

The reporter and the hacker

The first book in Stieg Larsson's dark-hearted Millennium Trilogy crime series, "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo," is perfect summer reading for its ability to pull you in and make you think of nothing else for a few days. Set in Sweden, it follows Mikael Blomkvist, an investigative journalist recently convicted of libeling a wealthy financier. Disappointed with himself and the results of the trial, Blomkvist leaves his post as editor of Millennium magazine to recuperate. Not long afterward, he is contacted by Henrik Vanger, a famous Swedish industrialist, to investigate the disappearance of his beloved niece more than 40 years ago. While Blomkvist broods over his career

and the case of the missing girl, we are introduced to his future research assistant, Lisbeth Salander, a brilliant, troubled 24-year-old hacker and private investigator for a security firm.

With its endless details and connections, the novel teeters on information overload. However, Larsson manages to hold all the pieces together. Along with the central mystery, the plot neatly threads in components of corporate crime, corruption and sexual violence. Even in the book's most banal moments, you can sense the dark forces lying in wait. And when they do rear their ugly heads, they are darker and more sinister than you could have imagined.

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