



# Through Dead Eyes

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Alex is beset by troubles. His mother left the family home a year ago to live with another man and his relationship with his father is uneasy. He has been in trouble at school for stalking a girl from his class and now, on an enforced holiday, he must travel to Amsterdam and amuse himself whilst his father works on a documentary there.

However, life begins to look rather better when he discovers he is to have the company of Angelien, the daughter of Saskia, his father's editor and former girlfriend. Despite a considerable age difference he finds himself attracted to Angelien and fascinated by her accounts of the history of the city, whose detail and colour absorb the reader, too. When she takes him to an antiques market he feels compelled to purchase a mysterious Japanese mask - and then his troubles begin anew.

As he puts on the mask he is transported to life in 17th century Amsterdam through the persona of Hanna, a recluse who murdered her father and who he has seen in a painting in the Rijksmuseum. As Hanna increasingly takes over his mind he finds himself losing his grip on reality. His turbulent feelings are exploited by Hanna through the mask and it is only when he is irresistibly drawn to echo Hanna's suicide jump from his window that he tells his father what has been going on. However, he is not believed and drifts even further into unhappy isolation, a state on which the dead Hanna feeds. Before he leaves Amsterdam his father destroys the mask, but on their return to England Hanna appears again, as does the reconstructed mask.

Hanna's story neatly parallels much of Alex's experience-the resentment he feels towards his mother, the emotional distance between him and his father - and the descriptions of her possession of Alex in his overwrought state are credible. The book combines teenage angst, history and horror in a convincing weave and is recommended to able and mature readers between 11 and 15.

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