

## Young Joel

**W**e probably all know how remarkable thoughts can be. It is as if an invisible hand scattered them over the earth. And there you are, thinking you have come up with something unusual and lovely, and you are proud and pleased until you notice that the same thought has sprouted in hundreds of other minds.

That was what happened with Minister Rhånge's thought about the sanctity of life. He was far from the only one to come up with it.

It was the month of June, the time of year when in Bohuslän, or rather in the coastal parts of Bohuslän and its archipelago, visitors were expected.

There had been a good deal of rushing about to get things ready for their arrival. Houses had been painted and boats, rooms aired and cleaned, flower beds planted, bathhouses heated and pools cleaned, and now the railway carriages began to arrive, chock-a-block with visitors from all over the country. There were the crippled and the exhausted, hordes of children and hordes of old people, people wanting peace and quiet and people wanting fun and entertainment. It was as if all of Sweden was on its way to the rocky islands and the surly North Sea.

But all the guests whose reception was being prepared were expected from the east, from inland. From the west, from the sea, no visitors were anticipated. No one had made any preparations for their arrival. Neither harbingers nor announcements of their arrival had been received.

So that when guests from the west arrived anyway, they could not be received in the same way as those who came

from inland. Their arrival caused lamentation and confusion and melancholy, but no pleasure.