

0. SOURCES FOR LISBETH SALANDER - Story Preface

1. BEHIND THE SCENES

2. EXPO - STIEG'S REAL-LIFE MAGAZINE

3. SOURCES for MIKAEL BLOMKVIST

4. SOURCES FOR LISBETH SALANDER

5. PICTURES - THE GIRL with the DRAGON TATTOO

6. PICTURES - THE GIRL WHO PLAYED WITH FIRE

7. PICTURES - THE GIRL WHO KICKED THE HORNETS' NEST



We know for sure that Stieg Larsson modeled Lisbeth Salander ("the girl with the dragon tattoo") on Pippi Longstocking (the girl who follows her own path) because he said so:

I have tried to swim against the tide compared to ordinary crime novels. I wanted to create main characters who differ dramatically from the ordinary crime characters. My point of departure was what Pippi Longstocking would be like as an adult. Would she be called a sociopath because she looked upon society in a different way and did not have any social competences? She turned into Lisbeth Salander who has many masculine features. (Email from Stieg Larsson to his publisher, translated by Dorte Jakobsen.)

What is the source for Lisbeth's name? Perhaps Larsson simply made it up. Perhaps he was thinking about Kalle Blomkvist's friend - Eva-Lotta Lisander - in Lindgren's trilogy. Or ... perhaps he wanted to use the first name of a girl whom he reportedly saw being raped when he - and she - were teenagers. The best we can do, on Lisbeth's name, is speculate.

Was there someone else who played a role in the creation of Stieg's memorable character? His family says that Lisbeth is based, at least in part, on Larsson's niece, Therese:

When he tried to explain the main character of his novels to his brother, Larsson reached for a closer analogy.

"She's like Therese," he said. (Rolling Stone, December 23, 2010, page 122 - or - page 5 in the online version.)

At the height of her uncle's popularity, Therese Larsson works as a nurse's aid in a Swedish hospital. When she was younger, though, she wore black leather jackets, black leather boots and applied black makeup. Stieg always said he liked the look.

While he was writing the Salander books, Stieg frequently wrote to his niece:

In the two years Larsson spent writing his novels, he often e-mailed Therese to ask her questions about her life: what she thought about, what she would do in certain situations. She told him about her struggles with anorexia and about her passion for kickboxing; she had been taking lessons since she was 15...

Lisbeth Salander is like you," Larsson told her. "Soft on the outside, but harder inside." (Rolling Stone, December 23, 2010 issue, page 122 - or - page 6 in the online version.)

Something else about Therese is like Lisbeth - she has a large tattoo. It's a rose, on her shoulder, but when she was young she often said she wanted a dragon tattoo.

What might be the source of Salander's dragon tattoo? Lisbeth seeks refuge in a church - in the general location of her flat at Lundagatan - to avoid capture by thugs who wish to harm her. Nearby is the Maria Magdalena Kyrka which has a dedication stone near its front door. On that dedication stone is a most impressive dragon.

Let's take a virtual trip to other places, and areas, made famous in the stories.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SOURCES-FOR-LISBETH-SALANDER-Stieg-Larsson-Behind-the-Dragon-Tattoo)

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SOURCES-FOR-LISBETH-SALANDER-Stieg-Larsson-Behind-the-Dragon-Tattoo>

Media Stream



Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board

Astrid Lindgren created a children's fictional character whom she called Pippi Longstocking (in its English translation).

This particular book, featuring that character—translated as *Pippi Goes on Board*—was originally published in 1946.

Popular in the late 1960s, the books were turned into both a television series and a film. [The book](#) and [the films](#) are still available today.

Stieg Larsson modeled Lisbeth Salander, in part, on Pippi Longstocking. Lisbeth, like Pippi, looks differently than most girls her age. She dresses differently. She acts differently. She tends to follow her own path.

Just like Lisbeth.

Book cover, from a work by Astrid Lindgren published in 1946, online via Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Pippi-Longstocking-Goes-on-Board>



Lisbeth Salander - Eva-Lotta Lisander

Image of book cover, online courtesy [Astrid Lindgren.se](http://AstridLindgren.se)

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lisbeth-Salander-Eva-Lotta-Lisander>



Lisbeth Salander - Dragon at the Church

Image depicting the founder's stone, with a dragon, at the Maria Magdalena Kyrka in Stockholm.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lisbeth-Salander-Dragon-at-the-Church>