



BOOK DETAILS

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in New Zealand and based in Melbourne, Meg Mundell has been published widely in Australian newspapers, journals and magazines, including *The Age*, *The Monthly*, *Meanjin*, *The Best Australian Stories 2010*, *The Sleepers Almanac*, *harvest* and *The Big Issue*. *Black Glass* won the 2007 D.J. (Dinny) O’Hearn Memorial Fellowship and was shortlisted for the 2010 CAL Scribe Fiction Prize. She is now completing a memoir on trucking culture, *Braking Distance*. Meg has worked as a journalist, university lecturer, magazine editor, researcher and government advisor.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. *Black Glass* is written as a series of interwoven fragments – notebook entries, conversations, first-person narrative. How did these different perspectives inform your reading of the novel? How do they relate to the themes of the novel?
2. *Black Glass* contains many speculative and futuristic elements — the level of surveillance, strict ID requirements, government control over public space, the merging of government and media. How do you think these elements compare to the reality of our world today?
3. What role does superstition play in our lives? What are some of the superstitions that appear in this book, and why might certain characters be drawn to them?
4. Survival is central in *Black Glass*. Each character faces different challenges in their struggle to survive, and all of them must work. Who do you think has the best job? Who has the toughest? Whose job would you prefer to have, and why?
5. What is Milk driven by at the beginning of *Black Glass*? Do you think his motivations have changed by the end of the book?
6. Do you sympathise with Damon’s position? Or is the media that he works for part of the problem?
7. Some of the events that befall the characters result from their own actions and choices; other things are outside of their control. Can you think of an example of each? How do different characters deal with questions of choice, responsibility and self-determination?

REVIEWS

'*Black Glass* presents a dark urban dystopian future of mass surveillance and government control, filled with corruption and morality gone wrong ...

Black Glass contains a mix of writing styles, adding to the big brother style of the book ... The tension builds right until the end.'

— ANDREW WRATHALL, *Bookseller & Publisher*

'*Black Glass* is a convincing piece of probable dystopia, ingeniously designed to save some of its best blows for the end. And the survival skills and no-nonsense voice of Tally are a pleasure to follow.'

— NICHOLAS REID, *Sunday Star Times*

'In her brilliant debut novel, Mundell envisages a dark, sinister city of the not-too-distant future where massive surveillance and controls are used to crush citizens into submission.'

— CARLENE ELLWOOD, *The Mercury*

'Meg Mundell creates an eerie vision of an Australian city (it sounds a lot like what once was Melbourne) in her chilling debut novel, where we follow the lives of the two itinerant sisters.'

— JULIA ROSS, *Courier Mail*

8. The characters in this novel struggle to hold on to their hopes and dreams in a difficult world. How does Tally keep her hopes alive? What role do hopes and dreams play for Grace?
9. Many of the characters we meet in *Black Glass* are alone, and the bonds that are made over the course of the novel are tenuous and easily broken. The bond between Tally and Grace, though, underpins the novel: Tally never gives up on her search for her sister. What does this say to you about the importance of family? Do these kinds of relationships become even more important in a world like the one in *Black Glass*?
10. What kind of future/s do you think Tally and Grace will have? Is there hope for them in the society that is depicted in the novel?



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