

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest Study Guide

**The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg
Larsson**

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Plot Summary

Larsson's *The Girl Who Kicked The Hornet's Nest* is the third book in a trilogy. As such, the story picks up the day after the ending of *The Girl Who Played With Fire*. The book openly celebrates strong women, often referred to as warriors.

The story picks up just after Salander has defended herself against Alexander Zalachenko, her father. Zalachenko had shot Salander in the head numerous times. Miraculously, Salander was able to return the attack with an axe. Zalachenko was struck in the head and several other places although none of the wounds was fatal.

Zalachenko, a former Russian spy turned gangster, attempts to appear as a normal citizen and has even changed his legal identity to Karl Axel Bodin. However, the change in identity does little to fool anyone who has any knowledge whatsoever of Zalachenko and his bloodied past.

Dr. Jonasson treats Salander as he would any other patient. Jonasson has never performed such a delicate brain surgery before and must test his skills in an entirely new way. Even with the assistance of Ellis, Jonasson performs almost miraculously and saves the girl's life. Zalachenko also receives the best possible care despite his history of being a murderer, spy, and the one to almost kill his own daughter.

Mikael Blomkvist is somewhat of a reluctant hero. Blomkvist is on a quest to find out the truth about Salander and prove to the world that the young woman is not only innocent of the crimes she is accused of committing, she is also a victim.

Blomkvist has developed a protective attitude over Salander to the point of refusing to give certain information to the police. Blomkvist works tirelessly to prove Salander's innocence. Blomkvist has support at Millennium, including his lover, Erika Berger. Blomkvist also engages the help of his sister, Annika Giannini, an advokat.

Zalachenko realizes that his recovery is going to take much longer than he had expected. Still, Zalachenko is not one to rest on his laurels. Even while he is recuperating in the intensive care unit, Zalachenko is planning his defense and the disappearance and/or demise of Salander.

Unfortunately for Zalachenko, his former employer, the Section, has no plans to save him this time. Gullberg, the former director of S apo's secret division, kills Zalachenko before turning the gun on himself.

During the majority of the story Salander is in the hospital recovering from the gunshot wounds. Salander must learn to rely on Blomkvist, Jonasson, the police and Giannini, at least in part, if she is going to be proven innocent of the triple murder in Stockholm.



Blomkvist's research uncovers the heinous crimes committed by officials in the Section, a special division of the police force. The Section is largely responsible for the crimes committed against Salander.

While Blomkvist and Team Salander - including the police, Figuerola and others - wage a war on Salander's behalf, Salander writes her autobiography, a tome that will serve to have many people arrested and to share her fantastical story with the courts and perhaps, the public.

After a great deal of undercover work exposing the Section, Salander is set free.



Part 1, Chapters 1-4

Part 1, Chapters 1-4 Summary

PART I, INTERMEZZO IN A CORRIDOR, 8 - 12.iv

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg Larsson starts off by discussing the fact that 600 women dressed as men and fought during the American Civil War despite the fact that it was often ignored by history and the popular media.

"Historians have often struggled to deal with women who do not respect gender distinctions, and nowhere is that distinction more sharply drawn than in the question of armed combat." (Part 1, Front Matter)

However, women have acted as soldiers from the beginning of time, from Boudicca to Joan of Arc. Larsson asks that those women be acknowledged.

CHAPTER 1

Friday, 8.iv

Larsson's The Girl Who Kicked The Hornet's Nest is the third book in a trilogy. As such, the story picks up the day after the ending of The Girl Who Played With Fire.

Dr. Jonasson is awakened at 1:30 in the morning with the news that a rescue helicopter is arriving with two patients on board. Both patients have been shot. One, a young woman, has life threatening injuries, including a bullet to the brain. The doctor, who is on call at A. & E. at Sahlgrenska hospital located in Göteborg, had already had a difficult night having tended to four car accident victims who had been DOA.

The two patients arrive at the hospital. Upon examination, Jonasson is amazed that the young woman is alive. Jonasson is worried because he has never operated on a case such as this. The bullet had entered the brain but had not exited. Jonasson asks the nurse to contact a friend and colleague, Frank Ellis, who happens to be in the area after giving a lecture on brain surgery.

The reader will soon learn that the patients are Lisbeth Salander, and her father, Alexander Zalachenko, aka Karl Axel Bodin. Despite the fact that the pair is father and daughter, Zalachenko is the one who had attempted to kill Lisbeth. Blomkvist had not known about the farm until twelve hours previous. It is Blomkvist who had found Lisbeth Salander on the kitchen floor of the farmhouse, bullet in her brain. Blomkvist had used duct tape on Salander's head before convincing Inspector Paulsson that the young woman had to be air lifted to the hospital, despite the fact that she was a triple murderer. Blomkvist must work hard to keep control of his anger at Paulsson who had previously ignored all of his warnings about Zalachenko.



Blomkvist makes a grave error by underestimating Paulsson's stupidity and arrogance. Blomkvist tells Paulsson about Ronald Niedermann, the man who had committed the murders in Stockholm. Paulsson takes down the information about Ronald Niedermann's whereabouts but does not heed Blomkvist's warnings about the man's ability to be dangerous and the fact that he suffers from congenital analgesia, which means that the man feels no pain and is therefore even more dangerous. Paulsson does not pay attention to Blomkvist and sends two men out to capture Niedermann. As a result, one man is killed; the other is savagely beaten.

Blomkvist continues to argue with Paulsson until he manages to get in touch with Inspector Bublanski, who in turn calls in Modig and Blomberg. The partners will take over until the arrival of Criminal Inspector Marcus Erlander who serves in the Violent Crimes Division of the Göteborg police. Erlander speaks with Blomkvist about the events of the evening. The reader learns that Blomkvist had been arrested for insulting an officer, resisting arrest, and being in possession of an illegal weapon. Erlander asks Blomkvist about his comments saying that Paulsson is an Olympic-class idiot.

Blomkvist says: "I will dispute that. I called him an imbecile and an incompetent fool. Under the circumstances neither of these epithets could be considered wide of the mark." (Chap. 1, p. 14)

Blomkvist goes on to explain the entire situation to Erlander, including the fact that Niedermann is the killer and that he works for Zalachenko, aka Karl Axel Bodin.

Jonasson finishes the operation. It was a three hour surgery and seems to have been a success. Ellis congratulates Jonasson on his work.

Annika Giannini wakes early. As she is watching the morning news, she sees the report about Salander and Niedermann. Giannini is immediately alarmed because her brother, Mikael Blomkvist, had gone after the murderers and now he could not be reached.

Blomkvist goes with Erlander to review the scene at the farmhouse. Both men wonder how Salander could have survived being shot, probably buried alive, and have returned to put an axe in her father's skull.

CHAPTER 2:

Friday, 8.iv

Modig and Holmberg are sent to the Göteborg Central Station. Shortly after they arrive, Bublanski calls to give new instructions. They should abort their plans and go to police headquarters on Ernst Fontells Plats. The headquarters is located in Western Götaland and is the seat of the County Criminal Police.

The partners meet up with Blomkvist and Erlander and are filled in on the known details of the case. When asked, Blomkvist refuses to give up certain information about Salander. Blomkvist is determined to protect Salander's innocence. The plot behind the attempted murder is unclear, although it is believed that Salander's guardian, Bjurman,



had hired Zalachenko to kill Salander. It is also known that Bjurman had molested Salander. Blomkvist bursts out laughing when he learns that Salander's revenge on her guardian was to give him an amateurish tattoo on his abdomen. The tattoo reads: "I am a sadistic pig, a pervert and a rapist." (Chap. 2, p. 19)

Richard Ekström is in charge of the preliminary investigation in the Salander case. Ekström arranges a meeting with team leader Bublanski to discuss the case. Ekström is completely convinced that Salander is a victim, not a murderer. Ekström disagrees. Bublanski makes it clear that he will not permit Salander to continue to undergo abuse and have her rights violated as they have been since she was a small child.

Upon Bublanski's orders, Andersson arrives at Gunnar Björck's summer house in Smådalarö. Bublanski tells Andersson that there must be a mistake since he is also a policeman. Andersson assures Björck, who is the assistant chief of the Immigration Division of the Security Police, that there is no mistake. Bublanski has some questions that need answers.

Blomkvist is released and checks into a hotel. Just before going to bed, he calls his sister, Advokat Annika Giannini. Blomkvist fills Giannini in on the events of the past evening. Giannini insists once more that Salander needs a criminal lawyer. Blomkvist agrees but says that Salander's only goal is to kill Zalachenko. After hanging up with his sister, Blomkvist calls his lover, Erika Berger, who is also the editor-in-chief of Millennium magazine. Blomkvist is dismayed to learn that Erika is going to go to work at Svenska Morgon-Posten, new magazine published by a news conglomerate with a reputation of being hostile toward women. Blomkvist's next step is to contact Salander's old boss to ensure that he is still willing to support the woman despite her troubles.

At police headquarters, Modig urges the police to give Blomkvist the benefit of the doubt.

"I would urge you to wait and see. Blomkvist has put the pieces of this puzzle together all by himself; he's way ahead of us on the police force. It will be to our advantage to stay on good terms with him and ensure his cooperation, rather than unleash him to condemn the entire police force in his magazine and elsewhere in the media." (Chap. 2, p. 27)

It is agreed to wait and see what Blomkvist can come up with regarding the case.

CHAPTER 3

Friday, 8.iv - Saturday, 9.iv

Inspectors Modig and Erlander visit Zalachenko in his hospital room. Surprisingly, Zalachenko is awake despite the grueling surgery to repair the axe wounds to his head and other parts of his body. Zalachenko's jaw had to be realigned and put into place using titanium screws. Zalachenko's cheekbone had also been crushed and he had lost a great deal of the flesh on his face. Needless to say, Zalachenko is in a great deal of pain when the police arrive to speak with him about Niedermann.



Modig addresses Zalachenko by name. Zalachenko becomes angry and says that his name is Karl Axel Bodin. Modig says she has read the file from Säpo and knows Zalachenko's history. Zalachenko counters by saying that it was a long time ago.

Modig says she wants to talk about Niedermann, despite Zalachenko's insistence on discussing the fact that his daughter had tried to kill him.

The conversation consists of Zalachenko's desire to press charges for the attempted murder and Modig's fairly unsuccessful questioning of Zalachenko regarding Niedermann.

Modig, frustrated, says:

"I'm beginning to understand why she felt an uncontrollable urge to slam an axe into your head." (Chap. 3, p. 38)

Salander wakes and seems to have her senses about her. Salander asks Jonasson about her father. Jonasson orders Salander to rest.

Blomkvist begins to write Salander's story. Blomkvist is stunned when he learns about Erika's promotion to editor-in-chief.

CHAPTER 4

Saturday, 9.iv - Sunday, 10.iv

Prosecutor Fransson finishes her deliberations. It is Saturday afternoon. Fransson considers the evidence in front of her. The burial ground in the Nykvarn woods is a complete mess; The Violent Crimes Division members have racked up an incredible amount of overtime ever since it was learned that Paolo Roberto had fought with Niedermann at the warehouse. The police are faced with at least three murders, arson, and the kidnapping and assault of Miriam Wu.

So far, Carl Magnus Lundin, a member of the Svavelsjö Motorcycle Club, is the main suspect. Lundin, who has been in the hospital with a broken foot and a wired jaw, has been formally charged in a hearing regarding his connection to Nykvarn. The police discover that Lundin's cousin is the owner of the warehouse. Lundin's connection to Sonny Nieminen is questioned. Police suspect Nieminen of being involved with the crimes but have no proof. The police are stunned by the fact that a girl of Salander's size could do so much damage to the two men.

Nieminen wakes up in a stupor. He is suddenly filled with rage over the incident at the farm house. He does not understand how Salander was able to take him down, seemingly without effort. Nieminen hates Salander and blames Niedermann.

Zalachenko is in a great deal of pain. Jonasson says that the injuries are no longer life threatening but Zalachenko's advanced age will cause the man to require extra care. Erlander and Holmberg visit with more questions. Zalachenko continues to insist that he



is the victim. As soon as he is able, Zalachenko calls his lawyer, a man reportedly associated with the Yugoslavian mafia. The only thing Zalachenko cares about is that the man has a solid win record. The lawyer says that he is not a criminal attorney but will arrange for someone to represent Zalachenko.

Zalachenko's next visitor is Jonas Sandberg, who works for Swedish Internal Security. Zalachenko says he doubts Sandberg's credentials but is willing to accept the help. Sandberg says he will do whatever needs to be done. Zalachenko says that Salander needs to disappear.

Modig and Bublanski meet to discuss the case. Both suspect that Zalachenko has some high powered support behind him which would make sense if he was a Russian spy who had been granted political asylum. Modig asks to read the report from Säpo but it was taken from Bublanski who never received a copy. Both cops are suspicious. Hours were spent discussing the situation. Modig plans to go to visit Salander the next day.

Part 1, Chapters 1-4 Analysis

As the third story in Larsson's trilogy, *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* picks up after the end of the second novel, *The Girl Who Played With Fire*. As the story picks in the last third, it is somewhat difficult to understand the background information and politics involved in the case of Lisbeth Salander. However, the case at hand is quite clear. Salander has attempted to kill Alexander Zalachenko, her father. Zalachenko, a former Russian spy turned gangster, attempts to appear as a normal citizen and has even changed his legal identity to Karl Axel Bodin. However, the change in identity does little to fool anyone who has any knowledge whatsoever of Zalachenko and his bloodied past.

Dr. Jonasson honors his Hippocratic Oath and treats Salander as he would any other patient. In fact, Salander's story only makes the case more interesting. Zalachenko also receives the best possible care despite his history of being a murderer, spy, and the one to almost kill his own daughter.

Mikael Blomkvist is somewhat of a reluctant hero. Blomkvist is on a quest to find out the truth about Salander and prove to the world that the young woman is not only innocent of the crimes she is accused of committing, but she is also a victim.

Blomkvist has developed a protective attitude over Salander. One of the major problems is caused by Inspector Paulsson, who does not appreciate Blomkvist's input, opinion, or experience. In Blomkvist's eyes, it is Paulsson who is responsible for a cop's death and the escape of Niedermann.

Blomkvist engages the help of his sister, Anna, with the hopes that she can help Salander through this ordeal. It is clear that Salander does not want the help but Blomkvist and Anna both disagree. Blomkvist also confides in his lover, Erika. Although Erika has taken on another job at a rival publication, her loyalties run deep. It may also



be suspected that Erika is promoted to pull her away from the Salander story on which she had been working when she received the news.

Zalachenko realizes that his recovery is going to take much longer than he had expected. Still, Zalachenko is not one to rest on his laurels. Even while he is recuperating in the intensive care unit, Zalachenko is planning his defense and the disappearance and/or demise of Salander. Zalachenko's interactions with Sandberg and others show that he still carries a great deal of weight and power despite his "retired" status.



Part 1, Chapters 5-7

Part 1, Chapters 5-7 Summary

CHAPTER 5

Sunday, 10.iv

Blomkvist spends the night with Berger. The couple discusses Zalachenko's story. It does not matter to Blomkvist that Berger has accepted the job with SPM since he trusts her completely. Additionally, Berger does not consider taking the story with her to the new publication even though she has done extensive work on the project. The story belongs to Millennium. The couple also discusses Berger's future and her decision to retain stock in Millennium and to keep her position on the board of directors. The couple jokes that the biggest difference is that they may have to start making appointments to see each other. This is additionally complicated by the fact that Berger is married.

After Berger leaves, Blomkvist attempts to get information regarding Salander's condition. The hospital refuses to give out any information. Erlander tells Blomkvist that Salander's condition is stable. Blomkvist is not allowed to visit Salander since she is officially under arrest.

Blomkvist's next call is to Salander's old boss, Dragan Armansky, President and CEO of Milton Security. Blomkvist asks Armansky if he is on Salander's side. Armansky says he will do anything he can do to help Salander, whom he considers to be a friend. Blomkvist invites himself to Annika's house for brunch. Blomkvist asks if Anna is going to act as Salander's lawyer. Anna says no, that she is not well suited to the case.

Blomkvist spends the next two hours talking with Annika about Salander's case and the fact that it is not about the murders but rather, the violation of her rights. Annika agrees to represent Salander.

Later, Blomkvist calls Erlander to inform him that Salander now has a lawyer. Annika speaks with Erlander and explains her position. Erlander states that Salander has been declared incompetent and that in itself may be an issue.

Blomkvist continues to work on Salander's story.

Evert Gullberg, a former Senior Administrative Officer at the Security Police, arrives in Stockholm. Gullberg,⁷⁸ once headed a secret division of the security police known as the Section. Although Gullberg is said to have been retired for 13 years, it is clear that "intelligence officers never really retire, they just slip into the shadows." (Chap. 5, p. 75)

Gullberg had worked for a special unit inside the Security Police known as the "Section." The creation of the "Special Section" came about after a meeting with the upper echelon of the "Firm," as the Security Police were called, which included the head



of Budget and the assistant head Secretariat. Gullberg served as its first director. The department went through many name changes, from "the Special Section" to "Special Analysis" to its final official name as "the Section for Special Analysis" or the SSA.

Francke refers to the SSA as the last line of defense. It had been set up to function as an ultra-secret division and would never be referred to in writing including memos or budgets. While the official head of the SSA was the head Secretariat, Gullberg had wielded a great deal of power. As the SSA grew, Gullberg had become so powerful that he could initiate investigations on any person for any reason without repercussion.

In the 1960s, the SSA became an approved division of the Security Police by order of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister saw the SSA as being a potential way to exercise internal control over personnel.

The SSA continued to change over the years as various Prime Ministers and police officials came and went. Gullberg saw it as a stroke of luck when Zalachenko was brought to one of the members of the SSA when he applied for asylum. Eventually, Zalachenko was brought into the Section. Gullberg's thought was that it was better to have someone like Zalachenko on your side than to have him running around as a free agent. Later, Zalachenko and Gullberg would be two of only a handful of people to be a part of the Section within the Section.

The reader learns about Zalachenko's rise inside the Security Police and that it is the Section that had been responsible for Salander's admission into St. Stefan's and for having her officially declared as incompetent. All steps have been taken to protect the work of the Section although Gullberg does believe that Salander is insane.

Late in the evening, Zalachenko and Salander are of like minds when each plots to assassinate the other.

CHAPTER 6

Monday, 11.iv

Blomkvist calls Eriksson at Millennium to congratulate her on taking over as Editor in Chief. Eriksson is still stunned at the offer and feels guilty moving into Erika's office so soon. Blomkvist reassures Eriksson that she will do a good job. Blomkvist hangs up and returns to working on Salander's story.

Gullberg takes a taxi to meet Birger Wadensjö, who is serving as the new director of the Section. Gullberg asks about the current structure of the organization and wonders how many of his old colleagues still work in the Section. The other men taking part in the meeting arrive. Gullberg is introduced to Jonas Sandberg, head of operations. Sandberg tells the men about his meeting with Zalachenko.

Salander's tenure at St. Stefan's is discussed. Much of the information about Salander came from her twin sister, Camilla. Salander's relationship with Bjurman is also discussed. No one knows the current whereabouts of Camilla Salander.



A nurse finds the pencil in Salander's bed. Salander laments the loss of her weapon but is too sick to argue. Jonasson visits Salander. Salander asks for an explanation of her injuries. Salander also asks about Zalachenko.

Gullberg and the others discuss Zalachenko and the possibility that if one of the members of the Section talks, the entire division will implode. Sandberg believes that Salander can be handled but Zalachenko remains a problem. The men discuss damage control. Blomkvist's name comes up as a potential link to Salander and the possible end to vital information leaking out, destroying the Section.

Gullberg goes to speak with Clinton to discuss the situation. Gullberg comes up with a plan that includes sending the police on a wild goose chase. It also includes finding a way to stop Blomkvist.

The thought of having Blomkvist's sister, Annika Giannini, as a lawyer makes Salander ill. However, Salander knows that she needs a lawyer. The police question Salander about Niedermann. Salander realizes that the police do not know that Niedermann is her brother.

CHAPTER 7

Monday, 11.iv - Tuesday, 12.iv

Blomkvist goes to Armansky's house to discuss Salander's case. Also present are Annika, Millennium Editor in Chief Malin Eriksson, Salander's former guardian Holger Palmgren, and former Criminal Inspector Sonny Bohman, who is now employed by Milton Security. Palmgren's appearance is surprising since it is the first time in two years he has been out of the Ersta rehabilitation home.

Blomkvist addresses the room: "This is probably the craziest thing I've ever been involved with," he says. "When this is all over I'm going to found an association called 'The Knights of the Idiotic Table' and its purpose will be to arrange an annual dinner where we tell stories about Lisbeth Salander. You're all members." (Chap. 7, p. 114)

Zalachenko opens the door to Salander's room. He watches her for a couple of minutes and then leaves. Salander is awakened at once and searches frantically for a weapon.

Blomkvist works on his story and thinks about the number of people at the SIS that must be involved with Zalachenko. The release of the story, when finished, is certain to cause a major explosion.

Salander thinks about Zalachenko. Annika Giannini interrupts her thoughts. Salander does not want to meet Annika but after a few minutes of conversation, Salander realizes that she needs Annika. However, Salander insists on paying the lawyer's fees out of her own pocket.

Gullberg's efforts on Monday have left him exhausted. After breakfast, he calls Clinton for a report. Clinton reports that they have brought in outside help. They have also



tapped Blomkvist's phones and plan to tap Giannini's as well. Giannini meets with Prosecutor Jervas with the intention of learning about the charges brought against Salander. Jervas tells Giannini that Niedermann is first priority at that point.

After the meeting with Jervas, Giannini goes to see Lisbeth. She arrives at the same time as Gullberg, whose mission it is to check out the ward's layout for future reference.

Giannini goes to see Lisbeth to discuss the case. Meanwhile, Gullberg delivers flowers to the nurses' station for Zalachenko. The nurse tells Gullberg that Zalachenko is not allowed to have visitors. Gullberg manages to sneak into Zalachenko's room after the nurse leaves.

Zalachenko is surprised to see Gullberg and demands to know how the Section will get him out of this mess. Zalachenko says he does what he has to do to survive and that the Section owes him.

Gullberg shakes his head. "No, Alexander, you do what you do because you're evil and rotten. You wanted a message from the Section. I'm here to deliver it. We're not going to lift a finger to help you this time." (chap. 7, p. 123)

Gullberg shoots and kills Zalachenko before turning the gun on himself. It is learned that Gullberg has terminal cancer and had planned all along to commit suicide if and when the pain became unbearable.

Word gets around about Zalachenko's death.

Erlander meets with Giannini and Salander. Erlander questions Salander but is unsettled by the answers given regarding Gullberg.

Giannini decides to stay in the city rather than return to Stockholm. She calls and arranges to stay with an old colleague. On the way, Giannini is mugged and her briefcase is stolen, including the Zalachenko file. When Annika reports the incident to Blomkvist, he goes home to get his copy of the file but finds it has also been stolen. Blomkvist calls the police.

Part 1, Chapters 5-7 Analysis

Blomkvist spends the night with Berger. Their relationship is such that Blomkvist does not worry that Berger will scoop him on the Salander story. Despite Berger's new job, Blomkvist knows he can count on her for help. Blomkvist also knows that he can count on Annika, even though she is not the most appropriate person to defend Salander. However, after Annika hears about Salander's history, she agrees to help. Also on board to help is Dragan Armansky, Salander's old boss. It is clear that Armansky likes Lisbeth and wants to help with little convincing from Blomkvist.

The introduction of Gullberg creates an interesting turn since he knew Zala back in the day. Gullberg, in his own way, is equally dangerous although much more controlled than



the insane ex-spy. The difference now is that Gullberg is dying and feels as if he has nothing left to lose. Confronting Zala is a nerve wracking yet interesting task. Gullberg feels that the Special Section has gone downhill since his day and that people like Zala are part of that disintegration. Gullberg's meeting at the SSA confirms his thoughts.

Salander is not cooperative when it comes to mounting her own defense. She wants no help from anyone, including Blomkvist and Giannini. However, Salander knows that she needs a lawyer and must give in. Yet Salander insists that she calls the shots and will pay for the attorney's fees so she will not be indebted to anyone.

It is unclear at this point why Camilla is mentioned, except to show what a terrible man Zala is and was to Agneta and her children.

Despite his weakened condition, Zala remains pompous and demands that the Section help him out of his current predicament. It is clear that Gullberg takes delight in telling Zala that the game is over. Even up until the last minute Zala cannot believe that he could ever be expendable.

Knowing Salander's past, Erlander needs to be sure of the girl's mental stability. Having Giannini with her when Gullberg is at the hospital is helpful.

Giannini seems to be more angry than scared after the mugging on the way to her friend's apartment. Blomkvist knows that the phones have been tapped and suspects that his copy of Zala's file has also been stolen. Blomkvist has a momentary flash of panic when he cannot recall if Bublanski still has a copy of the file.



Part 2, chapters 8-12

Part 2, chapters 8-12 Summary

Part 2 begins with a discussion about an Irish law that prohibits women from fighting as warriors. There are also references to women warriors fighting in ancient Greece.

CHAPTER 8: SUNDAY, 1.v - MONDAY, 2.v

Erika Berger arrives at SMP for her first day of work. She is a day early but too restless to stay at home. She meets with the outgoing editor, Morander, a colleague who has spent 12 years at the job but is now ill.

Morander explains the dire situation at SMP.

Blomkvist begins to notice a gray Volvo that is obviously watching him. He has seen the Volvo seven times in a day or two. The thing that stands out most is the KAB number on the car. After doing some research, Blomkvist learns that the car is owned by someone connected to Säpo.

Blomkvist reports the situation and asks Malm to find out the story behind the gray Volvo. Malm takes his camera and does as he is asked.

Blomkvist buys untraceable phones and calls Daniel Olsson, a freelance journalist in Göteborg. Olsson has worked for Millennium over the years and is the right choice for Blomkvist's needs. Blomkvist asks Olsson to do extensive research on Sahlgrenska Hospital. Olsson sees through Blomkvist's thin story and knows that the research has nothing to do with the supposed story and is somehow linked to Lisbeth Salander.

Blomkvist also contacts Armansky to tell him about being followed. Armansky tries to convince Blomkvist that Säpo is a good organization and asks that Blomkvist speak to a man on the inside.

CHAPTER 9

Wednesday, 4.v

It is Erika Berger's fourth day at SMP. At lunchtime, the outgoing editor in chief dies at his desk from a heart attack. Berger is stunned and must quickly figure out how to run the newspaper without the veteran editor and yet manage to maintain her new position at the helm.

Bublanski and the other cops look at photos taken at a summer cabin in Smådalarö. Gunnar Björck, assistant chief of the Immigration Division of the Security Police, is dead. Although the death seems suspicious, there is no proof that the cause is anything other than suicide.



The relationship between Salander and Giannini is rocky at best. It is clear to Giannini that Salander is keeping secrets. Giannini becomes frustrated and tries to explain that unless she knows the entire story, she cannot help Salander. When Salander refuses to talk about the death of Bjurman except to say that she is not responsible for killing him, Giannini is ready to give up.

Salander is also frustrated with Giannini and the constant questioning by the police. Salander is also very secretive when spoken to by Dr. Jonasson. Jonasson can clearly see that Salander is suffering psychologically.

CHAPTER 10

Saturday, 7.v - Thursday, 12.v

Blomkvist goes through his stack of articles and information that can and will be published as a book. The entire story of Salander is in there, including her supposed involvement in the murders. Also included is the information Blomkvist has gathered on Zalachenko. Blomkvist decides that it is also the perfect time to publish Svensson's work.

"Together with Eriksson and Malm, he had decided that Millennium Publishing would publish Svensson's text about sex trafficking, also to coincide with the trial. It was better to present the package all at once, and besides, there was no reason to delay publication. On the contrary - the book would never be able to attract the same attention at any other time." (Chap. 10, p. 174)

Blomkvist knows that he must speak with Salander before publishing anything.

Berger is struggling at SMP. The sudden death of the outgoing editor has left her without a back up system. Although she has an assistant editor to help her through the rough spots, Holm causes trouble for Berger by being insubordinate. Berger warns Holm to remember his place in the pecking order. Berger must also refuse a story written about Salander that is hearsay and perhaps libelous. Berger orders Frisk to research previous articles published about Salander and to report back with the evidence used to write the articles.

Blomkvist researches information on Idris Ghidi, an Iraqi who can be tapped to spy on Salander.

Blomkvist does not see the gray Volvo again.

CHAPTER 11

Friday, 13.v - Saturday, 14.v

Blomkvist goes to meet with Idris Ghidi. Blomkvist is careful to ensure he is not followed and goes to Salander's apartment where he borrows her car. After Blomkvist explains, Ghidi agrees to take the job for 1,000 kronor per week.



Superintendent Nyström of the SIS visits Prosecutor Ekström. Nyström wants to make it clear that the death of Zalachenko is to be handled with the utmost discretion. Ekström does not fully understand the situation but is afraid to ask questions because he does not want to seem ignorant to such a powerful man. Ekström believes Nyström's claims that the file on Zalachenko has been falsified. Nyström also tries to convince the prosecutor that Salander is stark raving mad.

Ghidi goes to work for Blomkvist. He plants a cell phone in a vent outside Salander's room to record all activity inside.

Henry Cortez breaks open a story about a Swedish construction supplies company that is selling toilets made in Vietnam. The toilets, which are exorbitantly priced, are being manufactured in sweat shops using child labor.

Ekström follows Nyström's orders and replaces Bublanski and the others on the Salander case. In their place Ekström assigns Hans Faste, a man who will not give any special attention to Salander's alleged innocence.

Bublanski is distressed over the fact that all of the copies of Björk's report have been stolen or have gone missing. However, Modig claims that she still has her copy. Bublanski explains which parts of the report are supposedly forged. Modig says she will go to the press if it appears that Salander is going to be used as a scapegoat again.

Blomkvist meets with Salander's doctor, Dr. Jonasson. Blomkvist relays Salander's story and tells the doctor that Salander's former psychiatrist, Dr. Teleborian, is evil. Dr. Jonasson had suspected as much. Blomkvist also convinces Jonasson to let Salander have her cell phone.

CHAPTER 12

Sunday, 15.v - Monday, 16.v

Superintendent Torsten Edklinth, Director of Constitutional Protection at the Security Police (Säpo), agrees to a last minute dinner meeting with Dragan Armansky. The history between the two men is discussed.

The author includes an overview of Parliament, the police system and the Swedish government and how they are viewed by Edklinth.

Armansky relays Salander's story to Edklinth and tells about the injustices piled upon the young woman. Edklinth is appalled at the story.

"If Armansky's information was correct, Security Police officers in senior positions had looked the other way when a series of savage assaults were committed against a Swedish woman. Then her daughter was locked up in a mental hospital on the basis of a fabricated diagnosis. Finally, they had given carte blanche to a former Soviet intelligence officer to commit crimes involving weapons, narcotics and sex trafficking.



Edklinth grimaced. He did not even want to begin to estimate how many counts of illegal activity must have taken place." (Chap. 12, p. 217)

Edklinth contacts Inspector Monica Figuerola and assigns her to research Armansky's story. Immediately, Figuerola begins to uncover the truth about Salander, which meshes with what Armansky and Edklinth had discussed over dinner.

Figuerola continues to make decisions on how to pursue her investigation while pondering her own life's direction.

Berger's work situation deteriorates. The staff does not respect her and the administration continually puts off her suggestions for improvements. Berger also receives an extremely vulgar email, supposedly from someone at SMP. Berger learns that the email address is a fake and it is unlikely that it could be traced.

Part 2, chapters 8-12 Analysis

Berger is restless and decides to begin her first day at SMP early. The outgoing editor seems to be relieved that Berger is coming on board. The editor tries to warn Berger about potential problem employees but then decides that Berger will need to find out for herself. It does not take long.

Berger is nervous about taking over at SMP since the staff is much larger than the one with which she is accustomed to working on a regular basis.

Blomkvist realizes that he is being followed and that his phones are tapped. Blomkvist seems to have supernatural instincts that continue to amaze everyone around him, including Malm.

"It sounded like the prelude to a typical Blomkvist adventure. Malm was never quite sure whether Blomkvist was paranoid by nature or if he had paranormal gifts. Since the events in Gosseberga his colleague had certainly become withdrawn and hard to communicate with. Nothing unusual about this, though. But when Blomkvist was working on a complicated story - Malm had observed the same obsessive and secretive behaviour in the weeks before the Wennerström story broke - it became more pronounced." (Chap. 8, p. 150)

Blomkvist is cautious when he speaks to Armansky about being followed. Armansky tries to convince Blomkvist that Säpo is a good organization and asks that Blomkvist speak to a man on the inside. Blomkvist is wary but he trusts Armansky, so he agrees.

Things change dramatically on Berger's fourth day at S.M.P when the outgoing editor in chief dies at his desk from a heart attack. Berger is stunned and at a loss when it comes to what to do next. Berger asks the staff for help but realizes that she is going to have to deal with some hostility from the staff.



The death of Gunnar Björck, assistant chief of the Immigration Division of the Security Police, raises many red flags for Bublanski. The death seems to be too convenient although Bublanski does not know what it means.

The level of distrust between Salander and Giannini will only serve to hurt Salander's case but the girl has spent so many years being abused that it is to be expected. Giannini is determined to work around it.

Blomkvist's plan to publish two books before Salander's trial is ambitious to the point that some people do not think it is possible. Blomkvist is determined and believes that publishing the books, particularly the one about Salander, is opportunistic and that it is by far the best time to release the books. Blomkvist does not seem to be worried about getting Salander's permission for the publication.

Blomkvist does notice that he is being followed on a regular basis and that his work has put him into further jeopardy. Although Blomkvist distrusts Säpo, he does trust Armansky and is willing to go through with a meeting that will prove to be beneficial as the story moves forward.

Berger finds herself in a sticky situation. Her doubts about SMP grow, particularly when she learns about her boss' illegal activities in Vietnam. The trouble continues when Berger begins to receive threats and lewd messages from an unknown source.



Part 2, chapters 13-15

Part 2, chapters 13-15 Summary

CHAPTER 13

Tuesday, 17.v

Figuerola wakes up early and takes a long run before work. She waits until Edklinth has settled in for the day before going to his office to give her report. Edklinth and Figuerola discuss the fact that the chief of Secretariat must have given approval for putting Mårtensson on the job. Figuerola is still bothered by Gullberg's part in Zalachenko's murder and wants to investigate. Edklinth tells Figuerola to hold off because digging into the records from the 1950s will tip off Shenke.

Jonasson visits Salander. While he examines her, Jonasson asks Salander about Teleborian. Salander tells Jonasson that Teleborian is a beast. After Jonasson leaves, Salander finds her Palm resting on her pillow. Along with the cell phone is a note from Blomkvist, telling Salander that they are trying to save her. Salander is thrilled to learn that she has an internet connection after two long weeks of being disconnected.

Salander begins to do her own research, just as Blomkvist had predicted. The group must show the reason for Salander's stint at the institution and that Teleborian is in cahoots with Ekström.

CHAPTER 14

Wednesday, 18.v

Figuerola gets up early, goes for a run and then drives to Vittangigatan in Vällingby. Mårtensson's apartment is nearby and Figuerola wants to follow his moves. Figuerola is careful because she is unsure if the man lives alone. Nearby Figuerola spots the gray Volvo.

Figuerola follows the Volvo to Blomkvist's apartment. Figuerola watches Blomkvist as he tries to act nonchalant. Figuerola pretends to read a map but Blomkvist makes her. Figuerola takes photos of the two men who entered Blomkvist's apartment. Also present is another woman taking pictures. The second woman leaves the scene and goes to Milton Security.

Blomkvist gets a shock when Cortez reports that the chairman of the company that manufactures the toilets in Vietnam is also her new boss at SMP.

Someone begins to send lewd emails to SMP staff, supposedly from Berger's address.

Blomkvist tells Berger the news about her new boss' illegal activities.



CHAPTER 15

Thursday, 19.v - Sunday, 22.v

Salander begins to read through Blomkvist's articles. Salander cannot figure out how Blomkvist plans to finish the book before the trial date but decides that it is not her problem. Salander begins to write her own story.

Berger wakes up at the hotel and knows her husband will be angry that she forgot to call to let him know she would be spending the night with Blomkvist. Greger does not have an issue with his wife having an affair, rather he is angry that he had spent the previous night being worried that something had happened to her.

Holmberg arrives at the home of former Prime Minister Thorbjörn Fälldin. Holmberg, who knows he will be in serious trouble if discovered, confesses all he knows about the Salander case to Fälldin.

Berger asks Blomkvist if their relationship is insane. Berger lusts for Blomkvist but is otherwise happily married.

Salander becomes ill. She experiences violent headaches and vomiting. Jonasson steps in and takes a cranial x-ray and also maintains a close watch on a fluctuating fever. Inspector Faste wonders if Salander could be faking it. Jonasson shows Faste the x-ray and says that he does not know what the dark spot on the film is just yet but that it could be a hemorrhage or scar tissue. Jonasson will not release Salander.

Salander hires Trinity and asks him to come to Sweden.

Edklinth speaks to the Prime Minister about Salander. The Prime Minister says that Salander will face no further charges or abuses but will have to stand on her own in court regarding the current charges.

Part 2, chapters 13-15 Analysis

Figuerola's presence in the story initiates a true, in-depth investigation by Figuerola. It is clear that Figuerola lives the job at this point in her career and will be relentless in investigating Salander's claims as well as the insinuations and accusations brought against her own agency. It is clear that Figuerola has more than a passing interest in Blomkvist.

Salander continues to trust no one, including Blomkvist and Giannini. However, Jonasson's attention to Salander softens the girl slightly. Salander begins to believe that Jonasson's intentions are true. This is solidified when Jonasson continues to protect Salander from Teleborian, a man who has caused untold damage to Salander during and after her stay at St. Stefan's hospital.



Edklinth has enough proof and intuition to go to the Prime Minister to ensure Salander's freedom after the trial. The Prime Minister will not interfere with Salander's trial which is a cause for concern.

Berger's work situation worsens to the point that she is fearful and angry. Blomkvist is also concerned about Berger even though he does not know the entire story.



Part 3, chapters 16-22

Part 3, chapters 16-22 Summary

PART III - DISK CRASH

27.v - 6.VI

Larsson discusses the findings of the Sicilian historian Diodorus who describes the Amazons of North Africa.

CHAPTER 16

Friday, 27.v - Tuesday, 31.v

Blomkvist leaves his office at Millennium at 10:30 on Friday night. After wandering around for quite some time to ensure that he was not being followed, he goes to Salander's apartment where he has been spending a great deal of time ever since he learned that his apartment and phones were tapped. Blomkvist uses Salander's computer to do his work.

Blomkvist uses the newsgroup to ping Salander. Salander shows Blomkvist the documents hacked from Ekström's computer. Blomkvist's thoughts on Ekström are confirmed.

Plague contacts Salander with files from Teleborian's computer. Salander learns that Teleborian is into child pornography.

Blomkvist begins to piece things together and develops the concept of a secret division inside Säpo. Blomkvist, uninformed about the existence of the SIS, refers to the group as The Zalachenko Club.

Berger continues to receive lewd, threatening emails at work. Berger admits that she has a cyber-stalker.

Prosecutor Ekström's phone is tapped by Salander's friends.

Figuerola and Edklinth discover that Gullberg had not been just an accountant but that he had been involved in the Special Section at Säpo.

CHAPTER 17

Wednesday, 1.VI

Blomkvist arrives home to find Figuerola at his apartment at Bellmansgatan 1. Figuerola asks Blomkvist to accompany her to a meeting but refuses to disclose the location.



Present at the meeting are Edklinth, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Justice. Many of Blomkvist's suspicions and research are confirmed.

Berger realizes that she has no choice but to resign from SMP due to her boss' illegal and reprehensible activities in Vietnam. While thinking about this predicament, Berger realizes that someone has thrown a brick through her window.

Salander continues to work on her autobiography. After writing 33 pages, Salander realizes that the horrors of her childhood make the story sound like fiction.

Salander confides in Giannini, saying that she is a world class hacker - a fact that is already known by Blomkvist.

Berger goes to the hospital to be treated. She also calls Milton Security after realizing that there are no sensors on her windows, which could prove to be dangerous. Berger arranges to have the window covered with plywood and then goes to bed armed with mace, a hammer and an 8-iron golf club.

CHAPTER 18

Thursday, 2. Vi

Berger receives a return call from Armansky. Berger tells Armansky what has happened and asks that Milton take over the security on her house.

Figuerola announces to her colleagues that Salander's trial is set to begin on July 14.

Jonasson decides that it is safe to release Salander from the hospital. Salander thanks Jonasson for his help and leaves the Palm in his care.

Figuerola, Edklinth and Blomkvist meet. They attempt to uncover the identities of those involved in the SIS with the intention of prosecuting those who have broken the law. Blomkvist reveals that Teleborian has been communicating with someone named Jonas at Säpo.

Berger receives another message from her stalker. She begins to believe that the stalker is located in the building and is watching her. Berger receives some relief when she learns that Milton has revamped her security system. Linder will spend the night at Berger's until the system set up is complete. Berger learns that some of her files, photos, journals and love letters have been stolen.

Figuerola takes Blomkvist back to her apartment and seduces him. Figuerola jokes that Edklinth's orders to keep a close eye on the journalist probably did not entail sleeping with him.

CHAPTER 19

Friday, 3.vi - Saturday 4.vi



Salander finishes her autobiography on Friday morning and sends it to Blomkvist via the Yahoo group. Salander thinks about what she has written and also ponders the fact that another birthday has passed while she is imprisoned.

Salander, bored, decides to hack into Armansky's hard drive. She learns about Berger's stalker.

Dag Svensson's book is prepared to go to press.

Salander, who has recovered from learning about Berger's relationship with Blomkvist, decides to contact Berger about her stalker. Salander pings Berger and encourages her to hack into the SMP computer system. Berger complies.

Figuerola wakes up with Blomkvist in her bed. She begins to wonder if she is falling in love with Blomkvist or if it is nothing more than a convenient, summer affair.

CHAPTER 20

Saturday, 4.vi

Blomkvist spends time in the morning ensuring that he is not followed. He has read Salander's autobiography and is pleased at the finished product.

Salander learns that Teleborian is scheduled to meet with Jonas. Unable to reach Blomkvist or Plague, Salander contacts Berger and asks her to relay the news of the meeting to Blomkvist. Blomkvist sends Cortez to the meeting place. Blomkvist also arranges to have the two men followed. It is learned that Jonas is Jonas Sandberg.

Figuerola calls Bublanski about Teleborian's trip to the police station. Bublanski assigns Modig to find out who Teleborian is meeting with and where. Modig reports back to Bublanski that Teleborian has had a private meeting with Faste and Ekström.

CHAPTER 21

Saturday, 4.vi - Monday, 6.v

Salander methodically goes through SMP's mail server, attempting to find out the identity of Berger's stalker. While it is clear Holm hates Berger, he is not Salander's top suspect. After doing some more digging, Salander learns that the stalker is Peter Fredriksson.

Before Salander leaves the hospital, she contacts Berger to let her know about Fredriksson.

Salander is transferred from the hospital to a prison in Stockholm.

Berger informs Linder about Fredriksson being the cyber stalker. Linder decides to confront Fredriksson directly. Linder confronts Fredriksson, steals the hard drive from



his computer, retrieves all of Berger's belongings, and warns Fredriksson not to return to SMP.

CHAPTER 22

Monday, 6.vi

Berger wakes up after only an hour's sleep but feels renewed. She is relieved that Fredriksson had not done anything with her personal items. Berger decides to buy an expensive Christmas gift for Linder.

Berger has a confrontation with her new boss, Borgsjö, about Cortez's article. Berger is asked to resign. Before Berger leaves, she gets Holm to agree to publish the story on the front page. Holm agrees. Eriksson is thrilled when Berger agrees to return to Millennium.

Teleborian visits Salander in prison. Once again, Salander thinks about how she could kill Teleborian.

Part 3, chapters 16-22 Analysis

The story begins to pull together at the same time it falls apart for the members of Säpo. Figuerola seems relentless in her pursuit of the truth, backed by Edklinth. The reader may surmise that it will be Figuerola and Edklinth who will get to the bottom of the story.

Figuerola is somewhat distracted by a blossoming romance with Blomkvist although Blomkvist's nonchalance on the matter dampens Figuerola's enthusiasm. It seems that Blomkvist has no interest in pursuing any of his relationships at this time.

Salander continues to benefit from Jonasson's attention and care. Salander does not feel safe because of Teleborian and the others, which is obvious to Jonasson. It is an odd stroke of luck that Salander becomes ill and must be kept at the hospital.

Salander's ability to reconnect to the internet secures the fact that the case will be broken wide open. The ability to hack into hard drives plus the assistance of Trinity and Plague will ensure that Salander will get the information she needs to free herself and show the guilt of those responsible for the murders.

Berger's continued interaction with the stalker hits new heights when the stalker invades her home. Greger is away which makes it worse. Berger is glad to have the company and watchful eye of Linder, who may become a friend as well as protector. Berger is stunned to learn the true identity of her stalker and the basis of his rage.



Part 4, chapters 23-29

Part 4, chapters 23-29 Summary

PART 4 - REBOOTING SYSTEM I.vii - 7.x

Larsson states that there is only one documented source of female warriors in history.

CHAPTER 23

Friday, 1.vii - Sunday, 10.vii

Two weeks before Salander's trial begins, Malm finishes the mock up of Blomkvist's book. Holm publishes Cortez's story as promised. Borgsjö resigns.

Figuerola asks Blomkvist if he is in love with Salander, Berger, or someone else. Blomkvist evades the question.

Officials in the Section learn about Blomkvist's book and everything begins to fall apart. Everyone becomes concerned with the existence of Salander's autobiography. The Section is determined to discredit Blomkvist.

CHAPTER 24

Monday, 11.vii

Armansky calls Blomkvist to report that someone has broken into his apartment and stashed money and drugs. Blomkvist explains that the Säpo means to discredit him.

Nyström and Clinton hire hitmen to kill Blomkvist. Meanwhile, Prosecutor Gustavsson of the National Prosecutor's Office arranges to have various people from the Section arrested during the trial.

Figuerola learns that Blomkvist and Berger are in danger. Blomkvist ends up in a confrontation with one of the brothers. He and Berger are moved to a safe house for their protection.

CHAPTER 25

Wednesday, 13.vii - Thursday, 14.vii

Blomkvist arrives at the district court. He thinks about leaking information regarding Salander's precarious mental stability. Salander plays into the scheme by arriving in court in appropriate attire and wearing heavy makeup with her tattoos showing under the skimpy outfit.



Ekström asks Judge Iversen to hold the trial behind closed doors. The judge agrees. Ekström begins to question Salander about her relationship with Bjurman and the claims that her guardian had raped her.

Edklinth arrests Wadensjö and interrogates him at the police station. Wadensjö tells Edklinth all he knows about the activities of the Section.

CHAPTER 26

Friday, 15.vii

Teleborian appears on the witness stand. No matter what questions are asked, Teleborian manages to turn Salander's testimony into some type of mental instability and lack of a grasp on reality.

The members of the Section are arrested. Jonas Sandberg is arrested on charges of being "a suspect and accessory to the murders of Gunnar Björck and Alexander Zalachenko, and as an accomplice in the attempted murders of Mikael Blomkvist and Erika Berger." (Chap. 26, p. 477)

Fredrik Clinton is arrested for attempted murder and being an accomplice to murder.

CHAPTER 27

Friday, 15.vii

Judge Iversen is surprised to see Palmgren in the courtroom. Giannini proceeds to try to convince the court that Salander's autobiography is factual.

Teleborian is under fire for falsifying reports, his mistreatment of Salander and child pornography. Teleborian is arrested.

CHAPTER 28

Friday, 15.vii - Saturday, 16.vii

Judge Iversen is somewhat stumped by the turn of events. Iversen turns to Ekström to ask for comments. Ekström, who now knows that Superintendent Nyström has been arrested, is also temporarily speechless. In the end, Ekström simply tells Iversen that he has been misinformed regarding major points of the investigation.

Now that the truth has come out regarding the actions of the Section, Salander is set free.

CHAPTER 29

Saturday, 16.vii - Friday, 7.x



Giannini takes Salander back to her old apartment. Salander collects some things including a note from Blomkvist. Blomkvist tells Salander that the ball is in her court. He will not try to contact her.

Salander is urged to go to Paris to see Mimmi. Once the two women meet and make amends, they decide to remain friends.

Part 4, chapters 23-29 Analysis

The case breaks wide open. There is proof that Teleborian had been in cahoots with Gullberg and repeatedly abused Salander. Although the judge remains relatively impartial, she is sickened by the mistreatment of a young girl and appalled by the damage heaped upon Salander.

Ekström feels like a fool when he must admit to the court that he has been misinformed about many aspects of Salander's case, including her guilt and alleged paranoid schizophrenia. Ekström knows that there is no way to save face. Even blaming the police would not free him of the guilt. Bublanski would never support his story. Ekström realizes that if Salander ever had the opportunity, she would murder him, just as she would Teleborian.

"I regret to say that it seems I have been misinformed on a number of essential points in this investigation." (Chap. 28, p. 507)

The judge's attitude toward Ekström and the entire legal web of deception borders on incredulous.

"I too believe we would be wise to investigate exactly what has happened that brings us to this sorry pass. I fear that you are probably not the right person to conduct that investigation. In all my years as a jurist and judge, I have never been party to anything even approaching the legal dilemma in this case. I confess that I am at a loss for words. I have never even heard of a case in which the prosecutor's chief witness is arrested during a court in session, or of a quite convincing argument turning out to be an utter fabrication. I honestly do not see what is left of the prosecutor's case." (Chap. 28, p. 507)

During the trial, the remaining members of Section are arrested. As Iversen points out, it is certain that the arrests and subsequent trials will create a monumental web of legal dilemmas and call into question everything that has ever been done on behalf of the Section and therefore, Säpo. The reader may feel that in some ways Zalachenko and Gullberg have escaped justice.

Teleborian is also arrested on charges of child pornography. Salander had provided proof to the courts after she had hacked into Teleborian's hard drive and located 47 folders containing nearly 9,000 photographs of explicit child pornography. The pictures included children age 15 and under; some were infants.



Salander is confused by what to do with her newfound freedom. It has been so long since Salander was truly free that she has to be told what to do by Blomkvist, Giannini and others. Salander, at a loss, goes to Europe. Salander allows herself to indulge in a number of unhealthy behaviors including excessive drink and having an affair with a married man.

Although Salander and Mimmi have decided to be no more than friends, Salander realizes that it is time to begin to build a life and maybe she can also learn how to trust.



Characters

Lisbeth Salander

Lisbeth Salander is the protagonist of Stieg Larsson's Millennium series which includes *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*.

Lisbeth is considered to be an extraordinary woman who has survived myriad attacks and psychological traumas including being beaten, sexually abused, chased by police, accused of a triple murder, and being nearly murdered by her own father.

Lisbeth is the daughter of Anthony "Zala" Zalachenko aka Karl Axel Bodin. Zala is a cruel and heartless man. He fathered Lisbeth and her twin sister Camilla but never treated them as children. The only time Zala showed up in Lisbeth's early life was to have sex with her mother and beat her, which eventually caused her mother's untimely demise. At that time, Lisbeth was 12 years old. As a form of revenge, Lisbeth threw a Molotov cocktail into Zala's car. Lisbeth was sent to live at St. Stefan's Children's Psychiatric hospital by Evert Gullberg and the Special Section of the Stockholm police, who also employed Zala as a problem solver a.k.a. assassin.

Since Salander's release, she has had two main objectives: kill Zala and protect women who have suffered abuses at the hands of others. Salander is smart and agile, both mentally and physically. She trusts no one. Lisbeth is a world class hacker who uses her skills to further her objectives. In the story, she spends a great deal of time recovering from gunshot wounds to the head while Blomkvist attempts to protect her and clear her name of the triple murders.

Mikael Blomkvist

Mikael Blomkvist is an editor at Millennium. It is at Millennium that he meets Erika Berger, who becomes his colleague, ally, and lover despite the fact that she is married.

Blomkvist is a hard nosed journalist who spends his time following the case of Lisbeth Salander, who is accused of killing journalists in Stockholm. Blomkvist knows in his gut that Salander is innocent and that the murders were committed by Salander's brother, Ronald Niedermann. Blomkvist also uncovers a great deal of information about Anthony "Zala" Zalachenko, aka Karl Axel Bodin, Salander's evil hearted father, former Russian spy and assassin for the Special Section of the Stockholm police.

Working on Salander's behalf, Blomkvist arranges for his sister to defend Salander, despite the fact that the sister, Annika Giannini, is not a criminal defense attorney.

Blomkvist works closely with Inspectors Bublanski, Modig and Holmberg on the case with the hopes of freeing Salander from the murder charges.



Anthony Zalachenko

Alexander Zalachenko, aka Karl Axel Bodin, is Lisbeth Salander's father. Zalachenko served as a Russian spy in the 1970s. Upon his retirement, Zalachenko had been drafted into the Special Section where he had taken care of problems in the police force by any means necessary. Zalachenko is known as a cold blooded killer.

Evert Gullberg

Evert Gullberg, 78, is a former Senior Administrative Officer at the Security Police and served as the original head of the Special Section (SSA) in Stockholm. He is called in out of retirement to deal with Zalachenko. It is Gullberg who eventually murders Zalachenko in the hospital before committing suicide.

Inspector Erlander

Criminal Inspector Marcus Erlander serves as a supervisor in the Violent Crimes Division of the Göteborg police. Erlander is an ally to Blomkvist.

Inspector Modig

Inspector Sonja Modig works under Bublanski in the Stockholm police department.

Annika Giannini

Annika Giannini is Mikael Blomkvist's sister. She serves as the attorney for Lisbeth Salander despite the fact that she is a woman's rights and domestic violence advocate, not a criminal defense lawyer.

Dr. Anders Jonasson

Dr. Anders Jonasson is a doctor at at A. & E. at Sahlgrenska hospital in Göteborg. Jonasson is the doctor who operates on Lisbeth Salander and Anthony Zalachenko after they are air lifted from the farmhouse.

Inspector Paulsson

Inspector Paulsson is the first inspector on the job to work at the farmhouse. Inspector Paulsson and Blomkvist immediately butt heads. Blomkvist refers to Paulsson as an Olympic-class idiot and blames him for the death of a police officer and the savage beating of another.



Inspector Jan Bublaski

Criminal Inspector Jan Bublanski, aka Officer Bubble, is a senior police inspector in Stockholm.

Inspector Jerker Holmberg

Inspector Jerker Holmberg works under Bublanski in the Stockholm police department.

Ronald Niedermann

Ronald Niedermann is the brother of Salander and the son of Zalachenko. Niedermann is suspected of being the person to have killed the people in Stockholm for which Salander had been blamed.

Erika Berger

Erika Berger is an editor at Millennium until being promoted to the position of Editor in Chief at SPM. Berger is Blomkvist's long-time lover.



Objects/Places

Millennium

Millennium is the name of the magazine developed by Mikael Blomkvist and Erika Berger. It is a cutting edge, hard journalism magazine, the type that provides important news backed with exhaustive research. Blomkvist and Berger, who are intimately involved, work together to create Team Salander, a group of people at the magazine who strive to prove that Lisbeth Salander is innocent in the murders of journalists in Stockholm. Berger and Blomkvist use their intuition, experience and extensive research skills to follow and unravel Salander's story.

There is a short period of time in which Team Salander may seem to be in jeopardy. Berger is transferred to a new magazine, SPM, where she will serve as editor in chief. Although Berger could easily scoop Millennium on the Salander story, it clearly belongs to Millennium and Berger's integrity will not permit it. Blomkvist will continue to work on the story with some input from Berger.

Millennium is also the name of Stieg Larsson's trilogy, which includes *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire*, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*.

The Section

Evert Gullberg had worked for a special unit inside the Security Police known as the "Section." The creation of the "Special Section" came about after a meeting with the upper echelon of the "Firm," as the Security Police were called, which included the head of Budget and the assistant head Secretariat. Gullberg served as its first director. The department went through many name changes, from "the Special Section" to "Special Analysis" to its final official name as "the Section for Special Analysis" or the SSA.

Francke referred to the SSA as the last line of defense. It was set up to function as an ultra-secret division and would never be referred to in writing including memos or budgets. While the official head of the SSA was the head Secretariat, Gullberg wielded a great deal of power. As the SSA grew, Gullberg became so powerful that he could initiate investigations on any person for any reason without repercussion.

In the 1960s, the SSA became an approved division of the Security Police by order of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister saw the SSA as being a potential way to exercise internal control over personnel.

The SSA continued to change over the years as various Prime Ministers and police officials came and went. Gullberg saw it as a stroke of luck when Zalachenko was brought to one of the members of the SSA when he applied for asylum. Eventually, Zalachenko was brought into the Section. Gullberg's thought was that it was better to



have someone like Zalachenko on your side than to have him running around as a free agent. Later, Zalachenko and Gullberg would be two of only a handful of people to be a part of the Section within the Section.

Farmhouse

The farmhouse is the place where Salander and Zalachenko had a major showdown. Salander was shot and Zalachenko was struck in the head with an axe.

A. & E. at Sahlgrenska Hospital

A. & E. at Sahlgrenska hospital in Göteborg is the department and hospital where Dr. Anders Jonasson works. It is also the hospital that houses Salander and Zalachenko while they recover from their injuries and where Zalachenko is murdered.

Stockholm

Stockholm is the capital city of Sweden. It is where parts of the story take place, including the three murders for which Salander is charged.

Goteborg

Goteborg is one of Sweden's largest cities. It is home to the Goteborg Police and Sahlgrenska Hospital.

St. Stefan's Children's Psychiatric Clinic

St. Stefan's Children's Psychiatric Clinic is the hospital in which Salander is placed at age 12 for mental instability. Gullberg and the SSA are responsible for Salander's admission at St. Stefan's.

Kronoberg Prison

Kronoberg Prison is the place where Lisbeth Salander is held while awaiting trial.

Stockholm District Court

Stockholm District Court is the site of Lisbeth Salander's trial.

Zalachenko Club

The Zalachenko Club is a term developed by Blomkvist to refer to a special faction within Säpo.



Themes

Conspiracy

Conspiracy is one of the main themes in the book. When Salander is 12 she is put into a mental institution after trying to kill Zalachenko. That is the beginning of the conspiracy to remove Salander from the picture as it becomes obvious she is a major threat to Zalachenko and the Section. It had not been considered that Salander might be released from the institution one day. From that day, the Section, headed by Gullberg, would attempt to remove Salander as a problem, going so far as to frame her for a triple murder in Stockholm. The murders are actually committed by Salander's brother, Ronald Niedermann.

Gullberg, Zalachenko and the others make a grave error when they underestimate Salander. Salander has world-class hacker and research skills which far surpass those of the Section. The Section also comes up against a formidable foe in Blomkvist.

Additionally, the Section has been created as a law enforcement division inside the police force. The Section can employ any means necessary to handle internal problems, even if it means murder. The actions of the Section also create a need for a major conspiracy to cover the tracks of the members of the team.

These conspiracies were so well crafted that even Prosecutor Ekström could not uncover them. It took Salander, Blomkvist, Plague, Bublanski and others to uncover the wrongdoing of the Section and to bring those actions to light in front of Judge Iversen.

Revenge

Revenge is one of the main themes in the book. Zalachenko does not have any concept of the lengths Salander would go to when it came to getting revenge on him for his evil ways. Salander's need for revenge begins with Zalachenko's treatment of Salander when she is a child. Salander also seeks revenge for the torment Zalachenko inflicted on her mother, Agneta.

Being placed in St. Stefan's increases Salander's need for revenge. This need transfers to Teleborian for his mistreatment of Salander including the lies, falsified reports, and the hundreds of days the man causes Salander to be put into restraints. As time goes on, Teleborian becomes more reprehensible and Salander's need for revenge against the doctor strengthens.

Salander's desire to get revenge on Zalachenko becomes an obsession as she is forced to go on the run. It increases to new heights after the triple murder for which Salander is blamed.



Salander's only hope to act out her plans for revenge lies in Blomkvist and his quest to set her free. However, Salander never gets her wish when Zalachenko is murdered.

Relationships

Relationships are a main theme in the book, especially those involving Blomkvist.

Mikael Blomkvist and Erika Berger are in an odd relationship. It is particularly odd because Berger is married. Berger says she has an insatiable lust for Blomkvist although she goes home at night to her husband, Greger.

Blomkvist does not mind that Berger is married and seems to be satisfied with the nature of their relationship, which consists of regular trysts and occasional overnight stays. Greger does not object to the relationship and actually seems to like Blomkvist. Greger's only rule is that Berger must call home when she intends to spend the night with Blomkvist so that he will not worry.

Blomkvist also develops strange relationships with Salander and Figuerola. The relationship with Figuerola is romantic in nature. Almost from the start, Figuerola seems to be enamored of Blomkvist and feels she might be falling in love. Figuerola questions Blomkvist about his concept of love.

Blomkvist replies: "If love is liking someone an awful lot, then I suppose I'm in love with several people." (Chap. 23, p. 419)

Salander seems to be confused about the nature of her relationships and, at times, her sexual preferences. Salander thought she was in love with Mimmi but later realizes that it was affection accompanied by lust and great sex. Salander does not know how she feels about Blomkvist.

While in Europe, Salander has an affair with a married German man. Later, she and Mimmi make amends and decide not to continue their former romantic relationship but to remain friends.



Style

Point of View

The point of view used in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* by Stieg Larsson is third person omniscient. This point of view works well in the story since there are several components and underlying factors that would not be revealed otherwise. While the first person point of view might have been interesting when coming from the characters, particularly Lisbeth Salander in her time of confusion and/or extreme focus regarding her father's demise, the third person point of view conveys the entire story and not just the subjective opinions of the characters. It also permits the reader to take part in the journey and development of each character in the story.

The point of view used in the story allows the reader to grasp the depth of each character and his/her role in the story. For example, using a first person point of view from Salander may help the reader to understand her plight, yet could not possibly reflect the point of view held by an objective source such as Bublanski. Likewise, seeing the story from the twisted mind of Zalachenko would prove to be fascinating considering his history, yet it could not possibly reflect the opinions and experiences of Salander or Blomkvist.

Setting

There are various settings used in *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest* by Stieg Larsson. They include references to the special unit inside the Security Police known as the "Section." The creation of the "Special Section" came about after a meeting with the upper echelon of the "Firm," as the Security Police were called, which included the head of Budget and the assistant head Secretariat. Gullberg served as its first director. The department went through many name changes, from "the Special Section" to "Special Analysis" to its final official name as "the Section for Special Analysis" or the SSA.

Millennium is the name of the magazine developed by Mikael Blomkvist and Erika Berger. It is a cutting edge, hard journalism magazine, the type that provides important news backed with exhaustive research. Blomkvist and Berger, who are intimately involved, work together to create Team Salander, a group of people at the magazine that strive to prove that Lisbeth Salander is innocent in the murders of journalists in Stockholm.

The farmhouse is the place where Salander and Zalachenko have a major showdown. Salander is shot and Zalachenko is struck in the head with an axe.

Sahlgrenska hospital is located in Göteborg, one of Sweden's largest cities. A. and E. is the department and hospital where Dr. Anders Jonasson works. It is also the hospital that houses Salander and Zalachenko while they recover from their injuries and where Zalachenko is murdered.



Stockholm is the capital city of Sweden. It is where parts of the story take place, including the three murders for which Salander is charged.

Language and Meaning

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg Larsson is a work of fiction that has been translated from its original Swedish. Stieg Larsson died before any of the Millennium trilogy had been published and therefore did not create the English translation of the work. The work was translated from the Swedish by Reg Keeland. It was originally published in Sweden as Luftslottet Som Sprängdes by Norstedts, Stockholm, in 2007; the first English edition was published in Great Britain in 2009 by MacLehose Press; Text published with agreement of Norstedts Agency.

For the reader, there are some parts of the translation that might be difficult or confusing because some of the language is stilted. The names of the characters and places may also present a challenge since they are Swedish and therefore may be difficult to pronounce or memorize. The same can be said with the variations in spellings and the similarities in words and names.

Overall, the language is straightforward and easily read.

Structure

The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest by Stieg Larsson is a work of fiction. It is 562 pages in length, broken down into 3 parts and 29 chapters plus an epilogue and extensive notes.

The shortest part is 136 pages in length; the longest part is 222 pages in length; the average length of the parts is 126 pages.

The shortest chapter is 1 page in length; the longest chapter is 18 pages in length; the average length of the chapters is 17 pages.

The Epilogue is 22 pages in length; the Notes section is 2 pages in length.

The story is written in chronological order with some flashbacks and references to the previous two books in the Millennium series, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo and The Girl Who Played with Fire.

Each chapter is dated.

Part 1, INTERMEZZO IN CORRIDOR A, 8-12.iv;

Chapters 1-2 Friday, 8.iv; Chapter 3 Friday, 8.iv - Saturday 9.iv; Chapter 4 Saturday 9.iv - Sunday, 10.iv; Chapter 5 Sunday, 10.iv; Chapter 6 Monday, 11.iv; Chapter 7 Monday, 11.iv - Tuesday, 12.iv



Part 2: HACKER REPUBLIC 1 - 22.v;

Chapter 8 Sunday, 1.v - Monday, 2.v; Chapter 9 Wednesday, 4.v; Chapter 10 Saturday, 7.v - Thursday, 12.v; Chapter 11 Friday, 13.v - Saturday, 14.v; Chapter 12 Sunday, 15.v - Monday, 16.v; Chapter 12 Sunday, 15.v - Monday, 16.v; Chapter 14 Wednesday, 18.v; Chapter 15 Thursday, 19.v - Sunday, 22.v;

PART III - DISK CRASH 27.v - 6.vi;

Chapter 16 Friday, 27.v - Tuesday, 31.v; Chapter 17 Wednesday, 1.vi; Chapter 18 Thursday, 2.vi; Chapter 19 Friday, 3.vi - Saturday 4.vi; Chapter 20 Saturday, 4.vi; Chapter 21 Sunday, 5.vi; Chapter 22 Monday, 6.vi;

PART 4 - REBOOTING SYSTEM I.vii - 7.x;

Chapter 23 Friday, 1.vii - Sunday, 10.vii; Chapter 24 Monday, 11.vii; Chapter 25 Wednesday, 13.vii - Thursday, 14.vii; Chapter 26 Friday, 15.vii; Chapter 27 Friday, 15.vii; Chapter 28 Friday, 15.vii - Saturday, 16.vii; Chapter 29 Saturday, 16.vii - Friday, 7.x; Epilogue: Friday, 2.xii - Sunday, 18.xii



Quotes

"Historians have often struggled to deal with women who do not respect gender distinctions, and nowhere is that distinction more sharply drawn than in the question of armed combat." (Part 1, Front Matter)

"I will dispute that. I called him an imbecile and an incompetent fool. Under the circumstances neither of these epithets could be considered wide of the mark." (Blomkvist to Erlander, Chap. 1, p. 14)

"I would urge you to wait and see. Blomkvist has put the pieces of this puzzle together all by himself; he's way ahead of us on the police force. It will be to our advantage to stay on good terms with him and ensure his cooperation, rather than unleash him to condemn the entire police force in his magazine and elsewhere in the media." (Modig, Chap. 2, p. 27)

"I'm beginning to understand why she felt an uncontrollable urge to slam an axe into your head." (Modig to Zalachenko, Chap. 3, p. 38)

"Gullberg, formerly Senior Administrative Officer at the Security Police, was now seventy-eight years old and had been retired for thirteen years. But intelligence officers never really retire, they just slip into the shadows." (Chap. 5, p. 75)

"Mikael ... I don't think you really appreciate what this involves. It's a complex criminal case, not a straightforward case of sexual harassment or of violence against a woman. If I take on her defense, it could turn out to be a disaster." (Chap. 5, p. 72)

"This is probably the craziest thing I've ever been involved with," he said. "When this is all over I'm going to found an association called 'The Knights of the Idiotic Table' and its purpose will be to arrange an annual dinner where we tell stories about Lisbeth Salander. You're all members." (Blomkvist, Chap. 7, p. 114)

"As she stood there she asked herself whether the whole thing was not a hideous mistake." (Chap. 8, p. 145)

"Salander was happy. Her heart was pounding hard when she started up the hand-held for the first time in two months and ventured on to the Internet." (Chap. 13, p. 235)

"She remembered the nights when, as a twelve-year-old, she had been strapped down in a stimulus-free room at St Stefan's. Teleborian had come into the room again and again to look at her in the glow of the nightlight." (Chap. 16, p. 285)

"It was obvious to Salander that Holm did not like Berger, and he certainly wasted a lot of space talking about how the bitch had said this or done that." (Chap. 21, p. 365)

"He was at a loss to comprehend how this had happened. He had come to the trial convinced that he knew everything about the case." (Chap. 28, p. 474)



Topics for Discussion

The Millennium trilogy, including the books *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played with Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*, were published posthumously. Why do you think Larsson never published any of the books? Do you think that Larsson would have had as much success with the books if they had been published while he was still alive? Explain. How does one receive posthumous publication? Who is in charge of Larsson's works?

Why do you think Blomkvist is so obsessed with Lisbeth Salander? Is it merely a good story or does Blomkvist have some personal investment in the story? How do Blomkvist's colleagues feel about the story? Who is the most helpful when it comes to tracking Salander and performing research?

Discuss Blomkvist's relationship with Erika Berger. How will Berger's new job affect their personal and professional relationships? Do you think Berger will still be willing to help Blomkvist with the case? Explain.

Discuss Lisbeth Salander's history. How did Lisbeth end up in St. Stefan's Children's Psychiatric Clinic? Was there one specific event that caused Lisbeth to be admitted? Who was responsible for the admission? Does Lisbeth know what really happened? What might have happened if Lisbeth had not been released from the clinic?

Discuss the character Zalachenko. What do you think made Zalachenko hate Lisbeth so much? Did Zalachenko feel the same about Camilla? What was Zalachenko's relationship with Lisbeth's mother, Agneta? What might have happened if Zalachenko had been a part of Lisbeth's life since birth? Do you think Lisbeth is like Zalachenko in any way? Explain.

Discuss the relationship between Lisbeth and Ronald Niedermann. Is Niedermann also considered to be mentally unstable? Did Niedermann purposely frame Lisbeth? What was the relationship between Ronald and Zalachenko?

Examine the formation and existence of the Special Section (SSA). What caused the police to create such a section? What was its purpose? Who was in charge? Why was Zalachenko recruited? How did the SSA change since Gullberg's retirement? Do you think the SSA will continue? Explain.