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Lady Midnight (The Dark Artifices)



Synopsis

The Shadowhunters of Los Angeles star in the first novel in Cassandra Clare's newest series, *The Dark Artifices*, a sequel to the internationally bestselling *Mortal Instruments* series. *Lady Midnight* is a Shadowhunters novel. It's been five years since the events of *City of Heavenly Fire* that brought the Shadowhunters to the brink of oblivion. Emma Carstairs is no longer a child in mourning, but a young woman bent on discovering what killed her parents and avenging her losses. Together with her parabatai Julian Blackthorn, Emma must learn to trust her head and her heart as she investigates a demonic plot that stretches across Los Angeles, from the Sunset Strip to the enchanted sea that pounds the beaches of Santa Monica. If only her heart didn't lead her in treacherous directions! Making things even more complicated, Julian's brother Mark—who was captured by the faeries five years ago—has been returned as a bargaining chip. The faeries are desperate to find out who is murdering their kind—and they need the Shadowhunters' help to do it. But time works differently in faerie, so Mark has barely aged and doesn't recognize his family. Can he ever truly return to them? Will the faeries really allow it? Glitz, glamour, and Shadowhunters abound in this heartrending opening to Cassandra Clare's *Dark Artifices* series.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My intention had been to download the Kindle version, read for about half an hour and go to bed. Here I am hours later, in the early morning, having finished the book. It really is a wonderful read

and does not disappoint. There are a limited number of things that I can say because the book reads like a mystery novel and there are certain surprises that are important to keep so as not to ruin it for others. It has been a bit since I've read any of the Shadowhunter books and have not read the mortal instruments. However, I found that the book was easy to follow without this background, although I need to read the Mortal Instruments at some point to have a better introduction to Jem and Tessa. It's nice though, there are multiple characters that overlap from the other books, but this is not a story about them, there is a recognition of the past history of the world that occurs in the other books and then Lady Midnight gives a nod to them and establishes its own story with its own characters. There was a bit of time in which I thought that the narrative was going to be very similar to that of Jace and Clary and Simon, but I then recognized that the characters of Emma and Julian, Mark, Cristina, and Diego are distinct; it's almost enjoyable to encounter these characters as the same age as Jace and Clary, who in turn now look at the younger generation from their own adulthood of early twenties. It's a reminder of how far the series has come and developed the characters. There is a stronger relationship with the Faire in this book and it is insightful to see how this society/community establishes rules and responsibilities. It further expands the world of characters Clare has introduced the reader to over the years. The concept of parabatai is explored at length in this novel, with Julian and Emma introduced as parabatai who have been bonded since a young age as one another's sworn friends, both having a mutual respect for one another in their Shadowhunting; it is compared to soul mates, who are then bonded by the Silent Brothers. This is a concept introduced very early, so I'm not really disclosing anything that is secret in the story. Above all things this is a love story, a love story by so many people; some that are obvious and some that are not. Almost every layer of this book has love at its heart and the sacrifices that people are willing to make for one another. At the same time, it is also a mystery, with twists and turns, as the Los Angeles Institute is seeking to find a murder who is killing both humans and Fairies alike. Oh, one nice addition to this story, as Clare has seldom shy away from new characters, whether it is sexual orientation, or overall likeability, is the introduction of Ty, who appears to be autistic. There is no mention of autism, but Ty's relationship with his family, and inability to read human emotion to a certain extent, highlights his differences from others that he encounters. I think that it was nice to have a character that Clare incorporates into the story, but is not signaled out as being autistic, but has variations in communication, or as seen through the eyes of family members who love a younger brother. Overall, a great read that kept me captivated all night!

Lady Midnight by Cassandra Clare is the first in The Dark Artifices, a new Shadowhunters series set around the Shadowhunters Institute in LA. It focusses on Emma Carstairs and her parabatai Julian Blackthorn, characters introduced in City of Heavenly Fire, the final book in the Mortal Instruments series. This was one of my most anticipated reads of 2016 and I LOVED it. The setup for Lady Midnight was one of the things I enjoyed most about City of Heavenly Fire and it more than lived up to its promise.

What I liked

The characters. Although Emma is a smart, engaging kickass heroine, I found my sympathies being drawn more to Julian - his struggles and challenges spoke to me even more than Emma's. I was also very interested that this time we meet some Shadowhunters who do not necessarily fit the mould of young teens, perfect in mind and body who embody the ideals of the Clave. Particularly interesting to me was Tiberius, who is clearly on the autism spectrum. I thought it was wonderful how he was shown to make a significant contribution to our protagonists' quest even if it wasn't always by going out and fighting demons. I am interested to see how the Clave tries to handle him in the future. We also have Mark Blackthorn, who, although technically a Shadowhunter has been strongly influenced by his time with the Fae. In both these cases we clearly see how Shadowhunter society in general is not very accepting of those who do not fit a specific mould.

The Law. The Law is a major theme in this book, specifically how to handle a law that seems harsh or unfair. This is symbolised by two Latin phrases - *Sed lex, dura lex* - the Law is hard, but it is the Law - and *lex malla, lex nulla* - a bad law is no law at all. This refers mainly to the law against helping the Fair Folk, and this is used to hinder our protagonists in their quest. We see attempts to get around this law both by diplomatic means and then by less open methods. Of course this theme also applies to the law against parabatai falling in love, which is also a major issue for our protagonists. All in all, it didn't leave me feeling very positive towards the Clave and Council. I look forward to seeing how Julian and Emma and their friends change their world for the better.

The world. I really don't need to say much here. Clare's world is absolutely phenomenal and fascinating. What was particularly interesting this time was seeing a post Dark War world. The struggle with Sebastian has left its mark and even five years later, the results can still be seen. We learn of new, elite Shadowhunters and processes that have been put in place as a result of the War - processes that aren't necessarily for the best. I'm not sure if Clare was aiming to reflect our modern post 9/11 world in this, but that is certainly what it made me think of.

What I didn't like

Bland, boring antagonist. I wasn't especially engaged by the antagonist - however, I suspect that the real villain of the piece was intended to be the rigid, inflexible attitude of those in charge of the Shadowhunters and the climate of fear that seems pervasive. I would imagine

we see our heroes come into direct conflict with that later on in the series. I gave Lady Midnight five stars out of five - when is the next book due out?

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