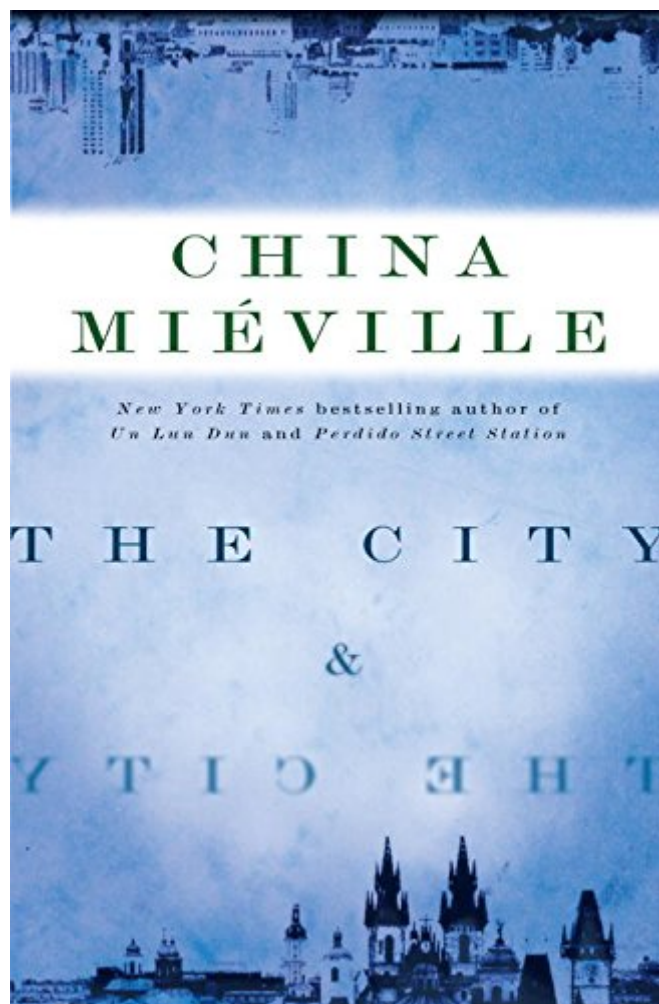


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The City & The City



Synopsis

BONUS: This edition contains a *The City & The City* discussion guide and excerpts from China Miéville's *Kraken* and *Embassytown*. **NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, THE SEATTLE TIMES, AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY.** When a murdered woman is found in the city of Beszel, somewhere at the edge of Europe, it looks to be a routine case for Inspector Tyador Borlén of the Extreme Crime Squad. To investigate, Borlén must travel from the decaying Beszel to its equal, rival, and intimate neighbor, the vibrant city of Ul Qoma. But this is a border crossing like no other, a journey as psychic as it is physical, a seeing of the unseen. With Ul Qoma detective Qussim Dhatt, Borlén is enmeshed in a sordid underworld of nationalists intent on destroying their neighboring city, and unificationists who dream of dissolving the two into one. As the detectives uncover the dead woman's secrets, they begin to suspect a truth that could cost them more than their lives. What stands against them are murderous powers in Beszel and in Ul Qoma: and, most terrifying of all, that which lies between these two cities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have awarded five stars to lesser books in the past, but now the bar has been raised; I know what

a five-star novel is really like after reading *The City & The City*. It's a detective novel written in the first-person; the narrator is Inspector Tyador Borlu of the Beszel Extreme Crime Squad. The writing style is relatively spare, reminiscent of Dashiell Hammett. The narrator constrains himself strictly to observable phenomena and tells us nothing of characters' inner thoughts or emotional states, which makes the action seem very immediate and the narration very stark. Police procedures are presented believably but without too much detail. The case itself is not terribly elaborate. It starts with a murder, but about two-thirds of the way through I felt that the murder was no longer the focus. Inspector Borlu's investigation leads to fringe political groups, an archaeological site, a foreign country, and to somewhere else entirely. The setting of the novel is what makes the story work. There wouldn't be a story if it wasn't set in Beszel and Ul Qoma. It's a totally original concept, like nothing I have ever read before. Beszel is a gloomy, decaying city which seems to be located somewhere in Eastern Europe. Ul Qoma is a bright, bustling city that seems either Arabic or Turkish. The relationship between the two cities is the central theme of the book. I can't tell you much about it without spoiling the beautiful unfolding of the novel. Of course Inspector Borlu takes everything for granted because he lives there; it's all familiar to him .. so instead of explaining things as one would to a foreign visitor, he lets details emerge through descriptions of sights and events, and the reader slowly pieces together details of the setting.

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