The Iron Trial

AUTHOR: Holly Black and Cassandra Clare
PUBLISHER: Scholastic Press
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GENRE: Fantasy
SETTING: The story begins in Call’s little North Carolina town. The majority of the story is set at the Magisterium, an underground school located in Virginia.

SUMMARY:
Callum Hunt is a twelve-year-old boy who lives with his father, Alistair. Alistair has taught Call his entire life that magic is bad. Despite attempting to fail the Iron Trial, Call is selected to attend the Magisterium. He overcomes his physical disability (a limp resulting from a bad bone break as an infant) and learns more about how to use his magic, uncovering some of his past, and discovering who he really is.

BOOK TALKS:
Callum Hunt may have a limp due to a broken leg he had as an infant, but he has the ability to use magic. His whole life his father has taught him how bad magic is and discouraged Call from attending the Magisterium. He passes the Iron Trial, however, and decides to attend the Magisterium. Will he discover that magic is as bad as his father said? Can Call discover why his father is against magic? Will it change him?

Most students are forced to go to school by their parents. Yet Callum Hunt’s father wants him to fail the test that will admit him to the Magisterium school. Why would a parent not want his son to attend this school? What will Call discover about magic and about himself if he attends? The Iron Trial series will uncover many secrets about magic, about Call’s past, and about his identity.

BOOK TRAILER:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jh4y1-D1qp4 from Random House Books
AUTHORS’ DISCUSSION:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_HR4ZIYAz4 from This is Teen

AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

AUTHOR’S NAMES: Holly Black & Cassandra Clare

Holly Black
Author’s Website: http://blackholly.com
Some of the other books written by Black:
The Good Neighbors, series
The Darkest Part of the Forest (2015)
The Copper Gauntlet (2015)
The Coldest Girl in Coldtown (2013)
Doll Bones (2013)
SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:
Harry Potter series

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. The first of the Five Principles of Magic is, “Power comes from imbalance; control comes from balance.” What does this mean? Is this principle applicable to real life? Why or why not? (p.83)

2. How has Call’s disability affected his life? Would things have been different for him if his leg had never been broken? If so, how? (p.30)

3. The words, “Knowledge and Action Are One and the Same,” appear over the gates that lead to the caverns of the Magisterium. Is this true? Why or why not? Provide examples from the novel to defend your answer. (p.207)

4. At the end of the book, Call is told that he is actually Constantine Madden and, “The soul of Callum Hunt is dead.” Do you believe that Call is actually the Enemy of Death? Why or why not? (p.269)

5. “Even if Call had been Constantine Madden once, it wasn’t like he remembered any of it. He was still Callum, wasn’t he? Still the same person. He hadn’t become evil...And what was a soul anyway? It didn’t tell you what to do. He could make his own decisions.” What do you think? Does a soul tell you what to do? Does the soul affect or make a person’s decisions? (p.286)

6. Call struggles with the decision to tell Master Rufus what he has learned. He deliberated for a while before passing through the First Gate. What would you have done in Call’s position? Would you have told Master Rufus? Or would you have walked through the First Gate? Did Call make the right decision? Give examples from what you read to support your answer. (p.294-295)

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts

- “Callum vs. Harry”
(A project for students who have read both Harry Potter and The Iron Trial.)
Using your preferred online tool, create an animated video comparing and contrasting the structure of Harry Potter and the Iron Trial. Be sure to include information about one literary device. http://literary-devices.com

Possible free online animation tools:
http://www.teachthought.com/uncategorized/50-animation-tools-resources-digital-learners
http://www.abcya.com/animate.htm
https://goanimate4schools.com/public_index
http://www.fractuslearning.com/2012/09/17/student-animation

Standards: 8.RL.3.1
Compare and contrast the structure of two or more related works of literature (e.g., similar topic or theme) and analyze and evaluate how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

Social Studies

- Create a Map
  Using the descriptions in The Iron Trial, draw and color a detailed map of the Magisterium. Be sure to label all rooms and significant items pertinent to the story.

  Integrate visual information (e.g., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

RELATED INTERNET SITES:
http://irontrial.scholastic.com

Challenging Words
Mages (p.12)
Magisterium (p.12)
aspirant (p.36)
coruscate (p.57) / coruscating (p.191)
'alchemist (p.60)
unscathed (p.61)
austere (p.77)
bioluminescent (p.82)
anomaly (p.146)
Reviewer’s Name: Philina Martinez
Reviewer’s Position: Library Media Specialist, Oak Hill High School

affinity (p.153)
ominous (p.213)
supplication (p.269)