

## Q2 The City and The City

The following excerpt is from *The City and The City* by China Mieville in 2009. In this passage the narrator is a detective visiting a crime scene. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Mieville uses literary techniques and elements to portray the narrator's complex perception of the city, Besź.

Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.

Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.

Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.

Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

It was close to ten o'clock in the evening, more than forty hours since we had found the victim. Corwi drove—she made no effort to disguise her uniform, despite that we had an unmarked car through the streets around Gunter Strász. I had not been home until very late the previous night, and after a morning on my own in these same streets now I was there again.

There were places of crosshatch in the larger streets and a few elsewhere, but that far out the bulk of the area was total. Few antique Besź stylings, few steep roofs or many-paned windows: these were hobbled factories and warehouses. A handful of decades old, often broken-glassed, at half capacity if open. Boarded facades. Grocery shops fronted with wire. Older fronts in tumbledown of classical Besź style. Some houses colonised and made chapels and drug houses: some burnt out and left as crude carbon renditions of themselves.

The area was not crowded, but it was far from empty. Those who were out looked like landscape, like they were always there. There had been fewer that morning but not very markedly.

“Did you see Shukman working on the body?”

“No.” I was looking at what we passed, referring to my map. “I got there after he was done.”

“Squeamish?” she said.

“No.”

“Wel ...” She smiled and turned the car. “You’d have to say that even if you were.”

“True,” I said, though it was not.

She pointed out what passed for landmarks. I did not tell her I had been in Kordvenna early in the day, sounding these places. Corwi did not try to disguise her police clothes because that way those who saw us, who might otherwise think we were there to entrap them, would know that was not our intent; and the fact that we were not in a bruise, as we called the black-and-blue police cars, told them that neither were we there to harass them. Intricate contracts!

Most of those around us were in Beszel so we saw them. Poverty reshaped the already staid, drab cuts and colours that enduringly characterise Besz clothes—what has been called the city's fashionless fashion. Of the exceptions, some we realised when we glanced were elsewhere, so unsaw, but the younger Besz were also more colourful, their clothes more pictured, than their parents.

The majority of the Besz men and women (does this need saying?) were doing nothing but walking from one place to another, from late-shift work, from homes to other homes or shops. Still, though, the way we watched what we passed made it a threatening geography, and there were sufficient furtive actions occurring that that did not feel like the rankest paranoia.

"This morning I found a few of the locals I used to talk to," Corwi said. "Asked if they'd heard anything."

She took us through a darkened place where the balance of crosshatch shifted, and we were silent until the streetlamps around us became again tawny and familiarly deco-angled. Under those lights—the street we were on visible in a perspective curve away from us—women stood by the walls selling sex. They watched our approach guardedly.

"I didn't have much luck," Corwi said.