

Film Review: David Fincher's Stunning 'The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 14, 2011 - 3:26pm

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CHICAGO – David Fincher's "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" comes with waves of expectations from fans of the Stieg Larsson books, the Swedish original films, the director's previous beloved works, and even drama over a certain national outlet breaking an agreed-upon embargo. Could it possibly live up to the hype? If you can let it go and just appreciate the film for what it is — absolutely. Fincher proves yet again that he needs to be near the top of any conversation of the best working directors, streamlining this admittedly-still-flawed source material and making a brutal thriller that is quite simply the best possible film that could be made from it.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Every decision made here, from how the novel was refined to the controversial casting of Rooney Mara to one of the best technical teams of the year was the right one. The hype has resulted in a few predictable reviews suggesting that the film doesn't live up to it. Nonsense. This is a work that will be recognized as brilliant the further it gets away from the storm surrounding its release. In ten years, no critic will admit to any issues with it upon its initial release.



[Read Brian Tallerico's full review of "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" in our reviews section.](#) [14]

Mikael Blomkvist (a perfectly world-weary Daniel Craig) is going through a career crisis. In what could be called the prologue to the action of the film, Mikael is forced to step down from his position at Millennium Magazine after he's successfully set-up by a fake source slandering one of Sweden's most prominent businessmen. With his tail between his legs, Mikael attends a meeting with the uber-wealthy Henrik Vanger (Christopher Plummer), a man ready to write his biography but haunted by the tragedy that forever shaped his life. Decades ago, Henrik's daughter Harriet disappeared. Everyone in the family, including Martin (Stellan Skarsgard) and Anita (Joely Richardson), recognizes that the loss of Harriet and the questions surrounding her disappearance altered the course of one of their country's most important companies. Can Mikael figure out what happened to her?

While Mikael investigates the past, Lisbeth Salander (Rooney Mara) uses the modern investigative tools of the present. The bisexual recluse with remarkable technological skills and a unique fashion sense was hired by the Vangers to background check Blomkvist. So, when she is coincidentally brought in as a research assistant to help him with his book, she already knows everything there is to know about him, most of it obtained illegally. Imagine meeting someone who knows more about you than your family and friends. Especially in this version of the book, there's a sense that Lisbeth is a counterpart to the missing Harriet. There's the girl about which Mikael needs to learn her secret – the mystery at the center of the piece – counterbalanced by the girl who knows all the secrets about Mikael. At first, it seems like Harriet and Lisbeth couldn't more distinctly different and yet I believe the core of the source material is the realization that they have faced the same evil in dealing with truly horrendous men.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico's full "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" review.](#) [14]

"The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" stars Daniel Craig, Rooney Mara, Christopher Plummer, Robin Wright, and Stellan Skarsgard. It was written by Stephen Zaillian and directed by David Fincher. It is rated R and opens on December 20th, 2011.



The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

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