

Internal conflict

Literature



In most literary pieces there is a fundamental conflict. There are several different types of conflicts, some of which are: character versus another character, character versus nature or any other outside force, and character versus him/her self (emotionally and mentally) – also known as ‘Internal Conflict’. Often, there can be more than one type of conflict in a literary work. I have chosen to discuss the internal conflict in one of my favourite books by Cassandra Clare; *City of Fallen Angels*. In my opinion, internal conflict is the most complex of all types of conflicts.

There are novels about characters that must physically protect themselves against another person, and also novels where a character must face the dangers of the elements and endure life-threatening situations. For instance, in *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, the main character must survive harsh conditions of outside forces to ensure their own safety. However, the most intense and interesting is internal conflict. In Cassandra Clare’s *City of Fallen Angels*, a young shadow hunter (demon hunter) must battle his own conscience in order to protect his beloved.

Jonathan ‘Jace’ Herondale, one of the main characters, and Clarissa ‘Clary’ Fray, after fighting the long, blood-shedding battle and killing Clary’s evil mastermind father, believe that they can finally live happily ever after. However, Jace starts to get nightmares about hurting and killing Clary – watching as the ‘life is sucked out of her pretty green eyes’. Little does he know that a demon as old as time is creating these nightmares for him. Scared of hurting Clary in real life, Jace goes to all measures to avoid Clary. He even tries to hide at Clary’s best friend, Simon’s, apartment with the excuse of protecting him from vampires.

This leaves both Clary and Jace heartbroken- especially Clary because she doesn't even know why he is shunning her. When Simon states the it seems contradictory that Jace is trying to make Clary happy when he is the reason she is unhappy in the first place, Jace replies, ' Love is a contradiction', and continues to mope around. This is where the internal conflict is most present. Jace worries so much about what he might do and why he keeps having those nightmares that his appearance shows how he is feeling inside- horrible, bare, and vulnerable, with dark circles under his eyes.

Eventually Jace stops pondering about whether to tell Clary about his problem, and they both help each other overcome this obstacle. This novel comes to an exciting end, and Clary and Jace work together to defeat the demon behind their mishaps. Personally, I believe that internal conflict works wonderfully in literature. When you are able to read a person's emotions, you can relate to them yourself and feel empathy and sympathy for them. This works well when trying to emphasise what the character is going through.