

The Thief Tyven

by Ulrik Langen



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The Golden Horns were stolen in 1802 and melted down. But who was the man who, out of pure greed, cynically destroyed this unique relic of the past?

His name was Niels Heydenreich, and he was the son of an alcoholic parish clerk in Jutland. The family's lot worsened after his parents got divorced: his mother was heavily in debt, and had to take her children and move to another part of the country. Trying to save his family, Niels began to print fake banknotes, but was caught and thrown into jail in Christianshavn, a district of Copenhagen. Here he taught himself to work with gold, and after being released he set up shop as a goldsmith, but once again things began to go wrong for him.

Ulrik Langen's *The Thief* is a gripping tale of gold, pawnbrokers, prisons, counterfeiters, inventors, honour, self-obsession and much more. Depicting the most famous thief in Danish history, it traces a unique story set during Copenhagen's Golden Age, written by one of Denmark's best-known, most authoritative and popular contemporary historians.

Ulrik Langen, PhD, is a professor of history at the University of Copenhagen. His books include *Shadows of the Revolution: French Emigrants and Other Peoples in Copenhagen, 1789–1914* (*Revolutionens skygger: Franske emigranter og andre folk i København, 1789–1914*) (2005), which was awarded the History Book of the Year prize.

In 2010 he received, in collaboration with Peter Henningsen, the 2010 History Book of the Year prize for *The Dog-Killer of Vimmelskiftet*, and *Other Stories from Eighteenth-Century Copenhagen* (*Hundemordet*

i Vimmelskiftet – og andre fortællinger fra 1700-tallets København) (2010). Ulrik Langen is also well known for hosting 'The History Quiz' for The Danish National TV and in 2012 he worked as a consultant on the hugely successful Oscar and Golden Globe nominated movie *A Royal Affair* (2012) which was sold to almost 80 countries.