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Tarok

By Thorvald Lervad

CATCH THE DREAM:

Based on a true story

It's the Danish Cup decider -

- live from the track

in Copenhagen.

Vagn Laursen is narrowly in the lead,

with Jrn Laursen in pursuit.

Go, Jrn!

- Well, lads, what do you think?

- She's beautiful, dad!

- Is it a Flash Gordon model?

- It's certainly a Yankee.

What is all the noise about?

- What on earth is that?

- A car.

What has happened to our little Ford?

Oh, yes... I sold it.

- Sold it? Why did you sell it?

- A Laursen should drive in style.

- Not a kilometre on the clock.

- Did you get it from Mr. Srensen?

The last of his stock.

Shall we take her for a spin?

We're just about to eat.

- Well, Your Majesty?

- But the dinner!

You can't have much to do.

After all, it is a roast, isn't it?

- Karl, what is this place?

- It's a manor.

- What are we doing at a manor?

- Well, if you can do any better

Welcome to Estvad!

Hello, Oxholm.

Thanks for fitting us in.

Shall we look at

what you've bought?

This is my wife.

- Torben Oxholm.

- Elisabeth Laursen.

And this is Mogens... Vagn...

... and Jrn... and Aksel. They

came into the world in that order.

I think my wife would
like to see the stables.
This way...
- You might've asked me first.
- I'll ask next time.
Yes...
And this is our horsepower.
That feisty fellow is our pride

and joy:

And this is Jens Hansen
and Otto Larsen, -
- my skilled, loyal men
for many years now.
This is Karl Laursen,
who has bought Estvad.
- You have a fine reputation.
- I hope I can live up to it.
He hasn't burnt off his energy
in the fields today.
- Or on the ladies.
- Karl! Think of the boys!
Your husband is right.
With 450 acres you need
quite a lot of horsepower.
So a good stud is an asset.
Self-sufficiency is no bad thing.
What a fine farm!
Yes, it represents years
of love and labour.
- Why sell up, if I may ask?
- My son wants out.
He insists we're going to be
overwhelmed by the Americans -
- and all their newfangled ideas.
There is nothing like
good Danish horsepower.
Well, I hope not.
- We'll look after Estvad well.
- I don't doubt it.
I hope you'll be as happy
here as we have.
I am sure we will.
It must be hard,

selling your life's work.

It won't happen in our family.

None of my lads will let us down.

No, never.

- Won't we ever move again?

- No, Jrn, we're staying here.

- Race you to the car!

- Wait!

Wait! Wait for me!

I don't like profiting from

the misfortune of others.

We don't profit. We survive.

That's the difference.

Hop in!

Vagn "Ben Hur" Laursen throws his
chariot with its four mighty steeds -

- into the final, decisive battle

between the Laursen brothers.

May the boldest man win!

Last man home unshackles the horses!

After him, Jrn!

- Vagn Laursen heads for the line!

- Overtake him!

After that boy!

Vagn Laursen is the greatest!

May the emperor hail him!

You did really well.

You are my best friend.

Crikey, what a racket!

It's the sound

of men losing their jobs.

- How come?

- One of those is worth five men.

- Not in our family.

- No. Dad loves horses.

Not even Karl Laursen can beat
such a threat from outside.

(carol)

Now I hope He'll be on my side
with the bank manager.

- The Lord helps those in need.

- But does he pay interest?

Six farms in seven years.

You're buying up farms.

And estates.
Like the rest of us buy suits,
Laursen.
It hasn't been dull.
How many men and horses
have you at Estvad?
Well, a lot has happened
in the last two years.
We've 20 men and women,
counting the families of the hands.
Horses... twenty teams,
that's forty, and two studs.
Estvad is big business...
perhaps too big now.
You put up a pretty big bond
when you bought it.
And you haven't made
a single payment.
Prices are falling and
it is hard to increase yields.
What are you going to do about it?
Buy a palace?
I was thinking of expanding.
Taking over the next farm.
They have ten good horses
and we could produce more.
I can get it cheaply.
With a bit of help from my bank.
- Thanks for the cigar.
- It's Christmas.
The presents don't buy themselves.
So if you'll draw up the papers...
The bank can't help you, Laursen.
The bank has been happy
to do so for the last ten years.
- You must think of the future.
- Oh, that?
Denmark's farmers have
not kept up with the times.
- You must use the latest methods.
- And we don't?
Horses are history, Laursen.
They must be replaced by machines,
and you must use chemicals.

- They increase yields.
- I'm not using poison in my fields.
You may have to. And you can get
financial aid... from the Americans.
The Americans?
Why would they help me?
To get the wheels turning.
Marshall Aid, they call it.
Isn't that just another term
for dependency?
Well, Laursen, what do we say?
He'll be looked after, Jrn.
Jrn!
Please drive carefully!
I think it's his first ride.
It'll be his last ride, too.
- Why?
- We're going to the abattoir.
Kjeld! Kjeld!
Let me go! Let me go!
Kjeld, they're going to kill you!
- Stop it!
- Help! Help!
- Are you mad, boy?
- You lied to me, you lied to me!
I never said where
that horse was going.
No! Don't do that!
Can't you see the boy is upset?
Jens was right.
Dad is powerless.
Do you think Dad has lost his dream?
Yes.
I'm not going to when I grow up.
I saw this film once
where they mixed their blood.
So their promises would last forever.
I promise you, Jrn Laursen, -
- that I will make
my dream come true.
And I promise you, Vagn Laursen,
that I will make mine...
... come true too.
- And we will always help each other.

- And our family.
This will sting a bit.
Jrn, aren't you going to come down
to suffer with the rest of us?
Jrn?
Yell as loud as you can.
It'll keep the lice at bay.
Chin up, boys! You look like
a couple of undertakers.
- What do they do?
- Bury people.
- Horses, too?
- Your father couldn't help it.
Who can help it, then?
It's not as easy as you two think.
Shall we hear what is on the radio?
I have my horse,
I have my lasso...
- Ready for a surprise?
- Yeah!
- Bring on the horses!
- Has Kjeld come back?
They are real horses!
May I introduce Kingo and Marian!
We're going into harness racing!
- What do you know about racing?
- As much as I knew about farming.
Nothing? Like everything else
you throw us into?
I know about horses, for a start.
We need a name for our new stables.
I propose Stald Kingo.
Those in favour?
Why after the stallion?
Why not the mare?
I vote for Stald Marian.
- You can't call a stables that!
- Why not?
Well...
What if we put Kingo and
Marian together? Stald Kima?
I can live with that. Can you?
Those in favour!
That's decided, then.

More hay?

Yippee yippy yay! Stald Kima's
bold steeds head for the start!

Everyone fears the Laursen brothers!
Go, Vagn!

The Larsen brothers are in the lead.
Time for the Laursen brothers to eat.
Go and wash your hooves!

Here's to Stald Kima!

It'll be the best in the kingdom!

- We'll win the derby!

- For sure.

Who's going to drive the horses?

Me!

Of course. You'll all drive for Stald
Kima when the time comes.

You didn't answer my question, Karl.

I am.

Who else?

You have never tried harness racing.
There's a first time for everything.
Such as this Sunday in Skive.

This Sunday?!

Yes.

North West Jutland Race Course, Skive
For the third race of the day we
have a 47 year old debutant.

It's our own Karl Laursen,
with Kingo from Stald Kima.

I didn't think

there were clowns racing.

He looks more like
an overgrown chicken.

- I've put 2 kroner on dad.

- And you?

- No!

- Best not tell your father that!

What, going home already?!

No. I just don't like
losers for company.

- You have to stay put.

- But I didn't do anything.

- You didn't. But your horse has.

- He hasn't done a thing.

He's won lots of races.
So he gets a 20 metre handicap.
20 metres? But how will I
be able to get past the others?
You won't get anywhere near them.
They'll be round the first bend
before you even start.
Did you hear that, Kingo?
Now for the Lima Run, 2100 metres
with 1400 kroner in prizes.
Line away!
I have no idea what is going on.
Ready!
Ready!
Steady!
Go!
Mr. Speedway from Stald Speed
takes the lead.
Kingo and Karl Laursen
are still looking for a gap.
Crazy nag! It's 20 metres, not 40!
What in heaven's name
are you doing, Karl Laursen?!
Get off the track before
the others get back!
I refuse to make a fool of us, Kingo.
Nobody's going to say
a Laursen gives up.
He hasn't lost his courage. Let's
hope he finishes before dark.
The three greatest horses in
the world are neck and neck.
Jrn with Winther
cross the line first.
Jrn Laursen, the winner of
the 1951 Danish Harness Derby.
There is a trophy, too.
Isn't that Ingelise from school
that you are mad about?
He'll like that.
Say thank you to the lady!
Thanks.
I won 20 re
so I'll just buy another.

- Doesn't the winner get a kiss?
- Yes!
Kiss him, kiss him, kiss him!
What the hell are you up to?
See what I won! So Stald Kim
goes home with a prize after all!
Cheeky devil!
We're going home. Now.
Where do you think you are going?
Move it.
Come along.
That's what it must be like to fly.
Just wait till it's our turn.
Stald Kima will whip them all.
Long-eared donkey
pulling master home
Crossing streams and fields
In the heat of the southern sun
Little donkey, don't you rush
Save your legs, there's far to go
Vagn Laursen!
Provincial Champion 1961!
- Dad will be so angry!
- Because you burned him up.
2nd place...
he'll never get over it.
He'll have to,
because here come his sons!
- Here's to Stald Kima!
- Skive's best!
- Denmark's best!
- We are the champs!
Hey, turn up the radio!
So just just just take it easy
Take your time,
We'll make it
Listen to the faint, faint
church bells
Nobody's expecting us
We'll make it
Why don't you come in
for a cup of coffee?
Sure...
Everyone has forgotten -

- that I was champion five years
running before my own son won.

And what about us two, Tina?

The 1957 Derby.

Yes, we were only fifth.

But that's because they tricked us.

- Like they did in 1959.

- Quite.

I'm not going to the toffs'

Copenhagen derby again.

- I don't believe you.

- They'll have to come begging.

They will.

I hope it all hasn't been in vain.

You saw Vagn win today.

A real Laursen victory.

And his brothers would go
through fire and water for him.

- And for you.

- We'll need that, too.

- We must have faith.

- Yes.

Can't you give us

a real winner, eh, Tina?

- To show them who's really king?

- The king's coffee is getting cold.

- Indeed... is there cake, too?

- Only if you behave yourself.

There is no doubt who's queen,
at any rate.

That's my big brother!

- Vagn, it suits you.

- Thanks.

Waiter, give everyone a drink on me!

- Dad will foot the bill.

- He'll go crazy.

I won and he grabbed the winnings.

But we're grabbing all the fun.

There is work to be done!

- Come on Aksel!

- Jrn!

Hello, Jrn Laursen!

Don't you recognize me?

Last time I saw you

you won a fizzy pop.
Ingelise?
A fizzy pop wasn't all I won, was it?
You've got a good memory!
Shall we dance?
I'm glad I bet on you that time,
Jrn Laursen.
I remember how you always
led the town processions.
Next to the chief of police.
- I felt like the Queen of Skive.
- You were my greatest dream.
- And you did nothing about it?
- I wasn't brave enough.
Do you still ride?
Actually, I won
the Skive Cup last year.
I haven't been home much.
Why did you go to sea?
What did your mum and dad say?
They weren't happy.
Especially not mum.
But I needed to try
being my own boss.
What now? Conquer the harness
race courses of the world?
No. That's Vagn's dream.
What's yours?
I've been accepted to train
as a fighter pilot.
Isn't it dangerous?
Yes, but
You are a real daredevil.
It won't be easy, making you
keep your feet on the ground.
These shoes are so narrow.
Thanks.
This is where I live.
Maybe we could...
... meet again?
You bet.
Yes!
- Can I help you?
- Vagn Laursen?

Down the corridor.

Room 12.

Thanks.

Five years, they say, at most.

But a Laursen never gives up.

How is dad taking it?

If he isn't in the stables

he's in his study.

He refuses to accept it.

That damned cancer.

That was "Christmas is coming" sung

by the Radio Choir. Now the news.

Here is the news.

Another Danish F-100 fighter

has crashed over Germany.

The pilot, Ole Jensen, was killed.

That is the tenth F-100 crash

in less than a year.

It is the highest number since

1950-1955 when 79 crashes...

Did you know him?

Yes.

- Did he have a wife and children?

- They were expecting their first.

I don't know

how I will cope...

... If I have to lose

two sons as well.

I am not going to be a fighter pilot.

Well, it is stupid to fly around in

something that can fall down.

How do you intend

to support a family?

I am looking at

a car dealership in Skive.

I see.

What do you know about cars?

As much as you knew

about harness racing.

I knew about horses.

There's plenty of horsepower in cars.

You should know.

Yes.

But I expect you'll go

on driving for Stald Kima.
Goodbye, dad.
See you on Sunday.
My goodness it is hot!
An ice-cold beer beneath the
starry sky would be fantastic.
And a nice cigarette.
- You need your head examined.
- Give me a break, Jrn.
I've lasted for... how long now?
Ten years.
Shall we change the subject?
You always said
it was important to be frank.
Even if it hurts and the truth
is almost impossible to face.
It's over now, and you know it.
I'd rather end on a beer and
a fag than a bowl of gruel.
This is the life, eh?
Yes.
We'll see dad's sulky in the stars.
Nothing is too grand for him.
They'll write Stald Kima
in the stars, too.
- What if we'd refused to drive?
- Dad wouldn't be where he is today.
Did he exploit us?
Other people would probably say so.
It's deep inside us to do
what is expected of us.
And what he built is very big.
And we love it.
- You may be right.
- Of course I'm bloody right.
But don't forget to fight
for this, too. The dream.
That vanished
somewhere up there, too.
How did it go...
"I want to fly round the world".
Difficult in a Morris.
Why?
You are right. It's not just

about dad, it's about us, too.

How far do you want to go?

All the way.

What are you doing, dad?

Nothing. Just sitting by myself.

And thinking.

I want to do that, too.

That's Uncle Vagn in front.

Yes he was always in front.

Were you very old there?

I am seven, and Vagn is eight.

- That's really old.

- Yes.

Are you sad that Uncle Vagn
is in heaven now?

Yes.

Very.

Very, very sad.

Don't be, daddy. At nursery
they say God is a nice man.

Mummy says to tell you
we have to go now.

How clever of you to remember, Hanne!

- Will you hold Jens a moment?

- Come along, Jens.

The funeral's in half an hour.

We mustn't be late.

Or granddad will bite!

It is hard, Ingelise.

Yes. And there is no need
to pretend otherwise.

He was your brother
and your best friend.

Granddad! Granny wants you!

Tell her I'll be in
when I've seen to the horses.

- More potatoes?

- No, I am full.

- Oh, go on!

- What's the hurry?

Oh, right, you never
do anything in a hurry.

- Not even putting your feet up.

- That will do!

Here's to 1971,
Stald Kima's best year to date!
No need to remind you who won the
amateur cup for the twelfth time!

- Daddy did!
- Try again.
- Uncle Aksel!
- No, I did, you little turd!

Mind your tongue! You only asked
to remind us it was you!

Nobody else remembers.

Cheers!

- Cheers, granddad.
- Here's to Vagn, too.

Yes Of all of you he had the best
mental make-up for racing.

Why did Uncle Vagn
have the best bike?

Bike?

It feels odd, celebrating a good year
at the same time so full of sorrow.

- To Vagn!
- To Vagn.

Remember the VW he got
for his eighteenth birthday?
Only because dad knew the dealer.

Yes, he owed me for a Yankee.

And within a fortnight
Vagn had swapped it for a red MG.
Vagn did what suited him.

And enjoyed it.

- He livened things up.
- He certainly did.

Is that why you sold Estvad
and moved to Hagenshj?

- Because Vagn couldn't run it?
- I ran Estvad, Ingrid.

But yes, without him it was too big.

And the rest of you have
enough on your plates.

We really appreciate how you busy
lads find the time to drive for us.

- Why not use professional drivers?
- Leave it, darling.

I'll tell you, Ingrid: a professional makes his living by winning. It is his job to win at any price. He can always find a new horse. Our horses are our family and we treat family properly. Don't you work at a pharmacy, Ingrid?

- Yes, I do, I

- So you know a bit of Latin.

- Oh, I'm not

- "Amateur" is from "amare". The Latin for "to love". And in this family we love what we do. I'll be in the stables.

- I asked the wrong question.

- You'll learn, don't worry. Karl can be brusque but he means well. Want a bet? No, but he is kind to children. They don't get a penny. Or even a word of praise. No, everyone works for the family! Ingelise, living so close must be awful. The worst thing is all the coffee machines and blenders we win. And all those toasters! I thought Aksel was the only one who kept bringing them home.

- Their only payment.

- Which they can't even use. Another prize would be fantastic. And I don't mean money.

- Such as?

- A domestic science course. To teach them how to use their prizes. She's in foal. Call the vet. Tell the boys they're needed at once.

- Tina? So soon?

- Something's not right. I'll phone. Come out of there, damn it!

If we don't get it out now,
they'll both die.

Thomsen will do it.

- Is it dead?

- No. They always look like that.

Shall I give you a hand?

Are Tina's foals scared of you?

The way they don't want to come out?

Scared of you, more like.

- What's his name, granddad?

- What did we agree on?

- Tarok.

- You don't get finer than that.

- Now for a fry up.

- More food already?

It's a tradition.

And two schnapps because it's a boy.

- Karl, this is the 20th century.

- There's most money in stallions.

Mare's lib hasn't happened yet.

Now you are going to see the world.

It is more than a warm stable.

- You think he understands?

- Of course. Better than most humans.

Thanks a lot!

Apart from you, only horses
understand common sense talk.

Courage and action creates miracles.

Remember that on the track,
little fellow.

All your talk will drive him crazy.

I see why the Vikings wanted
to be buried here So do I.

- That's not up to you.

- If the Vikings can, so can I.

I don't think we just "disappear".

No...

Vagn will always be with us.

Skive Harness Track

Come along...

- He's got temperament.

- That is good.

- Start him gently.

- Yes, of course.

No more chatter,
we haven't got all day.
What do you think, Tarok?
Shall we show him what you can do?
Slow down or
you'll run out of steam!
There is a wall of
competitors in front of you.
They don't want to let you through.
Pull out to one side
and put your foot down!
You understand plain Danish!
Bloody hell!
That's good.
Come on, lad.
That horse will break.
He can't last at that pace.
- You drove him too hard.
- The way he wanted.
- You are a winner.
- Tarok must not lead from the start.
It's bad tactics.
- Lack of patience is his strength.
- And your weakness.
We don't want any mistakes
at Billund on Sunday.
I'll get into the car.
Yes, my words exactly.
South Jutland Race Course
Billund
You are a minute late.
Just be grateful Billund has an
airport or I'd not be here now.
You're still late.
- Bruised your hand on mum?
- Oh, she's a tough customer.
- But it was Tarok's mum.
- Did she bite you?
A hare startled her.
I should've been more careful.
Right.
A horse can do no wrong.
- Where is mum?
- At home, of course.

- You drove one-handed?
- Yes. Just don't do the same now.
Don't let him lead. This field is far
stronger than anything he's tried.
Ramses II is in the lead.
Jrn Laursen and the new star,
Tarok, suddenly overtake.
Tarok is an exciting outsider
from Stald Kima.
Karl Laursen doesn't race
his horses till they are three.
So we never know
what to expect.
They are keeping up a good pace.
The race is still open.
Can you overtake him?
Tarok ups the pace and passes
the favourite, Supermule.
Tarok passes Ramses II.
What the hell are you doing?
It's bold of Jrn Laursen to let
Tarok take the lead so early.
The last lap and
Tarok is still in the lead.
Supermule passes Ramses II
and pulls alongside Tarok.
They are neck and neck.
Tarok seems to be tiring.
Is it the end for the latest
addition to the Stald Kima family?
- Damn!
- I said you were too excitable.
I should have done as dad told me.
They're neck and neck
as they round the last bend.
200 metres to go and
Supermule accelerates.
Go!
But Tarok retaliates.
- Move, damn you!
- 100 metres to go.
- Faster!
- There's not a head in it.
Will it be Tarok or Supermule?

Tarok has more in reserve.
He is hardly touching
the ground now.
But it's not over yet.
Now!!!!

Jrn Laursen pulls away.
Tarok is going to win
his debut race.
Tarok is approaching the line.
The others are nowhere close.
An extraordinary performance.
Tarok wins his debut race.
What did I tell you, dad?
It's the best debut
at Billund for years
After that splendid win for Stald
Kima and Jrn Laursen
3500, not bad for a debut.
A star is born.

- You drove him too hard again.
- He didn't tire at all.

We want to have
a horse for next time.

- I had a meeting in Copenhagen.
- That's not my problem.
- You don't give a fig.
- How right you are, boy.
- At least there will be a next time.
- Only the driver can spoil that.

You owe me for dinner.

- Ouch, this damned arm of mine.
- Shouldn't I drive anyway?

No.

- Shall I sell you a new car?
- Why buy new? Used is cheaper.

They wanted to show you
their costumes so badly.
A whole week they'd been
keeping them a secret.

- How did Jens manage that?
- Hanne threatened to kill him.

What did Saab say?
They were delighted. I promised to be
photographed with the horse.

- The Swedes love harness racing.
- Not enough to lend us the cars.

No.

Let's hope Saab sell
better than Morris.

At least the bank still serves us
biscuits with the coffee.

"Only the driver can spoil it".

We work 1 8 hours a day.

The only good thing -

- is that we don't have time
to spend any money.

You only see the children
when they go to your races.

They fell asleep in those costumes.

Dressed up as sulky drivers.

They are so bloody loyal.

But have we any choice? Your mum,
your dad, the races, the horses...

... are your be-all-and-end-all.

- You are my be-all-and-end-all.

- Oh, sure. We matter, I know.

Come here...

But have we any choice
in the matter, Jrn?

Yes, we have.

"A star is born."

This is what I have been
waiting for all my life.

This time I am not going
to let my dream go.

I can't tell you how.

But I just know that this fellow...

... is our way out.

OK...

You drive that horse and we'll sell
cars till a miracle happens.

I don't know why, but...

I have faith in you, Jrn Laursen.

Probably because

I am a handsome bloke.

That, too.

There is something

I forgot to tell you.

What now?

We owe Stald Kima 27 kroner
for a wiener schnitzel and a beer.

The rotten old miser!

It is unbelievable.

- Hello, children!

- Granny!

I'm not the one who needs a wash!

Such good children!

Look...

Pop across the road for an ice cream.

We haven't got time.

We have to wash all the cars.

I'll lend a hand.

Run along.

If they can use Saab engines in jet
fighters, they must be the best!

But Saabs depreciate too, right?

Hello, Elisabeth! Yes, if you run
over them with a steam roller.

- I'll wait...

- You can wait in the office.

I'll do that.

- Hello.

- Hello.

Do you promise Tarok will win today?

He'll show everyone his back.

- I'll talk to my bank, then.

- I'll get the paperwork ready.

- No harm in that.

- Goodbye, and thank you.

No need for thanks.

- How nice to see you!

- That went well, didn't it?

The bank will never lend him
the money for that car.

- There.

- They are good little helpers.

Hanne has just negotiated a pay rise.

Does she get paid for helping?

Yes, it helps them feel independent.

How's business?

It's tough,

what with this crisis.

People are sitting on their money.
Promise me you'll come to me
if you run into difficulties.
The grandchildren mean everything.
I know.

Thank you.

Tomorrow is the 1976

Danish Harness Racing Derby.

Crowds are expected to exceed 20,000.

With last year's superb victories
and 30 wins in 36 starts this year -

- Tarok is the biggest
favourite for 40 years.

With me is John Bjrklund from BT.

How certain is victory?

The Derby distance of 3000 metres is
a bit long for a sprinter like Tarok.

And the Laursens find
the Derby a challenge?

Karl Laursen has never won it.

We remember last year's fiasco with
Surveyor, driven by Aksel Laursen.

Also hailed as the greatest
favourite ever; came a poor fifth.

- Karl Laursen pleaded illness.

- As always.

- It could happen again.

- He may be king of the provinces.

- But he lacks the emperor's crown.

- So, Tarok as a sure winner in 1976?

No.

A good thing
the horses didn't hear that.

Why get worked up
about an idiot like that?

Heed your daughter!

Save your energy for Sunday.

Take this with you.

- How lovely!

- May I see?

Maybe it'll bring good luck.

DAD AND TAROK WIN THE DERBY

- Someone's got to win.

- Ready?

Off goes the sulky!
He's certainly frisky.
Those snooty Copenhageners had
better not steal my Derby win again.
A win would also mean
a lot to Jrn and Ingelise.
Yes.

If I can pocket the 100,000 and
show them who's really emperor, -
- I won't ask for more.

So we must hope for you
that your son wins tomorrow.

Yes.

Danish Harness Derby
Charlottenlund Race Course
Stall seven must be just down there.

It must be... there.

- They're all full up.

- Oh, there must be room.

- Hello?

- Number 7.

- The name of your horse?

- Tarok. He's in the Derby.

- You've been moved.

- Why?

The Swedes want to stay till Monday.

- So will we, if we win.

- Go right to the end and turn left.

They're joking!

Just because we don't smell of money.

There.

And now a lick of paint and a
few flowers. It'll be very cosy.

Chin up! We've come to win.

You'll shut them up good and proper.

Three races to go

before the 1976 Derby.

There are 20,000

spectators here today.

- You've got a bird dropping.

- Don't wipe it off, it's good luck.

That's Jrn Laursen and Tarok from

Stald Kima warming up now.

They're already in trouble.

Tarok is galloping along.
Not the best preparation
for the Derby.
He'll run that horse into the ground!
Bloody amateur!
A used car dealer has no business
driving that horse.
He is insane.
This is harness racing, not a gallop!
Tarok will have no strength left.
And he's starting in lane eight!
Just shut up, Karl.
He won't be able to get far enough
ahead to move into the inside lane.
If we don't trust our son,
who will?
There is something
completely wrong with him.
- What happened?
- He bolted. He's unrecognizable.
What are we going to do?
Have faith.
The horses head for the start.
The tension is rising.
More and more.
It's a large field,
with twenty teams.
Two rows of eight and one of four.
Tarok is on the far left.
Easy, now, we don't want
to get there too soon.
If he accelerates too soon
he'll run away.
Get a move on, Jrn!
Easy does it.
Hold him back, Jrn.
Tarok on the far left
in the light jersey...
3000 metres, three laps...
Speeding up...
There is a battle for the lead.
Tarok moves forward
and cuts inside Talisman Sus...
Tarok is in the lead.

Several horses have let him in.
Tarok in the lead,
driven by Jrn Laursen, -
- and Talisman Sus is second.
Tulle Sgrd driven by
Mogens Larsen is in third place.
But Tarok has taken
the position he wanted.
He is in the lead,
and doing a fair lick, eh, Per?
I can't give you a time yet.
Tarok passes
the stands for the first time.
Tarok is going very fast.
I have him down
for about 1 8 and a half.
Tarok, then Talisman Sus, -
- and Tino Hanover -
- driven by Walther Kaiser Hansen
is making a move now.
Thomas Reerstrup wants
a piece of the action too.
The field is spread out now.
Tarok is still in the lead, -
- ahead of Talisman Sus.
They round the bend onto the
home straight with one lap to go.
Tarok has taken his desired
position without much of a battle.
He didn't seem to expend
much energy on getting there.
Tarok in the lead as
they go into the last lap.
Tequila Sun moves forward.
But Tarok is still in the lead.
That was Tequila Sun we just saw.
Talisman Sus is well up the field.
It's Tarok and Talisman Sus.
Go on, give them one last hope
and then crush them.
Here they come, Tequila Sun
number 12, number eight, -
- Tarok and Jrn Laursen.
Number 5, Talisman Sus.

On the outside is Tequila Sun.
Number 6, Tulle Sgrd.
Tarok is leaving them behind now.
He's moving fast as
he heads for the final bend.
Tulle Sgrd attacks him.
Tarok, Tulle Sgrd.
The fight is on between
these two horses now.
I've got faith in you, old boy.
Can Tarok keep his lead?
Yes, it looks like it.
But Tulle Sgrd is catching up.
Tarok is in the lead but
Tulle Sgrd is right there.
Tarok, Tulle Sgrd Tarok holds
on as they approach the line.
Victory to Tarok.
The Derby goes to Tarok.
Ahead of Tulle Sgrd.
Talisman Sus manages fourth place.
Derby triumph for Tarok in a
masterpiece of driving, he, Per?
Completely by the book, yes, -
- and my watch says dead on 20,
a new Derby record.
He looks worn out but he is such a
great racer you can't blame him.
Jrn Laursen has got off his sulky
to pat Tarok.
Skive will be celebrating after
last year's disappointment.
Satisfaction for Stald Kima after
years of Derby disappointment.
They've had many good horses
but they never came good here.
Today they've done it.
Tarok has shown his
strength and class.
Jrn, I love you!
I wonder what a hotel would say
if we asked for a cot for Tarok!
I don't like sleeping alone either.
This is our future.

Yes.

- Goodnight.
- Goodnight.
- What's up?
- He can't sleep.

So he doesn't see why we should.

And the Christmas
pixies hop and jump...

- Merry Christmas, Petersen.
- Merry Christmas.
- That's quite some post.
- This is the third sack.

That bloody horse has received
at least 1 500 Christmas cards!

- How did they find the address?
- They didn't even try.
- What does it say?
- "For Tarok, Skive".

Shall I take that sack, Petersen?

Grandma, granddad!

Who have we got here?

My little darlings!

You've woken the
bear now! Come here!

- Is granddad ill?
- Not at all.

Granddad, that's a game for babies.

Ho, ho, ho, here comes
the Christmas post!

Look at all those letters!

It's crazy!

Goodness! All those letters!

Come to grandma!

- You'd think he was a rock star.
- As many people come to see him.
- He's a good horse.
- And driver.
- A good thing someone remembers.
- "The horse won, the driver lost".

Let's hope the driver wins
the world championships, then.

- You don't mean it.
- I don't, but the Americans do.

Tarok is the first Danish horse

ever to be invited to New York.

- Are we going to America?

- But it's really soon.

Are there any more apple doughnuts?

Kiss granddad!

Can you win it?

If you do, you'll be among
the world's best drivers.

I am going to propose
a partnership to dad.

A partnership... he'll never agree.

Why not? It'll secure
his life's work forever.

I can't wait to see
the skyscrapers!

I can't wait to race!

Why is everyone waiting?

What's happened?

- One of the ferries has broken down.

- Typical.

On the first day of the
summer holidays, too!

- How long will it take?

- Four hours at least.

- Can't they do anything?

- No, I am afraid not.

- I might as well take a leak, then.

- He doesn't like to if he's driving.

Who does?

Damn it!

It's Tarok!

It's Tarok!

Look, everyone! Tarok!

Look, it's Tarok!

Come on!

On your way to the world
championships?

- But now we'll miss the plane.

- I doubt SAS will wait for a horse.

Why should you wait?

I love Tarok! Mr. Laursen, will you
write "To Pia from Tarok"?

Take this. I won't make that flight
so treat yourselves to a good meal.

Go on, you deserve it.
It'll be such fun to see you
whip those flashy guys over there!
With disaster in New York,
has Tarok had his day?
We caught up with Jrn Laursen
at Copenhagen Airport.
Jrn Laursen,
Tarok was only sixth!
It was my fault.
Things just didn't work out.
It wasn't Tarok's fault.
But isn't it because you are
an amateur up against the pros?
No comment.
- Are they asleep?
- Yes.
At last Jens says I'd have won
if there hadn't been a re-start.
I don't think I'll be proposing
that partnership after all.
Oh? So this is a wake for our future?
- He'll refuse.
- Not when you start winning again.
A star is born... just think how
so few words can feel so far away.
Jrn, the two of you
are fantastic together.
You were unlucky in the USA,
that's all.
Now let's drink to our future!
I'll show him.
To the future!
What would I do without you?
Tarok is the horse
everyone has come to see.
The beautiful,
intelligent, honest Tarok.
Driven by Jrn Laursen,
Tarok cruises to victory.
But is Tarok
really so popular?
- He's a very beautiful horse.
- Everyone has feelings for him.

Tarok attacks

with 200 metres to go.

Tarok is first and

Jrn Laursen enjoys his triumph.

- Do you bet on him?

- Oh, yes!

- Where will Tarok finish today?

- Fourth will mean the national team.

Tarok attacks.

It's going to be Tarok...

A handsome victory to Tarok.

What more can you ask for?

- I want to ask you something.

- What?

What if we run

Stald Kima as a partnership?

- A partnership?

- Well?

You must admit I have

put Stald Kima on the map.

There you go.

- I'll have to think about it.

- Of course.

See you on Sunday.

Yes...

In the two years

since the US fiasco -

- Tarok's winnings have passed
the 2 million kroner mark.

He is the biggest winner in the
history of Danish harness racing.

Is it down to Jrn Laursen? Despite
the US fiasco he is still the driver.

Our success is down

to hard work and good luck.

The hard work consists of running

Stald Kima on my own.

I'll go on till I drop.

And the good luck is that

this fellow has kept on going.

Tarok could race abroad -

- and win millions more.

It would be tempting

if money was all that mattered.

The enthusiasm that greets us at home
is worth far more than money.
Thank you, Karl Laursen.
He cut us down on live TV!
Stald Kima will die with him.
That's been his plan all along.
All along.
Right? It's been his plan all along.
I can see that,
but I'm afraid we can't do that.
So there's nothing you can do.
Goodbye.
That was the bank.
They won't roll our overdraft over
without everything we own as surety.
The house as well?
Yes. The crisis, they say.
We've never missed a payment.
Their headquarters
in Copenhagen insist.
They have no right.
What do they know about us?
In Skive?
Copenhageners...
We won't let them dictate to us.
We'll shut up shop instead.
Come here...
You make millions for him,
while we have to shut up shop.
I promise you, Jrn Laursen, that
I will make my dream come true.
And I promise you, Vagn Laursen, -
- that I'll make my dream
come true.
The Prix d'Amerique!
What has that got to do with Tarok?
No Scandinavian-born horse has
ever placed well in that race.
If I am fifth we'll
be in the prizes.
The world's most
prestigious harness race.
It would be a sensation.
It would mean everything to Ingelise

and I when we start our stables.
You want to start a new stables?
You haven't a chance in that field.
And can Tarok last the course?
It's not till January.
Plenty of time for training.
Don't expect to train
any of my horses.
Though you can choose one
to start with.
If I'm successful with Tarok
I won't need one.
I am selling Tarok.
- You can't do that.
- I can do whatever I like.
And he can earn
the same money as a stud.
I am negotiating with
the breeding association.
They've already offered
half a million.
It would spare me all
the trouble with the mares.
We have given up everything
for Stald Kima.
Doesn't it count for anything now
we finally have a top horse?
I never asked you to.
But now I am asking you to help me
and mine to build a future.
I haven't got it in me to help you
build your future too, Jrn.
I am no longer a young man.
Every time I look at that painting
I hope the hare gets away.
Once the eagle spots its prey
it doesn't let up.
The same goes
if one has a goal in life.
That's how I have always lived.
Without any help from others.
Apart from your own flesh and blood.
I can't help you, Jrn.
You have never given us a choice

and you know it.

Goodbye, father. We won't
be seeing each other on Sunday.

- Hello?

- I am in the dining room.

Hello. Have you seen the way
the Tarok Club is growing?

It is amazing.

Yes.

Elisabeth, you once said
that if Jrn and I ran into
difficulties I should come to you.

Nobody's ever given me anything.

I have fought for it all.

You were given your children.

When I was a boy every penny I earned
went towards keeping the family.

- Jrn has always helped us.

- It's his duty, just as it was mine.

Duty? Karl, it's his love.

Why should my children be given help?

Because they are your children.

They came to our rescue, too.

- You will take away their pride.

- Your own pride is destroying you.

I don't understand

how he can betray Stald Kima.

He wants to make a life of his own
and his own dream.

Who was it who once said "Courage
and action creates miracles"?

- He has courage. Now help him.

- No good will come of it.

I don't want to lose my children
and grandchildren.

- Lose your grandchildren?

- They will hate us for ever.

- Why didn't you give him a fight?

- Only his driver can do that.

There is 12 metres of ascent
on the French track.

The French horses know it well.

But it has defeated

almost all the foreigners.

He's been training on
these inclines all his life.s
Tomorrow we'll take him
onto the hills again. He is ready.
Very well.
Thank you, dad.
I heard you and Vagn
in the stables that time.
Drive for your dream,
and Vagn's.
Hippodrome De Paris,
Vincennes
- Dad, let's find Ulf Thorsen.
- Easy, now.
Come on.
Good day...
What the hell is he doing in there?
Eight... one more?
Well?
- Only eight put up their hands.
- Damn. It's not enough.
Their left hands.
Nine voted "yes" with their right.
So we're in.
This course is impossible.
It's all ups and downs.
The final 200 metres rises so sharply
that it breaks most horses.
Just take it easy. What matters
to us is not coming last.
Then at least we won't be a fiasco.
Now we just have to get it over with.
Out here it's the law of the jungle.
It's no kid's race.
It's just like the way
the Frogs drive their cars.
You have to be first,
no holds barred.
We are strong
but we mustn't take the lead.
We will have to try
to take them from behind.
Seventeen of the best horses
in the world.

The absolute elite
among professional drivers.
Getting this far
is a huge victory.
Jrn, this is your dream.
Catch it!
Yes...
Good luck.
Thank you.
Good luck to you, too.
40, 000 spectators
waiting for only one thing:
The Prix d'Amerique. The greatest,
hardest harness race in the world.
I have never seen so many
Stars and Stripes at once.
The race started in 1920 as
a homage to the US war effort.
It's the biggest horse race of all.
Eighteen of the strongest horses in
the world are doing battle today.
The race is being televised in
three continents and 30 countries.
Millions are watching.
It's fantastic.
So now it's up to the two of you.
Even a place among the top five -
- would make Danish
harness racing history.
- Get on with it will you!
- Calm down, grandma!
Jrn Laursen and Tarok have come to
Paris to make Scandinavian history.
- Don't get your hopes up.
- Who are we?
We are white, we are yellow,
We're in nobody's shadow
Can "the Danish flag on four legs"
make all Denmark proud?
Easy, easy...
The horses are
under starter's orders.
They're off! They're off!
They're off!

The Prix d'Amerique has started!
The race is on.
Jrn Laursen is off to a good
start at the back of the field.
He is tucked in
behind the world champion.
He will be able to follow
when the champion attacks.
- Easy!
- The favourite is in the lead.
Tarok is still just
behind Ulf Thorsen.
Sensible of Jrn Laursen
to hold back at first.
He must deploy
his forces perfectly.
Go on, Jrn! Go on, go on, go on!
Perhaps Tarok is too far back now.
He'll have to take action soon
to stay in the running.
The world champion, Uffe Thorsen,
is unexpectedly passive.
Let's hope he attacks, taking
Jrn Laursen and Tarok with him.
It isn't looking good. Jrn Laursen
and Tarok are boxed in.
The Norwegian seems to be
showing signs of weakness.
- Pull out damn you!
- Granny! Such language!
Ulf! Get that horse moving
so we can get out of here!
How terrible for Jrn Laursen!
There is nothing he can do.
- It's not going to happen.
- Have faith!
They are completely boxed in.
It looks hopeless.
Pull out before the climb!
Jrn Laursen tries to cut inside,
will it work? But no.
Come on, will you!
Uffe Thorsen
can't keep up the pace.

They're dropping farther back.
We'll take them on the climb.
- Go on!
- Move, you bloody Norwegian!
Other teams are passing them.
It's your last chance, my boy.
- Jrn Laursen accelerates.
- Take them!
But he gets boxed in again.
His attack failed.
Such a shame for the Dane!
Damn!
Perhaps he should not
have started so cautiously.
- Go, daddy, go!
- Go for it.
The battle is lost.
Tarok is humiliated again.
Or could he still make a move?
But the leaders are galloping!
The field is breaking up.
- There's a gap.
- Go!
Move it, old boy!
Go on!
Jrn Laursen has found a gap.
Tarok makes his move.
It's looking good.
He has broken out of the box.
Tarok is still moving up the field.
The dreaded hill is approaching.
- Off you go!
- Here comes the hill.
Jrn Laursen pulls out.
Will the Danish flag on four legs
be crushed on the hill?
Just don't bolt!
- Go, Jrn!
- Remember our training!
Tarok is shooting ahead.
He is in seventh place now.
Hanne, get down off the sofa!
Tarok accelerates
up the dreaded hill.

- Tarok is close to sixth place.
- Go for it!
Go, damn you!
- Can he win 6th place?
- Now is the moment!
Now for the final 200 metres.
Tarok moves up to fifth place.
Can Tarok keep up this pace?
- Onward!
- Can he keep it up?
Can Tarok defend his fifth place?
Now he's fighting for fourth place.
Go, Tarok, go!
They are going like the clappers.
Will Tarok be fourth?
Yes! Tarok comes fourth!
Fourth in the toughest
harness race in the world!
It's fantastic! A world sensation!
Tarok covered
the final 200 metres -
- faster than any other horse in
the history of the Prix d'Amerique.
Tarok is the best foreign horse
and he is in the prizes.
Jrn Laursen rode
like a world-class pro.
Thank you, Karl.
You are the best granny ever.
You said. It was just as you said.
I should just have listened to you.
Just listened to you.
Jrn?
Will you hold him?
That last 200 metres, right?
I have never seen anything like it.
Tarok was definitely the strongest
horse in the whole field.
Congratulations.
Good luck with your new stable.
It'd be an honour to drive for you.
A year later
Has he eaten anything?
No. He hasn't touched a thing.

I'll take him for a walk.
It'll do him good.
I'll finish off in here.
Good evening, here is the news
on this Friday, 30 January.
A death.
The Danish flag
on four legs is dead.
Tarok has succumbed to the
dreaded Baron Gruff virus, -
- a deadly intestinal disease.
Tarok has lost his final race.
He will rest well here.
We'll always be able to see him
from across the fields.
Things will never be the same again.
No.
Not for them, either,
it would seem.
Karl and Elisabeth
are buried beside Tarok.
Stald Kima died with them.
Jrn and Ingelise
closed their car dealership
and started their own stables.