

# POZNANSKI




# EREBOS 2

 Loewe







**URSULA POZNANSKI** is one of the most successful German thriller authors and has been translated into 34 languages. Her debut *Erebos*, published in 2010, has received quite a few awards (e.g. German YA Literature Award). Over the last years, she has made herself very popular and is in great demand. Her thriller *Erebos* reached the bestseller lists and until today has been the leading title of the Loewe Publishing house - no book has been more successful. A translation grant for all titles is guaranteed.

# ASKING URSULA POZNANSKI

**Your YA book *Erebos* has had a comet-like rise. What is so special about writing for young adults?**

Actually, there's almost no difference in writing a book for adults. Thrillers for adults are a little bit more violent and there are some cuts that have to be made in terms of the language I use. Some expressions that I'd choose in a book for adults, I wouldn't use for a YA book. I don't want that they have to look up the meaning of words in order to understand them. In terms of the story's complexity and its characters it's pretty much the same. I wouldn't describe young readers as less critical or less challenging – it's quite the opposite. They dismiss a book a lot quicker and they won't fight with the first 20 pages if they're not interested, no hope that things will get better later on.

**Manipulation is an important topic in your books - how come?**

Manipulation, for sure, is a big topic as I believe that we're constantly confronted with it - in every life's aspect. We're manipulated into what we should find beautiful and how we should define us. Everyone is surrounded by those strong expectations, although they're not presented as necessary requirements. Instead, we're manipulated into and by them.

**You received many awards for *Erebos*. One being the Youth Literature Award 2011 awarded by the Jugendjury (jury of young people) – a special honour for you?**

Oh yes, for sure! A fantastic moment. I really didn't expect to win and was completely shocked. In a positive way. It was particularly great that the award was given by the Jugendjury – the group for which I actually wrote *Erebos*.

**How thorough was your research for *Erebos* and how did you proceed with it?**

It's about computers so I also did a lot of research on my computer, mainly on blogs and on websites that deal with addiction. There's a lot of material – more than you would imagine. The game itself I made up by myself, although there are typical elements that often are a part of a role-playing game: The characters, the quests, the whole realm. I've never played myself though.



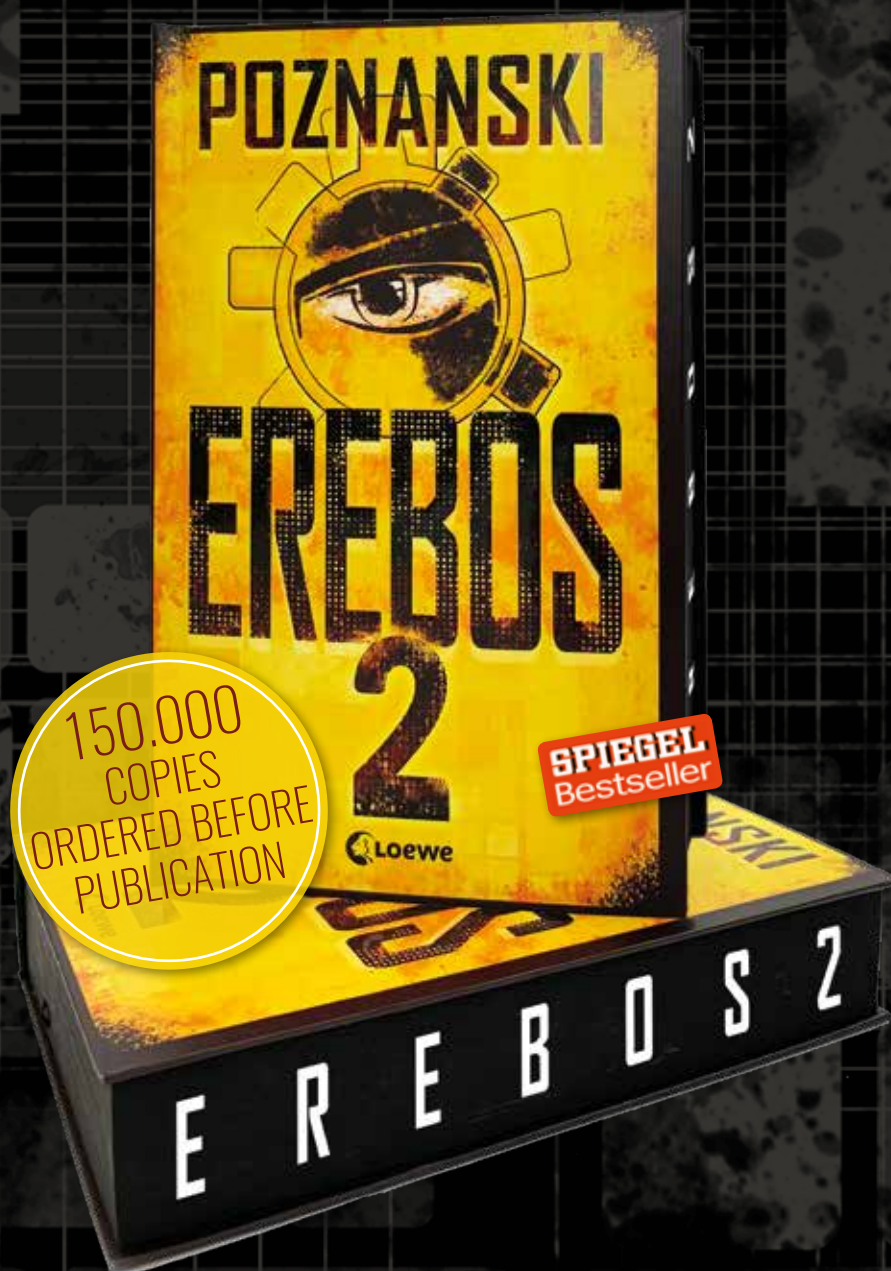


IMAGINE THE HARM EREBOS COULD CAUSE TODAY.  
THROUGH SMARTPHONES THAT ARE CONSTANTLY ONLINE.  
THROUGH INSTAGRAM, WHATSAPP AND FACEBOOK.

**Erebos** - a thought-provoking, enthralling and engrossing story set in present-day London where a computer game blurs the lines between virtual reality and real life. Erebos instantly proves addictive, requiring players to carry out increasingly questionable and risky tasks both within the game and in the real world. As Erebos players form part of a secret society, uncovering the game's true motive is as difficult as it is dangerous. Erebos is a piece of speculative fiction that is sure to spark discussions about computer games and their impact on the individual and society.

- ✓ **Extremely gripping *Thriller* extraordinaire!**
- ✓ **#1 Best-selling German YA author!**
- ✓ **Guaranteed Translation Grant**
- ✓ **On the 2nd print-run before publication!**
- ✓ **Erebos 1 - One Million books sold on the German market**

OUR MEDIA HAS CHANGED IMMENSELY  
AND FOR EREBOS IT'S TIME TO USE THAT!



Ursula Poznanski  
Erebos 2

14th August 2019

512 pages

All Age

ISBN 978-3-7432-0049-4



Audio book  
published by  
Der Hörverlag



- **Events and readings** from August until November
- Huge Event with **Fanmeeting** at **Frankfurt Bookfair**



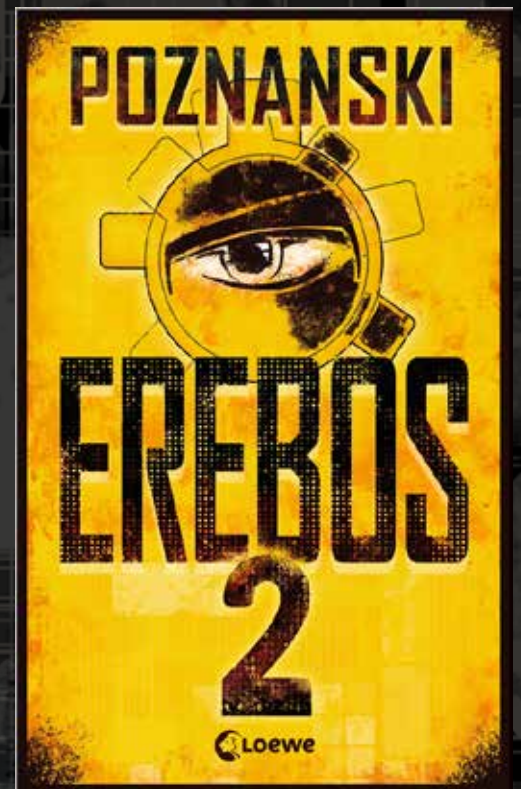
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Full range

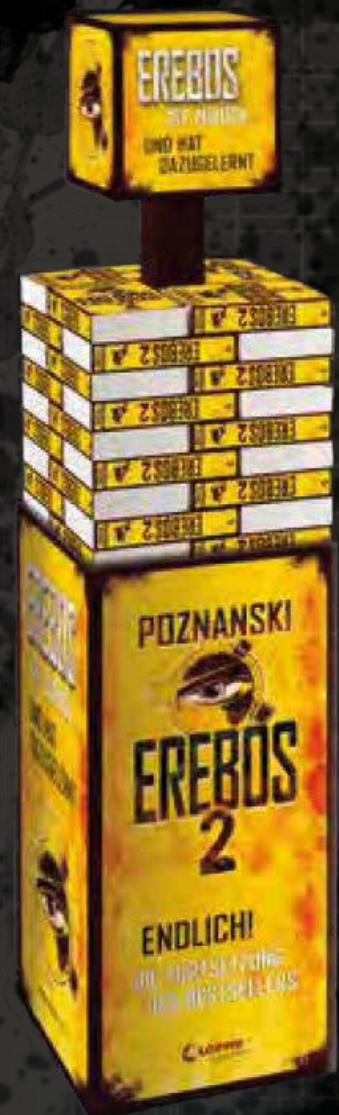
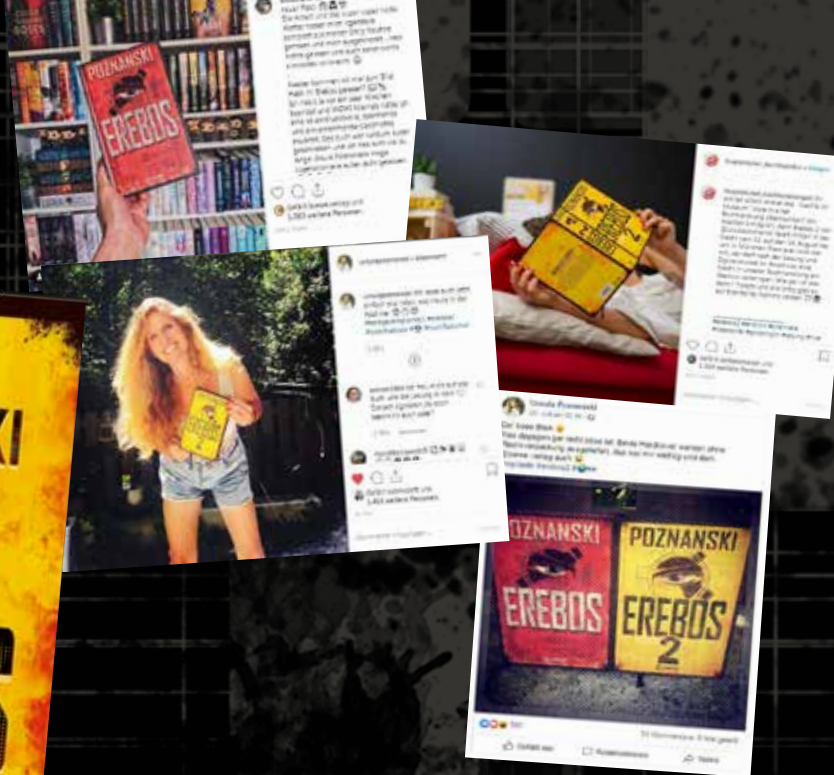


Big Book





Double-sided  
Banner



Power Tower

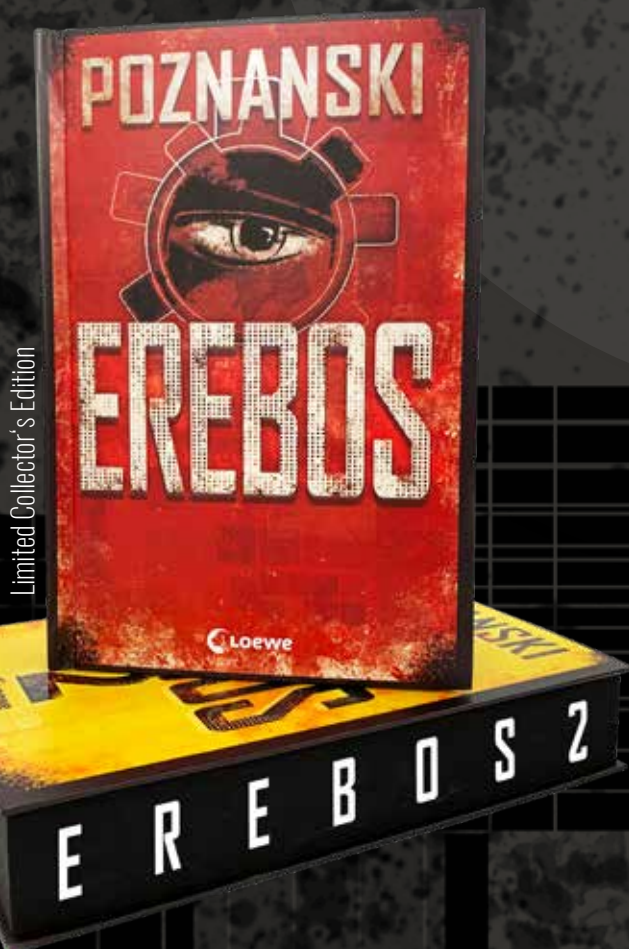


Cubes



# PRESS & BLOGGER REVIEWS

- “The lines between reality and fantasy blur in this **stunning thriller** ... a **prescient page-turner** and a **provocative, believable portrayal** of the seductive world of virtual gaming.” *Publishers Weekly*
- “From its opening notes of **eerie virtual landscapes**, to its **mesmerizing conclusions**, EREBOS is a nuanced thriller that weaves **effortlessly between reality and virtual space**, bringing its protagonists closer to the brink of destruction-or salvation-with every turn of the page.” *CM Magazine*
- “.. the **scary climax**, a **romantic subplot** and plenty of thoroughly credible gaming add proper spark to a **pageturner with amps aplenty**.” *Kirkus*
- “**A literary marvel.**” *Kara Smith Professionally Speaking*
- “Nick’s search to discover the mystery of Erebus leads not only to new discoveries, but also to an **exciting thriller that will leave you just as enthralled.**” *Open Book Toronto*
- “The author succeeds **brilliantly** in mediating the seducing fascination of computer games with the help of her **knowledgeable and fantastic construction of the game**, even without devilishing the medium with pedagogical impulse. And with her idea that the game encroaches in the reality, the author lets the reader shiver. The **delicate love story** developing between Nick and Emily creates hope for a happy ending and contributes to the **reading pleasure**. But there’s no way to avoid the deciding question: how would the reader behave in such a situation?” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*





- “Erebos is advertised as a thriller, but actually, it is so much more! (...) It’s about **addiction, influence, fanaticism** and **revenge**. But about **friendship, love, mourning** and **disappointment** as well. (...) It’s a book that **provokes reflection** and leaves behind a **lasting impression** on the reader. (...) 5 stars!” *Anlisunendlichegeschichte*
- “Ursula Poznanski caught me from the beginning. (...) For me, it was **unbelievably exciting** to discover how far people would go to be a part of this unique spectacle. To see **reality and fiction blur**, more and more. And, most of all, the whole story is so **authentically written** that everything that happens seemed even more frightening. (...) In my opinion, everything is **brilliantly concipated**. I couldn’t stop reading. (...) In the end, I was so fascinated about the story’s conclusion and the way everything clung together. Now, I am **thrilled to meet Erebos in his second round again**.” *Booknerdsbykerstin*
- “This book **convinces the strongest nonreaders**, even without pressure. **Astonishing**. And by the way: it’s actually very well written!” *Bulletin Jugend & Literatur*
- “Erebos can be seen as a parable of omniscient technology in the hands of influential wire-pullers and the power of manipulation - both are highly **topical issues in the age of Big Data**. But first and foremost, the computer game thriller, which can already be **regarded as a classic of its genre**, is absolutely addictive! The gaming world is the right backdrop for a thrilling reading adventure” *German Foundation for Reading*



German Youth Literature Award

**The jury’s statement:**

“The reader follows Nick into the world of Erebos and experiences how easy a game manipulates and changes you fundamentally. There are lots of secrets surrounding Erebos that guarantee suspense until the last page. Mesmerized you follow the development of the protagonist - joining in on the question who is behind each avatar and which purpose lies behind each task. Erebos fascinates through its detailed plotting and its highly relevant topic. The influence the media has on adolescents brings the reader to the question how far he or she himself would go for a game.”

TRANSLATION  
GRANT  
GUARANTEED

EREBOS TRANSLATED INTO  
34 LANGUAGES





# AMAZON REVIEWS



“As a reader, all I can say is that this **international import is truly awesome**. The sinisterness of the game is truly creepy, and the **mystery of Erebos is intriguing** enough to drive the story at a **fast pace towards its thrilling conclusion**.“

“This book kept me **entertained through every page**. The night I bought it, I **literally could not stop** reading this to go to sleep. I would try to stop reading, but then continue the book. Worth every penny and **totally deserves every award it has and will ever receive!**“

“**Absolutely riveting story** about an `interactive' computer game. **Could not click through the pages fast enough**, and tried to get through it in one sitting. **More, please!**“

“The game is **pure epic-ness** and I could totally see myself playing it... which is bad. ... This book was great. **I really really loved it**. It's worth reading and it gives you the chills. It sucks you in until you feel like you just can't not read it in one sitting. **Seriously, check it out.**“

“Holy moly! **I got a bit obsessed with reading this book**. ... the book drew me in in such a way that I was pretty desperate to get to lunch breaks and end of the work day just so I could get back to reading. I was dying to know what the real deal with the game would turn out to be!“

“...**Poznanski does a great job of illustrating the emotion and the frantic desperation of the players.**“



# SYNOPSIS

An exceptional computer game tantalizes a group of young students in London. Nick's best friend no longer has time for him, attends the school completely tired out like many other classmates and misses their basketball training. Nick and the other (yet) unaffected students don't know what's going on: None of the boys and girls who secretly pass on the DVDs talk about the game with non-players.

But then, Nick receives one of the popular DVDs and sinks into a perfectly generated online-adventure. The game is fascinating as it reaches a level of stimulation and illusion that Nick hasn't experienced before. Achievements and failures seem realistic, and the game surprisingly knows a lot about him. The virtual world becomes more realistic than the fictitious reality.

Nick receives orders in the game that have to be carried out in the real world. Harmless missions - until he is ordered to mix some sleeping pills in the tea of his anxious teacher. Nick doesn't follow through with this task and has to realise that another player is supposed to control him. Erebus knows that he has thrown the sleeping pills into a bin. This way, the game finally ends up for him at an early stage because the game (both inside and out) requires a perfect execution of all orders, allowing no resistance.

With the help of Emily whom he is secretly in love with for quite some time and the crazy computer specialist Victor, Nick manages to trick the game and expose an unbelievable story: An ingenious game developer who was betrayed by his competitors and destroyed in his existence created this game with the goal to eliminate his opponents before he committed suicide.

He ordered his own son to distribute the game first but his son was strictly prohibited to play the game himself. An increasing number of teens from different schools in London are bound emotionally to the game. They receive tiny orders that are, at first, not recognisable as harmful for humans. The virtual world and reality display several parallels, and that is the reason why those chosen for the last order aren't able to realise that they are being pushed in a certain direction. At the last moment Emily, Nick and Victor can finally

prevent the game developer's plan.

At the end of the book, the solution falls like scales from Victor's, Emily's and Nick's eyes: The parallels between the game and the real world are neither coincidence nor an aimless gambling but a preparation for the end: The virtual world is an adaption of a map of London, including a map of the tube, and the fortress of the mysterious enemy Ortolan can easily be located as an office building in central London. With this knowledge, they can prevent the players that are still in the game from a real murder.

After the game is uncovered, Nick organises a meeting for all players, aiming for an open exchange about the game and to collect information that might be helpful to realise the original goal of the game in a legal and legit way: The man, who is responsible for the destruction of the game developer's life, must be held accountable. The author leaves an open ending about whether they succeed.

The game developer's son, Adrian, who didn't play the game according to his father's will is now confronted with the impressive scenery for the first time as he experiences Erebus together Victor, Nick and Emily. He is affected because he recognises real places from his childhood and components of earlier games of his father as well. At the same time, he is deeply disappointed of his father who was thinking solely of his revenge but not of his wife and son that have been left behind after his suicide.





# NARRATIVE STYLE

With its riddling structure and the dense language, the book casts a spell over every reader. In a short prologue, the person who controls the game is introduced – not revealing that this person is already dead. The only thing the reader learns is that the person loves the dark and plans to harm someone else.

The actual story begins in a third person narrative out of Nick's perspective. Nick finds out that a boy from his school has kept weapons inside his locker. The next pages describe how Nick's friend Colin has changed, as well as other schoolmates, and how during a burglary into Nick's school a computer was stolen. At the end of the second chapter, Nick has finally received the game and pledged complete silence.

The next game sequence follows and drags on for about 40 pages: Nick gets to know the "Dead Man" who welcomes every new player and reacts instantly to every player's activities. Nick is startled by those accurate reactions and all the things the stranger seems to know about him. Nick creates an avatar, gets to know other players and a part of the game's landscape. Finally, he faces his first short fight.

In the following, there is a transition towards the fictitious reality: Nick's mother interrupts his gaming and the sounds she causes mingle with the virtual events. This entanglement of fictitious reality and virtual world keep popping up in the gaming sequences of the book. It is fortified by the parallels between the different storylines, the secret talks between the players, the sensation of being observed by the game, and the game's tasks that have to be completed in the fictitious reality.

These tasks become increasingly threatening: At first, Nick is supposed to photograph a couple in an underground car park and to transport a box with unknown contents from one place to another. But later on, he is ordered to poison a teacher. The breaks of a student's bike are being manipulated, causing a serious accident. Nick himself is pushed in front of the underground and can be saved with nothing but luck and the presence of mind of other passengers.



# STRUCTURE

The book is a thriller that uses elements of both, a detective and a fantasy story. Central element of the story are various chases: Nick feels observed and followed, and at the same time, he and his friends try to surround the mastermind. For this purpose, investigative work is necessary: Clues are collected, interpreted and classified into a bigger context. The fantastic elements come to expression in the form of two blurring worlds, the fictitious reality and the virtual world.

However, it's not, strictly speaking, a fantasy story because there are no inexplicable events happening - although, with its fast reaction times and perfect simulation, the computer game is technically not possible (yet?). Fantastic elements can be found in the scenario of adventure: surreal landscapes, gnomes, elves and goblins.

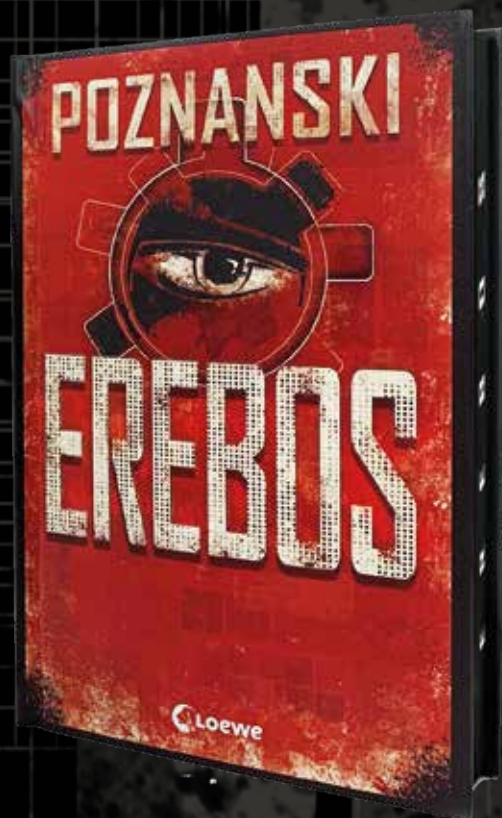
The book narrates chronologically, and most of the time in past tense. The game sequences take place in the present. Nick's perspective is adhered continuously and, especially during the computer game sequences, the reader gains insight into Nick's thoughts and emotions, using inner monologues and substitutionary narration. This way, the reader empathises with Nick worrying about his friend Colin, diving into the computer game, experiencing emotional dilemmas and being happy for him when he finally gets the chance to get close to Emily.

The book raises moral-ethical questions that never condemn the playing of computer games with and without warlike actions. The fascination arising due to well-programmed software is comprehensible because of the atmospheric tight description of action in Erebos.

Nick is an absolutely normal boy, popular and content with his life, who most of the times receives good grades in school. He doesn't play the game to compensate the lack of something essential but because he is fascinated by the game itself. He quits the game when the impact on the real life – the game's interventions – are getting too threatening – despite

his fascination, he manages to draw a clear line.

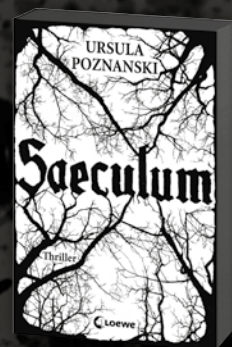
This differs from the other players of the game who often had to deal with loneliness and bullying before, and who compensate the negative experiences in the fictitious world with their avatars and the successes. This applies especially to Helen, a classmate of Nick, making her a perfect tool for the game's last order. She identifies completely with Erebos and her avatar and wants to complete the task at any price. At the end of the game, Helen has to get into psychiatric treatment as she can't deal with the loss of her virtual existence.



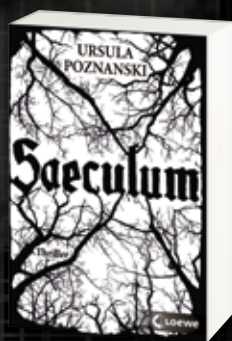


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