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Gran, Sara. Claire DeWitt and the City of the Dead

Sara Gran is a terrific writer. Her first two novellas, *Come Closer* and *Dope*, are the kind of gripping reads that keep readers turning pages into the wee hours. Gran excels at creating settings so atmospheric that they nearly become characters in the story. And the strongest aspect of her newest novel, *Claire DeWitt and the City of the Dead*, is the finely drawn post-Katrina setting. She revisits the days just after the hurricane when residents were still stranded on rooftops and creates vividly accurate portraits of the city's homeless and disaffected youth.

Her heroine is a brilliant, darkly self-destructive private investigator tracking the murderer of DA Vic Willing. While Claire is an intriguing character, the plot is murky and not nearly as fast paced as her first two efforts. The book may disappoint Gran's fans a bit, but most readers will be willing to follow Claire through her next adventure as this new series gets underway.

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