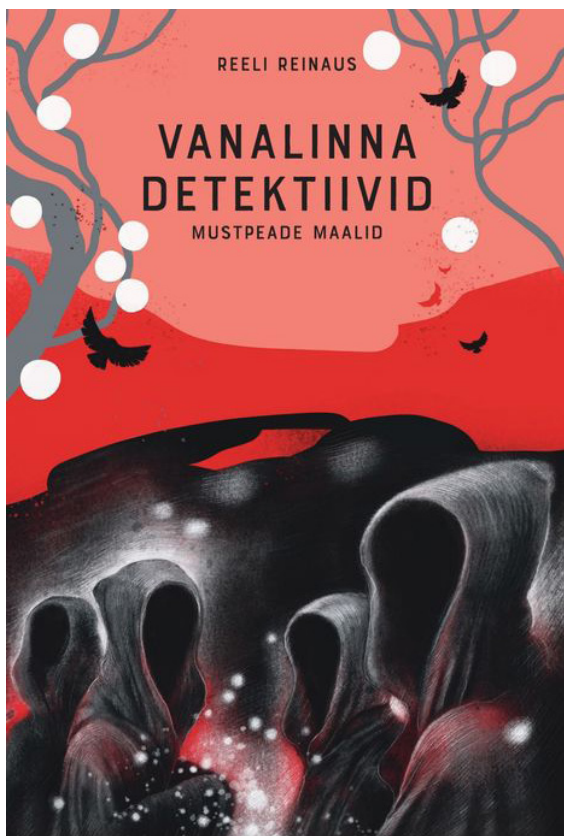


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The Old Town Detectives. The Paintings of the Brotherhood of Blackheads

Text by Reeli Reinaus

Illustrations by Sirly Oder

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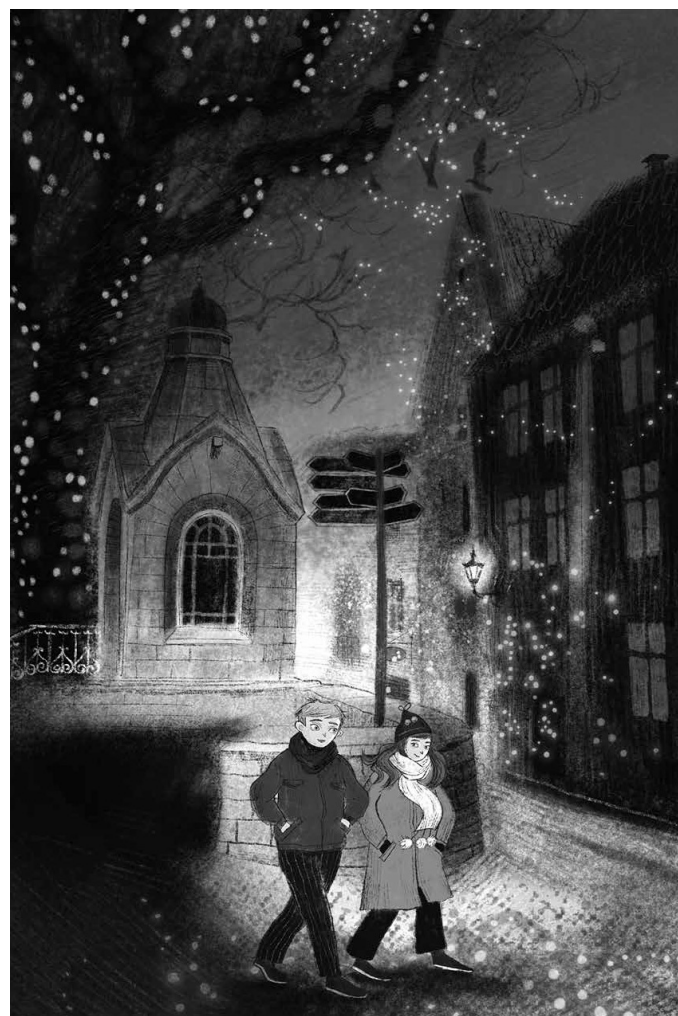
storybook, fiction

topics: ghosts/detectives/friends/mystery

Age: 9+

Old Town Detectives is a middle-grade series that takes readers to the medieval streets of Tallinn. In its first volume, 12-year-old Rebeka is with her dad at his company Christmas party, which is held at the historical House of the Brotherhood of the Blackheads. Wandering away from the boring event, she goes upstairs to the second floor and meets 13-year-old Gregor. The kids hear mysterious footsteps and spot black-hooded ghosts. When the two find identical notes in their pockets after returning home, they embark upon an adventure, the likes of which they could never have imagined.

The Paintings of the Brotherhood of Blackheads is first book of the series.



Excerpts

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[pp. 8–9]

Rebeka didn't know if she was even allowed to be in that part of the building alone. The thought came the moment she heard footsteps climbing the stairway. She looked up from her phone and waited to see who would turn the corner and appear, but to her surprise, nothing happened. Seconds later, the footsteps repeated. It was as if someone had climbed the stairs and stopped right there.

She got an eerie feeling. It was baffling why whoever had been coming up the stairs hadn't come any further. And why they hadn't gone back.

"I'm not afraid," Rebeka murmured to herself and stood up. She'd have to leave her hiding place sooner or later, anyway. The girl took a deep breath and peeked around the corner. No one was there. It seemed odd, because she'd just heard the unmistakable sound of footsteps. And it hadn't come from

down in the foyer, but right there on the staircase. Still, Rebeka didn't stand around pondering the situation for very long, but decided that sounds must travel differently through such an old building and started going back down the staircase. As she put one foot in front of the other, she glanced back for some reason.

And gasped.

She saw, as clear as day, a hooded man... floating through the room behind her?

Rebeka rubbed her eyes. It couldn't be real, could it? She'd heard of people hallucinating from hunger before. Breakfast had been her last proper meal, but it'd be weird if that started having an effect already. Either way, she continued hurrying downstairs. Rebeka hoped that the boring speeches part of the Christmas party might be over, and she'd finally have a chance to nibble on something.

But just before she made it back to St. Olaf's Hall, she heard footsteps coming towards her again. Rebeka froze hesitantly.

Moments later, she found herself face-to-face with a boy. He looked to be about her age or a little older. But most importantly, he wasn't floating.

as far as the eye could see, was manmade.

The gray birds circled above him a couple times before landing on the right-hand side of the street, perching on a rusty metal grill covering a basement window. Their eyes, which should have been black, glowed bright green. Then, the birds started to swell. They spread their wings and grew bigger, bigger, until the dark figures in the haze were the same height as him.

"Weird dream," Taaniel murmured.

The larger of the two cocked its head and drilled him with its piercing green gaze.

"This isn't a dream," it croaked. "It's a premonition!"

