

City of the beasts



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There are many tasks people must accomplish in order to mature and help themselves as well as others in life. In *The City of the Beasts*, Alex goes on an expedition to the Amazon River, and he faces certain obstacles that help him become a better person. Alex's rites of passage such as his trip to the Amazon, saving the chief, Majority, and the ritual with the people of the mist present themselves as challenges he must overcome in order to successfully complete his Journey.

In the beginning of the book, Alex hears the news that he will have to leave his family and go with his unpredictable grandmother, Kate, to the Amazon River. " I'm fifteen, Dad, and that's plenty old for you to at least ask my opinion. It isn't fair for you to ship me off to Kate as if I was some package or something. That's always how it is. You make the decisions and I have to follow them. I'm not a baby anymore! " (13). At first, Alex throws a fit, saying he does not want to go, but finally he accepts the fact that his parents have to go to find a cure for his sick mother, and he needs to do what they say.

When Alex goes to New York to find Kate, he goes to a completely different environment than he is used to. There are strange people, strange things, and the atmosphere is unfamiliar. Alex is already starting to face responsibilities he would have never had in his old small-town life. He is in for an even bigger surprise when he and Kate fly to the rainforest. This is not only unfamiliar, but unheard of. There comes a point when a person needs to take on new responsibilities, and make decisions on their own. In Alex's case, he is starting to become more independent, because Kate will not baby him like his parents did.

It takes a great deal of courage to be able to leave all you know behind and take on a new challenge. This is the first sign of Alex's capability to complete this Journey, along with many others. Once Alex has gotten to know the Amazon better, he starts to get used to the idea of living there for a while. He even starts to become friends with Nadia, a young girl joining them on the expedition. The two children are in for a big surprise when they are taken from a tribe of Indians, known as "the people of the mist". The tribe meaner no arm, and Alex and Nadia follow them to their home, "the Eye of the world" at the top of a waterfall.

As they climbed up the waterfall, they realize the chief, Majority, is missing, and assume he has fallen. The tribe wants to go back to get him, but Alex explains that he is experienced in climbing and will rescue the chief, "Alex was no expert himself, but at least he had accompanied his father on a couple of risky missions; he knew how to use a rope and had read a lot on the subject" (194) Alex stepped up to the plate and risked his life to save the chief, once again proving to myself that he is capable of doing things on his own, and can mature with the things he learns here.

The most significant experience Alex had was the ceremony with the people of the mist. In the ceremony, Alex had to take all of his clothes off, and put his arm in a tube of ants. This seems unreal to us, but it is a formal rite of passage to the tribe in becoming a man. The ritual gave Alex a chance to learn more about the tribe's culture and customs, but it also helped him learn more about himself. This established Alex's capability to be an independent man, "he knew that,

Deanna Ana Trot Tanat inlet on en would a De addle to look after himself. "(236), and it also gave him the confidence and knowledge to successfully complete his Amazon Journey. This was the perfect incident for Alex at this point in his life. Before going to the Amazon, Alex was immature and childlike, but now he knows more about himself, and can be a more independent person. In our culture, we rely on what we know, and how we live our daily lives. We aren't as accepting to other cultures because we are so familiar to ours.

For example, when a person turns eighteen, they are allowed to vote, join the armed forces, and are legally considered an adult. According to the people of the mist, you must go through a ritual and earn your manhood. The definition of "rites of passage" can mean many things in different cultures, but at some point, everyone will face them. Although Alex was hesitant to accept the Amazon life, because he accomplished his rite of passage: voyaging to the Amazon, saving the chief, and participating in the ritual, he could successfully complete his Journey through the Rainforest's.