I was 10 when my father died



Karen Blixen came from two well-to-do bourgeoisie families that had married into Danish nobility, and her family background played a decisive role in her own life and in her writings. Her mother's family came from Copenhagen merchants, but there were various officers and landed proprietors on her father's side.



Wilhelm and Ingeborg Dinesen, Karen Blixen's parents, on the veranda in front of their estate Rungstedlund, north of Copenhagen, ca. 1888. They are seen here together with their three daughters, Inger (called Ea), Karen (called Tanne), and Ellen (called Elle).

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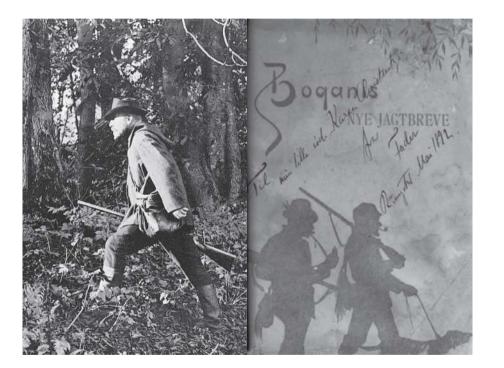
Wilhelm Dinesen's mother was the sister of Countess Krag-Juel-Vind-Frijs of Frijsenborg Castle in Jutland. In his early youth, Karen Blixen's father moved with ease in this family circle. During an uncertain phase in her youth, Karen Blixen herself felt irresistibly drawn toward the almost princely life at Frijsenborg, where she gained first-hand familiarity with an environment that very few authors have been able to describe from within.



ン。彼女の2人の弟、トマスとアナスはそ

Like his father, Wilhelm Dinesen participated in the Danish war against Prussia in 1864, and the feeling of defeat that gripped the entire nation after the loss of Southern Jutland never entirely disappeared. In 1895, he took his own life, only 49 years old, and left the responsibility for raising five children to his widow and her female relatives at nearby Folehavegaard. The picture here was taken the year after her father's death. Karen is on the left. Her two brothers, Thomas and Anders, were born, respectively, in 1892 and 1894.

In the late 1870s, Karen Blixen's father volunteered for the Russo-Turkish War (on the Turkish side) without ever seriously coming under fire. Here, he is seen in an 'Oriental' costume. The year is 1878. After returning home, he lived the life of a manor owner and entered into politics as a member of parliament, an occupation that caused him many disappointments.



There were powerful intellectual interests in her mother's family. Karen Blixen's grandfather, Chamberlain A.W. Dinesen, and her father were authors, albeit writing under pseudonyms as a rule. Thus, Wilhelm Dinesen's still very much read *Letters from the Hunt* and *New Letters from the Hunt* were published under the name Boganis (1889-92). Here is the first edition of *New Letters from the Hunt* with a dedication to his daughter Karen. Above, you can see Wilhelm Dinesen out on a hunt. The picture was taken a few years before his death.