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Opening Extract from...

The Man Who Watched Women

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As the taxi turned into Tolléns väg just before seven thirty in the evening, Richard Granlund didn't think his day could get much worse. Four days in Munich and the surrounding area. A sales trip. The Germans worked more or less as usual throughout July. Client meetings from morning till night. Factories, conference rooms and countless cups of coffee. He was tired, but contented. Conveyor belt systems might not be the sexiest things in the world – his work seldom aroused curiosity and was never the most obvious topic of conversation around the dinner table or with friends – but they sold well. The conveyor belts. They sold really well.

The plane from Munich had been due to take off at 9.05 a.m. He would be in Stockholm at twenty past eleven. Call in at the office and let them know how he'd got on. Home around one. Lunch with Katharina, then they would spend the rest of the afternoon in the garden. That was the plan.

Until he'd found out that the flight to Arlanda had been cancelled. He'd joined the queue for Lufthansa customer services and was rebooked on the 13.05 flight instead. Another four hours at Munich International. He wasn't exactly thrilled at the prospect. With a resigned sigh he dug out his phone and texted Katharina. She would have to have lunch without him, but hopefully they would still be able to spend a few hours working in the garden. What was the weather like? Perhaps a cocktail on the patio this evening? He could pick up something in the airport now he had plenty of time.

Katharina answered right away. Shame about the delay. She was missing him. The weather in Stockholm was fantastic, so cocktails later sounded like a great idea. Surprise me. Love you.

Richard went to one of the shops that was still advertising duty-free, although he was convinced this was no longer relevant

to the vast majority of travellers. He found the shelf of ready-mixed cocktails and picked up a bottle he recognised from the TV ads – Mojito Classic.

On his way to the newsagent's kiosk he checked his flight on the departures board. Gate 26. He reckoned it would take him about ten minutes to get there.

Richard sat down with a cup of coffee and a sandwich as he leafed through his newly purchased issue of *Garden Illustrated*. The minutes crawled by. He did a little window shopping, bought another magazine, one about gadgets this time, then went to a different café and drank a bottle of mineral water. After a visit to the toilet, it was time to head for the gate at long last. There he was met by the next surprise. The 13.05 flight was delayed. New boarding time: 13.40. Estimated departure time: 14.00. Richard took out his phone again. Informed Katharina of the latest delay and expressed his frustration with air travel in general and Lufthansa in particular. He found an empty seat and sat down. He didn't get a reply to his text.

He rang her.

No one answered.

Perhaps she had found someone to have lunch with in town. He put his phone away and closed his eyes. There was no point in getting worked up about the situation; there wasn't much he could do about it anyway.

At quarter to two the young woman on the desk welcomed them on board and apologised for the delay. When they were settled on the plane and the cabin crew had gone through the routine safety procedures, which no one bothered to listen to, the captain spoke to them. One of the lights on the dashboard was showing a fault. There was probably something wrong with the light itself, but they couldn't take any chances. A technician was on the way to check it. The captain apologised and asked for their cooperation. The inside of the plane quickly grew warm. Richard could feel his willingness to cooperate and his still relatively good mood seeping away at exactly the same rate as his shirt grew wetter and wetter on his back and under his arms. The captain spoke again. Good news: the error had been rectified. Not such good news: they had now missed their slot, and there were currently nine planes due to

take off before them, but as soon as it was their turn, they would begin their flight to Stockholm. He apologised.

They landed at Arlanda at 17.20.

Two hours and ten minutes late.

Or six hours. Depending on your point of view.

On his way to the baggage claim area, Richard rang home again. No reply. He tried Katharina's mobile. Her voicemail kicked in after five rings. She was probably out in the garden, and couldn't hear the phone. Richard reached the huge hall containing the luggage carousels. According to the monitor above number 3, the bags from flight LH2416 would be delivered in eight minutes.

It took twelve minutes.

And it was another fifteen minutes before Richard realised that his suitcase wasn't there.

Another wait in another queue to report the missing case at Lufthansa's service desk. After handing over his luggage receipt, his address and as good a description as he could manage of his suitcase, Richard emerged into the arrivals hall and went to find a taxi. The heat struck him with a physical force as he walked out through the revolving doors. It really was summer. They would have a lovely evening. He could feel his good humour returning slightly at the thought of Mojitos on the patio in the evening sun. He joined the queue for Taxi Stockholm, Kurir or 020. As they pulled away, the driver informed him that as far as the traffic was concerned, it was hell in Stockholm today. Sheer hell. At that moment he slowed down to just below fifty kilometres per hour as they joined the seemingly endless queue of cars heading south on the E4.

So by the time the taxi finally turned into Tolléns väg, Richard Granlund didn't think his day could get much worse.

He paid with his credit card and walked up to the house through the fragrant, beautifully tended garden. He put down his briefcase and plastic bag just inside the door.

'Hello!'

No answer. Richard took off his shoes and went into the kitchen. He glanced out of the window to see if Katharina was in the garden, but there was no sign of her. The kitchen was empty too. No note where it would have been if she'd left him one. Richard took out his phone and checked it. No missed calls or

text messages. The house was hot and stuffy; the sun was shining directly on the windows, and Katharina had not lowered the awnings. Richard unlocked the patio door and opened it wide. Then he went upstairs. He would shower and change. He felt dirty and sweaty, right down to his underpants. He pulled off his tie and started to unbutton his shirt as he walked up the stairs, but stopped in mid-movement when he reached the bedroom. Katharina was lying on the bed. That was the first thing he noticed. Then he realised three things in quick succession.

She was lying on her stomach.

She was tied up.

She was dead.