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Astrid Lindgren's book, translated into English (from Swedish) as *Kalle Blomkvist and Rasmus*, includes a cover illustration by Kerstin Thorvall. This edition of the work was published, in 1953, by Raben & Sjogren.

Knowing the story of *Expo*, one sees a bit of Stieg Larsson in [Mikael Blomkvist](#). But there is much more to the fictional character than autobiographical highlights.

Let's start with this question - one which Stieg put to himself and his friends. What would it be like if our favorite childhood characters, from our favorite fictional stories, grew up? As a corollary to that bit of pondering, who were some of Stieg's personal favorites?

Reading stories in his grandparent's cottage, in northern Sweden, Stieg fell in love with the characters of [Astrid Lindgren](#), Sweden's much-loved children's author (who was born and raised on a farm near Vimmerby). One of his favorites was Kalle Blomkvist, boy detective, who was unafraid to tackle investigations normally reserved for the most skilled police officers.

English-speaking readers never met [Kalle Blomkvist](#), per se. They knew the thirteen-year-old as Bill Bergson:

Lindgren's romantic saga is of Bill Bergson, a more-or-less ordinary Swedish boy with an extraordinary fascination for detective work. He identifies clues, investigates enigmas, and solves the riddle surrounding a mysterious stranger while the police and other adults overlook or dismiss the whole matter. (Dismissing: Webster's Quotations, Facts and Phrases, by Icon Group International, Inc., page 267.)

Stieg read the Kalle-Blomkvist trilogy as Astrid Lindgren originally wrote it - in Swedish. The three books made a deep impression on him. They are:

- [Bill Bergson, Master Detective](#) (1946) - original title: [Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist](#)
- [Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously](#) (1951) - original title: [Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist Lever Farligt](#)
- [Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue](#) (1953) - original title: [Kalle Blomkvist och Rasmus](#)

Admiring Astrid Lindgren's characters, Larsson refers to them - repeatedly - in his own trilogy. Also an activist, he must have appreciated Lindgren's personal willingness to take on the Establishment. Some authors, in fact, observe that Lindgren's greatest legacy was not her books:

Arguably, Lindgren's greatest legacy to Sweden has been her influence on the rights and protection of society's most vulnerable, from children and the poor to animals.

In 1976, [the] Swedish newspaper Expressen published an allegorical opinion piece she wrote on an unjust tax-system loophole that saw self-employed writers paying 102% tax on their earnings. Not only did it lead to an amendment in the taxation law, but it also influenced the fall of the Social Democrats, who had been in power for 44 years. (Lonely Planet Sweden, by Becky Ohlsen and Cristian Bonetto, page 42.)

Larsson gives his Blomkvist a name (Carl Mikael) which invites a nickname ("Kalle"). Because he despises that nickname, Blomkvist always uses his middle name (Mikael):

In spite of his respect for Astrid Lindgren - whose books he loved - he detested the nickname. It took him several years and far weightier journalistic successes before the nickname began to fade, but he still cringed if ever the name was used in his hearing. (The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, by Stieg Larsson, pages 13-14 of the paperback edition.)

Why does Blomkvist despise the name “Kalle,” when it is used as a reference to him? Because Blomkvist views the name as an insult when it is used for an adult. “Kalle” is a fictional, teenaged detective. Blomkvist is a professional, adult investigative journalist. He resents any inference which ties him to boyhood.

Using the name “Kalle,” for Mikael Blomkvist, would be the same as calling Woodward and Bernstein (the Watergate investigative journalists) the “Hardy Boys” (teenaged detectives in the books by Franklin W. Dixon). It’s an insult, and Mikael Blomkvist views it that way.

His sidekick in Stieg’s trilogy, however, cannot resist the temptation. Actually, Lisbeth Salander makes it even more insulting when she repeatedly refers to Mikael as: “Kalle ****ing Blomkvist.”

What are the sources for Lisbeth Salander? We can readily imagine that Stieg viewed her as a grown-up Pippi Longstocking, but ... where did he get the idea for a dragon tattoo?

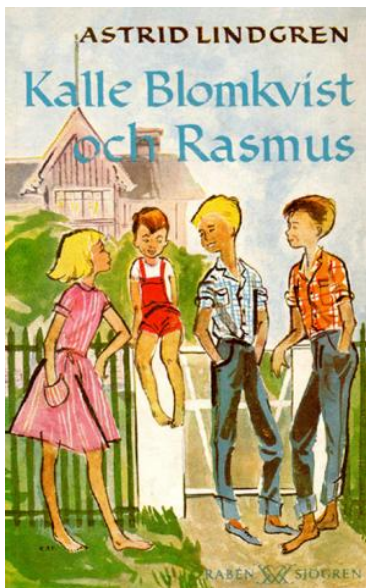
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Media Stream



Kalle Blomkvist and Rasmus

Astrid Lindgren’s book, translated into English (from Swedish) as *Kalle Blomkvist and Rasmus*, includes a cover illustration by Kerstin Thorvall. This edition of the work was published, in 1953, by Raben & Sjogren.

Throughout Stieg Larsson’s “Millennium Trilogy,” Lisbeth Salander—the “Girl with the Dragon Tattoo”—refers to Mikael Blomkvist as “Kalle Blomkvist.” It is reasonable to conclude that Larsson, the writer, remembered the Kalle Blomkvist stories he’d read, and loved, as a child.

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Kalle Blomkvist

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Astrid Lindgren

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Astrid Lindgren - Childhood Home

Image online, courtesy Astrid Lindgren's World.

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Astrid Lindgren - Childhood Photo

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Astrid Lindgren - Childhood Farm

Image online, courtesy Astrid Lindgren's World.

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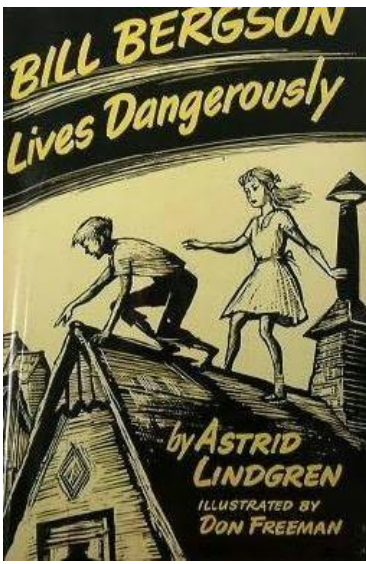


Bill Bergson - Master Detective

Image of book cover, online courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.

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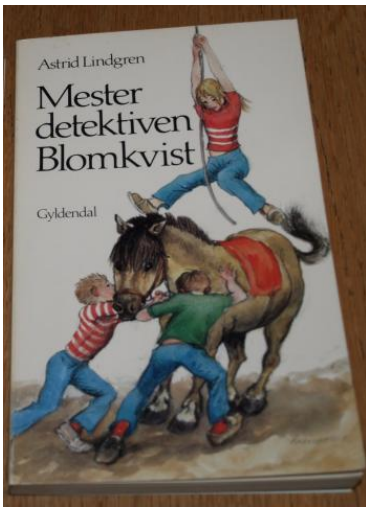


Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously

Image of book cover, online courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.

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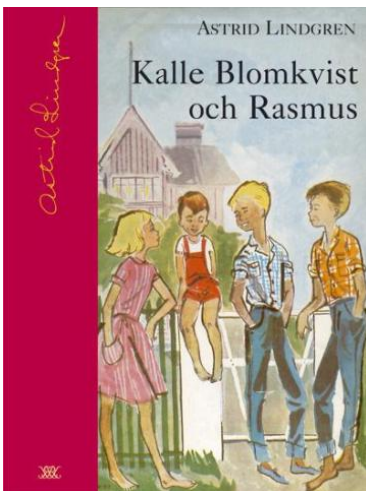


Stieg Larsson - Mesterdetektiven Kalle Blomkvist

Image of book cover, *Mester detektiven Kalle Blomkvist*, online courtesy [Dorte Hummelshøj Jakobsen](#).

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Stieg Larsson - Kalle Blomkvist och Rasmus

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