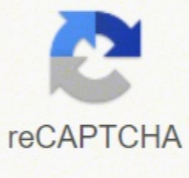




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## City of bones series age rating

19 Apr '16 Bet you're sick of my updates, now just for reference, on the recent Sherrilyn Kenyon v Cassandra Clare. Kenyon has filed a lawsuit against Clare, and also provides a list of alleged similarities between Clare's work to her own. Read and decide for yourself. 15 Jun '13 update again! Saw some stills for the movie, and to be honest, despite being slightly spurious in my "casting" of City of Bones, I actually think my version is much better than the movie version. I mean, look at Isabe 19 Apr '16 Bet you're sick of my updates, now just for reference, on the recent Sherrilyn Kenyon v Cassandra Clare. Kenyon has filed a lawsuit against Clare, and also provides a list of alleged similarities between Clare's work to her own. Read and decide for yourself. 15 Jun '13 update again! Saw some stills for the movie, and to be honest, despite being slightly spurious in my "casting" of City of Bones, I actually think my version is much better than the movie version. I mean, look at Isabelle, and look at Clary. Correct me if I'm wrong, but Isabelle is supposed to be way hotter than Clary. And don't even get me started on Jace. I mean, Jamie Campbell Bower was cute in a couple of his other films, but... Jace was supposed to be.... I dunno... swoon-on-your-feet-party-wetting hawwwt. And Simon.... I mean, he has "friendzone" written all over him. 12 Jan '13 I know this is now being made into a film, and I know they've all got the cast sorted out, but I imagined them very differently. So here's how they all played out in my head: Simon - Aaron Taylor-Johnson For some reason, I always imagined Simon as young Eisenheim. And a part of me wants to kick myself for associating the 2006 film with this book in any way. Alec - Ezra Miller And no, it's not because he's queer. Isabelle - Jessica Szohr Because I wanted to put this picture in here. 'kay? Jace - Draco Malfoy I mean come on. Is there even a debate on this? Clary - Kristen Stewart Only because her acting skills match the quality of Clary's personality. 11 Aug '12 Also known as Why Readers CAN Review An Author As Well As His/Her Book, And Why STGRB Are Full of Shit And Obviously Never Took English Lit Classes For Telling Us We're Not Allowed To. I heard about the whole plagiarism issue long before I even heard of Cassandra Clare's books, so I tried getting into it as objective as possible, given the circumstances. All I know is that she pretty much copy-pasted whole wads of text from another FF writer, from published books, from TV dialogue - into her Draco Dormiens trilogy, without providing any credit to the original authors. I also know that she lifted wads of text from Draco Dormiens into her published Mortal Instruments. What remains a mystery, though, is whether these bits copied into The Mortal Instruments were her own original pieces of writing, or some of them even plagiarized work? I won't go much into the whole plagiarism thing, since if indeed any plagiarized work exists in The Mortal Instruments, that is pretty much speculation. However, it does bring to mind questions of ethic: should a plagiarist be published? Some people strongly believe in giving second chances. I think people only deserve second chances when they admit to their errors and have truly proven their repentance. Both cases which I have not as of yet heard Cassandra Clare do. Other questions popping into my head include shouldn't there be some sort of punishment for plagiarists?! I mean, if I did in university what Cassandra Clare did in Draco Dormiens (and, arguably, The Mortal Instruments), then I would've been kicked out on the curb and my pretty Master's degree ripped to shreds. And, similar to the whole Chris Brown debacle, instead of condemning her far below ethical work habits, we, the consumers, commend their "artwork", as if sending the message that whatever wrongs they have done, it doesn't matter because people still eat their shit up. There is no learning curve here; or at least, no deterrence factor. But anyway, I tried to suppress these nagging questions while I read the book, because I wanted to know if I would truly, objectively, enjoy City of Bones. Especially after the whole "GR Bullies" absurdity, where an increasing number of voices proclaim that Reviews Should Be About Books And Completely Separate From The Author. Well, ladies and gentlemen, my experience reading City of Bones will provide evidence (alongside many other ample evidence out there), that no - sometimes we, as readers, cannot keep the two things separate. Sometimes, our moral and ethic code just won't let us. Reading is, after all, a subjective experience, and all sorts of things influence our enjoyment of it, including our perception of the author. And if that affects our enjoyment of a book, then it damn well does belong in a review if we choose to put it there. So. Anyway. Now that I'm off my soapbox. The biggest thing that stands out while I read City of Bones was how inconsistent the writing was. It was so lazy and repetitive, information was handed over to us on a silver platter - there was no subtlety or any depth going on. But then there would be brief, short scenes or dialogues that actually made me laugh out. Those few and interspersed scenes surprised me, like one wet and icky autumn day, when I found a five dollar bill while raking up my neighbour's filthy garden. Try as I might to ignore it, I was at a dilemma. Should I enjoy this? I mean, it's only five dollars. Surely they couldn't miss it. And, I mean, I'm working my arse off in this horrible weather because my mother owes them a lawnmower. And anyway, it might not even be theirs to begin with. In the end, I took the money (come on, you would've, too!), but I just didn't enjoy it as much as I would have. And the delight I should have felt at finding money just wasn't there. These funny bits of dialogues and scenes filled me with just as much inner turmoil as my five-dollar-note dilemma, and even though I know that maybe, perhaps, it could be that these are all Cassandra Clare's own words, I still couldn't shake off the icky suspicions out off my gut - did she "draw inspiration" from some other unknown source, here? In the end, it just ravaged me with too much guilt and suspicions that what originally would have been a five-star scene was reduced down to three stars and a really, really sad face. Also a part of the inconsistent writing, was the inconsistent narration. I know 3rd person omniscient gives the narrator the power to sift through characters' thoughts and emotions as they please, but this is what made the narrative sound forced and contrived. We would normally follow Clary as the novel progresses - until it is convenient for us to see things from another character's perspective, in which case off we'll jump into another person's head. These conveniences are just one example of what I mean when I say that the narrative lacked subtlety. When we aren't directly being fed a certain character's thoughts and emotions through his/her own point of view, we are blatantly told their feelings by the character themselves. Rarely are people in real life so honest and self-aware as the characters in City of Bones. "An asshat?" Jace looked as if he were about to laugh. "What you said to Simon--" I was trying to save him some pain. Isabelle will cut out his heart and walk all over it in high-heeled boots. That's what she does to boys like that. "" (... ) You want to know what it's like when your parents are good church-going folk and you happen to be born with the devil's mark?" He pointed at his eyes, fingers splayed. "When your father flinches at the sight of you and your mother hangs herself in the barn, driven mad by what she's done? When I was ten, my father tried to drown me in the creek. I lashed out at him with everything I had--burned him with everything I had--burned him where he stood. (...)" "I didn't think you liked me all that much." Isabelle's brightness faded and she looked down at her silvery toes. "I didn't think I did either," she admitted. "But when I went to look for and Jace, and you were gone..." Her voice trailed off, "I wasn't just worried about him, I was worried about you, too. There's something so ... reassuring about you. And Jace is so much better when you're around." The point I'm trying to make, here, is that we get to know the characters because other characters are constantly telling us about them, instead of us making our own informed opinions of them based on their actions and words. This is why I say the writing was lazy and lacked depth. And how Cassandra Clare tried to show us that her characters have background and troubles and are oh such damaged goods was more or less through self-testimonials such as the second quote up above, where Magnus Bane so conveniently gave away his entire childhood to three random teenagers. The chapter The Werewolf's Tale was another one of these self-testimonials for another partially-important character. This is a whole new level of telling-instead-of-showing. Where unimaginative writers just unload all these information through descriptive prose, Cassandra Clare was at least creative enough to hide it into her dialogue. But the same underlying problem is still there - we see none of this "damaged goods". I didn't need Sweeney Todd to tell me his past to know that he was a damaged, troubled man. His actions spoke it for me. As for information being handed to us on a silver platter - all you need to do is take a look at the entire ending scene with Valentine to see my point. The whole chapter was an infodump session. Rarely do I read villains who are so eager to reveal their past and provide explanations to their potential victims. The Harry Potter novels were slightly guilty of this - especially in the earlier books - but I believe a lot of other things about the books redeemed itself from this one fault. Jace was also a bit of an infodumper, but I don't take away points for this. I mean, I get it - it's hard to get on without one character at least explaining what the biases was going on. Speaking of characters ... this is rather tough. Many reviewers despised Jace because he was such an asshole. Clary herself accuses Jace of being an asshole plenty of times. But I've lived a fair amount of years, and I was friendly with quite a few assholes during my own teenage years. And let me tell you one thing: Jace is no asshole. He's a guy with daddy issues, trying to act tough. And that is as deep as any of the characters get. I guess, he would be my favourite character out of the whole lot - not my favourite character as in the one I liked the most, but the character whom, in my opinion, was the most developed, without self-testimonials or other characters telling us about him. But remember my five-dollar-note dilemma? Yeah, Jace was, without a doubt, a direct cut-and-paste of the Draco from Clare's Draco Dormiens trilogy - who, by default, is a creation of JK Rowling's. So forgive me if I "can't separate the book from the author" because frankly? If I enjoyed this book simply because of Jace, that doesn't say much about the rest of the book, or the quality of writing, because Jace is not even Clare's original character. Further illustrating the inconsistencies of Clare's writing, though, was the sudden and drastic change in Jace's character during the scene with Valentine. There is no way one person, in such a short amount of time, could thoroughly convince and change Jace into such an ... obedient? passive? receptive? character. No matter who the person claimed he was, or what evidence he brings to the table. Even if Jace believed in everything Valentine told him, there is no way it would have drastically changed him in such a manner and such a short time. Just as unlikely, was the way Jace was ready to walk the ends of the world with Valentine, build a new life with him, and in the next moment - after a few words from Clary - was ready to throw that all away once again. The double inconsistencies astound me. Clare simply does not understand human psychology or even human nature enough to make solid characters. The other characters were forgettable, to say the least. They all sounded the same, I'm afraid. Witty, dry sort of humour. It gets tiring after a while. Also, the Magnus-and-Alec thing? Can I just say, ew? Magnus is like, what? Forty? And Alec is ... sixteen? Even Valentine the Villain was ... not much of a villain. He didn't frighten me, or even daunt me. I kept reading how Clary was disgusted at how manipulative he was during his scenes, but reading the pages myself, reading his words, his actions? He wasn't particular conniving or ingenious - really, it was just that Jace was so ready to have a family back, he was willing to lap up every bit of contradicting information he heard. Plot progression and twists were unsurprising. Uninspired. No, wait, they were inspired. By Star Wars and Harry Potter, to name a few. Perhaps even a bit of Buffy in there. And this is where my final dilemma lies. To like, or not to like? That is the question. For light fluff, it has entertainment value enough. But what little entertainment value there was, was lifted off other, better, pieces of work out there. To say that I did not enjoy City of Bones would be a lie; but the question is, did I enjoy City of Bones, or did I enjoy the bits of Harry Potter and Star Wars in City of Bones? I'll let you decide if it's fine to like a book filled with other writers' characters, other authors' plot twists, other screenwriters' dialogue. Perhaps I'm being too uptight, but here's how I see it. New York with Potterverse and Star Wars. Take that away and what are you? ...more

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