

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of *The Girl Who Played with Fire* follows Lisbeth Salander as she begins her day with a sense of purpose. Waking early, she prepares for the day by showering and renting a dune buggy. After paying the deposit, she stops for breakfast and, while eating, her mind wanders to Fermat's theorem, a mathematical puzzle that preoccupies her thoughts. It's during this time that Dr. Richard Forbes, a well-dressed man, enters the restaurant, catching Salander's attention. She observes him from a distance, sensing that his behavior is strange, as he moves around the area aimlessly, making her wonder what his true intentions might be.

Salander follows Dr. Forbes through the streets of St. George's, maintaining a discreet distance while tracking his every move. After hours of watching him and noting his seemingly random activity, she witnesses him visiting a restaurant. While there, she sees him drinking Coca-Cola and looking out over the harbor, which raises further suspicions. Salander's thoughts turn to his activities on the island of Grenada, speculating that while he appears busy, he may have ulterior motives. Her curiosity grows when she receives several encrypted emails, sent by her acquaintance Plague and his associate Bilbo, which provide her with a file containing important information about Forbes, prompting her to delve deeper into his past.

As Salander sifts through the file, she uncovers photographs and documents revealing Dr. Richard Forbes as a respected figure in his church, but one whose public persona has been marred by controversy. She learns that Forbes has been previously arrested for serious crimes such as aggravated bodily harm and embezzlement, though he was acquitted. This discovery casts a shadow over his character, as Salander notes that he is financially dependent on his wife, Geraldine. She grows increasingly suspicious of his true intentions, pondering whether his actions are driven by financial instability or a more sinister motive. With her investigation into Forbes taking on greater urgency,

Salander begins to question the morality of the man she is watching and how his past might tie into his current behavior.

As the day progresses, Salander's attention is momentarily diverted when an impending storm, named Matilda, causes the weather to worsen. Despite warnings to stay inside, she decides to check on a local boy named George Bland, who lives in a dilapidated shack. The wind picks up rapidly, and she acts quickly to bring George to safety before the storm escalates. The urgency of the situation doesn't dampen Salander's focus on her mission; instead, it highlights her determination to act in the face of danger. Once George is safe, she is pulled back into the tension surrounding Dr. Forbes and his wife, as she continues her covert observation of their lives.

The storm intensifies, wreaking havoc across the area, but it also leads Salander to a shocking revelation. She and George witness Dr. Forbes physically assaulting his wife, Geraldine, an encounter that sparks a moment of intervention. Salander cannot stand by as Forbes's violent behavior escalates, and she steps in to protect Geraldine, using her quick thinking to get her to safety. During the struggle, Salander leaves Forbes behind, his fate uncertain, but Geraldine is safe and unharmed. The chapter concludes with the aftermath of the storm, where Salander's actions come into focus. While Geraldine survives, Richard Forbes's death is revealed, leaving many questions about the extent of Salander's involvement. The chapter ends ambiguously, with Salander's actions unclear, adding to the mystery surrounding her motives and the consequences of her intervention. This event sets the stage for a deeper exploration of her character and the complexity of her actions, all while maintaining a sense of suspense and unpredictability.