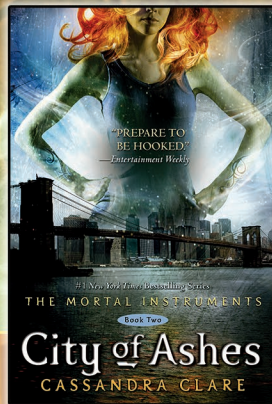
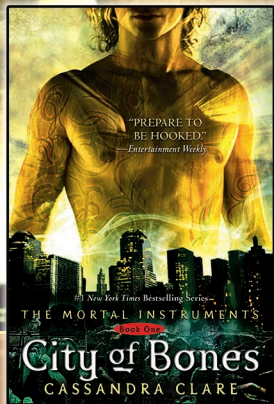


A Reading Group Guide



THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS





THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS

By Cassandra Clare

ABOUT THE SERIES

Anyone who has visited New York City can tell you that it's a magical place. But what if the magic that resides there is more than hectic energy and a bunch of tourist-friendly sites...what if it's real? What if there's another layer to this world that most people can't see, a layer that's full of faeries and vampires, werewolves and demon hunters, protective runes and evil overlords? In *The Mortal Instruments* series, Cassandra Clare peels back the glamour to reveal the magic that is usually hidden from us.

The *Mortal Instruments* series speaks to the outsider in all of us as we try to figure out who we are and how we fit into the world, without letting anyone know how scared we are. By finding a balance between the worlds of the mundane and the Shadowhunters, readers follow Clary as she defines what sort of adult she will be. She finds out who she loves, where she belongs, and what she's willing to fight for.

Discussion Questions

1. When Clary learns that Magnus Bane had erased her supernatural memories, she says that she had always felt like there was something wrong with her. How much of this is because she didn't know her history, and how much is caused—as Magnus says—by the simple fact that she's a teenager? Does she belong in the Shadowhunter world?
2. How much of what mundanes see in this world is a glamour, constructed by those with magical powers? Why do these glammers exist? How do things change for Clary once she can see through them?
3. Where did Nephilim, witches and warlocks, vampires, werewolves, and faeries come from? Do their origins justify the roles they play and the rivalries between them?
4. Why did Valentine rebel against the Clave in the first place? What does he hope to accomplish by stealing the *Mortal Instruments* and fighting the Clave now? Whose best interests does he have in mind?
5. In Chapter 14 of *City of Bones*, Jace says he doesn't believe in God. Do you think this is true? Can someone be a Shadowhunter and not believe in God?
6. What is it about the Silent Brothers that is so disturbing to Clary and the others? Do you think the Silent Brothers play up this aura of creepiness?
7. Why was Jace, who rarely felt fear, so afraid when he was imprisoned in the Silent City?
8. Discuss the character of Hodge. Why did he betray his young charges? Was he just self-serving and bad, or did he do some good with his life? Was he right to fear Valentine more than the Clave?
9. How do Jace's feelings about danger and death differ from Alec's and Isabelle's? Why does Jace feel the way he does about putting himself in the line of danger? How does Clary change this?
10. Shadowhunters are charged with protecting mundanes, but they seem to have very little respect for those they serve. Why do you think their feelings for normal humans are so complicated? Why do they continue to serve mundanes if they don't like them?
11. After Valentine takes the *Mortal Cup* and returns to Idris, why does the Clave find it difficult to trust Jace? What does Jace do to earn their trust? What should he have done? Does Maryse Lightwood really distrust him?
12. What role does Luke play in Clary's life? Does this role change as the story progresses? How does the Clave feel about Luke? Why does he inspire such strong feelings in others?
13. When Simon becomes a daylighter, how will this keep him from finding his place in the world? In what ways is it helpful to him?
14. How did Jace and Clary get their special abilities? Why do you think they developed different skills? Will the other Shadowhunters view their abilities as a gift or a curse?
15. What is the significance of Clary creating the binding rune? Does its origin tell us anything about how Shadowhunters and Downworlders should treat each other?

16. What sacrifices does Simon make? Why is he willing to do these things? Does he gain anything by doing this?
17. Valentine's plotting and lies cause a lot of confusion about who his children are. How does Clary define family? Who had the greatest influence on the formation of Jace's character? Where does Jace belong? Which of the three children—Clary, Jace, or Jonathan—was most affected by Valentine?
18. Several people, including Jace and Luke, accuse Clary of rushing into situations without any regard to how her actions will affect others. Do you think this is a fair assessment? Do any other characters act like this? In the end, does this trait harm or help Clary?
19. Why does Alec have such a hard time telling people about his relationship with Magnus Bane? What changes his mind?
20. What does the phrase “Mene mene tekel upharsin” mean? Where did it originally come from? How does it apply to the situation with Valentine? How does it compare to what Clary was thinking when she wrote it?
21. Clary and her mother are both artists. How does this figure into their gifts as Shadowhunters? Overall, is Clary's gift creative or destructive?
22. Discuss the many biblical references in *City of Ashes*, particularly those that make up the chapter titles—East of Eden, All the Host of Hell, Where There is Sorrow, Sins of the Fathers, etc. Do these chapter headings add to the actions that take place in the chapters they begin? Why do you think the author chose so many quotes from the Bible? Is the Bible important in the lives of any of the characters?
23. The author starts each book and each section within the books with a quotation. What do you know about the sources of these quotations? What sort of works are they from? Is there a common theme? Why do you think the author chose these quotes?
24. How does Simon feel about vampires being part of pop culture—used as a Halloween decoration or to teach children to count? How does his life differ from this pop culture representation? Why do you think vampires have had a resurgence in popularity over the past five or ten years?
25. Simon finds Camille's subjugates disturbing, with their lack of free will and their strong bonds to their master. How does this master/subjugate relationship compare to Simon's relationship with Clary, which some would define as too dependant? How much free will—how much choice—does Simon have when it comes to protecting Clary? And how is his relationship to the other Shadowhunters similar to or different from the subjugate/master relationship?
26. In *City of Fallen Angels*, is the Mark of Cain a gift or a curse for Simon? What does it allow him to do? What is the price he pays? Camille quotes the Bible, saying “And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.” Does the Mark of Cain end up being more than Simon can bear?
27. How does Simon's mother react when she learns that he is a vampire? Why is this reaction so upsetting to him? Is her reaction reasonable?
28. What does Jace's recurring dream in *City of Fallen Angels* signify to him? What is it about his upbringing that makes the dream take on such importance? Why does Lilith start her possession of him with this dream?
29. Chapter Four of *City of Fallen Angels* starts with the inscription above the front doors of the Brooklyn Public Library. Why do you think Simon is focusing on these words while he waits for Raphael? Why did he choose the library as their meeting place?
30. Clary tells Jace, “I wish I could say things the way you do...You always find the right quote, or the right thing to say to make me believe you love me.” Can you think of any instances where Clary does think of the right thing to say? Are there other ways that she shows Jace how she feels about him? Why do you think that Jace relies so heavily on the words of others, instead of just telling Clary what is going through his head?
31. Why are Luke and Clary so disturbed by the reanimation rune that they used to try to get information from the slain Shadowhunter? What does this teach Clary about her ability to create new runes?
32. In what ways is the Praetor Lupus similar to the Shadowhunters? Why are they so secretive? Could they be more productive if they shared information more readily? Do you think they are a noble organization, or are they more self-serving?
33. Part Two of *City of Fallen Angels* begins with a quote from Ted Hughes about payment. Do you agree with the sentiment contained in the quote...that nothing is free? Why do you think Cassandra Clare chose this quote to begin the second half of the book? Who will be making payment—and for what—as the book draws to a close?
34. Why does Simon give Jordan a second chance? Do either of them deserve to be forgiven? Do they feel guilty for the same reasons?
35. What does it mean to Magnus Bane to be immortal? How does it affect his dealings with mortals? Why does Simon choose not to think about his immortality?
36. Why does Jace need a ritual of protection from the Silent Brothers? Are there other repercussions from the request that Clary made of the angel Raziel?

37. What situations could have been prevented if those involved had merely communicated with one another? What reasons, if any, do they have for not communicating?
38. Why is Lilith so intent on bringing Sebastian back to life? What is she planning on doing after this is accomplished? Do you find any of her motivations commendable, even if her methodology is demonic and evil?
39. What role does Camille play in these events? Why does Alec decide to set her free?
40. Why is Simon so loathe to consume the blood that he needs to stay alive? What is it like for him the first time he feeds from a human? Overall, does abstaining from drinking human blood make him better than the other vampires?
41. What are Lilith's followers trying to do when they inject foreign blood into their babies? Why do you think they were willing to follow Lilith and enact her plan?
42. Why does the Clave deprioritize the search for Jace and Sebastian? Do you think that this is a fair decision? Do you think they would have made a different decision if they knew what Sebastian was planning?
43. The Shadowhunter motto is *Descensus Averno facilis est* or "The descent into hell is easy." Why is this an appropriate motto for this group? Does it apply more to some characters than to others?
44. Would it have been better if Jocelyn had killed Sebastian in his crib, as Clary thinks in a flash of anger? How would this have changed Jocelyn as a person? Do you think Valentine would have stopped his experiments if Sebastian had been killed as an infant?
45. With Jace gone, Clary mentions feeling cold all the time...like there is ice in her veins and a layer of ice around her emotions. Why do you think that she associates cold with his absence? What does this icy feeling protect her from? What harm does it do her?
46. Now that Cassandra Clare has written another series of Shadowhunter books, *The Infernal Devices*, she is able to reference other characters and items from the past Shadowhunter's. Discuss some of these references. What is the importance of these references? How do you think Clare might connect these two series?
47. The Seelie Queen warns Clary and her friends that Jace may be quite changed when they finally find him. Is she correct? How are his interactions with Sebastian different now than they were before he disappeared off the roof? What about his interactions with Clary? How does Clary react to these changes in Jace?
48. Why does Jocelyn make Clary leave Luke's house after Jace and Sebastian attack it? Is she right about Morgenstern men not giving up? Do you think this is a trait that Jace got from Valentine, or does it have more to do with his personality and his relationship to Clary?
49. How is the "twinning" ritual that Lilith performed on Sebastian and Jace different from the *parabatai* ceremony? In what ways is it similar? Why does it make the task set before Clary and her friends more difficult?
50. In *City of Lost Souls*, Raphael believes a war is coming that will destroy Shadowhunter and angel alike, and he cautions, "And you had better pray, Daylighter, that you do not lose that Mark before the war comes. For if you do, there will be a line of enemies waiting their turn to kill you. And I will be at the head of it." Is there anything besides the Mark of Cain that can protect Simon? Now that he no longer has the Mark, do you think Raphael will be proven right? Could Simon have avoided this situation by forming alliances with other vampires?
51. Do you agree with Clary when she asserts that there is no such thing as morality when it comes to love, and that you can do anything for the people you love? Or would you align yourself with Simon, who believes that while love is not moral or immoral, the actions we take in the name of love are? Do their actions match up with their beliefs? Do they stay true to their positions throughout the course of the story?
52. What do we learn about Isabelle in *City of Lost Souls*? Is Jocelyn correct when she says that Izzy won't be able to help but shine during dark and difficult times? Does Izzy deserve her reputation of making her few speeches count?
53. When she is trying to break through the hold that Sebastian has on Jace, Clary is reminded of some lines from a Leonard Cohen song: "There is a crack in everything/That's how the light gets in." Is there a way for the light to get into Jace? Should Clary keep trying?
54. Why does Simon feel like he can't feed from Izzy? Why does she want him to? How does their relationship change once he does?
55. What is the significance of the Rudyard Kipling poem that Jordan has tacked up on his bedroom wall? Does it mean something different to him now than it used to?
56. Why does Maia ask Luke's advice on some matters, even though she and Jordan had already discussed them? Are Clary, Izzy, Alec, Simon, and the rest of their group old enough to handle the situations that they are faced with? Does their experience give them any extra maturity or wisdom?
57. Why did Sebastian lie about the meaning of the Latin phrase, *Acheronta movebo*, on his bracelet? Why is this phrase so important to him? Did Clary understand the importance of this lie?

58. Why does Clary prevent Jace from turning himself and the new Mortal Cup into the Clave? Why does she come to regret this decision? How is making this decision different than making the decision to kill Jace on the battlefield?
59. What effect does stabbing Jace with Glorious have on him? Is this what Simon and the others expected when they raised the angel Raziel to ask for a weapon? Why do you think Jace is suffering these particular side effects?
60. How dangerous is Maureen? Why does she appear to be so powerful? What do you think she wants?

Activities

1. Write a research paper on ancient runes. When were they used? By whom? What did they look like? Are they still used today? What is their connection to modern written language?
2. Hodge knew many tricks for healing physical ailments using herbs, plants, and other natural remedies. Compare and contrast different branches of alternative medicine—homeopathy, herbal medicine, acupuncture, etc. How do they compare to the practice of medicine as we traditionally think of it?
3. There is a rich mythology surrounding angels, Nephilim, demons, vampires, and other creatures in the book. Choose one of these magical creatures and find out more about them. Find other books and movies that cover the subject, and compare the world found there to the world of *The Mortal Instruments*. Write a short paper about the history of the creature you've chosen and the different ways it has shown up in literature throughout the years.
4. Shadowhunters devote their lives to making the world a safer and better place for those around them. What can you do to make the world a better place? Choose a cause you believe in and then volunteer.
5. Clary is a talented artist, and often uses art to make sense of the things that are happening in her world. Express yourself through some art form—drawing, painting, sculpting, or collage—and draw someone or something from the books.
6. Shadowhunters have strong ties to their ancestors. Trace the family trees of the Shadowhunters and discover their connections to one another.
7. On the night that Jace tells Clary why he's been pulling away in *City of Fallen Angels*, she compares him to a Modigliani painting. Find some examples of Modigliani's work and write a paragraph about the traits that Clary was recognizing in Jace.
8. Shadowhunters use a lot of Latin phrases—their motto, engravings in the Silent City, the phrase on Sebastian's bracelet. Make a list of common Latin phrases that we mundanes use regularly. Perhaps you can find a basic Latin primer, or someone who knows Latin, and you can learn something about this beautiful ancient language.
9. Clary visits a number of foreign cities while living in the apartment with Sebastian and Jace. Choose one of the cities that they visit, and research its history. See if you can find some photos of the things that Clary sees while she's in that city.
10. When Magnus and the others summon the demon Azazel, they each have to give up a memory as payment for his help. What memory would you give up, if you had to? What memories would you never give up? Write a short essay describing these different memories.



Illustration © Cliff Nielsen



THE LAST BOOK IN THE MORTAL INSTRUMENTS SERIES... *CITY OF HEAVENLY FIRE*

About This Book

Now that Sebastian has the Infernal Cup and can build an army of Endarkened warriors, he's more powerful than ever. His attacks on Shadowhunter Institutes around the world have unsettled the Clave and devastated the Shadowhunter population. No family is untouched as the Nephilim fall victim to Sebastian, and nobody can predict what he'll do next. When Sebastian manages to take the Downworlder representatives to the Clave—Luke, Jocelyn, Magnus, and Raphael—hostage, Clary and Jace know that the only solution is to give Sebastian what he wants...themselves. The fate of the world hangs in the balance as Jace, Clary, Alec, Isabelle, and Simon fight their way through a demon realm for one last battle with Sebastian. Are they ready to sacrifice everything to save all of humanity?

Discussion Questions

1. The author begins the book with a quote from John Dryden. Why do you think that she chose this particular quote? What connection does it have to the characters as the book begins? Does their connection to the sentiment change over the course of the story?
2. Ty Blackthorn handles his emotions and perceives the world quite differently than the rest of the Shadowhunters. What do you think causes this difference? In what ways will his differences make him a better Shadowhunter? In what ways are they detrimental to him?
3. Why does Julian bring Cortana to Emma right after she discovers that her parents have been killed? How does the inscription on the sword help Emma at that moment? Is it true that Shadowhunters are weapons that must be tempered?
4. Who is more to blame for the end of their relationship, Alec or Magnus? What allows them to start communicating again? What are the main problems in their relationship? How do they reconcile themselves to these problems?
5. Why do the faeries align themselves with Sebastian instead of the Shadowhunters? Why does this betrayal come as such a surprise to the Nephilim? Are the faeries more of a help or a hindrance to Sebastian in his fight? Are the terms imposed on the faeries after the war fair and right?
6. Sebastian's bracelet says, "If I cannot reach Heaven, I will raise Hell," and in Edom, he references one of Valentine's favorite quotes: "It is better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven." Do these quotes represent different philosophies, or the same? Which is Sebastian trying to follow? How do the other characters feel about these credos?
7. Sebastian quotes Shakespeare while destroying the Praetor Lupus, saying, "I'll never pause again, never stand still, till either death hath closed these eyes of mine, or fortune given me measure of revenge." What message is this supposed to convey to the Downworlders? Does it make sense in light of what he did to the Praetor Lupus?
8. Amatis tells Clary, "You think they are kind, that the Nephilim are kind, because they are good, but goodness is not kindness, and there is nothing crueler than virtue." Is this true? Can you think of any examples where the virtue of the Nephilim is cruel? Would Amatis say this if she hadn't been turned by the Infernal Cup?
9. Why is Clary relieved to have Simon in Idris with her? Where is he safer, in Idris or in New York? If he were your friend, where would you rather he be?
10. Why did Maia want to break up with Jordan? Why does she feel so guilty about his death? Is there truth to what Bat tells her, or should she continue to feel guilty?
11. What protects the Shadowhunters at the London Institute from Sebastian's attack? Why does this seem to please Magnus?
12. In what context does Brother Zachariah use the phrase "Mene mene tekel upharsin"? In what other context has it been used in this series? Are there any connections between the two circumstances?
13. Is the heavenly fire a curse or a blessing for Jace? What good things does it allow him to do? What are the downsides of having it within him? What allows it to become an effective weapon? Does Sebastian fear Jace because he contains the heavenly fire?
14. Why is it so important to Sebastian that Clary *want* to rule alongside him? What would it mean to him? Do you think Jace is right when he says that Sebastian "doesn't think he has to change to be worthy of being loved, instead he wants to change the whole world, change humanity, make it into something that loves him"?



15. Clary tells Mark Blackthorn that his family is still alive, although she isn't sure it is the right thing to do. Discuss her question, "Was it better to think you had lost everything, and to start over? Or easier to know that the people you loved were alive, even if you could never see them again?" Does anybody else have to face this sort of choice?
16. How does the quote that comes before Part Two of the book contrast with the beginning of the second part? What is the importance of the hallucinations that each member of the group has? What do they tell us about each character?
17. Why is Edom like a darker, ruined version of Idris? Is its Shadowhunter past helpful to the group, even if the Shadowhunters are long dead? How does seeing this realm help Clary make her decision about whether or not to stay with Sebastian?
18. Is Brother Zachariah right when he tells Emma that sometimes it is braver not to fight? Does his past experience with the Carstairs family influence how he treats her? Is it the Shadowhunter way to back down from a fight?
19. Why does the heavenly fire kill Sebastian? How is he changed in the moments before his death? How do Clary and Jocelyn feel about him before he dies?
20. Were you surprised by Simon's decision to sacrifice himself to save his friends? Are there other examples of him doing this? Who suffers the most as a result of his actions? Do you think that Magnus's plan will allow Simon to live a happier life than he would have otherwise?

Activities

1. Although it is never named, it would appear that Ty Blackthorn has some form of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Do some research on these disorders—what are the symptoms, what talents often go along with the disorders, and what are the strategies for coping?
2. Mark is taken by the Wild Hunt, which can be found in the mythologies of many European countries. It can also be found, in one form or another, in many modern fantasy stories. Read several accounts of the Wild Hunt, both modern and ancient, and compare them.
3. After the war, the faeries must agree to the terms set forth for them by the Shadowhunters. This happens in our world, too, most notably with Germany after both World War I and World War II. Choose one of the World Wars and write a paper on the postwar limitations placed on Germany and whether or not they were effective.
4. In the demon realm, Clary and the others are faced with a demon that is able to torture them in ways specific to their desires. If Sebastian were to send a demon to torture you, what would its particular skill be? Write a short story where you confront this demon, telling how it would attack you and how you would fight it.
5. Just as there is always conflict in our world, there are also many charitable organizations dedicated to helping people in war-torn nations recover. Choose one such organization and find some way to help them with their work. Can you raise funds, or help them with an event? Perhaps they need help spreading the word?
6. Although Simon doesn't realize that so many memories have been taken from him, it is devastating for Clary and Isabelle. What would happen if you lost all memory of certain people in your life but not others? Choose one person that you know, and write an essay telling what would happen if you lost all your memories of them. Or write about how you would feel if that person no longer had memories of you.



Margaret K. McElderry • Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing
1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

TEACH.SimonandSchuster.net • TEEN.SimonandSchuster.com
Shadowhunters.com

Guide written by Cory Grimminck, Director of the Portland District Library in Michigan. This guide has been provided by Simon & Schuster for classroom, library, and reading group use. It may be reproduced in its entirety or excerpted for these purposes.