

TONJE'S VERSION

A radio documentary about involuntarily becoming a character in a novel

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TONJE: It's Friday 25th of March, and it's late evening. And I have just received an email from Karl Ove. "Fifth novel" it's titled, and it includes a large attachment. I don't even feel like opening it. No, I can't manage to, I am forced to wait.

Music

TONJE: Okay, now a couple of hours have passed. *Coughs* I have decided to open the email. *Clicking*. Here it says: "Dear Tonje".

KARL OVE: *Reads*. Dear Tonje. Now the moment you probably have dreaded, has come. Fifth novel has just been completed, I'm attaching it. The only thing I have tried to describe is the light you filled me with when we got together, and the darkness I was filled with...

TONJE: I was filled with... when it ended.

Music

TONJE: *Reads.* But it isn't just, how immense the pressure has been around this. And there isn't anything any longer that is normal, however little.

KARL OVE: *Reads.* Since this is a draft, it would be fine if you keep it to yourself and don't send it to anyone. All the best, Karl Ove.

Paper being put aside

ANNOUNCER: We are broadcasting "Tonje's Version". A radio documentary about involuntarily becoming a character in a novel.

Music out

TONJE: I remember watching a debate on NRK1 (*main Norwegian TV channel*) where Marta Nordheim, an NRK critic, said that "Yes, for all of those who have been written about in this novel, and who don't think it's very nice, they just have to sit very, very still", she said. And at that I reflected well, she has... she's right about that. But why is it like that?

NARRATOR: It was that spring when *Min kamp 5 (My Battle vol 5)* was due to be published. Karl Ove Knausgård had over the course of one year written his life, and it had been pretty intense. All of Media-Norway was standing on its head, the debate flared and the family threatened to sue. In Bergen his ex-wife Tonje sat dreading the next book. It would be about their marriage and divorce, and in which the publisher had promised new peaks to shake the readers.

TONJE: This one, this one here is from VG (*biggest Norwegian tabloid paper*): "Hi, have you managed to read the fiver from mister Knausgård? Problematic or?" *Laughs*.

NARRATOR: She had already read about herself in Min kamp 1 and 2, and everything was beyond her control. In February she sent an email to the Radio Documentary, in which she wondered about documenting her own life up to the publication.

JOURNALIST: What are your premises?

TONJE: In relation to this program I'm thinking that it has to be a cooperative project between us. So that I, on a par with you, am responsible for how this story is to be told. I also work as a journalist, and I know more or less how journalists think, in relation to this, you know. I have also received lots of enquiries from them. And I certainly do not blame them. But these questions that are raised are "How do you feel?", "Is it just terrible, or?". I will not fight him about what is truth, what is not truth.

JOURNALIST: Why do you want to make a radio documentary about this?

TONJE: Mm. It's a kind of double dilemma, actually. First I'm trapped in there, and then, in case I tell what it's like, then I am trapped again. And this is my way out I think.

Telephone rings

TONJE: *On phone*. Hi, it's Tonje.

JOURNALISTS: *On phone*. Hi, this is Lena Storvand from VG.

Phone rings

JOURNALISTS: Hi, this is Liza Stokke calling from News at Seven.

JOURNALISTS: *On phone.* ...so I wondered if you could enlighten me on something? We have talked to the publisher, you know, but they didn't want to reveal very much, it's sort of just bla-bla-bla.

TONJE: *On phone.* I have decided I do not wish to comment on this.

JOURNALISTS: *On phone.* Yes.

TONJE: I'm just a very ordinary person who loved a man who wrote very loudly. And I'm thinking like that that in itself is mine, then. No one else's.

Footsteps

Door closes

TONJE: Oh god, Karl Ove just tried phoning me. And I didn't reach the phone, but instead I sent him a text message that he must call me back. *Clears throat. Sighs.* So what am I going to say? Ehhhm... *Practises.* Hi Karl Ove. *Clears throat.* I have started work on a radio documentary. And would like to interview... no. Okay, shall I call you, then? *Sighs.*

Punches digits on phone

Calling tone

TONJE: What from our lives will be printed? I'm certainly not sure, but what I know, is that at least the end of that cohabitation, it will certainly be in print.

NARRATOR: It's early March and snow is melting. Tonje still doesn't know when she will receive the manuscript for *Min kamp 5*.

TONJE: It could easily be an exciting story in a book. And I am naturally not looking forward to reading about it, in case it is in print, for there there is also a lot that I haven't told my very, very closest, you know. And then I think like that, oh, if all of this is to be unfolded... What should I tell my dad, somehow? Is *he* going to read about it, right? Oh, I really dread reading that book. What are all the others thinking? What does Mom think? My grandmother who will soon have lost her sight, she's over ninety, you know, and she follows what goes on. She thinks the very best of me and... Suddenly she will... *Laughs* She will get to know what... no, it won't work. It won't work. She mustn't get to read that book.

Music

NARRATOR: It got all mixed up for her this spring. The past had landed with a bang in the present, and this program jumps back and forth over a time span of four years.

TONJE: It's March 29th, and I've lain awake and read the manuscript all night. Last I looked, the clock was three.

Water in the faucet

TONJE: I have read the start of our life together. And I thought it was... just as beautiful as I remember it. I read the book and laughed, and cackled to myself. I remember back to what it was at that time, it was fine then. Right now I am not able to reflect on that this here is going out in the world, and what consequences it will have, right now I just live in a tiny bubble where I think of how things were, then.

Jangling

NARRATOR: Min kamp 5. (*Mein Kampf / My Battle, 5*)

KARL OVE: *Reads.* All that existed when we looked at each other through the hall, was she and I. It was strange. There was nothing to fear, nothing to be uneasy about. I didn't have to achieve anything, not do anything, not be anything, I didn't even need to say anything. But I did. We sought each other out that evening, she passed a bit to and fro, we exchanged a few words now and then. Then suddenly we stood alone talking, completely engrossed in each other. I saw nothing but her, who shone with a light so strong that everything else disappeared. Never had I felt anything of what I felt now. Not once, never even been close. So we had met each other at a party, smiled to each other. And that was that? Yes, it was. How could that change everything? Because everything was changed, I knew that. My heart told me. And the heart is never wrong. Never, never wrong, the heart.

Music fades out

TONJE: So, it's a long time since I've met Karl Ove. The last time I met Karl Ove was about four years ago, at the International Festival, when he was in Bergen to read. And then we met each other and chatted, and so he told me about this autobiographical project he had going on. But it, it seemed more like a kind of professional update, you understand? So that all the time that passed in between, then, I haven't thought about it at all. Until I returned from summer holidays... last year. So there were a heap of emails on my computer that I had to sort through. And among those was one from Karl Ove. After all we don't have very much contact, so that was the first one I opened. And... Shall we go and have a look at it? Would you like to read?

JOURNALIST: Yes.

TONJE: I just have to fetch the computer.

JOURNALIST: Sure.

NARRATOR: It's been a year since the very first email about Book 1 ticked into Tonje's machine.

KARL OVE: *Reads.* Dear Tonje. It's getting to be a long time since last, hope all is well with you and yours.

TONJE: Let's see... *Coughs.*

KARL OVE: *Reads.* Now I'm writing because in autumn I'll be publishing an autobiographical novel. One half of it is about the winter and spring I was 16, the other deals with the days when my

father was to be buried. Since you were an important part of my life then, it means that you are in it there. All names in the novel are authentic, also yours. I will of course be very happy if you read it in advance, in case there is anything you react to, and I have therefore included it. I shouldn't think there would be anything, but one can never know, that's my experience.

TONJE:

I can only remember that I got a nervous twitching in one eyelid and a splitting headache, immediately. So I just ran home then, after work, and lay down on the sofa and started reading. But then these here kind of sneaking feelings entered me. *Sighs*. That here I am in it, then. Here's my name. Here's my life. Is it okay? Right. Then all these issues arose, eventually. Well I could have said that I didn't think it was okay, he wasn't angling it that way, but since he didn't get any answer then, at the beginning, I received a new email.

Phone rings

TONJE:

And there he writes that you must be feeling awful, that must be why I haven't heard from you. And then he writes that if you want to, I can alter your name, he wrote. And neither did I reply straight away to that. I wanted a thorough discussion about it. That included with myself. But providing that all the other persons were authentic, being after a fact that this was so important for him, I found out that, okay, what I'll do now, is that I won't approve it, but neither would I deny him the right to do it. So at that I wrote back to him that this will have to make or break. I neither wish to authorise or to censor. This is your project, in your hands.

JOURNALIST: Do you think he has sacrificed you and others for his project?

TONJE: Yes, that... Yes, well... Quite obviously! Quite obviously he's done that. He's taken an extremely high risk. And he has made a very clear choice there, that this book is after all more important than having an eventually good relationship or possibly a good relationship with family or a working relationship with his ex. He has risked all of this. He has sacrificed it. He has been willing to do that. And so it is an artistic project, and he has said that this is the way I remember it. He hasn't claimed that this is the truth. But it is his truth. His reality. And it is very elusive, true. For then you are not arguing only against the person who wrote the novel, but also against the work of art itself in a way. And that's quite unheard of.

Train sounds

NARRATOR: Bergen railway 16th of May. It's three weeks until Min kamp 5 will be published.

TONJE: Now I'm on my way to Voss to visit Karl Ove. He is visiting Yngve (brother) and is about to finish writing number six. Volume number 6. It is now four years since I met him last. And another four more would at least have passed, if it hadn't been for this book. I feel that when I have been dragged so deeply into it and there has been such huge attention around it, and there are so many who want to get answers from me about how I experience it all, then I reason that it could be nice to know what he is thinking too. Now he has in a way written us together again, and there are so many questions I am left with.

Which I hope... I really hope that I can obtain some answers. So that it becomes a bit clearer to me.

Train sounds end

TONJE: I was told by Karl Ove in the first email I received that I was in book number 1, and that we returned again to our life in book number 5. And that was what I had to relate to. In fact, the turning point was book 2.

Music

NARRATOR: Min kamp 2.

KARL OVE: *Reads.* The first time I laid eyes on Linda was the summer of 1999 at a Nordic first-time author seminar at Biskops- Arnö outside Stockholm. She was standing outside a building with the sun in her face. She was wearing sunglasses and a white T-shirt with a red stripe across her breasts, army green trousers. She was slender and beautiful. Her radiance was dark, wild, erotic, destructive. I dropped everything I had hold of. I would get to be with Linda. Did not need to return to Bergen, could just leave everything there, and then stay here, together with her.

Page being turned

TONJE: Then right before book number 2 was to be published, I received a new email from Karl Ove. And there it says: "Soon book 2 will be appearing". And that I am mentioned in it as well, but just a couple of times. And that there's nothing bad

or... bad about me. But then at the same time it also says that I ought not to read that book: "It would be better if you didn't read that book". Because it is about life after us, and it might be hurtful for me to read, then. And so I thought: Okay, if I am only mentioned a couple of times in a large novel and this deals with life after us, then I think that perhaps I shall not read that novel. So I settled for that. Then the book comes out. And I am awoken early in the morning by a phone call from a girl friend in Oslo: "Have you read *Aftenposten*?" (*Norway's major daily*) "No, I haven't yet". "You ought to". So I go online and read the review by Ingunn Økland, who is a reviewer in *Aftenposten*. And she writes in a long review of book number 2 among other that this novel project must be entirely horrible for the ex-wife. And at that I'm thinking: Oi, then this book probably relates to me in any case, I'm thinking, then. But I don't know what this here is about topic-wise, and immediately phone calls from journalists start ringing in, you know. "How do you feel... about becoming a novel figure?" and "What do you think about that?". And I know *nothing*, right. I don't know what is written in this book. I felt completely... evidently, it was an incredibly difficult situation to suddenly find oneself in. So what I am forced to do, is to go over to the book shop, and queue up, and buy that book. And I just remember I felt it was so terribly embarrassing, I hope I won't meet anyone I know now. No, that, I thought was pretty tough. And then there followed a new reading process. And... I am not only mentioned a couple of times. I am mentioned many times in this book. Even although I am not a present figure, I am recurring, you see. Time and time and time again. And now all of a sudden there is this chilly, distanced view of our life together. What I felt was perhaps the most difficult in

the midst of it, was to have to read about a great many things that had happened while we were married, which I myself didn't even know about. Which are out in print in book 2. And that is simply that he fell in love then, with this girl who later became his wife, long before we parted from each other. Of this I knew nothing. But he wanted everybody else to read about this, right, while he didn't want *me* to read it, you understand? And one thing is that he at that stage made a choice, in fact, he has made a decision on my behalf, by bringing me into a novel, by making me a character in a novel, and then in addition he is also choosing that I shall not read that novel. That everyone else shall get to know, but not I. That is perhaps the biggest... *Draws a breath.* Yeah, the worst choice he has made. Yes.

Silence

TONJE: Then I feel that I get a bit sort of: Oh. *Sighs.* Damned ex! *Laughs.* You understand? And when journalists call me, and sort of "Oh, how terrible it must be for you" and "This must be awful for you, Tonje", it is exactly, precisely that, then, which people expect that his ex shall say and mean. And I have sort of fought against this all the way.

Paper flutters

KARL OVE: *Reads.* Dear Tonje. I too am in despair, believe it or not. I burn with trepidation every day, because I don't have control over how people react, not in the least. I should naturally have sent the manuscript to you, my point was just that I didn't think of it, because I received the mail I did, and said that you ought not to read it, because it would be painful, due to what we

have had together. But, as I said, I would never write anything disparaging about you. If you experience it in such a way, is a different matter. Oh, I am so sorry about all of this. I can hardly get up in the morning. At the same time I have myself chosen it, all of it, and people have every right to be infuriated with me and feel offended, naturally. I just hope I am not ruining anything for you. You are one of the finest people I know. But on the other hand, I am writing about my life, and I can't escape the fact that I have lived half of my adult life with you. I'm sending you the fiver when it is finished.

TONJE: Indeed it is clear that there have been an incredibly amount of conversations about my ex in this house. And I don't think I would have tackled it as good as my partner tackles it, to put it that way. Everything has been out of my hands, actually, the focus on me and our relationship and my earlier life, it is totally out of control. It is sort of Karl Ove who is writing his version, and it is this one that is going to be the true one, and it's the one that will remain, you know.

Short silence

TONJE: It was extra provoking in my view, when Berdal, the publisher, appeared both in *Dagbladet* (*second largest daily tabloid*) and on *Dagsrevyen* (*TV's News at Seven*) in an interview after book number 2. And: "No, here all those involved, they had an opportunity to read the manuscript and approved it". That is his message in public, then. And after all it doesn't tally, I had not been able to read the book. Actually I had been told *not* to read that book. And I think that the least a publishing house ought to do, when it has such a controversial project ongoing,

is to have control with who gets the manuscript for reading. Therefore in affect I wrote an email to the publishing manager. And so a few days pass, and then I receive a reply from Berdal, he phones me back. He says that this email has affected him. But then it also surfaces during our conversation that the publishing house does not have control of who gets the manuscript. This is something Karl Ove decides himself. The fact that this is not cleared from the publisher's side, I think that's incredibly weak.

Train sounds

TONJE: Oh, we've arrived at Voss.

Conductor checking tickets

CONDUCTOR: You're going to Voss?

TONJE: Yes.

Music

Leafs through book

TONJE: Here it comes. This is the passage where he's longing to get away.

NARRATOR: It's March 28th. Night. Tonje is lying under the duvet reading the manuscript of Min kamp 5.

TONJE: *Reads.* ...He was yearning for something else. "During nights when I was out, this longing for something else, became the

only thing that existed. I could do anything at all, and finally I did". Yes. *Sighs*.

Turning the page

KARL OVE: *Reads*. The only thing I thought of was her who also was sitting in there on a chair some distance away. I wanted her, so I approached her. She sat on my lap. Snogging.

TONJE: *Sighs*. Infidelity and accusations of rape.

Turning the page

KARL OVE: *Reads*. My hands were all over her. That it took place right in front of Tomas' and his friend's eyes I didn't care about. Now this was everything, she everything, I raised her up and got on my feet, took her by the hand and went into the bedroom. Tomas' bedroom.

Tonje weeps

KARL OVE: Then I shut the door and tore her clothes off. I just ripped the two lapels of her jacket aside without worrying about the buttons. Kissed her. Unbuttoned her skirt, pulled it off her, took off her tights, she was almost naked, freed the button of my trousers, dropped them, rolled on top of her completely mad with desire. No thought of anything else. Yes, somewhere I thought I want this, that I'm doing this, I'm the one who wants to, why should I not do it?

Turning page

Tonje sighs

Music

JOURNALIST: Now you are soon meeting Karl Ove...

TONJE: Mm. Mm. So I have lots of questions, I do. I am above all sort of curious ... to just see him now. Because suddenly our life is again very... close. It has been distant for so long, true, it has. And now it is suddenly present again. As if it were yesterday.

Phone rings

TONJE: It will soon be ten years ago, actually. In fact, I have a clear intention of confronting him with the difficult part, I do indeed. And I want him to feel it a bit, I do. But actually, there is no... there is no revenge being acted out here, that is not my ambition. It is just a very large need to understand, and to make him understand as well, what this has started off in me. I want to look him in the eyes. And I want him to look me in the eyes too. And tell me. And I have a deep and sincere desire to leave that meeting and understand and fully accept, you know? Okay, that was how he thought, and therefore he had to do this. And then maybe come to rest, afterwards.

Phone rings

Thump

NARRATOR: After Tonje has read the manuscript of book 5, she invites her female friends for dinner.

Laughter

FRIEND: Who thinks about it when you're with someone, that suddenly one day you wake up and then just: Hey, you know what, I'm writing a book about it. It's a breeze! Well it certainly isn't okay! Everyone else would have panicked, Tonje, it's perfectly natural to panic.

Laughter

FRIEND: But have you ever considered, that since you were with an author, that this could happen?

TONJE: No, you know what, I had never thought that. Never, never, never. Yes, but I remember once, actually even before he made his debut, when he tried to write, he wrote a short story about when I and he were at the aquarium. And he was so dissatisfied with it that he threw it away, and I felt very dejected about that. Because then I thought that this was sort of a small gesture in private to me, a small short story. Yes, like a fine picture of an epoch. Do you get me?

FRIEND: You once said that now he had been so depressed for a very long time because he was unable to write, and then you had done everything to make him happy again, and sort of really tried to encourage him. And then suddenly he was so super happy. Without it having anything to do with you. Because then he had all of a sudden pierced the abscess and started writing. I have thought so much about that. Because Arnvid of course has always said that he... he has his writings and stuff, and so I'm just thinking: For God's sake! Don't become an author!

Laughter

FRIEND: For after all it's as egotistic as... I have also thought, in fact, that types like that, they're just as selfish as top athletes. It's just "me-me-me-me".

TONJE: Yes, I had completely forgotten that, but it's also in the book.

Laughter

FRIEND: I also remember that you said he did a lot of writing at night, and that he had to place a towel under the typewriter so that you could sleep, because you had to go to work.

Laughter

VENNINNE: I say, are you happy that Ingar doesn't write?

TONJE: Yes, that was one of the criteria for my next man. Do you have ambitions as a writer? - No, you don't? Okay!

FRIEND: What does it feel like now then, after you've read it?

TONJE: Yeah. Now I've achieved a little distance to that book. And it's certain that it is, it is both beautiful and horrendously ugly. But then, it's obvious, of course, you have these juicy stories at the end that cause divorce and stuff. And these are the kind of stories that very, very few know about. Well, it's like this...

FRIEND: Very private.

TONJE: Extremely private. Actually, there are maybe just two-three people in the whole world who know about it. It was absolutely terrible, you know what I had to do then? I received a visit from my father some weeks ago. And by then I had read it, and knew that soon these stories would be out in the world. And I had to.... I had to tell him about it. You understand? It's the kind of things you don't ever tell your father at all. I had to sit down and say: "Listen Dad, soon book 5 will be out. And in it there will come to light some information you do not know about, but I would like to, perhaps, that you'd be hearing it from me first". But I would never, never, never have told him about it, if it hadn't been for...

Door opens

NARRATOR: Three weeks earlier.

TONJE: Look here, Dad. This is just a fraction of the manuscript. You understand? *Laughs.*

TONJE'S FATHER: Just about how many pages is it?

TONJE: No... 550, approximately.

TONJE'S FATHER: Oh my god.

TONJE: Something surfaces in this novel that you don't know about, either. That I haven't told you.

TONJE'S FATHER: Mm. Yes, yes. Mm.

TONJE: And it seems to me... it is perhaps the most uncomfortable thing about the whole matter, I think. Because... I feel that you ought to know... get to know, before virtually everyone else.

TONJE'S FATHER: Yes. *Chuckles a bit.*

TONJE: If you see what I mean? Yes. I feel that way. Because after this story of adultery, we did live together for some time, true enough. But it was tough. And it ended up with me also cheating, once.

TONJE'S FATHER: Mm, mm. Mhm.

TONJE: And... well. And it was after this episode that we had a talk and decided that we... that we had to stop there and then.

TONJE'S FATHER: Mm. Right.

TONJE: But I thought that since there are many of... probably many of your colleagues and friends and the likes reading the novel, then I feel... I at least wanted you to know precisely that, then. And it is not something I am proud of and would rather in a way... But it is like this that I don't want my own father to get to know it from a book, instead of...

TONJE'S FATHER: Mm, mm.

Phone rings

Leafing through pages

NARRATOR: Thursday 10th of June. Reviewers have received Min kamp 5.

TONJE: *Crying.* I don't know if I can stand more now. Today I'm home from work. Now VG has called, and Dagbladet, and News at Seven. *Sniffles.* Everybody is wondering if I would like to comment on these rape allegations. *Pause* And I wonder if there's anything in the newspaper today, I've been and bought it.

Leafing through newspaper

TONJE: Nothing on the front page, at least. Nothing in VG today. Not today either.

Leafing in paper

TONJE: Well. Then maybe it will be out tomorrow, then.

Train sounds

Footsteps

TONJE: Hi, Karl Ove. *Laughs a bit.*

KARL OVE: It's been a long time. Same perfume.

Door

NARRATOR: 16th of May. Tonje meets Karl Ove at his brother's at Voss.

TONJE: Do you feel it is uncomfortable that I am sitting here?

Beverages being poured

KARL OVE: Not that you're sitting here, but that we are talking about this is uncomfortable, yes. No, but look, I have done something that isn't good for you.

TONJE: What was it like then, when you were about to begin on that story? What was it like for you to write about it?

KARL OVE: To write about us? It was... it was very nice, and very sad. Especially because I go in and describe us falling in love so... try to describe how intense it was then. And then it returns in a way, you know, that's the way it is. But all of that is double. It's sad because it was charged with so much future and so many possibilities, the two of us and our future, but it isn't tragic because we have another future now, and we are another place.

TONJE: Yes.

KARL OVE: We have our own families.

TONJE: Mm. I experience in a way that there is a large contrast between the tone you have towards me, as we sit here speaking, and in what you are actually doing. Right.

KARL OVE: Mm. There is. There is a completely different ruthlessness in what I do, than... And that is what has been... This year for me, has been like that. This incredible... I want... I want to write about myself, you know. About this. And do it as ruthlessly as possible towards myself. But if I had been able to just write

about myself, and not involved others, then I would have done so, naturally.

TONJE: Yes, if you had been a hermit, then.

KARL OVE: Sure. But I said, I was just talking to... I was explaining about this project to an American editor. So I said that I have actually sold my soul to the devil. That's the way it feels. Because in addition I get such a huge reward, too.

TONJE: What sort of reward is that?

KARL OVE: Money. Fame. All doors are open wide.

TONJE: But what do you think about your family reacting like they did?

KARL OVE: *Clearing throat.* No, that was a sort of existential crisis. I think I was sitting talking to people on the phone from I got up till I went to bed. Just to sort of try to handle this in one way or another. What on earth was this, why am I doing this, can I do this? And so on, and so on.

TONJE: But do you understand their reactions?

KARL OVE: Yes, of course. I do absolutely. And what can I say? I understand it so far that I agree that perhaps this here... this here is close to unjustifiable.

TONJE: But nevertheless you chose the option to do it.

KARL OVE: Mm. That I did.

TONJE: Why?

KARL OVE: Because I meant that... *Draws breath*. That my motives were good.

TONJE: To me that seems like a very simple explanation. Well, you're saying "They could have reacted like that". They could have reacted by saying that "This is literature", "This is his vision", "This is his story, not ours", for example. But after all this is more than literature, it isn't just literature, truly. It has become a part of the news. It is something that has happened.

KARL OVE: Yes, I know. Absolutely.

TONJE: In fact, it is a writing of history, and you are the one writing the story. And you reserve for yourself the official version of it as well, because the others would never have been able to tell it. And therefore it becomes the vision that lingers. It's the truth, in quotation marks, you're narrating, right.

KARL OVE: Well at that one has to ask oneself: What is it I'm telling, that is so terrible? And it is thus in the very possibility of this, or my entitlement to do this, that I maintain that I am not telling anything that is horrible, or something that cannot stand the light of day. Except for that bit involving my father. And it's my father, isn't it.

TONJE: Yes, but it's not just a matter of horrible contra fine here. It's just *that* you do it as well. You take quite a large part of my life,

and publish it, and tell it to everyone else. And I suffer in so much as I have no say in the matter. Because that... actually, it is your appreciation. And that is regardless of whether it is a horrid or great story, because the way I see it it is both, in fact. But you do it anyway. And you make that choice on my behalf, and that I have struggled with.

KARL OVE: Mm. Yes, it's obvious that... that there is no small measure of exploiting other people, then, in this.

TONJE: And then I am baffled, of course I am. Because I get on the inside of your head. And then it is kind of like: Was that the way he thought about me? Was that the way he regarded it? And things. And at any rate in relation to ... in relation to the break-up. It might well be that you regarded it in this way, that we ended our relationship like this.

KARL OVE: But I have never thought of it in the way that it was I who left. That it was sort of one-sided.

TONJE: Well but that's what you write: When I left her, right. When I went away from Tonje and she cried on the platform, right. The thing is that I feel very sorry for myself. And there are very many others who feel sorry for me precisely due to that. So therefore, I appear to be the one abandoned.

KARL OVE: Yes, exactly.

TONJE: Yes. That's not at all how I experienced it, then. I experienced that it was... That I wished to get out. And that my infidelity was just the final punctuation mark for that. And it isn't...

Sighs. This is of course considerations of vanity, then, too. But the consequences of the way you write it, I think, leads to many people regarding me as a victim.

KARL OVE: Yes, it's absolutely horrible. But the book hasn't gone to print yet, I can write in a sentence about it.

TONJE: *Laughs.*

KARL OVE: It's fully possible. Absolutely. I'm not kidding.

TONJE: No, but listen. I have made up my mind. Well, since you sent me that first email, then I decided that I will not edit your text.

KARL OVE: No, that's not what you're doing. You are presenting a completely different way of looking at it.
I can't give any advice, but how I consider this on my part, is that it isn't dangerous. It's many other things, but that it is not.

TONJE: But I...

KARL OVE: But I also get the reward for it, I also think a lot about that. But you don't. There is no...nothing in it for you.

TONJE: No, I've received the status of your ex, right... I have never been ex in anyone's eyes, but suddenly I am both in relation to my family, neighbours, colleagues and things like that - wow, there goes Knausgård's ex..., see what I mean.

KARL OVE: Yeah.... No, it's completely.... *sighs*

Pouring beverages

KARL OVE: It would be nice to have a smoke.

TONJE: I think we need that.

KARL OVE: Yes.

Chairs being shoved around

Microphone being put down.

TONJE: It was very exhausting to meet Karl Ove. It took an unprecedented effort. Not just for me, but for him as well. He looked all worn out afterwards. And I do not feel particularly wiser either, because on one hand he has a very bad conscience about me, because he has gone far in using my life in his book. But on the other hand it was so important for him to use this life and this name in order to tell his own story, and that when all is said and done, it is the writing that is most important. And that's how I remember it, and that is the way he is for me, then. Ruthless, but with a terribly guilty conscience.