

The  
Unpredictability  
of being  
**HUMAN**



First published in the UK in 2018 by Usborne Publishing Ltd., Usborne House,  
83-85 Saffron Hill, London EC1N 8RT, England. [www.usborne.com](http://www.usborne.com)

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 9781474940634 4696/01 JFMAMJJASO D/17

Printed in the UK.



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# You, Me and God Himself




If I got to be God for one day, the first thing I'd do would be to microwave a bag of popcorn to perfection. Where all the corns got popped and not a single corn burned. And then I'd make sure that everyone else who made popcorn that day had their bags cooked to perfection too. I think a lot of people would be happy that day.

The next thing I might do is to take back what happened that day in Holberg's shop, because that was pretty silly. But then again, maybe I wouldn't undo it, because if I hadn't shoplifted that day I wouldn't have met Hanna Kjerag. You might ask why I don't change things around so that I met Hanna anyway, but I don't think it works that way. I think that's cheating.

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I'd like to say that I'd end world hunger and create world peace and fix everything else that's wrong in this world. But I honestly wouldn't touch any of that. I figure that if it was *that* easy, God would have taken care of it all a long time ago. Who knows what sort of trouble I'd stir up if I started messing with that on my first day on the job?

So I'd stick to simpler things, like popcorn. Popcorn can't cause too much trouble. Besides, it's the small things in life that matter. That's what my Norwegian teacher, Trude Fjell, says.

My name is Malin Sande and I am fourteen years old. Last week I was given a school assignment: *What would you do if you got to be God for one day?*




I failed.

I failed because they said I didn't take the task seriously. All the kids who said that they wanted to get rid of world hunger passed.

I live in Haasund together with just about 5,346 other people. Unless you're from Haasund or any of the neighbouring villages, you won't have heard about the place.


Haasund is a village on the south-western coast of Norway. To get to my house you go up Haugen Hill, which is right next to Hopstad Butcher's. Then you just continue straight ahead until you reach Thorstein Street. At the end






of the street there is a great big red house. It has a huge yard, with grass cut to perfection and a privet hedge surrounding it. On each side of the driveway, two tall birch trees have formed an arch almost welcoming you in. It really is a magnificent house.

I live in the house next to it. The white one with the broken garage door. It should have been painted last summer and the lawn hasn't been mowed in a while. You'll see it when you see it.



My teacher gave me two days, four hours and thirty-six minutes to hand in a new paper on what I would do as God's substitute. So I was sitting in my room with a pen and a blank sheet of paper when my dad stormed in and yelled, "Why are you not taking your schoolwork seriously?" I said that I was. And then he stormed out again. Then my mom came in and asked me why I was being rude to my dad. They're a bit on edge these days.



The truth is that before I stole that chocolate bar I had never really been in any trouble. I've always handed in my homework on time; I've never cut class, or smoked a cigarette or anything. It's not so much because I'm such a good person. It's because I'm too much of a coward to do any of those things. I worry too much about consequences. My older brother Sigve gets in trouble all the time. He cuts class and smokes cigarettes and stays out past his curfew.



And he doesn't care one bit about consequences. Whenever he misbehaves, my dad yells and shouts and even punches the wall and throws things across the room. And then he yells some more.

It was a Wednesday afternoon, the day I got in trouble, and I was walking home from school. All of a sudden these girls, Frida Berg and Julie Losvik, came up behind me and asked me to wait up. They are the most popular girls in my class. They never talk to me. Frida and Julie don't carry their books in a backpack like I do, they have them in handbags. Proper handbags, like the ones my mom has. Only my mom's bags are a lot cheaper. The girls were both wearing puffer jackets and Sorel boots that day and they both had their hair up in French braids. Luckily one is blonde and the other a brunette, or I might not have been able to tell them apart.

"What are you up to today?" Frida said.

"Not much," I said.

Before I knew it I had walked with them over to Holberg's shop. Frida said, "You can come to my slumber party on Saturday if you want."

"Really?" I had never been to a slumber party before.

"Yes. But you have to steal something in the shop first. To show that being a part of our group really matters to you. All the other girls have done it."



“What do I have to steal?”

“Anything.”


Frida and Julie waited outside while I went into the shop. I didn't really want to steal, but these girls had never shown any interest in me before and now I had the chance to become their friend. Besides, I didn't want them to think that I was a coward.

I walked up to a shelf and grabbed the first thing I saw. A Stratos chocolate bar. I don't even like Stratos.

I put it behind my back really quickly. Then I got nervous because I realized that I had forgotten to check if anyone was watching me. I started walking backwards towards the door and I didn't see where I was going so I bumped into this girl. Our collision made me drop the chocolate and it also caused a bag of gummy bears to fall out from underneath her jacket. Apparently she was on the same mission as me. Through the window I could see that Frida and Julie were already fleeing down Valen Street. And then Holberg himself came over to us with this really strict look on his face and said, “You girls better come with me.”

“You idiot!” the girl hissed at me. The girl was Hanna Kjerag.


We were sitting in the office in the back of the shop while Holberg called our parents. Hanna was wearing




dark eye make-up and had a grey beanie hat on her head. She seemed to be mad at the world.

She asked me why I was trying to shoplift when I was so bad at it. I told her what had happened. Hanna raised one eyebrow and said, “You’ve got worse problems than I thought.”

She said I needed better friends. Maybe that’s why she decided to become my friend. Hanna taught me that a friend worth having is someone who doesn’t make you do anything you don’t want to do. She is only a year above me, but she has already had her sixteenth birthday. Perhaps that is why she knows all these things.



Hanna told me not to worry so much and to listen to my heart. My heart told me that I wanted to try and smoke a cigarette.



If I got to be God for one day I’d make sure that everyone had a friend like Hanna. And I wouldn’t change a thing about that day in Holberg’s shop.

Well, perhaps I’d steal a bag of popcorn instead of the Stratos bar. I hate Stratos.

I still wouldn’t fix world peace and end world hunger. If God Himself can’t fix it, how could I?

