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# A Thief in the House of Memory

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Dec's mother apparently left without saying goodbye, driving off into the night six years before. His father has erased her from his life and taken on a new house while leaving the old one like a museum on the hill above them. When there is a burglary at the old house and the strange death of the burglar, all the mysteries of the past re-emerge for Dec, making him review his memories as he finds himself seemingly baulked by others' refusal to let him know what happened. Memories of his mother are coloured by his fondness for her and the liveliness of her manner, her clothes and her games. His father, by contrast, seems grey and withdrawn. Fascinatingly, the memories, re-seen and relived by the older Dec, come with new interpretations and possibilities to make the past a shifting, doubtful arena for understanding. What happened to his mother and the truth of the burglar's death are mysteries to be solved. Wynne-Jones' gift here is to make memory itself a tangible subject for a mystery novel which is always actively exciting and thought-provokingly different like the wonderful gallery of characters, especially Vivien, who provide a wonderful oddity to the thoughtful exploration of the past, of memory, growing up and growing into the future.

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