

# The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters, Volume Two

*Gordon Dahlquist*

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**The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters, Volume Two** Gordon Dahlquist

A mystery as dazzling as a hall of mirrors.

A seductive, terrifying, all-too-real world.

A beguiling, erotic literary adventure.

Discover why readers everywhere are enthralled by this “marvelous confection of a book.”\*

In which the astonishing adventure to end all adventures continues—and the excitement doubles.

Like every other honest man, an assassin has his reputation to consider. So it is with Cardinal Chang. A brutal killer with the heart of a poet, Chang is no longer able to trust those who hired him. Disconcerted, he sets out on the trail of a mystery like no other, in a city few have traveled to—featuring three unlikely heroes with a most intriguing bond.

*\*Philadelphia Inquirer*

## The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters, Volume Two Details


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Author : Gordon Dahlquist

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## From Reader Review The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters, Volume Two for online ebook

### Denise says

This is a review of both Volume One and Two, since they are meant to be read together as a single novel, the first, in the trilogy. I, however, read them four years apart. I read Volume One in 2014, and just finished Volume Two. I do not recommend this. There is no recap/prologue in Volume Two to remind you of what happened in the first volume. There is also no summary online, or at least that I could find. Combined, this two part novel is more than twice the length I usually take on.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

This is the first steampunk novel I have ever read. I am eager to read more of this genre. It is quite entertaining. Though before I continue with this series, I think I want to read something in this genre by a female author. Dahlquist writes beautifully complicated characters, including women, but I felt a bit put off by the fact that all the women are seen as, and, to a certain extent, behave seductively. Female characters are definitely objectified (quite literally in the excessively long final chapter), whereas no male character is, although many are used. This might not have been a detail I noticed in 2014, but I certainly did in 2018. It could be an element of the Victorian time period, but it does go a bit too far at times, and becomes uncomfortable. Perhaps that's the intent? Not sure.

This novel, though wordy at times, was intriguing and engaging. Be warned, however, it is graphic in nature, both in terms of physical violence as well as sexual content. I am not a prude, but I probably blushed a few times. Most of the sexual content is either rape or molestation, and just as violent and graphically described as the combat and dismemberment content. This is not a story for the faint of heart, nor is it a casual read. The plot is complex, and there are a great number of players. It is difficult to keep track of all the details and keep the characters straight, as all are important. So, you may want to take notes. I wish I had. That being said, the story really sucks you in. I found myself wanting to know more about the principal three protagonists, and intrigued by the mystery of the cabal's many alliances and betrayals. Dahlquist also adeptly builds suspense around the "science" and alchemy of the secret experiments, revealing just little at a time along with pieces of the cabal's conspiracies. All becomes clear in the end, but it seems even the characters aren't sure of what's going on until the last few pages. Each chapter alternates between the perspectives of the three protagonists, Miss Temple, Cardinal Chang, and Dr. Svenson. Sometimes together, but often separately, they each pick up clues to the puzzle that are pieced together at the climatic end. Till then, no one person knows all the details except the reader. There are details even each of the villains are unaware of. Dahlquist's character development was delicious, and for the most part quite even. Though a bit predictable in regards to the cliché of a prim lady thrust into a ridiculously horrific adventure and discovering her own strength and purpose, she was not the only one driven by her emotions. Miss Temple's two male companions were equally consumed by their emotions, even the assassin succumbed to grief at one point. Likewise, both male and female villains were evenly sinister. Even minor and secondary characters were richly developed. I enjoyed reading this more than I thought I would, given how graphically violent it was. The story of this unlikely trio of heroes (another cliché, I know) continues in "The Dark Volume," which I will be adding to be my TBR presently.

As you can tell, my feelings on this novel are complicated and conflicted, but there is no denying that despite a few things that made me uncomfortable, I rather enjoyed reading this novel, and look forward to the next in the series.

## Morgan says

(The same review for Vol. 1 and 2) This is a raucous adventure that runs the reader along a taut high tension line. Dahlquist insists on action, relentlessly dealing it out like a meth addled blackjack croupier. This novel reeks of all the "mistakes" that a first book suffers from: too many characters, too many storylines, extreme violence, and ultimately the scenes are scenario driven. I'm thankful for this naivete. Refined authors tend to cut, and smaller stories end up quieter, whereas this is a pipe bomb. This is big and unapologetic.

It seems these days that most adventure stories are tucked away in Children's Lit, or buried deep in Fantasy schlock. This hearkens back to everything that folks like Haggard, Burroughs, or Howard were shooting for.

He undoubtedly leans heavily on genre tropes, as the story (mystery) wraps up neatly as a parlor room drama, down to your standard "Before I kill you, Mr. Bond" confessionals and the "Ah-ha, now I have the upper hand" reversal moments. But it is all in good fun.

If I have a real complaint about the book it is that the women are ALWAYS defined by their sexuality (either over or undersexed). In the book there is only one male character that is defined by his sexuality, so it stands out as evenly one-sided. Ms. Temple, while a great character is constantly put into awkward sexual situation to define her (the way that the Doctor is constantly confronted with his fear of heights, ha). It would have been more just to spread the sexual encounters through all of the main characters for the sake of the read rather than fulfilling Dahlquist's little wet dream for his character.

Still though, this has been a tremendously fun read. The 5 stars rating is for how much I enjoyed it rather than how "good" it is.

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## Linda Isakson says

More like a 3.5 star rating. Volume two was marginally more interesting and engaging than volume one, but the story never actually ends with a discernable conclusion. The writing style is great, but the plot gets weighed down by excessive details in some scenes and not enough details in others. One of the most redeeming qualities of the story are the flawed protagonists and their misguided reasons for pursuing the destruction of the society. Miss Temple, Cardinal Chang and Dr. Svenson continue their journey into uncovering the sadistic activities of a secret society that turns women into mindless robots and men into political pawns. People subjected to this conversion process have their memories drained into glass cards and eventually into a large glass book. After Miss Temple's abduction at the end of the first volume, Chang and Svenson split up to find her. They eventually meet up at the Victorian mansion where this story first begins and are able to, once again, elude their captors. This time, another character, Eloise, joins the fray.

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## Ori Fienberg says

The title was so good that Dahlquist decided not to bother coming up with another one for Volume 2. Unfortunately, the title was once again the best part of this book.

After Volume 1 made a late break for excitement and entertainment and built up anticipation about the glass

books and the dream eaters I had high hopes that Volume 2 would continue that excitement and provide answers. And it did provide some answers, ponderously, and then over and over again.

Certainly there are moments of good writing, but even more so than the first I felt like Dahlquist could have left a large percentage on drafting table. Instead of two 400+ page books I'd have much rather read one tautly paced 600 page book.

Because I'd finished the first book and wanted closure I slogged through this over-written, over-wrought mass of plot conveniences and predictable cliffhangers. But the worst didn't come till the final pages: this isn't even the last book. There's one more available, *The Dark Volume*, weighing in at an agonizing 500+ pages

I've always had trouble in these sorts of situations, and so I'll put it to my Goodreads friends: when do you quit on a book or series? At what point do you decide that you have better things to read, or do, or that the writing is just too awful? Growing up, if I started a book, 99% of the time I finished it. I'm torn here: the reviews for the third book are mediocre, but I've already read 2. I hear there's possibility of 4th book, and I think that might be the breaking point. One more I could read fast, but I don't want to be hooked into a never-ending series that I don't enjoy.

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## **Alana says**

My review for *The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters* spans both Volume One and Volume Two, because really, I figure if you're committing yourself to the first, you should probably accept the second... after all, the book was originally printed as one large hardcover, and it only split into two volumes in paperback.

That said, my big issue was this. Generally, I think one can assume that the period of time in which it takes the events of a book to unfold will be greater than the time it takes one to read it. That might be \*barely\* true here... but only if one factors in the extra day that passes in the first five pages where Miss Temple absorbs the news that Roger Bascombe has ended their engagement. \*Including that\*, everything takes place in three days. Three days! That's a lot of pages to chart the course of three days. And sure, we're moving quickly, but I actually found this to be a book rich in detail, perfectly willing to linger over descriptions of people and locations... and the action scenes certainly took double the time to read than they would to actually occur (and oftentimes, you have certain scenes repeated at least twice, as we bounce between the perspectives of three main characters).

All that aside, I did enjoy these books and since I read them in the space of five days, I can reasonably say that they do captivate one's attention. Of course, they do this by such a ridiculous amount of suspense that I didn't feel as though I was eagerly devouring the book so much as I was being forcibly pushed through everything, with the knowledge that if I stopped, I would surely find something amiss and so I had no choice but to power through. There was never a moment of pause as we barreled headlong into an incredibly complicated plot with a long list of characters.

The simple description is ridiculously broad. Three unlikely compatriots find themselves banding together against a sinister group of persons who have a plot to take over the world by mind-manipulation. But that only scratches the surface.

The book opens upon Miss Temple reading a note from her fiancée, informing her in a rather terse note that he is terminating their engagement. She resolves to discover exactly why he has ended things (not out of deep love to get him back, but more with a need for closure), and of course, the most logical way to do that is

not to ask him, but to follow him. This propels her (and the reader) into a world that is more and more complicated by the minute, with a "Cabal" of personalities bound tightly together by a fracturing partnership. But she isn't alone -- Celeste Temple forms a strange alliance with two other men as they seek to thwart the evil-doings of the Cabal. Cardinal Chang is a deadly assassin so named for his trademark red jacket and scarring on his eyes that gives him the appearance of being Oriental. Originally hired to kill a man (who turns out to be deeply involved in the Cabal's goings-on), Chang is unable to follow-through on that assignment when he finds the man has been killed for him, but his involvement hardly ends there. Doctor Svenson is a chain-smoking diplomat/doctor who is essentially baby-sitting a prince of Macklenburg (a German duchy) that has become engaged to a wealthy Lord's daughter, and then discovers that the Lord, the daughter, and his own prince all have their roles in this sinister plot. And lest you think this is some simple "take over the world" plot by hypnotising people, the means for mind-manipulation rest in the mysterious properties of "indigo clay" and the amazing glass that can be formed by it as a repository for memories. Such fantastic ideas have a darker side, too -- and the adherents to this "Process" might very well be selling their souls (or at least their free will) over to the leaders of the Cabal.

The fantasy elements are certainly interesting... I was introduced to the phrase "steampunk" by way of this book, and if you know that at all, it certainly applies. It's chocked full of dirigibles and trains, as well as masquerade balls and erotic undertones (without venturing into anything really romantic). It's certainly a wild ride, but I must admit that with the two volumes and all, I was a little peeved to note that there's a sequel that was just published. You'd think that it would at least have the courtesy to conclude its business within those two volumes, but ah well. I'll certainly go on to the sequel, but I predict that it might be trying my patience to do so. But if "steampunk" seems up your alley, then by all means, seek out *The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters* because it certainly is a creative epic, the likes of which you rarely stumble across on the pure fiction shelves (rather than that of fantasy or sci-fi).

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### **Steve says**

It's hard to find the words to describe this book. I mean, there's lots of good ones: suspenseful, thrilling, surreal, imaginative, and the ever popular, "action-packed". All that is kind of meaningless, though. You want some sort of insightful, incisive description of all this action that the book is packed with. That's where it gets hard.

It starts (in volume one, which as I mentioned over there, doesn't end, it just continues over here), with a jilted rich girl stalking her ex to try to figure out why he left her. She follows him to some sort of eyes-wide-shut style rich people party, which turns out to have some strange science experiments going on, she gets captured, escapes, meets an assassin and a doctor who also have run afoul of the conspirators involved in those science experiments, and stuff just gets stranger from there.

These three companions keep peeling back layers of conspiracy, and getting in more and more trouble, and it becomes increasingly difficult to put the book down and do anything productive with my life. I get the feeling (due to the nature of the science stuff), that this book likely gets shelved with the sci-fi/fantasy stuff. I guess that's fair. It read a lot more like a mystery book meets an action movie, though with less of a negative connotation than that.

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### **Mason Jones says**

Being the second part of a single book, this volume finishes the first installment of this series, which continues with the Dark Volume. Given that the first volume simply stopped in the middle of the action, it's nice that this one comes to a generally satisfactory conclusion. The story as a whole still isn't finished, but the plot is fairly well tied up and nearly all of the bad guys are taken care of.

It's still difficult to really review this without giving away a great deal, so instead I'll simply say that this volume is perhaps a bit too insular. The three protagonists share the book, told in intertwining sections that back you up in time as the story progresses through a single night (for the most part). The action takes place nearly entirely within a single place -- a very large and complex mansion, but still a single place. It's tempting to say that this book could have been condensed without losing too much, and combined with the previous volume. But their adventures are fun, and despite being longer than it needs to be I enjoyed it enough to continue with the next book. If vaguely steampunkish Victorian adventures a la the likes of Dumas and Stendhal sounds fun, give these books a try.

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### **Kristina says**

Occasionally as I was reading, I almost felt a little guilty for enjoying this book so much. There was definitely some pretty kinky and bizarre stuff going on here (be warned), but I found the whole thing completely entertaining. The first volume was a little tedious, with lots of setup, and many, many characters being introduced. (I'm tempted to go back and read the first half again and make a chart, because the various relationships and loyalties of these characters does become very important at the end.) But this second volume was just a great, pulpy adventure, and I really had a lot of fun tearing through it. Plenty of creepiness, major violence (which I don't normally go for, but found myself cheering here), general mayhem, etc. Certain lines really cracked me up (e.g. "Pray make up your mind so I can scoff at you with precision!" and "...one wonders if you are professionally helpless for a living...") and I was fascinated with all the strange stuff that was going on. Most importantly, I felt very invested in our tenacious heroes, particularly Miss Temple, who was just totally badass. Love her. Having the three finally get together again was a relief, as they are a good team.

The overall story is probably too long and meandering, and as another reviewer pointed out, the characters do seem to "scoff" an awful lot. But that didn't really bother me too much. It's not perfect, and I definitely would not recommend it to everyone, but I was really pleased with it. The first half was slow-going, but I felt rewarded by the fun of the second half. I see there is a sequel, which I will be eagerly picking up as soon as it's available.

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### **Adrienne says**

This was a tough one to rate. I couldn't put down the first volume. I finished it in two days, give or take. The characters aren't stock. They're interesting and well-developed. And this particular cast--Celeste, Dr Stevenson, and Chang--will give any reader someone with whom they can relate. The world it's set in is awesome, the premise is also super cool, and the unveiling of the glass books--goodness! it was thrilling, and I raced through it.

It may be unfair to include the review for the second book, but it's a set, so on we go.

The second book was absolutely ABYSMAL. The editor should be shot. It's as though people you love are trapped in a house you hate visiting. All of the events of the two books unfold over three days--count them,

three--and for all that writing, you ought to get back story (the Doctor's lost love, who this prince is, Celeste's family, the quarry, etc etc etc), and also heart-rending detail. Instead, you get what feels like ongoing one-upmanship. It's as though the author keeps thinking--"oh yeah, you thought THAT was messed up? Check THIS out!" and the plot drones on. Suspense builds upon suspense until--finally--the book ends. It's even one of those idiotic endings where everything sort of happens to work out, and all the people we spent the last miserable 200 pages pursuing just sort of happen to be there, and--even better!--they want to tell you all about what they've done.

If this were a review of the series: Two stars, only because I enjoyed the first one so much. I hope they re-release it as one book, get all the material currently in the second volume down to fifty pages, and skip the fanfare to what is ultimately not that exciting an end.

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## Melinda says

This book starts exactly where Volume 1 of The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters left off. As we left our heroes, they had parted ways as they continued to try to frustrate the efforts of the Cabal for world domination. Celeste Temple, the heiress from the West Indies, had headed for the St. Royale Hotel, to find the Contessa Di Lacquer-Sforza, who tried to have her killed at Harschmort House, just the other night. Taking a pistol with her, she plans to put things to right, but doesn't tell Chang or Svenson, our other two heroes, where she is going. They try to anticipate her thinking; Chang goes to the Institute where they make the Blue Glass Books, and Dr. Svenson goes to Tarr Manor, where they dig the Indigo clay necessary for The Process that transforms people into the Minions for the Cabal.

THE PLOT: As we join our heroes, things have not gone well for them in their endeavors. Celeste is a prisoner of the Comte and Contessa - thinking her exceptional, the Comte has decided she must go through The Process and become a Minion. They board a train to Harschmort House where The Process will turn her into a Minion, except she would rather die first, so escape is her only option. Chang, after battling enemies at the Institute, and finding a friend, had ground glass blown into his lungs by the Contessa when he found the trail of Celeste. He followed to the train and is outside hooked on to the Coal Car. He must save Celeste before he dies of the glass in his lungs as he knows that he will die soon. He has little time to complete his mission, but he just can't leave her to these people, so off he goes to Harschmort House to enable her escape as well as the escape of Angelique, the woman he loves. We left Dr. Svenson hanging from a rope below a dirigible, flying through the air - and him, afraid of heights. After struggling up the rope to the top of the airship, he makes his way into Harschmort House, only to discover that the woman that he fell for in Tarr Manor, Eloise DuJong, was inside. He also found out, his two comrades were inside as well. He needed to find all three, but in which priority? He must cause as much trouble as possible too. Which means, disrupting whatever the Cabal is doing now, as well as discovering their plans, and killing his Prince. The Doctor has so much to do and so little time to do it in, and with a house full of murderers, rapists, thieves, and alchemists, he doesn't know if he will see the light of day, but one thing he does know - he will do his level best to see that Mrs. DuJong, Celeste, Temple, and Cardinal Chang are all alive and well come morning and that the Cabal isn't. It's a tall order, but he has to count on the fact the his two friends are doing the same thing! Who will succeed? The Cabal or our Heroes? What will happen over night at Harschmort House? Will the Cabal rip itself apart from the inside with help from our heroes? Will our heroes die a heroic death before morning? Will the group be down to one or two come morning? The plot was so amazingly byzantine, that the twists and turns came at you every which way. I loved every minute of the finely executed plot. It was with very great enjoyment that I watched the plot unfold like Swiss clockwork. At each click of the second hand, something new would pop out you - surprising you with its insight into the overarching theme, the Cabal, or the story itself, as well as the people involved. For Plot, I give this book a 10/10.

**THE CHARACTERIZATION:** As with the first volume, this book goes deeper into the characterization of the heroes themselves, but also into their enemies. We get quite a good look at the heads of the Cabal, the Comte and Contessa, Francis Xonck, Mr. Crabbe, as well as Roger Bascombe, who had been something of a cypher up to this point. We also get to meet some new characters including Colonel Smythe, a leader of a company of Dragoons, Mr. Blenhiem, the keeper of Harschmort House, Lord Robert Vaanderiff and others. The characters were deep individuals, with core feelings that went way down to their very hearts and souls. Reverberating there for no one to see but the readers, in some cases, and in others, for all the world to see at Harschmort House, through the telepathic imagery of the Blue Glass women, as in the case of Cardinal Chang and Angelique. His heart was literally bared wide for all to see in a particular instance. It nearly killed him emotionally as well as physically, yet he persevered to save his comrades. For Characterization, I give this novel, a 10/10.

**THE IMAGERY:** Dahlquist is a master of imagery - he did an amazing job describing Harschmort House in particular - which was a prison, converted into a luxury manor. A tower inside the manor went underground, instead of soaring into the sky. Inside the tower was a colossal room surrounded by prison cells. The primary focus of the room was a stage set with operating tables lit from above, from which the Comte could work his alchemical Process. Hundreds of tubes ran down the walls of the Tower - making it virtually serpentine. All the tubes culminated into a singular system that fed onto the stage itself, where the alchemical Process that the Comte was to perform, before the people watching in the prison cells. This image of the people in the prison cells, with the camp chairs, and their champagne, looking through slots, getting excited while watching the Comte transform three women from human to Blue Glass people in his alchemical Process - I will never forget. It was truly disturbing. Kind of like a side show turned evil. If there is evil in the world, and I do believe there is, Dahlquist captured it its essence in that sequence. The people are dupes, the women have no idea of what is going to happen to them, they are innocent, yet guilty by association. Only the Comte knows what is happening. He isn't going to tell. He is the evil one. He displays the Glass Women with leather leashes around their necks after the transformation, as if they were his pets or creatures that he controls; another form of Minion, yet a powerful one at that. I found it disgusting, but the images did not leave my mind. The images were very cinematic. For imagery, I give this novel a 10/10.

**THE GORE SCORE:** This novel rates rather high on the gore score, as they kill, and dismember people, then behead, shoot and stab people everywhere. The blood flows, whether it is red or blue. If you like violence with your adventure, you'll get it here. No one stops to think before the murder or mayhem starts. It just happens and happens quickly. Even our heroes don't hesitate, because they'd be dead if they did. For a Gore Score, I give this novel, an 8/10.

**THE DIALOGUE:** Everyone in this book was upper crust, with the exception of a few chambermaids who helped Dr. Svenson when he arrived at Harschmort house, and two butlers who tried to stop Celeste Temple and Eloise DuJong after they popped out of dumbwaiter on their way to escape. The dialogue was not only snappy, upper crust, but unique for each individual. The Contessa and the Comte each had a way of speaking that defined them. The same was true of Roger Bascombe, who had a tendency to whine. Francis Xonck resorted to violence first and asked questions later, Celeste was definitely a talker, where Chang listened. Svenson thought a lot, so we heard those thoughts as he was speaking in his head. It was amazing how Dahlquist used speech as another defining part of characterization. The butlers and maids spoke lower class English, which of course was appropriate for their station. The dialogue in the book was simply another factor in an already amazing adventure that defined each character down to a T. For dialogue, I give the novel 9/10.

**THE PACING:** This book is like a runaway horse at full gallop. I started at the first word and BOOM! I was off - flying with the wind in my face, flying over the fields, never stopping, never slowing, just that rocking motion at high speed. I didn't stop until the very last word on the very last page, then the book was over. I put it down, clearly satisfied with the trip, and looking for the next volume, which is hopefully right next to me so that I can continue on my ride once again. After a cup of coffee and a snack maybe...The transitions were

smooth as a babies behind. No problem telling one narrator from another. No problem telling when I switched scenes. There is no sophomore slump for Dahlquist at all. This book was actually better than the first volume. I liked it more, and that is saying something. For Pacing, I give this novel a 9/10.

THE ENDING: I thanked my lucky stars that this book did not end the way that volume 1 did - with a cliffhanger. I hate cliffhangers! This book had a satisfying ending. It wrapped up all the story lines and tied them up nicely, leaving our heroes, in a situation where there is a potential for all types of things to happen to them. I can't wait to read The Dark Volume, which is the next book in the series. There was so much action at the end, you would think a zombie apocalypse is tame. It was definitely a Battle Royale. Dahlquist did it right this time - gave the reader a satisfying ending. I was so happy about that - no cliffhangers, no moment in time endings, just a satisfying resolution to the problems proposed by book two, and away we go with book three. I was happy about that, it made it so much easier to put the book down, and take a break for a few minutes from the series and do something else. I was satisfied that for the moment, that our three heroes were okay. For the Ending, I give this novel, a 9/10.

THE UPSHOT: I love this series, it is one of my favorites of all time, and I believe that it is one the top 10 best adventure series in Literature. Dahlquist is a genius when it comes to action, adventure, plotting, wordsmithing, imagery, and characterization. If you like action and adventure novels, if you like steampunk, if you like Victorian historical fiction, if you like world domination conspiracy novels, if you like fantasy novels, if you like murder mystery novels, you will love this series. Get all three of them today. The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters Volumes 1 & 2 and The Dark Volume. I swear, I haven't found any other action/adventure, fantasy, steampunk, conspiracy, murder mystery, novels that can quite compare. This novel scores 58 out of 60. Almost a perfect a score. So, come along with me into a world where Blue Glass can become people, books, or anything else - can wipe your mind of thoughts, turn you into a Minion, or make you a Master of the World. Please hurry, we won't wait for you long. We are taking over the World, after all...

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### **Amanda says**

I liked this volume a little less than the first because it took far too long to get through some portions of the action from the point of view of all three characters and was a trifle too maudlin by the end. However, the reveals were still exciting and piecing together the mystery was good as well, even if some things were discovered a bit too easily (though luckily nowhere as quickly as one might in a Dan Brown book). The style remained delightfully Victorianesque and engaging, and I really enjoyed the book as a whole.

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### **Kim says**

I LOVE this book. I cannot express how deep my love for it goes. It took over my mind for months. Alternate Victorian, steampunky, high adventure, sexy. Must read.

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### **colleen the convivial curmudgeon says**

My thought on the second half are much the same as the first, though the second volume was a bit more intriguing.

The climax had moments of excitement, but also of silliness. I mean, what does it take to kill some people.

And then it just ends and it's like "that's it?". Pages and pages of stuff, often too much stuff and the annoying perspective shifts setting us back in time - again - not to mention everyone stopping to philosophize in the midst of running for their lives, or trying to escape and/or rescue someone, and when you have to have all your characters repeatedly think "I know I shouldn't do this" or "I know I'm wasting time" *but...* pages and pages of unnecessary padding, and *that's* the ending you give me? Really?!

But I can't hate the book. The characters grew on me, even when they were annoyingly stupid, and there really is a good and unique kind of story hidden in there. Pity it's not several hundred pages shorter and tighter, though.

Ah well.

3.5 - maybe even 4 star - for the idea.

2.5 for execution.

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### **Linda says**

Although I read Volume 1 of this duo several months ago, I found that I didn't need to remember the events that were important to the events in this volume. Dahlquist does a great job of embedding them in the text rather than taking a large portion of the beginning to review what has already happened.

Together these two volumes offer a rollicking view of Victorian times seen through the Steampunk lens. An unlikely trio - a 25-year-old woman, a German doctor and a hired assassin - combine to solve the mystery of the blue cards and the meaning of the "Process." Add an airship in and you have it all!

The real attraction is the 25-year-old Celeste Temple, always MISS Temple to others, who is a semi-rigid, well-brought up young woman who lost her mother at an early age and has inherited a plantation on the island where she was raised. Miss Temple is no-nonsense and yet is quite uneasy when she has to perform tasks that are necessary but not "moral" - like killing a man who is just about to kill her. She does not suffer fools and has a hard time keeping her mouth shut when people say or do stupid things.

She is the most endearing heroine I've met in a long time!

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### **Woodge says**

This book is the second half of the story begun in Volume One. Not sure why it was split into two volumes, together they are about 900-odd pages of a story, on the large side, surely, but I devoured it fairly quickly. Like Volume One, Volume Two has many hair's-breadth escapes, confrontations, and other suspenseful stuff. Sometimes they get a bit too descriptive, but this story holds your interest throughout. The characters both good and bad are wonderful creations. And our three protagonists prove themselves worthy adversaries for the numerous bad guys in the sinister cabal. If the body count in Volume One is impressive, it's nothing compared to Volume Two. Our heroes (and heroine) are deadly! Guns, knives, sabres, glass shards -- and that's just a partial list of the weapons they employ. And the final denouement is an extremely cinematic (and bloody) smorgasbord of good versus evil. And there is one small hanging thread that leaves room for a sequel. I understand that the recently published book, The Dark Volume continues the adventures. Sweet.

This was a fantastic story in every sense. Wicked fun.

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