

**DAVID  
LAGERCRAINTZ**

**THE GIRL  
WHO  
LIVED  
TWICE**

**THE GIRL  
WITH THE  
DRAGON  
TATTOO  
IS BACK**

CONTINUING  
**STIEG  
LARSSON'S**  
MILLENNIUM SERIES

*David Lagercrantz*

THE GIRL WHO  
LIVED TWICE

*Translated from Swedish by  
George Goulding*



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## PROLOGUE

A beggar no-one had seen before appeared in the neighbourhood that summer. No-one knew him by name, and no-one seemed to care much about him, but to a young couple who passed him every morning he was the “crazy dwarf”. He was in fact around one metre fifty tall, but he was certainly erratic, and he would occasionally spring up and grab people by the arm, babbling incoherently.

Most of the day he sat on a piece of cardboard right by the fountain and the statue of Thor in Mariatorget, and there he commanded a measure of respect. With his head held high and his back always straight he looked like a chieftain who had fallen on hard times. That was all the social capital he had left, and it was why some people still tossed him coins or banknotes, as though they could sense a lost greatness. And they were not mistaken. There had indeed been a time when people bowed before him. But all repute, all status had long since been stripped from him. He was missing several fingers and the dark patches on his cheeks did not improve his appearance. They looked to be a shadow of death itself.

The only thing which stood out was his quilted down jacket, a blue Marmot parka which must have been expensive. It looked so out of place, not just because of all the dirt and stains on it, but also because it was much too wintry a garment to be worn at the height of summer in Stockholm. An oppressive heat lay over the city, and as the sweat

trickled down the man's cheeks, passers-by studied the jacket with a pained expression, as if the very sight of it made them suffer the more from the high temperatures. But the beggar was never without it.

He looked lost to the world and seemed unlikely ever to be a threat to anybody, but it was later said that at the beginning of August a more determined expression came over him. On the afternoon of the 11th he was seen painstakingly writing out a screed on lined A4 paper and, later that same evening, he stuck it up like a wall newspaper on the bus stop at Södra station.

It was a rambling account of a storm and referred by name to a member of the government. A young medical intern called Else Sandberg, who was waiting for the number 4 bus, managed to decipher parts of it and could not help being intrigued, professionally. Her best guess at a diagnosis was paranoid schizophrenia.

But when the bus arrived ten minutes later, she forgot all about it, left only with a feeling of unease. It was like the curse of Cassandra: nobody was going to believe the man because the story he was telling was so wrapped up in madness. Yet somehow his message must have got through, because the very next morning a man in a white shirt got out of a blue Audi and tore the wall newspaper down, crumpling the shreds of it and taking them back to his car.

On the night of Friday, August 14, the beggar made his way over to Norra Bantorget to get hold of some moonshine. There he met another drunk, a former industrial worker named Heikki Järvinen, from Österbotten.

“Hey, brother. Are you desperate?” Järvinen said.

There was no answer, not at first. Then a stream of words came pouring out, which to Heikki sounded like a load of bragging, and he hissed “what total bullshit”, adding needlessly – he admitted as much himself – that the man looked like a “bloody Chinaman”.

“Me Khamba-chen . . . hate China!” the beggar yelled at him.

Then he punched Heikki with his damaged hand and, even though there was no skill or technique there, the blow carried an unexpected authority. Heikki was bleeding from the mouth and swearing profusely

in Finnish as he staggered away, down into the Tunnelbana at Central Station.

The beggar was next seen back in his familiar neighbourhood, very drunk and clearly feeling ill. Saliva ran from his mouth and he was holding his throat and muttering:

“Very tired . . . Must find dharamsala, and Ihawa, very good Ihawa . . . Do you know?”

He never waited for an answer but crossed Ringvägen like a sleep-walker, and soon after that he threw an unlabelled bottle onto the ground and disappeared amongst the trees and bushes of Tantolunden. A light rain fell overnight and in the morning a north wind was blowing. By eight the wind had died down and the skies had cleared, and the man was seen on his knees, leaning up against a birch tree.

On the street, preparations were underway for the Midnattslopp race that coming night. The neighbourhood was in a festive mood.

The beggar was dead.

No-one cared or knew that this strange man had lived a life of unimaginable hardship and heroism, still less that he had only ever loved one woman, and that she too, in another time, had died in devastating solitude.

PART I

THE UNKNOWN

Many dead never have a name and some not even a grave.

Others get one white cross amongst thousands of others, as in the military cemeteries in France.

Some few have a whole monument dedicated to them, like the Arc de Triomphe in Paris or the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Alexander Garden in Moscow.

## CHAPTER 1

15.viii

The first person to pluck up the courage to cross the street and go up to the tree, only to discover that the man was dead, was the writer Ingela Dufva. It was half past eleven by then. The smell was terrible. Flies and mosquitoes were buzzing about, and Dufva was not being entirely truthful when she later said there was something deeply moving about the figure.

The man had vomited and suffered from diarrhoea. Instead of empathy, she felt very troubled and contemplated with dread the prospect of her own death. Even Sandra Lindevall and Samir Eman, the police officers who arrived at the scene fifteen minutes later looked upon their assignment as some sort of punishment.

They photographed the man and examined the immediate surroundings, but their search did not extend to the slope below Zinkens väg, where a half bottle of alcohol lay with a thin layer of grit in the bottom. Even though neither of them thought the incident had crime “written all over it”, they examined his head and chest with care. They found no trace of violence, nor any other sign that pointed to the cause of death, apart from the thick drool which had run from his mouth. Having discussed the matter with their superiors, they decided not to cordon off the area.

While waiting for an ambulance to come and take the body away, they went through the pockets of the filthy, shapeless and quite unsuitable

down jacket. They found many pieces of the translucent paper in which hotdogs are sold in the street, some coins, a twenty-kronor note and a receipt from an office supplies store on Hornsgatan, but no I.D. card or other papers that might have led them to identify the dead man.

They supposed it would not be difficult to find out who he was. There was no shortage of distinctive features. But like so much else, this proved to be a mistaken assumption. When the autopsy was carried out at the forensic medicine unit in Solna, X-rays were taken of the man's teeth. No match was found for them or for the prints from his remaining fingers in any database. Having sent off some samples to the National Forensics Laboratory, medical examiner Dr Fredrika Nyman checked some telephone numbers handwritten on a piece of paper found in one of the man's trouser pockets, though it did not in any way fall within her responsibilities to do so.

One of the numbers was that of Mikael Blomkvist at *Millennium* magazine. For a few hours she thought no more about it. But later in the evening, after a particularly upsetting row with one of her teenage daughters, she reminded herself that in the past year alone she had performed autopsies on three bodies which were then buried without being identified, and she swore at that, and at life in general.

She was forty-nine, a single mother of two, and she suffered from back pain and insomnia and the sense that life was meaningless. Without thinking it through she rang Mikael Blomkvist.

The telephone buzzed. It was an unknown number and Blomkvist ignored it. He had just left his apartment and was on his way down Hornsgatan towards Slussen and Gamla Stan with no clue where he was heading. He wandered aimlessly through the lanes until at last he sat down at an open-air café on Österlånggatan and ordered a Guinness.

It was seven in the evening, but still warm. Laughter and applause could be heard coming from Skeppsholmen and he looked up at the blue sky and felt a mild, pleasant breeze coming off the water. He tried to persuade himself that life was not, after all, so bad. But even after a beer

and then a second he wasn't convinced, so he paid and decided to head home to do some work. Or perhaps he would immerse himself in a T.V series or a thriller.

Then almost immediately he changed his mind and set off towards Mosebacke and Fiskargatan. Lisbeth Salander lived at Fiskargatan 9. He was not at all confident she would be at home – after the funeral of Holger Palmgren, her former guardian, she had travelled around Europe and only sporadically answered Blomkvist's e-mails and texts – but he would try his luck. He took the steps up from the square and turned to face the building opposite the apartment block. He was amazed. Since he had last been there the entire blank wall had been covered by an enormous work of street art. But he spent no time studying it, even though it was a painting to lose oneself in, full of surreal detail, like a funny little man in tartan trousers standing barefoot on a green Tunnelbana carriage.

He keyed in the front-door code, got into the lift and glared at the mirror inside. You would hardly know that the summer had been hot and sunny. He saw himself pale and hollow-eyed and he was weighed down still by the stock market crash which he had been wrestling with all through July. It was an important story, no question. It had been a rout, caused not just by high valuations and over-inflated expectations but also by hacker attacks and disinformation campaigns. By now every investigative journalist worth his salt was digging into it, and even though he had uncovered a great deal – among other things he had discovered which troll factory in Russia had chiefly been spreading the lies – it felt as if the world was managing just fine without his efforts. He should probably take some time off, get some much-needed exercise, and maybe take better care of his colleague Erika, who was in the throes of getting a divorce from Greger.

The lift came to a halt and he pushed open the wrought-iron gate and got out, already convinced that his visit would be a waste of time. Salander was almost certainly away, and was definitely ignoring him. But then he saw that the door to her apartment was wide open, and remembered how frightened he had been all summer that her enemies would go

after her. He rushed in over the threshold. “Hello . . . hello!” he shouted, and was met by the smell of fresh paint and cleaning products.

He heard footsteps behind him. Someone was snorting like a bull on the stairs and he spun around and found himself confronting two stocky men in blue overalls. They were carrying something large, and he was so agitated that he was unable to grasp this perfectly normal scene.

“What are you doing?” he said.

“What does it look like?”

It looked like two removal men lugging a blue sofa, a stylish new piece of designer furniture, and Lisbeth – he of all people knew – was not one for stylish interiors. He was about to say something when he heard a voice from inside the apartment. For an instant he thought it was Lisbeth’s and he brightened. But this was only wishful thinking. It didn’t sound remotely like her.

“A distinguished visitor. To what do I owe this honour?”

He turned and saw a tall black woman standing on the threshold, contemplating him with a mocking look. She was wearing jeans and an elegant grey blouse. Her hair was in braids and her almond eyes sparkled, and he became even more confused. Did he know her?

“No, no,” he managed. “I just . . .”

“You just . . .”

“Got the wrong floor.”

“Or didn’t know the young lady had sold her apartment?”

He did not. And now he felt uncomfortable, especially since the woman kept smiling at him. He was almost relieved when she turned to the removal men to make sure the sofa didn’t bang against the door-frame, and then vanished into the apartment again. He wanted to get away, to digest the news. He wanted to drink more Guinness. But he stood there as if frozen to the spot, and glanced at the letterbox. The name there was no longer v.kulla, but linder. Who the hell was Linder? He searched the name on his mobile and up came an image of the woman.

Kadi Linder, psychologist and non-executive member of various boards, it didn’t give him much to go on and he was intrigued. But most

of all he thought about Lisbeth, and he only just managed to compose himself when Kadi Linder reappeared in the doorway. Now she was not only teasing, but curious too. Her eyes flicked back and forth. She was slim, with slender wrists and pronounced collar bones, and there was a waft of perfume in the air.

“Come on, tell me. Did you really come to the wrong place?”

“I’ll pass on that one,” he said. Not a good answer, he realised at once.

But he understood from her smile that she’d seen through his confusion and he wanted to get away, leaving as little as possible behind. Under no circumstances would he reveal that Lisbeth Salander had lived at this address under an assumed name, regardless of what Linder did or did not know.

“That doesn’t make me any less curious,” she said.

He laughed – as if the whole thing was a silly private matter.

“So you’re not here to check me out? I mean, this place wasn’t exactly cheap.”

“Unless you’ve cut off a horse’s head and left it in someone’s bed, I should probably leave you in peace.”

“Can’t say I remember every detail of the negotiations, but I don’t think that came up.”

“I’m happy to hear it. In that case I’ll wish you all the best,” he said with feigned ease. He wanted to leave together with the removal men who were on their way out of the apartment, but Linder evidently hoped to keep the conversation going and was nervously fiddling with her braids. It struck him that what he had construed as an irritating self-confidence might in fact be a cover for something quite different.

“Do you know her?” she said.

“Who?”

“The woman who lived here?”

He turned the question around.

“Do you?”

“No,” she said. “I don’t even know her name. But I still like her.”

“Why’s that?”

“Despite all the chaos on the stock exchange, the bidding turned out to be pretty crazy. There was no way I was going to keep up, so I dropped out. But I still got the apartment because ‘the young lady’ – as the lawyer called her – wanted me to have it.”

“Strange.”

“Isn’t it?”

“Maybe you’d done something the young lady liked?”

“I’m actually best known in the media for having run-ins with old boys who sit on boards.”

“It’s possible that she approves of that kind of thing.”

“Maybe. If I can tempt you with a moving-in beer, we could talk about it. I have to say” – she hesitated again – “I loved your story about the twins. It was so touching.”

“Thanks,” he said. “You’re very kind. But I really do have to go.”

She nodded and he just managed a “See you”. He hardly could have said how he got away, only that he emerged into the summer evening. He didn’t notice the two new surveillance cameras over the street entrance, or even the hot-air balloon immediately above. He crossed Mosebacke and continued down towards Urvädersgränd. Only at Götgatan did he slow down, and he felt totally deflated. All that had happened was Lisbeth had moved, which he should have welcomed. She was safer now. But instead of being glad for her, Blomkvist felt it like a slap in the face. It was absurd.

She was Lisbeth Salander. She was who she was. But he felt hurt all the same. She could have given some indication. He reached for his mobile to send her a text, a question, but no, best let it go. He walked along Hornsgatan and saw that the youngest participants were already running their lap of the Midnattslopp and he stared in astonishment at the number of parents cheering and clapping from the pavement, as if he simply could not understand their excitement. He had to concentrate to cross the street in a gap between the runners. Up on Bellmansgatan his thoughts continued to meander, and he remembered the last time he had been with Salander.

It was at Kvarnen restaurant on the evening of Holger's funeral, and neither of them had found it easy to talk. Under the circumstances that was hardly surprising. The only thing that stayed with him from their encounter was her answer to his question:

“What are you going to do now?”

“I will be the hunter and not the hunted.”

*The hunter and not the hunted.*

He never managed to get her to explain, and he remembered how she had later disappeared across Medblomkvistarplatsen, wearing a black tailored suit which made her look like an angry boy reluctantly dressed up for some formal occasion. It was in early July, not that long ago, but already it felt like an age. He thought about that and other things as he continued home. When at last he had opened his door and settled into the sofa with a Pilsner Urquell, his mobile rang again.

It was a medical examiner, a doctor by the name of Fredrika Nyman.



## CHAPTER 2

15.viii

Salander was in a hotel room on Manezhnaya Square in Moscow, her eyes on her laptop, and she watched as Mikael Blomkvist emerged from the building entrance on Fiskargatan. He did not look his usual confident self, instead he seemed lost. She felt a pang of something she did not fully recognise, and did not feel minded to probe. She glanced up from her screen at the glass dome in the square outside, glittering with light of all colours.

The city which until recently had held no interest for her now beckoned, and it crossed her mind that she should just drop everything and go out on a binge. But that was idiotic, she had to remain disciplined. She had more or less been living at her laptop recently, sometimes she hardly slept. And yet she looked much neater than she had for a long time. She had had her hair cut short. Her piercings were gone and she was wearing a white shirt and her black suit, just as she had at the funeral, not actually to honour Holger, but because it had become habit and she wanted to blend in better.

She had resolved to strike first, not wait like some cornered prey, and that was why she now found herself in Moscow, and why she had arranged for cameras to be installed at Fiskargatan in Stockholm. But she was paying a higher price than expected. Not only because it brought back her past and kept her awake at night. It was also the fact that her enemies were hiding behind smokescreens and impossible encryptions,

and she had to spend hours covering her tracks. She was living like a prisoner on the run. Nothing of what she was searching for came easily to her, and it was only now, after a month's work, that she was nearing her objective. But it was hard to know for certain, and sometimes she wondered if the enemy was, in spite of everything, always one step ahead.

Today, when she had been out on reconnaissance, she had felt she was being watched, and sometimes at night she would listen for footsteps in the hotel corridor, especially those of one man – she was sure it was a man – suffering from dysmetria, an irregularity in his gait, who often slowed down outside her door, and who seemed to be listening too.

She pressed rewind. Again Blomkvist came out of the apartment on Fiskargatan with a hang-dog look, and she reflected on that as she drained her glass of whisky. Dark clouds drifted over the State Duma towards Red Square and the Kremlin. A storm was on its way, and that was perhaps just as well. She got up and considered taking a shower or a bath, then settled for changing her shirt, choosing a black one. That seemed appropriate. From a hidden compartment in her suitcase she retrieved her Beretta Cheetah, the pistol she had bought on her second day in Moscow, and slotted it into the holster under her jacket. She sat on the bed and contemplated the room.

She did not like it, nor the hotel for that matter. It was too luxurious, too ostentatious, and it was not just that there were men like her father socialising down in the bar, pompous shits with a sense of unconditional entitlement to their mistresses and subordinates. There were also eyes on her, and word could be passed to the intelligence services or to gangsters. Often she found herself sitting as she was now, fists clenched, ready for a fight.

She went into the bathroom and splashed cold water on her face. It didn't help much. Her forehead was tense from lack of sleep, her head ached. Was it time to go, so soon? Probably just as well. She listened first for sounds from the corridor, then slipped out. Her room was on the twentieth floor, close to the lifts. A man of middle age was already waiting, good-looking with short hair, wearing jeans and a leather jacket

and a black shirt just like hers. She knew she had seen him somewhere before. There was something strange about his eyes, they shone with different colours. She ignored him and stared at the floor as they rode down in the lift.

She stepped into the lobby and went straight out into the square. Ahead of her the large glass dome sparkled in the dark. Beneath this revolving map of the world was a four-storey shopping centre. On top, a bronze statue of St George and the Dragon. St George was Moscow's patron saint and she ran into him everywhere in the city, with his sword raised. Sometimes she put a hand to her left shoulder blade, a gesture of protection for her own dragon. Or she would caress an old bullet wound in the same shoulder, or her hip, where there was a scar from a knife injury, as if to remind herself of past pain.

Her mind was on conflagrations and disasters, and she thought also of her mother. Yet she was still careful to avoid surveillance cameras. Her movements were therefore tense and irregular as she hurried towards Tverskoy Boulevard, the large, splendid avenue with its parks and gardens, and she did not pause until she reached Versailles, one of the fanciest restaurants in the city.

The building looked like a baroque palace, with columns, gold ornaments and crystal, an entire glittering seventeenth-century pastiche. She wanted nothing more than to get far away. But tonight a party was to be held there, for the city's wealthiest, and from a distance she could observe the preparations. So far the only people there were small groups of beautiful young women, most likely call girls hired for the occasion. The staff were also hard at work making the final arrangements.

As she drew closer she caught sight of the host. Vladimir Kuznetsov. He was at the front entrance in a white dinner jacket and patent-leather shoes, and even though he was not old, barely fifty, he looked like Santa Claus with his white hair and beard, and a fat belly at odds with his thin legs. Officially he was something of a success story, a petty criminal fallen on hard times who had turned his life around to become a celebrity chef specialising in bear steak and mushroom sauces. But covertly

he ran a string of troll factories that spewed out fake news, often with an anti-Semitic undertone. Kuznetsov had not only caused chaos and influenced political elections. He also had blood on his hands.

He was guilty of fomenting genocide and had turned hatred into big business. The mere sight of him at the entrance gave Salander a boost. She felt the outline of her Beretta in its holster and looked around her. Kuznetsov was tugging nervously at his beard – it was to be his big night.

A string quartet, which Salander knew would be followed by the Russian Swing jazz band, was playing inside. A red carpet had been rolled out beneath a broad black awning. It was bounded by rope and bodyguards who stood in serried ranks, kitted out in grey suits and ear-pieces. All were armed. Kuznetsov studied his watch. Not a single guest had arrived – perhaps it was some kind of game? Nobody wanted to be the first.

But the street was full of people who had come to gawp. Word had clearly got out that V.I.P.s were expected, and that was no bad thing, Salander thought. She would melt into the crowd more easily. Then the rain began to fall, first a drizzle, soon a downpour. There was a flash of lightning in the distance. Thunder rolled. The crowd dispersed, except for a few hardy figures with umbrellas who stayed put. Before long the first limousines and guests arrived. Kuznetsov greeted them one by one with a bow, and a woman beside him ticked off names in a little black book. The restaurant slowly filled up with middle-aged men and even more young women.

Salander heard the hum of voices from within and, more faintly, the music from the string quartet. Every now and then she glimpsed figures she had come across during her research, and she observed how Kuznetsov's expressions and movements varied according to the status of each arrival. All guests received the particular smile and bow he considered they merited, and the really distinguished ones were treated to a little joke too, though most of the laughter came from Kuznetsov himself.

He grinned and chortled like a court jester, and Salander stood frozen and wet, staring at the spectacle. A guard noticed her and nodded at a

colleague – she had become too absorbed and that was not good, not good at all. She pretended to walk away but instead hid in a doorway a little way off. She noticed then that her hands were shaking and she did not think it was because of the rain or the cold. Nervous tension had brought her close to breaking point.

She pulled out her mobile to check everything was prepared. The attack had to be perfectly coordinated, or she would be lost. She went through it once, twice, three times. But the minutes were running away from her and she began to have doubts. The rain fell and nothing was happening. It was looking more and more like yet another missed opportunity.

The guests seemed all to have arrived. Even Kuznetsov had gone inside. The party was in full swing, the men were already knocking back shots and groping the girls. She decided to go back to the hotel.

But at that moment another limousine drew up and a woman by the entrance hurried inside to fetch Kuznetsov, who came shambling out of the restaurant with sweat on his forehead and a glass of champagne in his hand. Salander decided to stay after all. This guest was important, that much was obvious from the behaviour of the security guards and the tension in the air, as well as the ridiculous look on Kuznetsov's face. Salander slunk back into her doorway. But nobody emerged from the limousine.

No chauffeur jumped out into the rain to open the door, the car just stood there. Kuznetsov straightened his hair and bow tie, pulled in his stomach and drained his glass. Salander stopped trembling. She picked up something in Kuznetsov's eyes that she recognised only too well, and with no further hesitation she launched her attack.

Then she tucked her mobile into her pocket and let the programme codes do their work while she looked around, noting every detail of her surroundings with photographic precision: the body language of the guards, the proximity of their hands to their weapons, the gaps between their shoulders along the red carpet, the irregularities and puddles on the pavement before her.

Motionless, almost catatonic, she stood watching right up to the moment when the chauffeur got out of the limousine, unfurled an umbrella and opened the back door. Then she moved forward with cat-like steps, her hand on the grip of the pistol inside her jacket.

PURCHASE A COPY OF

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**THE GIRL  
WHO  
LIVED  
TWICE**

**DAVID  
LAGERCRAINTZ**

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