



City of Bones

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[Geoff Fox](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The omens were not favourable: yet another 'new dark fantasy trilogy'; verses from Shakespeare and Milton (again) set as epigraphs; recommendations from two members of the author's writing group ('funny, dark and sexy?'); a heroine called Clary from a writer called Clare. And the author's enthusiasm in the publicity prompted further jaundiced anxieties: 'I wanted to write' an epic battle between good and evil, terrible monsters, brave heroes, enchanted swords and recast it through a modern, urban lens.' The occult, the fantastical and the simply weird - there's too much of it about.

Well, there's nowhere more modern and more urban than New York City, and Ms Clare is as good as her word. This is indeed a classic tale of good versus evil, where Shadowhunters strive to keep the world in safe balance through their timeless struggle with demonic forces among the dangerous canyons of the city. There are werewolves on flying motorbikes, engagingly camp warlocks and, you might say, Heaven knows what else. Our heroine Clary and her wordy, slightly nerdy friend Simon get swept up into all of this. There's plenty of sword and sorcery, treachery and sacrifice, jealous smoulderings and youthful angst. All this probably still sounds fairly catastrophic as the makings of a novel, but what fully redeems the book is first, the ambitious, risky excitement of the narrative; and secondly, the wit of the dialogue between the teenage cast. There is very little of the 'And I was like' and he goes? and I went omigod? which grates so much in print; we are if anything closer in spirit to the glinting exchanges of **The West Wing**. Keep up, or you've lost it. The market for such series seems insatiable; this trilogy has found a distinctive voice.

Running Order:

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