

CHAPTER 30

Blomkvist entered the prestigious Fiskargatan 9, wondering if he would find Salander. The residents' list yielded no clues, leaving him to navigate the upper floors, eventually stopping at the top floor where a familiar name—V. Kulla—pricked his memory. This connection to Salander, with its nod to Pippi Longstocking's Villa Villekulla, brought a smile to his face. After ringing the doorbell with no response, he unlocked the door himself, triggering Salander's burglar alarm.

Unbeknownst to him, Salander was outside Örebro when she received the alert on her phone. The alarm, designed solely for her personal protection, indicated that someone had entered her apartment. Salander relished the anticipation as she monitored the intruder through her surveillance camera, her amusement growing as she recognized Blomkvist. He hesitated in panic, trying to guess the alarm code. In a stroke of luck, he recalled the code corresponding to his online handle, WASP, inputting 9277 just before the impending paint bomb was to explode. Surprisingly, the alarm deactivated, baffling Salander.

Though initially concerned about Blomkvist's arrival, she quickly accepted it, reasoning he wouldn't betray her. Meanwhile, at Millennium's office, Eriksson met Paolo Roberto, who shared insights about a fighter named Ronald Niedermann—whose description matched the giant responsible for Miriam Wu's kidnapping. Drawn from an old boxing picture, they learned he was untrainable yet deceptively powerful, hindered by a rare condition rendering him incapable of feeling pain. Their investigation connected Niedermann to a haunting past intertwined with Salander's life.

As Blomkvist explored Salander's lavish yet empty apartment, he unearthed a DVD depicting her horrific experiences with Bjurman, piecing together a dark history involving her enemies. Motivated by her suffering and the urgency of rescuing her friend Wu, he gathered crucial documents while wrestling with his ethical obligations, pondering how much to disclose to the police regarding his findings about Zalachenko, Salander's father, and the murders surrounding this web of intrigue.

The stakes escalated, with Salander on an emotional edge, hunting for those who had caused her friends such pain. Both characters were on a collision course, each driven by a quest for justice, facing formidable foes in their paths. The narrative builds tension, making it evident that Salander's past trauma would fuel her resolve as she prepared to confront her father and his accomplices. The chapter ends with Salander meticulously preparing for the confrontation, a symbol of her journey towards empowerment amidst shadowy legacies and brutal realities.