



by Mechthild Gläser
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Children's & Young Adults'

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City of Shades and Deceit

Stadt aus Trug und Schatten

review

Gläser's joyful romp of a debut, and the first in a new trilogy, has moments of humour, fear, sadness, frustration and everything in between. With drive and excitement, it successfully mixes a simple teenage love story with a rites-of-passage tale.

In *City of Shades and Deceit*, when the body sleeps the soul walks. There are Sleepers, whose souls are factory drones living in Victorian-style squalor but who have no memory of their nightly drudgery when they wake up, and Wanderers, who whether asleep or awake are aware of their dual existence. Flora, the novel's heroine, is in the process of becoming a Wanderer as the story begins, and we learn of a stone of great power which was stolen by Flora's soul. It becomes apparent that Flora opted to become a Wanderer knowing that she would then lose her memory. The stone, then, would remain hidden.

Gläser has a gift for storytelling which draws the reader deep into her invented world. One description of how Flora's soul, separated from her body during a boring lesson, passes through a window, encourages the reader to believe that if one could only move just so, then escape might be possible ...

about the author

Mechthild Gläser was born in Essen in the summer of 1986. Today, she still lives in the Ruhr area of Germany, where she studies and occasionally does ballet – but incredibly badly, so only when nobody

is looking. She started writing at an early age, and her laptop still sits on the pink computer desk on which she wrote her first stories. She finds inspiration everywhere, at best when drinking a cup of peppermint tea.

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