

The Girl Who Played with Fire (2010)

Rated R. Our Ratings: V-7 ;L-6 ; S/N-8. Running time: 2 hour 9 min.

I am the scorn of all my Lisbeth and Mikael finally
adversaries, meet after a harrowing
incident.

a horror to my neighbors, 2010 Music Box Films

an object of dread to my
acquaintances;

those who see me in the street flee from me.

I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;

I have become like a broken vessel.

For I hear the whispering of many—

terror all around!—

as they scheme together against me,

as they plot to take my life.

Psalm 33:11-13

Although it's unlikely that Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace)
would be familiar with Psalm 33, her pre

dicament in this thriller could engender similar feelings in
her heart and mind. In this second of the

trilogy of films based on the Millennium novels written by the
late Stieg Larsson, the girl with the dragon tattoo on her back
is being sought by the police, some mysterious gangsters, and
her one-time lover and true friend, journalist Mikael

Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist).

Lisbeth has been out of Sweden for the past year enjoying a respite from the horrors inflicted on her. She had left the country with a large supply of money, at the end of the first film, and has spent part of her vacation squirreling her millions in various banks. Now she is back and on the run because police inspector Bublanski (Johan Kylan) is convinced that she is behind the murder of a young journalist and his girlfriend who had been researching a criminal organization trafficking in young women brought in from Eastern Europe. The two had come to Mikael with their carefully researched story, and he was about to publish it in his magazine Millennium. Certain that Lisbeth did not kill them, he searches for her. She is conducting her own search, especially when her sometime lover, Miriam Wu (Yasmine Garbi) is brutally beaten by a mysterious blond giant named Ronald, whom, we eventually find out, is more than just a goon working for the gang. Along the way Lisbeth discovers past family secrets, and we learn the meaning of the film's title—it is a scene in which we see that Lisbeth plays for keeps.

This is not a film very suitable for a discussion group, filled as it is with sex scenes and intense, brutal violence. However, there can be no doubt as to the effectiveness of the cast (especially Noomi Rapace), so well directed by Daniel Alfredson, and the sudden, twisting turns of the plot—though pared down far more than in the first film, and thus not quite as interesting. This is a thriller without need of stuntmen or special effects, and thus much more satisfying than the rest of the lot, even Salt. It is a sad commentary on U.S. audiences and their refusal to accept subtitles that Hollywood feels compelled to make its own version of the novels.