice in the murder of Hunjor belongs not to Edith Chaus but to Borisha Balog.

means that we have not moved forward one step. I am also going home. I have a lot of unfinished business.

— OK, Uncle Bela.

— Tam kartui, Tibi. Tomorrow, we will go further.

— For the time being, Uncle Bela. I'll ask Jaster to see the driver from the "Erzebeta" area, and maybe he will be able to find out what Borisha Balog was doing on the night of Wednesday and Thursday.

— OK.

10

Searching for a needle in a hay wagon. The same needle that almost impossible to find. Or maybe it doesn't even exist. Maybe it's just a clever or malicious coincidence.

A taxi driver from the Erzebeta district - the only one and the last all the drivers interviewed - recognises Šomer from the photo. Yes, he drove him from Boulevard Circle to Martiri Avenue. It seems to have been just after eleven o'clock, and then he immediately picked up new passengers, a man and a woman, whom he took to the Budapest bar.

The next morning, Bela Kelemen was sitting at his desk, going through the reports. In the evening, he was no longer at work. He went to bed at home for half an hour and woke up at 11:00. Caring Mance didn't wake him up. Bela was angry about it. And now he 't care. At least he got some sleep.

Something is wrong here. Either one of them is lying - Edita Chaus or Borisha Balog. Either one of them is clearly deceiving everyone. And if it was Borisha who went to the fisherman's hut with Šomer

Balog? After all, there is still no record of where she spent Wednesday night. So the question is still open.

"We've been scratching for too long. Maybe a couple of slaps are all it takes to get Edita Chaus to calmly tell us everything in order. Unfortunately,

It is not possible. The law does not allow it. But still, it happens that someone takes it and doesn't restrain himself. It's not often." Kelemen does not even remember such a case. Easy for the prosecutor. He gets finished material. And they have to prepare that finished material. With accurate evidence. With clear and concrete evidence. And they have to be dug out from under the ground. It is hard to dig out the evidence from under the ground, though. Or rather, simply impossible. The clues are usually on the surface. Not to mention, of course, money or other valuables buried in the ground. And so does happen.

Well, well, what ? Reports from the district offices on yesterday's events. Central Watch Summary: A series of pickpocketings on the sixth tram, and then at the Korvin department store six citizens have their wallets stolen from a shop. This could be the work of Cubaine, if she is not sitting down, or Gulliffe. It doesn't matter, we'll catch it. Burglary in the "Atilla Jozef" area. A drunken greyhound killed with an axe out of jealousy... Two fights in Besermenis Avenue. From Besermenio Avenue "An ambulance picked up Arthur Goldberg, who was injured by a knife. The much heard...

Kelemen laughs. The name of the United States representative to SNO is Arthur Goldberg. Let's see what that Goldberg has done. Nothing. He called the police. Yesterday At 6 pm, he telephoned the duty office to report that he had seen someone driving a car from his room through the theatre binoculars.

Kelemen continues to read the messages. At half past nine, Goldberg again: called to identify the car thief, he turned out to be Antal Schmidt.

Antal Šmitas is also a familiar surname. He was, of course, the accused in the case of the group that operated in the Matjaš Square area. Kelemen remembered him quite well now: in the morning, he was sitting on a bench in the corridor with handcuffs on, and said hello as Kelemen walked by.

Like in a detective movie.

— Goldberg is an old single man, 56. He works as a technician in an electronics manufacturing trust. He is intimate with a young married woman whom he was expecting to arrive at his house at six o'clock. He lives on the corner of Verešmarcis and Sofia Streets, and from the window of his flat

full view of Hunjad Square. His girlfriend always walked through the square, and Goldberg, seeing her through the theatre's binoculars, would usually switch on the coffee machine so that the coffee would be brewing as soon as she walked through the door. That evening she was late and he kept his eyes on the window in his excitement. It was ten minutes past six when he saw a black Mercedes with West German plates trying to turn onto Sophia Street, but without success, as this stretch of the street was closed for sewer repairs. The car turned around and stopped at the corner of Hunjad Square. A tall man got out of the car with

wearing a fashionable hat, walked down Sofia Street. Three or four minutes later, a young man of medium height wearing a fur-collared coat and a girl in a red coat pulled up. They said goodbye, the young man took out a bunch of keys and unlocked the door of the Mercedes for the third time. He got behind the wheel, turned around and sped off at high speed. Goldberg followed him through the binoculars until he turned Avenue Djerdi Dozier, when he immediately called the police. Senior Lieutenant Zomboja took immediate action. He handed over the number plate, the tags and the car

the route to the police cars on duty, and at six o'clock and thirty-five minutes, having shown a fantastic

three cars equipped with ultra-shortwave radio transmitters stopped the Mercedes and arrested

Antal Schmidt, a young man wearing a coat with a fur collar.

Bubbles. Now Kelemen remembered. Bubbles is the nickname of Antal Schmidt. Yes. There was another one among them, called Taupykle. And another one called Cactus. The phone rang. Bela raised his horn.

— Yes, I'm listening.

He listened carefully to Bakoc, then said:

— Thank you, Leksi. I'll tell Shomfai right away, and we'll bring it over.

Kelemen called Shomfajj from the next room, who took out a roll of paper with a number on it, tied with string, and, as he was leaving, Kelemen told him what he had said to Bakoc. Bakoc was sitting in the sixth

in a room behind a table covered with items found during a search.

Shomfaye leaned over the table, examining something carefully, then straightened up, looked at Kelemen, then at Bakoc, and nodded his head. He handed the scroll to Bakoc, who put it in his drawer.

— Will you stay here? - Bakoc asked.

— We'll go to Natran's room and turn on the speakers.

They cross an empty office and move into the next room. Sit down. Kelemen switches on the loudspeaker. For now, he is silent. Kelemen turns it off.

— A grand success," says Shomfayi, leaning on table.

— 's it. - He nods his head towards Bakoc's office.

— Did you make the inventory?

— I.

— Did Bakoc see it?

— This means...

— Then it's not a grand success, but a professional experience. Bakoc is an old .

— But that so quickly...

— Some cases are investigated quickly, others more slowly. And some take several years. But even then, professional experience pays off - Kelemen switches the loudspeaker back on. Bakoc's voice is heard:

— And the knife?

— You want to know where I got it from, Captain? I won this knife from Jan - that is, from Janos Kovacs, last summer. He let it go for a tithe.

- And the clock?
- Honestly bought. I still have the cheque.
- Golden clasps?
- What are you doing, Captain. I bought it for sixty forints at the kiosk.
- Who else is there? A belt, a tie... This tie is foreign. Is it also from a car? Speak up, Antal, it doesn't now.
- A gift from one woman. For her birthday. I can show you.
- Okay, I believe. Handkerchief. I see yours - it has your monogram on it. I'm Antal Schmidt.
- Mine.
- Wallet? Nice. Where did you get it? You can't get one in Hungary.
- Also a gift, . Only from another woman.
- By the way, Antal, this is also just a formality.
- Yes, . I understand.
- That means this handkerchief is also yours. Just like this one. With your monogram: 'I am Antal Schmidt'.
- I... I don't understand you, .
- And this one. This is also your handkerchief. Same material - Swiss batiste, same finish, same monogram. All eleven. And yours is the twelfth. Exactly a dozen monogrammed handkerchiefs.
- Captain, these handkerchiefs are not mine! , not mine! It's some kind of coincidence!
- Coincidence, of course. Of course, these are not yours. But are the other eleven handkerchiefs - your eleven - in your house? You must have ordered a dozen? After all, nobody orders just one monogrammed handkerchief! What do you think?
- I only have one handkerchief, Captain. I swear, just this one. The others are not mine!
- Well, not yours, of course. None of them. And this one is not yours either, Antal. Tell me whose? Will you tell me yourself? You took it because the monograms match.
- Captain... I... I'm nothing...

— Have a smoke, Antal, and tell us why you killed Shomer.

You see, we know everything. Do your best to mitigate your sentence by confessing honestly.

— I swear, Captain, it's not me!

— You swear unnecessarily,

Antal. The phone rang.

— Just a minute. - Bakoc raised his horn: "Yes, yes. OK.

Thank you. Good. - He puts down the horn and turns to Antal Schmidt again. - During the autopsy, traces of halothane were found in the mucous membrane of Shomer's nose. And in your coat pocket they found a crushed ampoule of glass crumbs. The lab just reported. After all, between these two circumstances some kind of connection, right? As you can see, there is no point in defending yourself. You'd better confess right now that you killed him.

— I did not kill him! I didn't! I only put him to sleep. I thought he would wake up from the cold water. I swear I didn't kill him. I just wanted to take his Japanese lens away...

Kelemen pressed the off button on the loudspeaker. He slowly stood up. Shomfayi stood up too. Kelemen put his hand on his shoulder:

— Maybe you're right. Maybe it really is... What did you say? Yes, "a grand success". Except that this grandiose success would not be worth a rotten egg without the professional expertise of Bakoc. Let's say if that Goldberg's mistress had arrived at on time, they'd have had a cup of coffee and... Then Antal Schmidt would have been on the move only a few later, perhaps In spring or summer, a handkerchief could have been given to a laundrette and a coat to a pawnbroker... Do you see the correlation, my dear friend Shomfaji?

— No, I'm not, my friend Kelemen. Who is this Goldberg?

— It doesn't . It doesn't now. I'll tell you later.

They walked down the corridor to Kelemen's office.

Jerome was already there.

— So, did you get any sleep? - Kelemen asked.

— I dozed off a bit. Sometimes that's enough for me.

— By the way, my sincere congratulations.

— With whom, Uncle Bela?

— With your good ear for handkerchiefs.

— Has a twelfth appeared?

— It has emerged. Together with the murderer Antal Šmits. He killed Shomer because of some Japanese photo lens. How did you come up with the idea of taking eleven of Shomer's handkerchiefs?

— Two or three years ago, you once said that if a pair of shoes or gloves is missing, or if there are only five out of six tennis balls, or if there are only nine out of a set ten and eleven out of a set of a dozen, you should look for the missing item, it can help you to find the trace. I have a good sense of this. We found eleven handkerchiefs with his monogram in Shomer's flat, and then I thought that the twelfth one was probably with him when he was killed. Those handkerchiefs could have been useful, so I took them and the missing one I took with me.

the list of wanted items in the Shomer case.

Kelemen feels a sense of pride overwhelm him. Here, in this room, almost his entire staff is gathered. They have all heard what Jerome has said and understand his noble modesty.

Kelemen can no longer remember if he ever said anything like that - it may have been an impromptu idea. He feels a pleasant warmth. Yes, Tibi

Jerome is his disciple. Smart, intelligent. Although there is no direct contribution from Kelemen, he did contribute to the arrest of Antal Šmit.

Kelemen almost cried, but did not give up. He praised Jeromáš deservedly:

— You have done a great job, my friend Jeromoš. I am telling you straight. - So Shomer was just a buyer of stolen goods for Shmita. - It seems so. But we'll find that out from him. Shmita was distracted by monogrammed handkerchiefs.

— And who is Goldberg, friend of Kelemenai? Of course, this is what Shomfaye asks.

But Kelemen was pleased, very pleased, and already at wanted to give a little lecture on the fact that without honest

the militia would do nothing without the help of the citizens, that without such Goldbergs the militia would be isolated from life itself, only it suddenly occurred to him that Goldberg was intimate friends with

a married woman, and also with her co-worker, that this woman, who is therefore cheating on her husband, is also to be commended. And in general, if she had been more punctual... No, no, you can't do that. So he just says:

— Goldberg happened to see through the window someone drove off in a car. And phoned the police. This is how Antal Šmit was arrested. But this is not the least bit does not diminish the merits of Comrade Jeromoš and the impeccable, truly professional work of Comrade Bakoc.

— So Shomer's killer was caught by accident!

Of course, asks Shomfayi again. These young people don't know how to value professional experience at all. For them, it is pure chance.

"Grandiose success".

— Of course, my friend Shomfaji. Coincidence too played their part. However, in the logical chain of events, coincidence turned out to be only the starting point. New links in that chain were found only thanks to our staff. A car thief was apprehended and turned out to be the murderer of Shomer. However, let us consider this matter resolved. We have a lot of other things to do.

Already during the first Schmidt quota, it became clear that his testimony was a real gold mine.

Since Tuesday last week, Schmidt, Fekete and Dolgovic have been following Shomer all the time.

On Monday evening, the twenty-seventh of January, Antal Šmit saw in the window of a photographic supply shop a Japanese lens like the one he had sold to Šomer for five hundred forints two months earlier. The price tag read twelve thousand forints. Schmitt went into the shop, looked at the item and was told that the lens was brand new and had never been used before. Schmidt thanked them for the information and called Shomer from the first phone booth.

But Shomer wasn't home.

The commercial relationship between Shomer and Schmidt started last summer. One evening, while Schmidt was having fun with

a girl in the Olympia bar, Shomer approached him, smiled, apologised and introduced himself, then turned to a girl he already knew and said that

next week, he will need it for a series of photographs

commissioned by a provincial sewing cooperative. He left her the phone, said goodbye and left. Schmidt questioned the girl about Schomer, and the next day, after a phone call, he went to see her and offered to show her some fine cameras and a foreign exposure meter, saying that he would agree on a price.

Shomer didn't refuse the offer, but wanted to see the goods first. They agreed that the next day Schmidt would bring him some cameras. Shomer looked them over and declared that they were stolen and that, as a photojournalist, the police regularly sent him numbers of missing cameras and expensive spare . By the way, he doesn't seem to be saying much. From

seven cameras, he chose three and paid one thousand six hundred forints. This was twice as much as the others offered, and Schmidt agreed. After paying, Shomer said that Shmit could not sell these things anywhere, and that if he tried, he would go straight away. And he, Shomer, needed them for work. He will take them at that price, and he will take more, if there is any. Let Schmidt call him. Then Schmidt checked the price of the things he had sold - Shomer had paid him

almost a quarter of their fair value. But that more or less satisfied him. Shomer bought cameras and spare parts from him two or three more times, and there were no misunderstandings between them until Schmidt saw a Japanese

lens prices. He expected to get at least three or four thousand forints from Schomer, but he only got five hundred - it was a clear deception, and he called Schomer on Monday evening last , but did not find him at home. On Tuesday morning, the twenty-eighth of January, Schmidt called again

He told Shomer that they needed to talk urgently. Shomer replied that he was leaving immediately and that he was very busy this week in general - he had a lot of work to do - and asked him call me on Wednesday next week. Schmidt, who was talking from a phone booth on Gabon Street, saw Schomer leaving the house.

Schmidt had walked in front of him, but Shomer got into a taxi that was parked outside and drove off. And he spotted Antal and even waved to him with a smile from the car. This made Schmidt angry, and he firmly decided to demand the money he was owed or to take back the Japanese lens. By noon he was waiting for Shomer in the street, but he was not alone, but with a woman he had taken to his place.

Then Schmidt felt that it would not be easy to carry out his intention.

In the evening, Schmidt went to the park where his friend's old car, a Trabant, was parked - his friend was just sitting in it, locked up for three months - opened it and drove to pick it up. Fekete, then they drove together to Dolgovic's. Schmidt explained to them what he wanted from them, and on the twenty-ninth, Wednesday morning, he showed them Shomer from afar through the window of the Trabant. They agreed that Fekete, nicknamed the Dark One, and Dolgovic - called Kinkadrebis - would follow Shomer day and night and if he returned home alone, they would tell him, Antal Šmit.

Dolgovich said that Shomer drove around the city all day, and in the afternoon he stayed in a house on Aurora Street, went out to the Boulevard roundabout at about ten o'clock, and waited outside a house for a while until a company came out of it. A woman got separated from the group and Shomer went to the bus stop with her. They got on the twelfth bus, got off at Mestero Street and turned onto Gabon Street. There the one-way movement, and Dolgovich was unable to follow them, and by the time he had turned round and was on Gabon Street, they were no longer

see. But a few minutes later, at the Shomer's house

A light came on in the window, and someone, probably him, pulled down the shutter. Dolgovic left his car on Gabon Street, and went to the Lelia café, where, according to the agreement, Schmidt and Fekete were waiting for him. They were actually sitting in the café with two girls. Dolgovic called Shmit and explained the situation to him, and Shmit immediately sent

Fekete keeps an eye on the house and doesn't let Shomer out of her sight. Dolgovic gave the car key to Fekete and he left.

Shomer left his house at about 15 minutes to 12, got into a taxi and drove to Martiros Avenue. There he flagged down a taxi, rang the doorbell and went to his house.

The Fekete should have stopped a little further. As soon as he switched off the engine, Shomer roared back, got into the small Fiat that was parked along the pavement and started it at full speed. Fekete did not expect Shomer to get into a stranger's car and almost lost sight of him. At the corner of the boulevard, behind Mayakovsky Street, Shomer stopped, got out of the car, went to a phone booth, made a phone call, then got back in the car and drove on. Fekete followed behind.

Fekete immediately stopped car when he turned onto Gabon Street, as the Fiat was already parked and Shomer himself walked up to the house. He left with a woman. They got into a Fiat and drove off.

— Did you see that woman up close? Could you identify her? - asks Jerome.

— But think about it! It's night, it's dark, there are only street lights on, and we are at least fifty metres apart. I only saw that it was a woman.

— Well, at least how was she dressed?

— With coat and hat.

— And in her shoes? What shoes?

— Not in shoes, but in shoes.

— One hour," says Jeromoš, deftly drawing three female figures on a pad of paper.

— This one," Fekete points her finger at the middle figure with a wide-brimmed coat, long boots and a fur hat.

— Are you sure? - asks Jerome.

— Oh, yes! At dawn, when they were returning, I saw her again.

— What time this?

— A little after four. I only followed them as far as the island of Cepel because the Trabant stopped. It ran out of petrol.

Actually, there was petrol, but by the time I pumped from the reserve tank, they were already who knows where. I

I decided not to go any further, as I would hardly get any petrol at night if I ran out after sixty-seventy kilometres. And if I did find a petrol station, they would still run out of petrol while they were pumping it. So I drove back, stopped on Gabon Street and decided to snooze.

At the beginning of five o'clock, a Fiat pulled up, they got out of the car and went up to the flat, and I went to Antal and told him everything. He sent me back, telling me he would replace me at eight and that I should do my job, because he would not be sorry, because this place smells of at least three thousand.

Jeromoš nods to Golig, who calls the duty officer from the corridor.

— Please take the detainee to the next room. Let him stay until I call him.

After conferring, Sipek and Shomfaji get dressed and leave.

Forty-five minutes later, the phone rings on Jerome's desk.

— Yes, it's me," says Jerome. - Great. Come in and stand at the end of the corridor, under the lamp. There must be nothing nearby. Make sure there is nothing in the corridor either. Right.

He puts on his horn and says, loud enough to be heard in the next room:

— Ferenc Fekete, please come in. You will now go out into the corridor and look to your left. At the end of the corridor stands

Man. Take a good look at him - do you know him, have you ever seen him, and if so, when and under what circumstances.

Understand?

— Understood. What if I don't it?

— You haven't seen it, so you haven't seen it.

Jeromoš mentally counts to forty, opens the door.

— Go.

Fekete goes out, looks to the left, at the end of the corridor, and immediately turns around, looking into the room where Jerome is standing:

— It's the same one from Gabon Street. Only the hat then was placed straight on, not on its side... That's right... - Spreading his fingers, he shows how the hat was placed on his head.

— OK. Thank you. Please go back.

After he has gone, Jeromoš closes the door and he stands in the room, looking stupid, waiting for someone to praise him. But Jerom turns to Kelemen, who is sitting silently at the next table.

— Comrade Kelemen, are we going to continue with the Schomer case or finish the Hunyor case first?

— I think we need to finish the Hunyor case first," says Kelemen quietly. - It started before that one. We'll keep it in order.

— Take Ferenc Fekete out of the interrogation room and bring in Edit Chaus," says Jeromoš to the guard standing next to Fekete.

A bitter triumph. Or triumphant bitterness. Kelemen has repeatedly tried to grasp the almost celebratory atmosphere of the finale, when the thrill of the chase passes, when in the slow movement in a circle the previously seemingly disparate parts come together almost of their own accord, when for an hour they

lighten up, and then appear again to be simple and mundane human acts, when even a hardened murderer for a moment becomes a man worthy of pity when the chaff has been separated from the wheat, but the right of the strong is still a natural law, and only later, in the process of the trial, will it take the form of a law formulated by moral and judicial reasoning. The bitterness of triumph is perhaps the exact description, the dividing line between crime and punishment, at which the almost chemically transparent formula of murder - the formula of an unrepeatable and irreversible process - ends, and the process of punishment - the process of condemning the criminal - imprisonment for life, or even death penalty - begins. And in between - those minutes, that bitterness of triumph.

Edith Chaus actually stopped defending herself - Jeromáš was telling the truth, and she appeared smarter than they thought. Kelemen wanted to ask if she had really realised that there was no point in denying everything now, or if she had just felt it; but he didn't ask, contenting himself with the fact that she wasn't defending herself, but speaking in a quiet, sad voice. She was dressed in a green, wide in a baggy winter coat, wearing sheepskin boots with new soles, with a mop of long black hair that glistened in the light of the table lamp with every shake of her head, she looked a little dishevelled, but still very beautiful.

On Wednesday afternoon, Hunjor went to her shop, leaned on the counter and whispered, "I took the money, forty-five thousand forints. Tomorrow I will file for divorce and rent an apartment." Nobody heard these words, but in the meantime the buyer came up and they could not continue talking. Hunjor waited until there was no one around and spoke again, "Excuse me from work, tell me, you're not feeling well, I'll wait at the shop." Edita Chaus did not want to ask to be let go and said: "Go calmly, I'll come back after work." - "You won't make it at two-thirty, get on the one that leaves at two-fifty, I'll meet you at the bus stop by the fishermen's huts," said Hunjor and went shopping, at the checkout

he looked back and left. He bought almost everything from Edith Chaus, except wine and bread.

After work, Shomer was waiting for her outside the shop. It was a surprise for her, as they hadn't agreed to meet. Shomer was also seen by other co-workers in the shop with whom she left after work. In fact, when questioned by Gengeler, they remembered Schomer, especially the girls and women. Edith would still have made it on the electric train, but Schomer asked her to come to him. Edith didn't really want to, but it was on the way, and when they got off the bus, she decided to go to see Shomer anyway. She would still be able to make the train. By the way, Hunjor said that twenty at three forty the last one leaves. Edita tells him that she was late at two-thirty because she was detained in the shop until half past eleven.

She couldn't answer Shomer, nobody could answer him - he was so stubborn. What to speak of, she went to see him again with pleasure, even though she tried to justify herself to herself, trying to find reasons why it was so important for her to visit him. Tomorrow Hunjor will file for divorce, he has already taken the money from the savings bank, forty-five thousand, they will move into the flat he is renting,' these arguments held her in place, and Schomer understood: he did not demand that she stay at his place

for the night, but asked to take the latest train possible. She knew that tomorrow would be the start of a new life for her, and that was why she could not resist the urge to see Schomer one last time.

"Go on, baby, you'll make it to the train," said Schomer, switching on the radio. The last news was on, so it was the beginning of twelve, and she was still sitting on the edge of the couch with only her underwear on. Then she started to get ready, and Shomer felt sorry for her. "Wait, I'll try to think of something, maybe I'll give you a lift in the car," he said, and started to dial a phone number. - In half an hour, you will come downstairs and wait for me," said Shomer, putting down the receiver. - We'll catch a train at a stop and you'll get on.

Already driving through the island of Cepelo, Shomer suggested: "I'll take you to a place, there's enough petrol, I like driving. Behind the wheel I will rest. I know the road, I've driven it many times." She didn't ask with whom - it didn't seem to matter. The radio was on in the car. Finally, they drove out of town. "Don't take me to the house," he said.

her. - I'll get off early and tell Jane that I accidentally got off one stop early and had to walk." At the curve, she got out of the car, but Shomer returned was not moving - she could still hear the engine roaring behind her. It was dark and there were no lights on the street.

Finally, she came . There was a in the window, but she did not knock. She pushed the gate - it was unlocked - walked down the path, around the house and then knocked on the door.

"It's me, Edith." - "Where have you been so far? - Hunjor asked. - I thought you weren't coming. I was on the last train too. And I was about to go to bed." He was wearing a dressing gown and a dressing gown, which he had put on when he went to open the door.

When she went into the room, Hunjor locked the door. Edita Chaus started to make excuses: she had mixed up the stops, got off too early and had to walk.

At that moment, someone knocked. Hard, decisive. Then a voice said, "Open up, police." - "Lord!" - Edita Chaus said. "What are you worrying about? - Hunjor asked. - Don't be afraid, we are not thieves." He tied his robe, fastened his belt, said "I'm coming" and opened the door. Edita Chaus recognised Shomer immediately, even though the lower part of his face was covered with a scarf, as if it was very cold on the street.

"Militia. Please show your papers," said Shomer. At first Edith thought it was a joke. Shomer liked to joke. Hunjor took a couple of steps back, Shomer moved into the room. "First you show me your papers," Hunjor said and looked at Edith Chaus, as if to let her know that in such cases, it was only it's the right thing to do, and there's nothing to fear or tremble about.

At that moment, Shomer hit him on the head with the jack he had hidden in the fly of his coat. Hunjor screamed, collapsed on the floor, croaked a few more times and calmed down. Edita Čaus was still standing there in her coat and hat, not having time to take off her gloves. "Fredí!" - she exclaimed, but he, as if without seeing her, he rushed to the black lacquered suitcase on the bed and, finding no money in it, started looking around frantically. At last, seeing the briefcase on the chair, he ran to it. The money was in a briefcase. He rummaged through it and stuffing the bundles into his coat, jacket and trouser pockets. Then he

took the jack, wrapped it carefully in the newspaper which had been dropped by the stove, looked at the black suitcase he had opened, lifted the pyjamas which had been thrown on the top, looked at the table, took Hunyor's watch and combs from it, and then threw them into the suitcase, and just now

looked at Edith Čaus. "Shut up! Don't move and don't touch anything," he said and looked around the room. It was very quiet for a moment. And it was only a few minutes. At least it seemed that way to Edith Čaus. "It's all right," said Schomer again, "go!" The door was left open, the key sticking out. Shomer sat down next to Hunjoro, touched his shoulder, stood up. Looking back, Edith walked to the door and saw Shomer close the lacquered suitcase and lift it off the

Beds. Then he went out, put the suitcase by the door, crouched down, and picked up the matchbox, which was lying by the kerosene lamp,

lit a match and lit the wick of the lamp. When the match burned out, he waved it in his fingers and put it in his pocket. "I wish I'd forgotten this thing," he said, rattling it in the room, then went out carrying the jack, took out the key and locked the door from the outside. "Take the suitcase and let's go," said Shomer.

They went out through the upper gate. "Go to the car, and I'll lock it and come in." And only now Edith Čaus spoke. "I can't, I'm afraid," she said. Shomer fumbled for the key in the bundle, finally found it, locked the gate,

holding the jack out to the side. "Come on, quick," said, "Just don't run! Fool!" They walked to the car. Shomer threw a jack in the open boot, closed the

in the boot, took the suitcase from Edita Chaus and got behind the wheel. "Get in!" Edita Chaus sat down, Shomer started the engine, and the car drove off. The highway was empty, only at Tekelo's he met the car coming. Shomer turned off at the Danube, got out of the car with his suitcase, walked a little way along the shore, then reached down and threw the suitcase into the water with all his might, got in the car, drove it back onto the highway, and drove off towards Budapest.

— And you sat in the car in silence? About nothing you didn't talk the whole way? - Jeromoš asked with distaste.

— Why? Freddy talked, he talked all the time, without being silent for a minute. As soon as we moved, he said: I think you realise that we will both be if we are caught. But don't be afraid, they won't catch us if you do as I tell you. Just to be happy to reach home." - "Why did you do that, Fredi? - I asked. - Was it because of that ill-fated money?" - "You'll think it's funny," he replied, and then added: "But I did it for you. I did it for you first, and then for the money." Then I was horrified, and I was very scared of him and cried all the time. I didn't want to cry, he even threatened to slap me, but I couldn't stop myself. Then he slapped me across the face and I slowly calmed down, and he kept talking, spinning a web of words around me. He said that he loved me, that he couldn't live without me, that he had only done it for me, that everything would be all right, and that he would lead , because we were tied to each other for life now, and even if one of us were to die, we would still be tied together, and it was too late to vomit - nothing can be changed. If I get caught, it won't end well for him, and if he gets caught, it will end badly for me. He talked on and on, as if he were drunk. He was like that I've never seen before. He repeated several times, "Just to get home safely and be safe." I was trembling with fear, with fatigue, I was in despair. And he went on and on and on."

— And it did not occur you that you would be interrogated by the police in connection with the murder of Hunjoro?

— That's all I was thinking about. They will arrest me and hang me, they will arrest me and hang me. I even told Freddie. "You fool," he said, "they're just as human as you or me. Besides, you will tell them the whole truth, without a single detail. You came to me,

you slept with me all night, you didn't go to Hunjor. If we reach home happily, everything will be fine." We did reach home happily, there was not a soul on the street spirits. We went up to the flat, Frédéric had to climb down again, to take me to the car, but I had a fit of hysteria, I asked him not to leave me alone, to take me with him. He slapped me - can't we risk it now, when we are home, when we are safe?! So he left, it was five o'clock, and some forty later he returned. I sat shivering from the cold and I couldn't get warm. Freddy dragged me under the hot shower, and I stood there for a long time until I finally recovered from the warm water jets, then he gave me a coffee.

— When you first give evidence, you give very detailed you told me what you did that night in his flat. So it was all a fabrication?

— No, it's not a fantasy. Freddy spoke without stuttering. He said that the police would probably interrogate me. I should say that Hunjor had been in the shop and I had promised to come to him, but Freddy had come to me and I had spent the whole night at his place. Then they will interrogate him, and he will say the same thing. Now we know for sure that nobody saw us, that we were at home and we didn't go out all night. 'If they interrogate me,' he said, 'I will confirm it, that you slept with me.' He asked if I remembered well what we did the last time I slept with him. I said that I remembered. "Then tell me." And he told me to repeat it twice. He asked me to clarify the details, like in an interrogation. "I need to know everything too," said, "so that I don't get confused. So that I also

I would know what to say." And so it was. You asked questions and I answered, as Freddie and I had agreed. I didn't remember anything, except that everything I said was not that night, but two weeks ago. Freddy also warned me that we would be questioned one by one, that you would tell me that our testimonies were not the same, but still, even if they cut me into pieces, I must speak only as we agreed. "Even if I fall under a tram or a brick falls on my head from the roof, even if I die and am buried in the old Buddha, then you must speak only as we agreed. I will do it the same if something happens to you. Nothing will separate us even after death, darling. Nothing will tear us apart," he said and kissed me.

— I already told you that Shomer wanted to run abroad and you were just a toy in his hands. I have shown you his foreign passport with an Austrian visa.

— I couldn't believe it. Then I thought that he wanted to leave and then take me with him - he can't get rid of me as long as he's alive, because we're tied to each other. By the way, I did not believe a word you said, even when you said he was dead. Freddy warned me not to believe you. Then I saw his corpse. But even then nothing changed. Freddy said that I would not speak any differently after his death. And since everything happened the way he predicted, I did as we had agreed. And I did. And now nothing matters to me. He's going to hang me anyway.

"Poor, poor girl," thinks Kelemen, "but she had the sense to lead us around by the nose for a week. She didn't contradict herself, there wasn't a single word in her testimony that we could have stuck to. In her own clever way, intuitively, she used all the possibilities and was persistent and consistent even in that stupid situation when Borisha Balog's testimony had already destroyed the construction that Shomer had put in her head. She understood our rule that one witness is not a witness, and immediately

She told us everything without dodging when we managed to find a second witness who had seen them and recognised her from her coat, cap and boots."

— The quota is over," says Jeromoš. - Bring the accused out.

"The quota is over," muses Kelemen. - The Hunjor case is finished, and after that we will finish the Shomer case."

Edita Chaus rises from her chair and stands there, confused, not knowing what to do next.

— 'All the best,' she says, embarrassed, and walks towards the door, accompanied by the attendant. In the doorway, she turns and asks, "Please tell me, will they hang me?"

— The court will determine the severity of the sentence. But if you want to know my opinion, I won't fight you. The law does not provide for the death penalty for human stupidity.

"Well," sighs Kelemen, "at last Jerome has lost his nerve. I was beginning to yawn at his formal tone and unshakeable calm."

12

"Aka-bana-ataraka-talabaka-bakalana-pic." Ten hours, twenty-seven minutes. He was already in his mind and spelling it out. The same fairy tale spell that the good fairy Kitraputa gave to Shimonka to make his three wishes come true. Not unlike three cheques signed but not written. A few he knew by heart from his childhood. One day, one of his three wishes came true: for his birthday, he received a toy toy

An iron with a steam locomotive, which could be bolted down with a copper key. The other two wishes did not materialise, apparently due to technical difficulties. But he was not disappointed with the magic word, and eventually even learned to use it better: being practical, he used it not abusing or asking for that are clearly impossible,

he realised that you have to use the spell wisely too.

The spell was maturing together with Kelemen, although there were serious conflicts between them, especially during the period Kelemen's scientific world-view was being formed and

the question: is the verb compatible with the materialistic Philosophy? Isn't that superstition? After careful consideration, he decided it was not. The spell remained - between his materialistic worldview and the spell there was a

a kind of *modus vivendi*. A person would only say it now if he was sure that his wish would come true. He had already learnt to reconcile his desires with real possibilities.

"So I'm a conciliator and a conformist," he was plagued by remorse, because a word of magic is worthless if it is only used when success is known to be assured."

The case of gamblers Kutman, Colek and Chorvat confirmed that the spell is indeed worthless. Or worth a lot. Their partners quickly saw where the dog was, took the cards away and found the signs on the other side. Or rather, they thought they had. And Colek, during the quota, showed that the cards were new, factory cards. Then immediately a new deck was opened, the cards were shuffled and dealt, and within two hours he had won seventeen thousand forints from the prosecutor, conditionally of course.

Finding no signs in the cards, the court had to drop the charge.

But Kelemen did not calm down after that - he said his lottery word, and it did not disappoint him. Kelemen scrutinised the forty new decks and found in them those infinitesimal typographical errors that only a professional eye can see, and which can be used to win unerringly. The fraudsters Kutman, Colek and Croat were sentenced to three years, and their method of investigating the case was developed into forensic science and became known as the Kelemen method.

The watchword helped. He was no longer a reconciler and Conformist - I had to withdraw this accusation against myself. The spell remained true to him, but every time he

to take advantage of it, they had to spare no .

At half past seven, he called Mance and asked him not to wait for dinner. Mance started to snarl - she had already bought the cinema tickets, as they had agreed. "Go with Andris. said Kelemen. Or call Janka. She's alone too, because Sipek is also staying the night. We have to finish the Hunjoro-Shomer case."

Incidentally, Mancé was the only person to whom, in an hour of sensuality, in the heat of love, the day before the engagement, he confessed that he had said a spell before asking for her hand. "I should answer you. You deserve it", Mancé said laughing, and they kissed. Kelemen had taught her the word too, but I wonder if she remembers it now, because in eighteen years of married life, neither of them has ever spoken it aloud. A spell is not a toy. Maybe it is a toy. It's just something you can't get used to.

So it's Friday, the seventh day of February, ten hours and twenty-seven minutes in the evening.

On Thursday, the 30th of January, at eight o'clock in the morning, Dolgovich again replaced Fekete and continued to observe Shomer. After ten o'clock, Shomer left the house alone, which is consistent with Edita Chaus's testimony that when she woke up at half past twelve, Shomer was gone. She came home, got dressed and,

as they had agreed, she went to the shop at two o'clock, work. Shomer went to the Austrian Embassy, then to the Hungarian Café, and sat down at a table. On the third

At one o'clock, Shomer went to the film studio and left with a woman. They got into a car and drove to Gabon Street.

The car was driven by a woman. Fekete was waiting for them, again replacing Dolgovic. At nine o'clock in the evening they left, and

the woman took Shomer to Aurora Street. He went to a house we already knew and didn't leave until the morning. He had not been alone in the flat on Gabon Street for an hour, so Schmidt could not come in.

On Friday, the thirty-first of January, Shomer went back to the Austrian Legation, where he stayed for a short time. Then they took a taxi to the Inturistas office. He left quickly. The taxi driver was waiting for him, took him to the bank and was waiting for him there as well. Shomer was now followed by Dolgovic, whose face he did not recognise. Out of curiosity, Dolgovich walked up to him just now.

a bank and saw someone at the counter exchanging forints for him some foreign currency. Then Shomer went out, stopped a taxi. Dolgovic followed in Trabant, but at the intersection the taxi turned green and he had to stop before the light turned yellow. He looked at the taxi and thought he had lost sight of it. When the light turned green, he guessed he had chosen Barosha Street - and successfully. The taxi was just a short distance away, and Shomer paid the driver. Then he went to the savings bank, filled in the income warrant and took the money out of his briefcase. Dolgovich followed and saw that the hundred forint notes were not tied in a bundle and he

pulled them out of a black briefcase with bronze edges with untidy bundles. From the savings bank Shomer pulled into Matthias Square, flagged down a vacant taxi and drove to Gabon Street. He went to the house alone, but Dolgovic did not hesitate to call Schmidt, as the taxi driver remained waiting at the front, and Shomer could break through at any moment. And so it was - Shomer quickly left, got in a taxi and drove to Aurora Street. There, he dismissed the cabbie.

Fekete and Dolgovic both affirm in one voice the fact, well known in the practice of interrogators, that it is extremely difficult, almost impossible, for a driver to follow a person on foot through the streets of Budapest. And to do so in such a way that you do not cause that person to be disturbed. The main obstacle is the forbidden signs and the one-way traffic in many streets. Parking is very difficult to find, especially on the major highways, and slow driving causes jtarim. They were extremely lucky not to lose sight of Schomer. And Shomer, strangely enough, did not notice he was being followed. Anyway
Yes, it didn't look like he was trying to get rid of the "tail";

If he had wanted to, he could easily have done so. But he didn't. Fekete and Dolgovich repeatedly complained about their difficulties to Schmidt, who had promised them three hundred forints for each day of "duty". It's much easier to follow a bus, trolleybus or tram - here

just make sure you don't overlook when you get out, and park your car so you can drive straight away. It's a joke to chase a car, except, of course, when it manages to get through a green light and you have to stop in front of a yellow or red light.

In Matthias Square, Dolgovich used a pay phone to call Šmit, who was sitting in a café. Twenty minutes later, he was in the Trabant and, after listening to the story of Shomer's adventures in the first half of the day, told him to follow , and he returned to the café. At 8 p.m. Dolgovich replaced Fekete, but Shomer did not leave the house all night.

From Dolgovich's story, Schmidt understood that Shomer, with his pockets full of money, was preparing to flee abroad, and soon, by the way. According to Dolgovich, Shomer was going to be

he has deposited at least 20,000, and maybe more...

— Thirty," says Jeromoš. - Tell me more.

— Well! Only a blind man would not have realised that he was trying to escape with a Japanese photo lens. And for me, the tracking alone cost one thousand eight hundred forints. Isn't that business? Besides, I just get all shaky when someone runs away. I'm very talkative, Captain, one kind word is all I need, but when a person is running, I get angry very quickly and I can make a lot of pigs. You cannot fool me. I lose, but I will not put my hands in handcuffs. That Freddie guy has a hundred out of every hole, and I have a measly five hundred forints. If I had ground his snout in, I would have died in one piece. He would have had me betrayed, zero, seven and you're done! Evaded

snake. Call me in a week, he says, I'm busy. And you to the Austrian Embassy, to Inturista, to bank for currency. Before you know it, it will be gone. What if you tell me to throw it off the train at the last moment? Then you put me behind bars, and he's back on the train in a couple of days. And still sneering. But I, Captain, can spare even a scumbag like Shomer. Don't let them accuse me of being pig-headed.

— Stop bitching, Antal. What happened on Saturday?

— I'll report right back, Captain. That is exactly what I wanted to tell you. At fifteen-fifty he came out of a house in Aurora Street. There must be a woman living there who makes his food. At about eight o'clock I myself sat down in the "Trabant and covered my chin with a scarf so he wouldn't recognise me . At the bus stop, he got on the "9" and drove to Vereshmarcis Square. Kinkadrebis and I followed him. He gets off the bus, buys a newspaper, goes to a snack bar. "Look," I say to , "don't overdo it." Look at the clock - it's ten past eight. He is in no hurry. "He probably has a date with a lady at ten o'clock," I say to myself, because there's no point in talking to Kinkadreby about it. So I can talk to him for the time being, because I feel sorry for him. Kinkadreby stops at a snack bar, I get out of the Trabant and go into the hall. He is reading a newspaper. I go to a table. "Ciao, Fredi", I say.

He rolls his eyes, says: "Ciao." - "Can I sit down?" - "Not in time. I have a date. A lady is coming right away." I sit down next to her anyway. "I won't interrupt, we need to talk urgently. That thing for which you gave me a total of five hundred forints, I can sell for five thousand, they offer me." - "So I only gave you the hand money. We'll talk more about it, call me on Wednesday, now go." - "But I urgently need

money", I stand by. "No time now, Antal," he says. - Go and call on Wednesday." - "But won't you lie to me, Fredi? After all, we are brothers." He looks at me, laughs: "Of course,

Siblings. Which end would I deceive you? Get out of my sight. Chiao." - "Chiao," I reply, stand up and walk door. And inside I'm boiling. I feel dizzy. He has pockets full of money, but he won't pay. He postpones it until Wednesday.

Kelemen is yawning, he is tired and wants to sleep. Antal Schmidt's story is endlessly boring. At home, on the table alongside the sofa, the book "What Happened to the Carpet Merchant from Aleppo?" lies open with a coloured folder facing up. He has already read to the last chapter, and the killer is still unknown.

And here is a famous one. Everything is known here. As soon as Shomfaye saw the handkerchief on Bakoc's desk, the last of a dozen, everything became clear. It also emerged that the Beetle, that is Antal Schmidt, had been working in the surgical ward of a hospital from mid-October to the beginning of December, and was known to be able to obtain halothane easily.

But Kelemen was not inclined to sympathise with the carpet merchant from Aleppo, because he knew that his whole story was just the result of a compilation of facts. It only takes a small trick - to shroud everyone in the shadow of suspicion - to keep the reader's attention until the last moment. Both Gledis and Henderson, the servant, could have been murdered, although he claims to have spent the night with a chambermaid, the same chambermaid who disappeared around

who is already known to have been a dancer at the Eastern Star café before entering the Vice-Governor's house, where she was blackmailed by Ed the barman, who knew about the missing jewels of Lady Hikaf. Suspicion also falls on the unfortunate Sam, who is staying at the carpet merchant's house

intoxicated with opium and secretly in love with a chambermaid. Jtarim falls, as he is the only heir of the Vice-Governor. Everyone is suspected, even the fat Spanish cook who had the least to do with the story. The shadow of suspicion also falls on Chico Moehm, a private investigator who once studied with Sam in Eton and is now investigating the case. Everyone is under suspicion. Even the victim himself, the vice-governor, found stabbed in the back with a spear in a whitewashed beach cabana, locked from the inside.

Everyone is suspected but Schmidt. He is no longer suspect. Antal Šmitas is a serious problem for the prosecutor in determining the length of the sentence. Legal problem. Can he be charged with premeditated murder? Yes and no. More likely than . He can probably be charged with premeditated Reckless homicide by robbery. But even that is unlikely.

So we need to hear Antal Schmidt's detailed account of the events leading up to Shomer's death. Legally, every word he says can be decisive in reaching a fair verdict.

Now let's look at it another way. Shomer died after committing a brutal, premeditated murder. So his every move, his every action could be very

important for the exact motivation for Hunyor's murder. No one knows more about this than Antal Schmidt and Janos Dolgovic, who were on the island of Margita on Tuesday, the fourth of February, in the second half of the day. Dolgovich was sitting

"Trabante at the wheel. He informed Šmita that Šomer got off the bus at the Casino restaurant, headed in the direction of Pest and then turned towards the hotel.

One more important point. Schmidt sent Dolgovich to see who Shomer would meet there. Dolgovich went to the hotel, looked around as if he was looking for something. He saw a well-dressed man approach the table where Shomer was sitting. adulterer. Or so Dolgovich thought, because he heard Shomer greet him with "Grisgot, her Olason." Of course, Dolgovich could not have known that the man's surname was Olafson. However, in the investigation of the murder of Hunjoro, this is a very important detail that supports the assumption that Shomer had met Olafson.

As Dolgovic was driving to the car, Šmit had a great moment, worthy of a top detective's thoughts. If Schomer was going to the Austrian Embassy, he wanted to go to Vienna. But when? We'll have to try to find out at the Inturista office. No, don't. They might not say anything there. And yet he goes to office for information. He says his brother has bought a ticket for the j

One train, but circumstances are such the journey will have to be postponed - can I change my ticket?

"Schomer, Alfred Schomer," the receptionist is flipping through a book... - Yes, there it is, Alfred Shomer has a ticket for the express that leaves on Wednesday morning." Ticket applications changes are accepted up to 24 in advance, subject availability of course. That means, in this case, until Tuesday evening. However, in extra cases, it is possible to exchange a ticket "In the Inturisto office at the station. Schmidt thanks them for the information and leaves.

Antal Schmidt now really believed that Shomer was going to cheat him - after all, he had asked him to call him on Wednesday, and by phone they would agree how and where to meet, say, at noon, when Shomer himself would be behind the wall. No, brother, it won't burn you out.

For Jerome it was also a new demonstration that Schomer was helped by Olafson, who did leave on Wednesday on the Vienna train. The same train. In the same compartment? They probably took tickets in different compartments.

Schmidt didn't like to waste money. He lets Dolgovich go, after paying him one hundred and fifty forints for half a day, and asks him to come and see him and Fekete on Monday.

7am. And he gets into a Trabant and drives to Barosh Square. There is still time. Not much, but there is. We have to find something to make Shomer pay him by Wednesday...

— Thank you, Captain," says Schmidt, taking a greedy sip of hot black coffee.

Kelemen ordered four cups: for himself, Jeromas, Duris Sipek and Schmidt. Jaster and Zenger are in the next room interrogating Fekete and Dolgovic. From time to time, one of

each of them comes up to Jeromoš, whispers something in his ear, and leaves.

— No idea until Saturday evening! Neither one way the other - nothing came out. I've already done my time in the "Beautiful Ilonka" café with two ladies, but I couldn't think of anything clever. Suddenly, Samu and his dog move in.

— Name, address?...

— I don't know, Captain, my word of honour, I don't know. Samu - that's what everybody calls him. Red-haired, humpy, fat. He takes refuge in a theatre on Luther Street. That night, when I got out of the car with the Japanese lens and drove down Eastenhedi Avenue, he was parked along South Station. I stopped, I offered: "Get in, I'll give you a lift." He was looking at the camera and the lens the whole time we were driving. In the café, I looked at him and he nodded to me, inviting me to leave. We walked out into the street, unclothed. "Well, did you manage to get those things out?" - He asks.

I'm a skilled bird and I don't like others to meddle in my affairs. I say: "What's your business?" But he is not stupid:

"There is a buyer." I'm in no hurry. I can see he clearly wants to make money, that reassures me. "Tell me the price." - "Three for the machine,

seven per lens - ten. Two for me and one for the client. For the footballer. Tomorrow he's going out of the cordon for a week, so he can leave," says Shamu. I gave the camera to Freddie for a thousand, but for the lens he only gave me, a dog, five hundred. Footballers are trustworthy, easy people exported, they are not intercepted by customs officials. "The lens is there. Vacio

on the street, its price is twelve thousand." Shamu says: "I don't know if they will take it without the machine. Well, okay, bring it to the theatre this afternoon. If they take it, we'll make a deal." You see, Captain, I am telling you everything as frankly as possible, as a real mother. All this is trifling. But I didn't want to kill Schomer, my God, I didn't.

— Footballer's surname?

— I don't know, Captain, I didn't even ask. I support the Fradi team, and Fradi will probably be in the winter

will not leave the cordon. Why the hell should I hide the name of a footballer from another team. I don't know.

— Well, here we .

— I still had seven hundred forints left. On Sunday afternoon I took the money and went to Fredj. I rang the bell, and he opened the door, wearing a dressing gown and barefoot. "What do you mean,

Antalya? - he asks. After all, we agreed on Wednesday. I am not alone. I have a woman in my bathroom. You might get fooled."

Seeing that it was pointless to talk to him, I began to plead, "Fredj, I have a buyer, he's taking the lens for seven thousand.

Here's your five hundred, pay me back.

lens. I'll promise you another one, and you'll get a percentage of this one. Give the lens back, Fredi." But it was pointless to talk to this piece of shit. "Go to hell," he says.

I need a lens too. I'll meet you on Wednesday to discuss. For now, go quickly. Goodbye." And he slammed the door right under my nose. Well, tell me, Captain, didn't I do everything for him?

— You killed him.

— I didn't kill him, my God, I didn't. I just wanted to take back the lens. Believe me, Mr. Captain, I did not kill him.

Schmidt cries. He cries while hissing and moaning. His shoulders are slumped, his mouth is twisted. Then he lifts his head, pulls out a handkerchief, sniffs, wipes his eyes.

— Did you steal the halothane from the hospital? After all, you worked there as an orderly.

— Yes. But I took it anyway. I wanted to have a laugh.

I had three ampoules at home, which I took on Sunday evening. On Monday morning I sent Tamsaijj to follow Shomer. In the evening, I thought to myself, I'll take my chance, give him a little sniff, take his keys from him, take back the lens and leave him five hundred forints. And when he wakes up, let him take his kudashi wherever he wants. But nothing came of it - he went to the shops until noon, and at three o'clock he closed at his home on Aurora Street and didn't blow his nose until the morning. All day on Tuesday, he took a taxi around the city. I had to leave

"Trabante one Kinkadrebj and try to open the apartment door with a padlock. However, the door turned out to be locked with two locks, and I was hesitant to break it. I went downstairs and was about to go to Aurora Street, when suddenly a taxi pulled up and stopped in front. Shomer got out, paid the driver and started climbing stairs. A Trabant just appeared at the end of the street. I ran to Kinkadrebj to find out what was happening, already determined to go to Shomer's flat and get the lens. As soon as I got to the Trabant, Kinkadrebj opened the door and shouted: "Faster, Let's go!" I jumped in the car, pulled my scarf over my chin and immediately saw Fredj with a black diplomat's briefcase in his hands. He was leaving the house. I thought to myself, I'll take a taxi.

No, he went to the Boulevard Circle, got on the 12th. "Get out of behind me," I tell Kinkadrebi. At the Comedy Theatre, he got out and walked back down the boulevard. We can't stand, the traffic is heavy, it's impossible to even turn around. "Go on

"I say to Kinkadreby. "Let's turn around the block and go back to the boulevard." As soon as we turned onto the boulevard, Kinkadrebi saw him: "There he is, standing there, waiting for the twenty-sixth bus!" At first there was no bus, but soon it came. We slowed the Trabant down, breaking the rules of the street, but now it was all alone. Shomer got on the bus, which for some reason stood still for a long time, but then moved. "This one's going to the island," I say to Kinkadrebi, "as per order. Let's have a little ride with this gentleman."

— Well done, Antal!

— I didn't want to, my God, I didn't want to. I just needed a lens. Shomer got off the bus at "Casino restaurant and walked across the island towards Pest. We also stopped, got out and followed him. Around There wasn't a soul to be seen, but there was still something that could have got in the way, so we waited for him to go a little further. He walked down the quay straight to the hotel. "Let's cross," I say to Kinkadrebi. We quickly crossed the side alley and stopped where it leaves the quay.

We sit on a bench and wait. Only his footsteps sound. Finally, he himself came closer. Did he recognise us or not? We jumped up and grabbed his hands from both sides - I from on the right, Kinkadreby on the left. In my left pocket were ampoules and a handkerchief. "Don't be silly, Antal," he said in a calm voice, "What do you need?" I grabbed his arm. But he didn't resist, and didn't let go of the briefcase.

"The lens," I said. "You won't get it," he replied, very calmly. That made me angry... "Well, you'll have to flip the bird, Freddie," I said, because he made me very angry. "Well, if you have to flip them, I will, but I won't flip them. And you're not stupid to go behind for two or three grand." And he even laughed. "Enough of this, Mr. Shomer," I said, and in the meantime, with my left hand, I crushed the ampoules in my pocket so that I could soak my handkerchief. - Now you sniff." I clicked a handkerchief to his nose. He started to mutter, "Don't be silly, Antal, you'll get ten thousand if you just..." But he had barely turned his tongue, and immediately I felt myself getting weaker. I kept pressing the handkerchief to his nose until his head fell on my shoulder. We immediately put him on the ground. "Let's open our pockets and let's go, gently..." - I said. We shook everything in his pockets - notepads, keys, handkerchief, money - to keep him from going home for as long as possible and give me more time.

"Don't leave him a single forint for the tram!" - I told Kinkadrebi.

- And there are none left. You did your .
- I wanted to pull him aside, lest someone should strike immediately, but that cattleman Kinkadrebi asked: "Are you sure his heart is strong? Hearts cannot withstand anaesthesia. My father did just that..." In the meantime, I saw the steps to the quay. "You know what, let's drag him to the water, he'll get better soon." And the animal said, "So, so what, the heart..." We dragged him down the steps and laid him down so that his head was in the water, not even his head, just his hair...
- It must have slipped lower. He rolled through the dream and slipped.

— Of course!... I said I didn't want to kill him. I dragged him to the water too, so that nothing would happen...

— Tell me, tell me, Antal.

— Yes, yes, I'm telling you... His briefcase must have fallen out and we almost lost it. We had to dig it out. I grabbed the briefcase and went back to the Trabant. We were smoking down the quay as fast as we could. We stopped at his house and left the briefcase in the car again, but I had the keys. We went upstairs, and there was this bovine Kinkadrebi who wanted to take his gloves off...

— Do you work with gloves?

— Why yes, . I also watch TV.

So that I leave my fingerprint when it's in your file...

- What would you leave behind?

— Fingerprint. Fingerprints. Here in English. I thought you knew. Someone told me that fingerprints is English for fingerprint.

— You found the lens, of course, and took it with you.

— You'll be your head off, Captain... Thank you, it slipped out accidentally. We've dumped everything, found the camera, but not the lens.

I had to work alone, because Kinkadreby only looked at pictures of naked women. He even wanted to take a couple, but I fed him through my fingernails. Nobody needs a camera without a lens, so we didn't take it. I knew we didn't have much time. We dropped everything, went out, looked around to make sure nobody had seen us, and got into the Trabant. I dropped Kinkadrebj off in the square on the seventh of November, and I went to my girlfriend's and spent the night.

— How much money did you find at Shomer's?

— Two thousand seven hundred. One thousand two hundred of which I gave to Kinkadrebi, and told him to disappear and be as still as a fish.

— What did you find in your briefcase?

— Good of you to ask. I dropped my briefcase on the back seat when we were leaving the island, but it slipped on the floor, and I must have been in a hurry.

in my excitement, I forgot about it. The next day, Wednesday, I get into the Trabant and see a briefcase on the floor. I open it. You will not guess, Mr Captain, what was in it.

— Japanese lens.

— them. Not just the lens. About two hundred negatives in long cellophane packets. Almost all in colour.

And only naked women. There was also a ticket with a voucher for a carriage on the Wednesday express. It was already half past eleven, and I thought that he had been left biting the dust, had not left, and that he was dead, and I had no . Mr Captain, make it so I don't get bitter, I confess everything, but I didn't kill him, I didn't want to kill him, all I needed was that damn lens, believe me...

Night. Half past four. Kelemen is standing in the middle of the room.

Everyone is asleep. It's warm and . Dinner on the table. He gently lifts the napkin with which Mancé had carefully covered the plate. Small sandwiches with sausage. A bottle of kefir is open beside him, but the cap is left on the bottle to keep the dust out. A teaspoon and sugar in a glass dish.

He asks himself if he is hungry. Not really. But he knows he needs to eat. With eyelids swollen with fatigue picks up a book from the table. Everything is stretched like rubber. The joy of revenge. He already knows that he will take the trick, he will stop reading the remaining eighteen to twenty pages and immediately look at the end to see who the murderer is.

After opening the book with a bottle of kefir and pushing a plate front of it, he picks up the sandwich with his left hand and turns the pages with his right.

Wow! The victim turned out not to be the vice-governor, but the a carpet merchant who shaved his beard on the day, the brother of the Vice-Governor, who was carried out in the same yechi, a resident of the English spy service in Aleppo, and the murderer, a manservant, an agent of a state, who committed the murder together with a barman, Ed, who is willing to commit any crime for money.

Wonderful! Now we just need to find out how the murderer escaped from a locked cabin on the beach. No way. "I've long thought," says Cic Moem with bitter irony, "that there are no miracles in the world." Of course there aren't. A carpet merchant from Aleppo was killed by a spaghetti on the beach, along the cabana. Then a servant and Ed - no special power required here - moved the cab, picked it up and pushed the corpse inside. He dug the cab into the ground and sand has been added around it. Ah, well, what a shame. The unmasked servant draws his revolver, but the vigilant Cikas Moem beats him to it. Ed is also handcuffed. Gledis, smiling wanly, walks up to Cikas and puts his hand on his shoulder. There is no more to read.

And yet he continues reading. The last sandwich. How did it end for the Governor if the victim was not him?

The Vice-Governor, it turns out, was kidnapped before the sun set and taken to an unknown destination. Cyrus Moehm has no time to start with Gledis. But that's another story.

"Kelemen had already read The Story of the Kidnapped Vice-Governor.

But Bela was so tired that she didn't even try to drink the kefir.

He slowly unbuttons his shirt, walks to the sofa, and pours himself a cup of lemon tea from the thermos. He lifts the glass to his mouth and sees a note on the...

"Encryption again! And many unknown, new signs... Yes, but the six-letter signature starts with "A". Well, that's my Andris prank. I forgot to wipe this stupid secret off the wall in his room, and he decided to have a little fun. No, Andris, you won't fool me that easily.

Bela wrinkles the note, undresses, lies down and turns off the light.

With his arms crossed over his chest, he lies in the patamsy, trying to fall asleep.

"A simple murder. And not just one. Two. No miracles. Chico Moem's truth. And those crimes needed to be solved. That's our job. But it's better when it's accompanied by success. And when you do it well, it comes in handy."

BERSERKER

BOOKS

