

Carry On Study Guide

Carry On by Rainbow Rowell

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Plot Summary

NOTE: This guide refers to Carry On - St. Martin's Press, First U.S. Hardcover Edition, 2015

Carry On, by Rainbow Rowell, is a fantasy novel which transports young adult readers to the world of magic. In the story, the Chosen One (Simon Snow) must defeat the evil Humdrum, who seeks to destroy the magical world in the United Kingdom. When the novel begins, the orphaned Simon is just starting his eighth and final year at Watford School of Magicks. The Mage, who is the head of the school and the leader of the magical world, is mentoring Simon. As the Chosen One, Simon enjoys something of a celebrity status. Some people hate and fear him. Others love him. Simon's girlfriend, Agatha, breaks up with him because of expectations placed on her to be by Simon's side at all times. The breakup devastates Simon. He takes comfort in his best friend Penelope, who is beautiful and intelligent, and in the school goat herder, Ebb. Ebb is warm and friendly.

Simon also worries about the absence of his roommate, Baz, during the first few weeks of the school year. Though roommates, Simon and Baz are staunch enemies. Simon receives a message from a female ghost, urging him to find Nicodemus to find the ghost's killer. Simon believes the ghost is meant for Baz, but Baz is not at school.

Initially, Simon believes that Baz is siding with the magical Old Families against the Mage, because the Families have fallen out of power and influence with the Mage's reforms. They would rather bring the Mage down than save the magical United Kingdom. As it turns out, Baz was late to school because he was kidnapped by troll-like numpties. Baz admits early on that he hates Simon.

Upon learning about the ghost, Baz is deeply troubled, for his mother was killed by hired vampires many years before when she was head of the school. Simon offers Baz help to find his mother's killer, and Baz accepts. Together, with Penelope and Agatha, the four commit to solving the murder of Baz's mother and to finding a way to stop the Humdrum. Simon also comes to realize he has feelings for Baz, and the two fall in love.

As winter approaches, the four friends are able to determine a number of important things, including that the Old Families have been right to oppose the Mage. First, they learn from Nicodemus, who is the brother of Ebb, that he was approached by the Mage to strike a deal to sneak vampires into the school to stage an attack to signal the need for reforms and the coming to power of the Mage. Nicodemus explains he refused because he did not want his sister to be hurt. The Mage managed to get vampires in the school. The vampires killed Baz's mother and turned Baz into a vampire. The ghost visiting Simon was not Baz's mother. Instead, it was Simon's own mother, who conceived Simon with the Mage in the attempt to force a prophecy and bring about the Chosen One.



Simon is sort of the Humdrum. Simon is a Normal child conceived with forced magical abilities. He uses a tremendous amount of magic each time he practices, causing great holes in the magical world to open up, and causing a shadow of himself to form as the Humdrum. Only by feeding his magic into the Humdrum does Simon manage to defeat the Humdrum, and kill the Mage. Simon, however, has lost all of his magical abilities, and he must now live as a Normal. He is happy to at least have Baz and Penelope in his life. Agatha, meanwhile, leaves for California to leave the world of magic behind for good.



Book One

Summary

Chapter 1 – Each September, Simon Snow makes his way to the magical school of Watford, where he is now in his eighth year. In Chapter 1, Simon thinks about the magical abilities of himself and others, such as Penelope “Penny” Bunce. She is always focused and easily able to draw on magic. However, Agatha is never focused and does not like to talk about her magic. Simon’s best friend, Baz, describes magic like pulling a trigger or lighting a match. Simon himself is powerful enough for people to sense his magic. He draws on immense amounts of magic at unexpected times.

Chapter 2 – When he was little, Simon, an orphan, dreamed of attending the Watford School of Magicks. When he was invited to attend by the Mage, it was a dream come true. Rather than looking forward to summers, Simon agonizes over them because they keep him away from Watford, especially during a time of war with Humdrum. Simon explains he wields a weapon called the Sword of Mages, but Simon himself is also known as the Sword of Mages. That magic is entrusted only to old families. Simon says that no one else loves magic like he does, because no one else knows what it is like to have lived without it. Magic is only one of the things that Simon misses during summer. Others include Penelope, a half-Indian half-white girl from London who helped him to adjust to school, and who is dating an American; the football pitch; his school uniform; and Ebb the goatherd and her goats. Two things that are no longer favorite things Simon misses are the Wavering Wood and Agatha.

Chapter 3 – Simon arrives at a train station in rural England where he takes a taxi toward Watford. Simon realizes his taxi driver is secretly a goblin when he sees the driver’s reflection in the mirror, so he uses the Sword of Mages to cut the goblin’s head off, causing the taxi to crash. Simon reveals the goblins have long been after him for revenge after he helped the Coven to drive the goblins out of Essex. Simon must then walk to school, which Normal human beings believe to be a very exclusive, private boarding school. The gate is inscribed with the words “Magic Separates Us From the World; Let Nothing Separate Us From Each Other.” The Mage’s Men, including Premal (Penelope’s older brother) protect and guard the school, which was founded in the 1500s. Premal verifies Simon’s identity as he enters because Humdrum is running around disguised as Simon. Simon is thrilled to be back at school and rushes to unpack. Penelope comes in to see him to say hello and complain, as always, about her roommate Trixie, a half-pixie, who is manic.

Chapter 4 – Penelope is worried that Simon looks too thin. She finds it hard to look him in the eyes because he looks so worn out. Penelope knows she would run away with Simon if she could, if he were not the only one who could make a difference in the World of Mages.



Chapter 5 – Simon and Penelope are among the first students back at the school, so the dining hall is pretty empty. While eating, he reflects on how he is the Chosen One, the Greatest Mage, the Power of Powers, prophesied to bring about the fall of the one who has come to end everything – the Humdrum. Simon is believed to be the Chosen One because no Normal has ever been born with magic, except him. No magical parent would ever abandon a magical child because magic is so precious, so Simon is not a magical orphan. Simon reflects on becoming something of a celebrity when he first arrived at Watford and how the Mage helped protect and guide Simon through his early days. In the present, Simon and Penelope trade stories about their summers, during which time Simon notices how good Penelope looks in her uniform skirt. They also talk about their ongoing efforts against the Humdrum, the hostilities with the dark creatures, and a civil war that is coming. Simon avoids talk about Agatha, his girlfriend, who is also one of Penelope's friends. Penelope and Simon then discuss how Baz may or may not be a vampire, which concerns Simon since Baz is his roommate even though Baz has never tried to kill or feed on Simon. While falling asleep that night, Simon thinks he sees a figure in the moonlight by the window.

Chapter 6 – Lucy says there is much she needs to say, but that time is short and her voice does not carry.

Chapter 7 – The Mage visits Simon in the morning, apologizing for not being around the previous day. Simon catches the Mage up on his summer and his incident with the goblin. The Mage reveals trouble among the magical world, as factions have formed seeking power. The Old Families are testing the Mage, and half of Wales has stopped tithing. The Pitches are paying Coven members to stay away from meetings to prevent a quorum. There are skirmishes along the road to London. The Mage explains that the incident last June –where Simon was kidnapped by Humdrum without triggering any alarms –means Watford is not safe for Simon. So, he must go to a secure place elsewhere to continue his education. Simon is stunned and says that he will not go.

Chapter 8 – Lucy says the fog is so thick.

Chapter 9 – Simon wears an anti-vampire cross pendant around his neck, given to him by Agatha. Agatha returns to Watford, but Simon cannot find her anywhere. He has lunch with Penelope and fills her in on his talk with the Mage. Penelope reveals that the Veil is lifting, as it does every twenty years, in which time the dead may speak to the living if the dead have something that really needs to be spoken. The dead, she explains, always speak the truth.

Chapter 10 – The Mage knows he can force Simon to go into hiding, but he knows Simon is not a child anymore. The Mage knows that Simon must find a way to control his power effectively.

Chapter 11 – Lucy tells the story of David, known as Davy, who hailed from Wales and was the first of his family at Watford. Lucy knew Davy at Watford, where Davy was obsessed with perfecting and protecting his magic while Lucy wanted to travel the world.



Chapter 12 – Simon finally sees Agatha out on the Great Lawn. Their meeting is tense, with Agatha wanting to talk about what Simon saw the previous June. Simon does not want to talk about it. He only wants everything to be fine with Agatha.

Chapter 13 – Agatha loves Simon, but knows it won't be enough for her when Simon finally does not come back from some adventure or some battle. Agatha worries about not only protecting herself, but whether or not she should be standing beside Simon as everyone expects her to, for she is the one chosen by the Chosen One.

Chapter 14 – Simon and Agatha do their best to catch up on missed time, talking about the Mage, Humdrum, the war, and Baz. They later meet up with Penelope at the back-to-school picnic, which is a bittersweet experience because it is the last one they will have as they are due to graduate at the end of the year. The three friends look for Baz, who has still not shown up. That night, Simon thinks someone is in his room, but cannot find anyone.

Chapter 15 – Baz is still not at school the following day when classes begin. Simon thinks about how Baz's family is one of the oldest and most powerful, having held political power at both Watford and across the country for years. His mother was the previous head of Watford until she was killed by Humdrum by sending vampires into Watford. Her death brought the Mage to power, who has kept everyone alive since then. Baz and his family are opponents of the Mage, especially since Baz was slated to be the next head of Watford. Simon seeks out Baz's best friend, Niall, to ask where Baz is. Niall will not say. Penelope and Agatha consider that Baz might be traveling on vacation, or may have just skipped eighth year because it is optional. Simon does not think so.

Chapter 16 – Weeks pass without Baz's arrival. Simon visits with Ebb and her goat herd. The goats eat dangerous magical plants that would otherwise harm students. Ebb appears to have been crying, but she will not say why. Simon fills her in about Baz's mysterious absence. More weeks pass. Simon notices the Mage, who has often been absent from the school in the past, is nearly always at school now, surrounded by guards. The Mage is tasked not only with running the school and hunting the Humdrum, but running the magical United Kingdom. Simon explains Humdrum first appeared twenty years before and he operates by sucking all the magic out of a place to create a magical dead-zone. The first magician to encounter such a hole called it a "humdrum," which is how the Humdrum got his name. The Humdrum has allied with all the dark creatures of the magical world, who are kept from attacking and conquering the Normal world only by magicians. Simon does not know why the Humdrum has targeted him, though he believes it is because he has so much power and is the biggest threat. Simon decides to talk to the Mage about Baz, but discovers the Mage is actually out. He then speaks to Mrs. Possibelf about the situation. Mrs. Possibelf explains that because Baz is eighteen there is nothing that can be done to force him to attend school. Simon explains he is worried that Baz is planning an insurgency against the Mage.

Chapter 17 – Simon continues to seek answers about Baz, even venturing into the Wavering Wood to search for him. There, a nymph tells him that Baz is not in the woods



and that Baz is his enemy and a vampire. The nymph asks Simon what he is truly looking for, but Simon does not answer. He explains to the reader that he wishes he could find a map or a guide that would make the magical world all make sense. Simon journeys to the catacombs beneath the Chapel where he once found Baz chanting among the dead in fifth year, but Baz is not there at present.

Chapter 18 – Lucy recounts how it was Davy who cast the spells that brought creatures like wolves and fish-beasts to the school, and that it was Davy who thought about expanding the world of magic to schools other than just Watford. Lucy remembers telling Mitali, who would become the mother of Penelope, that Davy was planning a revolution. Lucy, floating around in the present, says that Davy's revolution has been completed, for the school of Watford now considers every child blessed with magic.

Chapter 19 – Close to Halloween, Simon finally gets the chance to speak with the Mage, who is worried about Simon following a failed flibbertigibbet attack orchestrated by the Humdrum. The Mage reports that the Old Families are calling home their sons to close ranks to move against him. This worries Simon, because he knows the magical world will fall to the Humdrum if it is divided against itself. The Mage thinks it is all a part of the Humdrum's plan, and comments that the Families would rather see him fall than the Humdrum stopped. The Mage wants to hide Simon, but Simon again refuses.

Chapter 20 – Simon and Penelope study up in the Hills Beyond. Penelope hopes her Aunt Beryl will make an appearance before the Veil closes. Penelope and Simon also notice that other students, including Baz's cousin Marcus, have left school to be with their families.

Chapter 21 – The Mage truly believes that Simon is the Chosen One, and that he will be the Greatest Mage of all time. But the Mage senses a crack or a flaw in Simon, and vows to fix it.

Chapter 22 – Simon stops wearing his pendant as he and Agatha get into a fight over her planning to go home for the holidays. Penelope calls for a strategy meeting between her, Simon, and Agatha in Simon's room after dinner.

Chapter 23 – Agatha is not happy to be in the boys' dormitory, knowing she will be expelled if she is caught. Still, the meeting gets underway. The three discuss what knowledge they have. The Humdrum looks like Simon, has been relatively quiet since June, is creating more holes, and his existing holes are spreading. Agatha reports that the Mage has been raiding the houses of Old Families looking for dark magic, and that allies of the Pitch family are leaving school. Only the Mage making Simon his heir enabled Simon to get into Watford, for the Old Families –who had long prophesied the Chosen One –fought against his acceptance. One cannot be a magician unless one can control magic, and Simon cannot exactly control his. Agatha explains her family can no longer host Coven meetings, for the Normal neighbors are getting suspicious. Agatha then abruptly leaves, saying she has to study.



Chapter 24 – Agatha reflects on the previous year, when Baz tried to move in on her. She also thinks about how she would have gone off with him the previous year. She considers what it would be like to be with Baz, and if she might live forever. She waits on the school ramparts, hoping Baz might see her.

Chapter 25 – Lucy keeps trying to get through.

Chapter 26 – Simon finds Agatha on the ramparts. He knows she was lying about leaving to study. He discovers her holding one of Baz's handkerchiefs. Angered, he uses magic to force Agatha to tell the truth, but just before she must begin to speak, Simon undoes the spell. Agatha does not deny she is waiting for Baz to come back, and that she wants him to come back. Simon asks if Agatha wants to be with Baz. Agatha says she does not know. Agatha then breaks up with Simon, saying he is not her happy ending. Simon rushes back inside, stunned, hurt, and angered.

Chapter 27 – Simon cannot sleep because she is wondering what Baz means to Agatha and what he could have promised her to steal her affections. Simon sees a woman at the foot of his bed, a visitor through the Veil. The woman is asking for her son. She tells Simon to tell her son that her killer walks. She goes on to say that Nicodemus knows and that Basilton must find Nico to bring her peace. The woman kisses Simon's temple and asks this be given to her son. She goes on to mention her "rosebud boy" and stars. Simon promises to tell Baz if he ever comes back.

Chapter 28 – The next morning, Simon rushes to find Penelope in the dining hall. He tells her all that has happened. Penelope does her best to comfort Simon over Agatha, and she listens to news about Simon's visitor. It is then that Simon is stunned to see Baz arrive.

Analysis

When Rainbow Rowell's novel *Carry On* begins, Simon is beginning his final year at Watford, which makes him extraordinarily unhappy. Simon, who has lived without magic, has truly come to love magic in ways that the Old Families and other magical students cannot because they have never lived without it. Rowell sets the stage here for a very important thematic argument which will recur throughout her novel, namely that love and friendship are what make life worth living. The reader here can easily replace "magic" with "money," "power," "influence," and so on – things which someone who has never had them can come to love more than those who have always had them. But, these sorts of things do not make a human life worth living.

Without realizing it, Simon has a life worth living. Apart from magic, he has an amazing friend in Penelope. Temporarily, he also has a girlfriend in Agatha (the two were once very close and deeply in love). Simon has a father-figure in the Mage, who offers Simon sound and important advice and guidance. Simon takes many of these things for granted without realizing it, assuming these are things which must be there. For example, Simon's refusal to directly deal with Agatha and the problems between them is



not merely a mark of Simon's dislike of confrontation. It is a sign that Simon expects that Agatha will be there. His primary focus in life is magic, and so he does not have the patience to deal with much of anything else.

The reader is also quickly exposed to some other fundamental and important thematic arguments that Rowell makes early on. The reader should note the inscription on the gate of Watford: "Magic Separates Us From the World; Let Nothing Separate Us From Each Other." In other words, the magical community has more in common than not. The differences they do have should not tear apart what common ground they do have. "Magicians" can easily be swapped with "people" to the effect that people should not let their differences tear them apart. At the same time, any divisions – personal vendettas and personal interests – must be put aside for the greater good. As the reader learns, the Old Families are opposed to the Mage's rule, and would rather see the Mage thrown from office than side with him to defeat Humdrum. The Mage argues that the greater magical world in the United Kingdom will suffer because of pettiness.

Rowell also makes a very important point through the initial absence of Baz and the sudden presence of the ghost. Both represent mysteries that must be solved. The pursuit of truth in solving of these mysteries is a necessary thing. Rowell uses these mysteries (and others, such as the existence of the Humdrum and the family-power politics) to argue that the truth must be pursued no matter where it may lead. Such truths may be uncomfortable, or even seem impossible to bear. Nevertheless, the truth must be faced. Simon recognizes that the pursuit of truth is essential, especially given the dangerous times in which he and the others find themselves. Also, the ghost that has appeared to Simon has directly appealed to him for help. Truth will mean an end to the wars.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Simon love magic? Why does Simon insist that he loves magic like no one else in the magical world does?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Simon so troubled by Baz's absence early at school? How is this compounded by the presence of the ghost?

Discussion Question 3

What difficulties has the war with the Humdrum brought to light –both with respect to the dark magical world and politics with the Old Families? Where does Simon stand on the Mage's conduct of the war? Why?

Vocabulary

fantasy, dubious, acrid, materialize, manic, prophecies, mundane, insidious, sluggard, artifacts, coven



Book Two

Summary

Chapter 29 – Baz makes a dramatic entrance into the dining hall, where his close friends Dev and Niall welcome him with open arms. Baz is amused to find a stunned Simon and Penelope watching him. He plays to Agatha by giving her a long look.

Chapter 30 – Baz knows he has much to make up for in the past eight weeks of absence, but he refuses to tell anyone he was kidnapped by numpties –large, stupid trolls. He also confirms to the reader that he is indeed a vampire, which he is still adjusting to. It was Baz’s Aunt Fiona who rescued him, saying the numpties kept changing what sort of ransom they wanted for Baz, leading Fiona to believe the numpties were acting on orders. In class, Baz delights in Simon glaring at him.

Chapter 31 – Simon is confused, angry, and full of questions for Baz. He is also angered that Agatha can’t stop looking at Baz. Penelope cautions Simon against trying to pick a fight with Baz, saying that something big must be going on because Premal has been out of touch for weeks. At last, Simon and Baz speak to one another as civilly as they can in their dorm room. Simon wonders how he was ever cast as roommates with Baz, but he also remembers how the Crucible casting is meant to ensure that roommates watch out for one another as brothers. Baz cautions Simon to put on his cross necklace, which Simon rushes to put on. Simon asks where Baz has been, but Baz will not answer. Simon then attempts to do homework, during which time Baz leaves.

Chapter 32 – Baz is enraged with the Mage for the searches he and his men have been conducting of Old Family libraries for dark magic, banned books and dark objects. Baz’s family is not working with the Humdrum, and the family hates any insinuations that they are. Aunt Fiona hates the Mage for his searches and hates the Mage for taking the office and allowing in non-racially-pure magicians. Aunt Fiona believes the Mage is also up to something else, but can’t say what; and she expects Baz to find it out. She also expects Baz to take something random from the Mage’s office, just because. When Baz returns to his room that night, he reflects on being hopelessly in love with Simon.

Chapter 33 – Baz has been in love with Simon since fifth year. He wishes that he had never realized that he had feelings for Simon.

Chapter 34 – Baz does not hate Simon, but he hates the feelings that Simon stirs within him. Baz does hate the Mage, for he believes the Mage is trying to throw his family out of magic and ruin them. He and other Old Families believe that the Mage will use Simon to destroy their power. Baz knows his love for Simon is misplaced, because he will probably have to stand against Simon one day.



Chapter 35 – Penelope and Simon eat lunch outside. Simon asks if visitors from the Veil can visit the wrong person. Penelope says it is essentially impossible. She also insists her family is nothing like the Pitches. Simon asks Penelope if she knows anything about a Nico or a Nicodemus, but Penelope does not.

Chapter 36 – Penelope heads out for dinner with her mother in town. She recalls how she and Simon narrowly escaped the Humdrum in Lancashire the previous June. Because of this, her parents now make her carry a mobile phone in the event of an emergency.

Chapter 37 – Agatha considers how she is not particularly fond of magic and how she and Baz have not yet spoken, even though he has been back a while now. She decides to try to speak to Baz, but Baz tells her he is wrong for her.

Chapter 38 – Baz does not feel well. As a vampire, he can never feel full, warm, or comfortable. He also hates that Simon is relentlessly watching him and that he must deal with Agatha. Baz goes to the Mage's office, which used to be his mother's office. He decides to steal a book, and he focuses on one called *Flames and Blazes – The Art of Burning*. A paper flies out of the book just as Simon appears to confront Baz, sword drawn. Baz explains, truthfully, that he is looking for one of his mother's books. The paper that has slipped out of the book turns out to be a photo of Baz as a toddler. Simon then says he has something to tell Baz.

Chapter 39 – Back in their dorm, Simon explains to Baz about the visit from his mother. Baz does not know who Nicodemus is or what his mother's message about rosebuds and stars might signify. Penelope suddenly arrives in tears, saying that the Mage has forced a routine search of her own family's house and that Premal is the one who helped lead it. Simon says that if the Mage has done this, he has a reason. Penelope worries that something may have been found at her house because her mother collects every possible kind of book and artifact because she is for freedom of information. Simon says that Penelope's family will be fine, but Penelope does not believe him.

Chapter 40 – Baz reveres his mother, the youngest head of Watford ever, and the third of three to die defending it. Baz goes down to his mother's tomb in the catacombs and cries, remembering how his mother was killed in front of him. Back in the dorm, Simon promises to help Baz find his mother's killers.

Chapter 41 – Lucy is losing her grip on the world as the Veil weakens and pulls her back toward the other side.

Analysis

As it turns out, Baz has been absent from school because he has been kidnapped. The continued obsession that Simon had with whether or not Baz is a vampire results in the truth coming out that Baz is indeed a vampire. At the same time, the reader learns that Baz's hatred of Simon has nothing to do with actual hatred of Simon. It is because Baz is in love with Simon and believes he can never have Simon. Simon has absolutely no



hint of this truth. Also, Baz's feelings come as a surprise to the reader. The acknowledgement is in keeping with Rowell's assertion that one must always strive for the truth, no matter what that truth might be. This is given further weight when Simon reveals the contents of his ghostly conversation to Baz. Simon vows to help Baz find the killer of Baz's mother, a quest for truth which establishes a truce between the two boys.

At the same time, Rowell's contention that during troubled times personal differences should be put aside is both upheld and challenged. Simon and Baz, who have positioned themselves as enemies of one another since day one, put aside their personal differences in pursuit of Baz's mother's killer. Also, during the unsettled times, the alliance between the two boys might have an impact on the wider war itself. However, this remains to be seen. Rowell's contention of the greater importance of the greater good is challenged by Aunt Fiona and other members of other Old Families, who would rather risk the safety and security of the country than see the Mage continuing on in the office of headmaster.

The challenging of the Mage by members of the Old Families relates to Rowell's thematic argument that people have far too much in common to let their divisions tear them apart. The Old Families' opposition to the Mage poses dangers that dissension brings. The existence of the magical world in the United Kingdom is at stake. By all appearances, the Old Families would rather risk ruin than allow the Mage to remain in power. Their disregard for the consequences of their actions is another mystery for Simon and others to solve. This upholds Rowell's assertion that one must follow the truth no matter where it leads.

What is especially important through this section of the novel is that the things which make life worth living –especially friendship –continue to matter greatly. Simon takes not only comfort in Penelope and her kindness and support, but he begins to behave in a friendly manner toward Baz. Baz has had a rough time lately, and Simon –himself an orphan –knows what it is like to grow up without a mother. Simon is empathetic has no problem being friendly toward Baz as a matter of respect. He also recognizes that there is more to life than hatred and anger. Simon is just beginning to recognize that he and Baz have enough in common that they should not be divided, especially given the mystery of the ghostly visitor and the greater war that is unfolding against the dark magic world.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Baz late in coming to school? Why does he refuse to tell anyone about where he has been? How does everyone else –especially Simon –react to Baz's return? Why?

Discussion Question 2

Does Baz really hate Simon? Why or why not? Baz thinks that his hatred of Simon comes from where?



Discussion Question 3

Baz is baffled by Simon's offer to help find his mother's killer. Why is Baz so surprised by this? Why does Simon offer to help his worst enemy?

Vocabulary

ferociously, berated, covertly, omnipotent, elocution, prowling, anathema



Book Three

Summary

Chapter 42 – Baz tells Simon he intends to take Simon up on his offer to track down his mother's killers. Simon and Baz declare a truce so they can work together. They meet up later to begin going over clues, with Baz writing things on a chalkboard. The first thing Baz writes is the date 12 August 2002, a point time when he was only five.

Chapter 43 – Baz only remembers some of what happened on the day when vampires broke down the room where the children of faculty were being protected. Baz remembers his mother wielding fire to fight off the vampires, and he remembers the look of horror on his mother's face when a vampire bit him and he passed out. Then he woke up to find his mother gone.

Chapter 44 – Baz tells how the vampires were on a mission from the Humdrum and notes that it was the first breach in school history. Reading news accounts in The Record, Baz learns that his mother was bitten just as she set off a spell that set her and her attacking vampires on fire, killing them both. While visiting Penelope later, the school goes into chaos as word comes that the Humdrum has sent a dragon. Simon and Penelope rush outside to confront the dragon, where Baz joins them. Simon pushes his magic into Baz to help Baz cast a spell that sends the dragon flying away.

Chapter 45 – Simon reveals the Veil Visit of Baz's mother to Penelope to seek her help in discovering the truth behind the visit and the identity of Baz's mother's killers. Penelope agrees to help, wanting Natasha Grimm-Pitch to be able to rest in peace.

Chapter 46 – Baz is impressed with Penelope's magical abilities. Penelope explains that to learn who sent the vampires and why, they should learn more about vampires themselves. Looking through records, Simon, Penelope, and Baz discover the Mage giving a speech which talks about dark creatures growing stronger before the vampire invasion. Back then, there was no mention of the Humdrum, even though the Humdrum existed at least as far back as the late 1990s. All three realize they first heard about Humdrum in school, not at home. They also realize it was the Mage who drove most of the vampires out of England. Penelope explains that her mom has said the war started with the anti-vampire raids.

Chapter 47 – The war with the dark things started with the vampire raids, Penelope goes on, brought on by the vampires' desire to kill Normals and the magicals' desire to keep them alive. An act of war was declared by the Watford vampire invasion, she argues, which also signaled the first real attack by the Humdrum. The Mage's reforms began after this, which put the Old Families and the Mage at odds.

Chapter 48 – That night, Simon asks Baz to try conducting magic through them both once more, to make sure it was not a fluke. The experiment is a success, though it



brings Simon too close to Baz for comfort. Baz becomes angry with Simon when Simon asks about his vampire status, however.

Chapter 49 – Agatha asks to speak with Simon. Simon agrees and hopes she wants him to take her back. Instead, she tells Simon he should not visit her over Christmas because they are broken up.

Chapter 50 – Simon, Penelope, and Baz continue to work together, uncovering more evidence and piecing together more clues. Baz invites Simon home with him to Hampshire, but Simon declines. Baz then tells Simon he was not trying to steal Agatha last June. He was flirting with her to try to hurt Simon. This leads to an argument after which Baz leaves for the holidays.

Chapter 51 – Baz considers marrying Agatha to continue on his family name or to allow his father to continue on the family name through Agatha. He hopes this means his father will not be angry that he is gay. Baz is also saddened that he and Simon must continue to be enemies.

Chapter 52 – Simon, now nearly alone at school, decides to try to find the nursery room where the faculty children were kept during the vampire invasion. He believes it may be by the Weeping Tower. He decides to speak with Ebb. He thinks that Ebb is probably in her thirties; therefore, she must have been around during the attack. Ebb welcomes him into her little home. Ebb explains she was afraid to leave Watford after the death of her twin brother. Baz's mother allowed her to stay. She explains her brother's name was Nicodemus Petty and that Nicodemus went to the vampires. However, he was not among those who attacked the school. She also reveals the nursery hid itself away after the violence. Simon then decides to visit Baz.

Chapter 53 – Baz is stunned when Simon arrives at his house.

Chapter 54 – Simon reveals everything he has learned from Ebb to Baz, revealing that Nicodemus's name was stricken from the Book because of his Turn to vampirism. Baz insists Simon spend the night.

Chapter 55 – Simon feels out of place at dinner because of his enemy status with Baz, how wealthy Baz's family is, and also because Baz's family hates the Mage. After dinner, Baz and Simon comb the library to learn what they can about Nicodemus, but they find nothing. They do find information about the Petty family in general, including that they are an Old East End Family and that their power comes and goes. Simon and Baz wonder why Nicodemus would have given himself to the vampires. Baz then brings Simon into his aunt's old teen bedroom, where a yearbook from her time at school can be found. Aunt Fiona, Baz explains, went to school at the same time Ebb did. They find pictures of Ebb and Nicodemus back in the day. They then decide to visit London the following day.

Chapter 56 – Simon and Baz visit Aunt Fiona in London the following day to ask about Nicodemus. Fiona reveals Nicodemus betrayed the magical world by crossing over, saying he wanted to evolve. Nicodemus, however, turned out to be nothing more than a



two-bit gangster in a pool hall, Fiona continues. Fiona then tells Baz he must find a way to bring down the Mage.

Chapter 57 - Agatha and Penelope get together over Christmas break to hang out and make gingerbread cookies. Penelope's mother is glad to see the girls getting along. Seeing the girls having fun together causes her to tell them about her old best friend, Lucy, who left for America after school. She explains that Lucy was dating the Mage, which stuns Penelope and Agatha. Penelope's mom goes on to say that the Mage – Davy – was very controlling and that Lucy was desperately in love with him. She brings out an old photograph of herself, the utterly gorgeous Lucy, and the very handsome Mage. Agatha secretly pockets the photograph.

Chapter 58 – Lucy says she wishes everyone could have known the Mage when he was younger. She explains the Mage was always talking about ideas. Even with most of his ideas turning out right, no one ever listened to him. He was very handsome and brilliant, she explains. He was intrigued by prophecies –especially the one about the Greatest Mage.

Chapter 59 – Penelope speaks with her father, who, like her mother, is a professor at Watford. Her father is the head of a team tasked with mapping out, studying, and tracking the magic holes and their growth. Her father explains that the Humdrum is absent from early news stories and records because no one knew he existed back then. In 2008, ten years after the first magical dead zone appeared, the dark world went mad, which tipped everyone off to the Humdrum when dark creatures were sent for Simon. Dark creatures do not possess the intelligence or motives they had, Penelope's father explains, so the magical world knew someone was instigating an attack. Penelope then asks her father if he knew Nicodemus. Her father denies this, but she knows he is lying.

Chapter 60 – Simon and Baz decide to go looking for vampires. They find a run-down bar, sniffed out by Baz's vampire nose. They descend to caverns beneath the bar, asking for Nicodemus. At last, they come across him. Nicodemus is self-assured and superior in attitude. He says the vampire attack was instigated by one of them. He explains someone came to see him a few weeks before the attack to broker a deal, but he refused the deal to protect Ebb. Nicodemus will not give up the name of the individual out of fear for his own life. After they leave, Baz becomes enraged because he is so close to the name that they need. Simon does his best to comfort Baz, but Baz declares he is a monster. Simon says he is not, and will not turn his back on Baz.

Chapter 61 – Simon and Baz kiss, with Simon wanting to comfort Baz. Baz is stunned and elated.

Chapter 62 – Simon wonders how long Baz has wanted him, wonders if this means he is gay, and wonders what he should do about Agatha. Simon feels very happy about the kiss, though. They spend the night together, and Baz is the happiest he can ever remember being.



Chapter 63 – It is Christmas Eve. Penelope asks Agatha to drive her into the country so they can help Simon.

Chapter 64 – Baz is still very happy. He and Simon spend much of the morning working through clues and evidence, and talking about how they will not attack each other anymore even though they disagree on whether to like or hate the Mage.

Chapter 65 – Simon and Henry are caught kissing by the maid who announces the arrival of Penelope and Agatha. They have brought gingerbread cookies, and they share with each other what information they know. They are all perplexed by the information Nicodemus gave them, and realize there must be a traitor, somewhere. How to get Nicodemus to confess what he knows is now what must be handled. Penelope then has a breakthrough: she argues that whoever sent the vampires after Baz's mother also sent the numpties after Baz to prevent Baz from learning the identity of her killer from his mother's ghost passing through the Veil. Agatha suggests telling all of this to the Mage at once.

Chapter 66 – No one other than Agatha wants to tell the Mage what they have learned, especially because they have learned so little. They suggest tracking down the surviving numpties from Baz's kidnapping, but Agatha insists on telling the Mage. Agatha relents, but then invites Simon to her house for Christmas. Simon is thrilled, but then thinks of Baz. Baz is angered and jealous. Simon agrees to go to Agatha's.

Chapter 67 – Baz is hurt that Simon has gone. Baz's father comes in to talk to him in the library. He is worried about Baz's vampire status and worried that Baz may try to make a move on the Mage on his own independent of the families. Simon suddenly returns to have dinner with Baz and spend the night, saying he was afraid of what might happen if he did not.

Chapter 68 – Penelope and Agatha return to London, a drive which takes three and-a-half hours. Agatha admits to feeling inferior, and feels like she could not do anything to actually help Simon, Baz, and Penelope do what they are doing. At home, Agatha asks her mother about Lucy, and her mother confirms that she is the daughter of regular guest Lady Ruth Salisbury, and ran off with an American after school. Worse, her mother explains, Lucy ran away from magic to California. That night, Agatha considers that perhaps Lucy had a baby that she decided to run away with so he would never be forced to deal with magical wars. If so, the baby got off, and Simon got shouldered with a heavy burden.

Chapter 69 – Lucy recalls a conversation between Davy and Mitali Bunce, in which Davy said the only way to bring about reform to the Coven is by revolution. Lucy recalls him explaining that it will be necessary to combat diseases that affect only the poor, and to counter the high suicide rates of the low-magicians; and that they would build new traditions. Lucy remembers that eventually, Davy gave up on everything except the prophecy of the Greatest Mage. Lucy remembers Davy telling her they could make the Greatest Mage through having a baby.



Analysis

Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha commit to finding the truth. They fully dive into the mysteries they are confronted with –those involving the Humdrum and the ghost that visited Simon early in the novel. They uphold Rowell’s argument that the truth must be pursued no matter where it may lead. As Simon and the others begin to trace the truth through evidence, records, recollections, and memories, the reader is given a glimpse into the mind of Lucy. Lucy begins to recount important evidence about the past, evidence which contextualizes the clues that Simon and the others find. For example, much of the Mage’s backstory is filled in by Lucy, including that he was a handsome, brilliant man who was obsessed with prophecies.

Simon and the others pursue truth in their own ways. They discover a number of startling things which slowly begin to add up to something larger, though what that something larger is, is not yet known. Simon and Baz track down Nicodemus, who explains that the vampires made it into Watford with the help of a magic traitor. Nicodemus will not give up the name, so Simon and Baz have only half a truth to go off of in pursuit of the answer. Vampires, like other dark creatures, do not have the intelligence to plot, so therefore, they must have been sent by someone to do his or her bidding. That someone, Simon and Baz believe, is the Humdrum. Other parts of the past begin to fill in as well – the Mage’s pushes for reform (by revolution if necessary), his romance with Lucy, and his desire to fulfill a prophecy artificially by forcing it to happen.

As Simon and the others push for the truth, they unwittingly confirm Rowell’s argument that people have far too much in common to let their differences tear them apart. Personal interests must sometimes be put aside in the interest of the greater good. For the sake of finding the murderer of Baz’s mother, Simon and Baz have put aside their hatred and status as enemies, but their differences of opinion about the Mage. Agatha and Simon also put aside their personal differences in pursuit of the truth about the Humdrum, and about what happened to Baz’s mother. Only by working together do the four friends uncover as much information as they do. Without any one of them, the entire operation to find the truth could very well fall apart.

All the while this occurs, Rowell’s contention that love and friendship are truly what make life worth living continues to be true. Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha have strengthened their friendship, their loyalty, and their compassion for one another through working together to find the truth. Despite their differences and the dangers that they face, they take great comfort in one another and the friendship each offers the other. For Baz and Simon, this even turns romantic. Love and friendship are the things which make life worth living, not money, not power, not magic, not prestige. The only thing that keeps Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha together as friends is their mutual like of one another, and their mutual friendship itself. Beyond that, nothing else matters.



Discussion Question 1

Why do Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha put aside their differences to work together through this section of the novel? What differences do they set aside? Why is this important?

Discussion Question 2

What important information is uncovered by Simon and Baz regarding the vampire break-in? Why is this information especially troubling to them?

Discussion Question 3

How does friendship affect Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha in this section of the novel? How does this friendship uphold the author's thematic contention that life is made worth living by love and friendship?

Vocabulary

immolating, spurned, congenitally, wringing, ravenous, indiscreet, austerity, acclimate, emphatically, cream-crackered



Book Four

Summary

Chapter 70 – It has been some time since Nicodemus has spoken to his sister, Ebeneza (Ebb). He recalls how powerful the both of them were. He secretly meets with Ebb to talk from time to time, even though it is against the rules. When Ebb fails to show at their appointed time, Nicodemus learns that Ebb has been arrested.

Chapter 71 – When Simon wakes up, he is alone. He makes his way to the woods by Baz's house where he is suddenly confronted by the Humdrum himself. The Humdrum points out Baz, who looks sickened and is very hungry. Baz turns on Simon with the intent of feeding on him. Simon forces magic into Baz, which heals him. Humdrum disappears. When Baz recovers, he begins to think that either Simon is Humdrum, or Humdrum is Simon. Baz begins laughing, saying Simon is both the Chosen One and the magical world's greatest villain. Simon is, and is not the Humdrum, and it is something that he and Baz must now seek to figure out. As they return to the house, they realize they have come to a dead spot.

Chapter 72 – Simon and Baz suddenly realize the forest is now on fire. Baz urges Simon to run. Simon flies into the sky, pushes rain clouds to the fire, and then flies away.

Chapter 73 – Simon travels to Penelope's house. By the time he arrives, he is in serious ill-health. Penelope's parents rush to help warm and care for Simon, saying healing and warming spells. Simon is then put to bed.

Chapter 74 – Simon wakes up on Christmas morning with Penelope beside him. Penelope has already heard about what happened. The largest magical dead-zone ever has been created, and all of Hampshire is gone. The Pitches are blaming the Mage, saying the Mage is controlling the Humdrum. The Pitches are saying that Simon himself laid the groundwork with dark magic. Penelope says it is time to talk to the Mage. Baz suddenly arrives, and begins tracing out evidence for Simon and Penelope. He explains that the first anti-magic hole appeared in 1998, just after Simon was born. He notes that each expense of magical power from Simon corresponds to a magical hole opening up somewhere. The Humdrum is what is left over when Simon is done. Each use of magic sucks magic away from somewhere else because the magical world cannot handle the sheer amount of power Simon uses. The Humdrum is attempting to get Simon to go off to create a bigger hole. Simon says he must tell the Mage, but Baz opposes this idea.

Chapter 75 – Baz demands going to the numpties, saying they had an agreement to find his mother's killer. It must be done now, before everything completely falls apart in the magical world. Simon says there are other important things that must be dealt with first. Baz says nothing is more important than his mother.



Chapter 76 – Baz travels to Blackfriars Bridge where he finds the numpties who survived his kidnapping rescue. Baz demands to know who it was that sent them after him. The numpties say it was a soft man in green, then close in to attack Baz. Nicodemus suddenly arrives and stuns the numpties into stillness. He then confesses that it was the Mage who came to see him about a deal, and that he is now revealing the Mage as the enemy because the Mage had Ebb arrested. Penelope then sends along a message to Baz through a passing Normal walking his dog that Simon has gone to meet the Mage alone.

Chapter 77 – Agatha learns of the attack on the Pitches. She realizes she must do something. She slips out of her house and takes her mom's Volvo.

Chapter 78 – Baz rushes to pick up Penelope, who relates that Simon has indeed gone off to talk to the Mage.

Chapter 79 – Lucy recalls sneaking into the Oracle's room at the top of the White Chapel during autumn equinox to conceive a child during a ritualized ceremony. Lucy can even recall the very moment of conception, of feeling the magic release inside her.

Chapter 80 – Agatha arrives at Watford, and notices the lights on in the White Chapel. Inside, she hears loud crashes and footsteps and discovers the Mage, bloodied, casting spells. Agatha rushes to the Mage, who says she will have to do. He then grabs her, but is confronted by Ebb. Ebb shouts for Agatha to run. She rushes out into the night. Simon, meanwhile, flies toward Watford, and arrives to see the Chapel all lit up.

Chapter 81 – The Mage knows there is no time, that the Humdrum is devouring them all. He reveals he had hidden Simon among the Normals so that no one could know. He says he did not realize that something was wrong with Simon, that Simon could not hold so much power. He then decides that Ebb must do. Ebb battles back against the Mage, but ultimately gives in when he says that she needs to make a sacrifice for the greater good. The Mage then plunges a knife into her chest.

Chapter 82 – Simon rushes into the White Chapel. There, he discovers Ebb dying on the floor. The Mage confronts Simon, apologizing and saying he has gotten much wrong. He tells Simon he is a miracle, but he is not the Chosen One. He says he thought he could salvage Simon, but he was wrong because Simon wasn't the right vessel. He goes on to say that Simon did not cause the Humdrum, that he must not listen to the others. He then asks for Simon's magic to be given up to him, because he has control Simon will never have. With Simon's power, the Mage explains he can destroy the Humdrum and end political disharmony. Suddenly, the Humdrum appears. Simon then grasps the Humdrum, pouring everything he has into the Humdrum. The Humdrum disappears as Simon forces all of his magic out and into the Humdrum. Simon realizes he is fizzling out of magic.

Chapter 83 – Penelope and Baz arrive at the White Chapel to see Agatha rush past, telling them to run. The Chapel is smoky, and feels as if a great amount of magic has been expended. They find Simon unconscious, and the Mage distraught. The Mage



attempts to grasp at Simon, but Simon tells him to stop it in a magical spell, killing the Mage.

Chapter 84 – It was Lucy who named Simon, she reveals. She says she named him Simon Snow because Simon is the name of a good savior and Snow is a silly middle name like all people must have. She called Simon her rosebud boy. Lucy then reveals herself as the ghost who visited Simon, not Baz's mother.

Chapter 85 – Simon, crying, covers the Mage's body with his jacket. Baz holds Simon, saying everything will be okay.

Analysis

Rowell's argument that the truth must be pursued no matter where it leads is borne to full fruition in Book 4 of the novel. The Mage is revealed as the culprit behind everything: Simon's existence, the existence of the Humdrum, Lucy's disappearance, the vampire invasion, the kidnapping of Baz, and the killing of Baz's mother. It is a horribly uncomfortable truth for Simon, but it is a truth that is inescapable. Simon himself turns out to be the truth behind the Humdrum, for his existence and use of magic has created the Humdrum, and created the dead spots that are being found throughout the magical United Kingdom. Simon is horrified by this, and even more horrified when he must give up his magic to both destroy the Humdrum and the Mage.

As the reader here learns, the personal interests that Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha have set aside have resulted in the saving of the magical world in the United Kingdom. Their differences were overcome by the things they had in common, namely, the greater good and survival of magic. Ironically, the Mage has brought about many of the changes he desperately wanted to bring about, but for the opposite reasons. In the wake of the Mage's duplicity, the Families are able to set aside their personal differences to come together to reform the magical world –not because of the Mage, but in spite of him. The Mage became the magical world's own worst enemy in order to save it, all the while believing he was on the side of good. The Mage is presented as an unwitting villain of sorts, who allowed his own unalterable differences and personal interests to seduce him to power.

Early in the novel, it appears as if the Families are allowing their personal differences to create political fracturing, which in turn leads to the endangerment of the magical world. All along, Simon wants the Families to fall in line behind the Mage to defend the magical world –but in reality, the Families are right. They are not the ones with the differences and personal interests at stake in the same way the Mage's personal interests and differences are at stake. By uniting, the Families are prepared to challenge the Mage's rule of the magical United Kingdom, demonstrating they have far more in common than not. They want to preserve the magical world against the corruption of the Mage. Interestingly, Simon brings about the Mage's own end by killing him with the final bits of magical power that he still possesses.



The resolving of the climax of the novel is bittersweet. Events convey Rowell's message that there are no such things as happy endings. The Mage, who had good intentions but was ruined by underhanded and immoral practices, is dead. His death devastates Simon because the Mage is more than just a mentor. The Mage is Simon's father. Simon himself, who has loved magic, suddenly finds himself without it. Agatha is terrified and has run off into the night. Ebb has found herself an unwitting sacrifice in everything going on (her exact role and purpose remains unclear, and is an unanswered question which reinforces the idea that there are no happy endings), while Simon and the others feel horrible for being unable to save her in time.

Discussion Question 1

Who is behind the murder of Baz's mother, and the creation of the Humdrum? Why is this so? What is this individual's motive?

Discussion Question 2

Can the Mage be considered a villain? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

What is the most difficult truth for Simon to accept in Book 4 of the novel? Why?

Vocabulary

admonishes, equinox, intricately, ritual, profusely, abject, miasma



Epilogue

Summary

Simon attempts to help Ebb, but Ebb is already dead. Penelope sends out little bird messengers of her parents to let them know what has happened. The war that has threatened to rip apart the magical world is avoided with the death of the Mage, the death of the Humdrum, and new Coven elections. Penelope's mother is appointed the new head of Watford, and of the magical world in the United Kingdom. No matter how peaceful things are now, Penelope can no longer return to Watford for any reason, even to finish her diploma.

Baz goes on to graduate from Watford, having been able to stomach the rest of his senior year. It is hard for Baz to graduate, knowing everything that the school has meant to him. Baz perseveres because he does not want to dishonor the family name by being the first Pitch to drop out of school. Aunt Fiona attends his graduation, and is giving up her London flat to Baz while she undertakes undercover work in Prague. Baz then visits his mother's tomb, and tells her he will carry on. At the Leaving Ball, Baz and Simon dance together, during which time Baz learns Simon can't dance. Simon still feels badly about losing his magical powers. He feels as if he is not the Chosen One, but Baz says he chooses Simon.

Agatha has moved to California. She vows to never return to England, and has left behind every magical trace of her life to live as an American Normal. Agatha only keeps in touch with Penelope, and only because Penelope insists on texting her. Agatha wonders if she will ever see Lucy in California. Simon, meanwhile, has moved in with Baz in London. He and Baz are very happy together. Baz does his best to live without magic since Simon feels badly about no longer having magic. Simon is studying at Normal university, while Baz is attending the London School of Economics. Penelope insists that Simon was chosen to end the world of Mages, for the Mages no longer run things.

Analysis

As Rowell continues to argue through the conclusion of her novel, life is made worth living by love and friendship. Simon now finds himself without the very thing he once believed made his life go around –magic. Without magic, Simon believes he is worthless, but Baz reminds him that he is not. Simon takes great comfort in his relationship with Baz, for it gives him something which makes life worth living without magic, and that is love. The reader should again be reminded of the fact that magic can be replaced with anything in life –money, fame, power, and so on –and that these things do not make life worth living. These things do not last, but love and friendship can last forever. Penelope's friendship with Simon and Baz continues uninterrupted through the



Epilogue, and Penelope even reaches out to remain in touch with Agatha, who now finds herself in California.

Rowell's theme of unhappy endings continues through the Epilogue as well. Although Simon is happy with Baz, Simon is unhappy that he is no longer magical. This is not a happy ending for Simon –or at least, not as happy as it could be. Agatha has been so traumatized by the magical war that she has left the world of magic completely. She wonders if she will ever see Lucy in California. What Agatha does not know is that Lucy is dead, and so her search for Lucy will never have an end. Penelope, who seemed to have some kind of romantic inclination toward Simon early in the novel, is now confronted by the fact that this will be impossible with Simon in a relationship with Baz.

Nicodemus will be forced to live forever as a vampire knowing that his sister is dead. The Families who have regained power will roll back many of the Mage's reforms, making the magical world less open and less friendly towards low-magicians and those like them. Rather than spending time with her family, Aunt Fiona has been sent off on a secret mission in Prague. Penelope, so devastated by the events at Watford, is unable to finish her schooling there, and so does not graduate. Although he is still magical, Baz must live in the real world among Normal neighbors. The magical world of Watford is a world that Baz cannot live in forever. Rowell's insistence on refusing genuinely happy endings to her characters comes about because she both recognizes that being eighteen is not the end of a life, but just the beginning. She recognizes that the real world does not always have happy endings. Through the use of fiction, she braces readers for the bittersweet situations they will face in their own lives.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you believe that the author chose a bittersweet ending rather than a happy ending? What important relevance about real life might this sort of ending have for the reader?

Discussion Question 2

Why is Simon still so upset that he no longer has magical abilities? Do you believe Simon is right to be upset? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

How does the war affect Penelope and Agatha? What do their experiences cause them to do? How do they cope with the aftermath of war?

Vocabulary

reconvened, inflammable, equilibrium, consoling, brimstone, amnesia, poetically, restoration



Characters

Simon

Simon Snow is the eighteen year-old savior of the magical United Kingdom, supposedly foretold by prophecy to be the Chosen One who would destroy the greatest threat ever known by the magical world. Simon, raised an orphan, deeply loves magic and is thrilled to be a Normal with magical abilities attending Watford. He is best friends with Penelope, enemies with and later boyfriend to Baz, and boyfriend to and later friends with Agatha. Early in the novel, Simon believes there is nothing more important to his life than magic. However, he later learns that love and friendship are what make life worth living. He also comes to discover that he is both the Chosen One and the source of the Humdrum. To destroy the Humdrum, he must give up his magical abilities. This devastates him. Simon takes comfort in his romance with Baz and does his best to focus on the good things in life without magic.

Penelope

Penelope “Penny” Bunce is a girl of about eighteen with light brown skin and red hair. Beautiful and brilliant, Penelope is the daughter of an Indian-Englishwoman and an Englishman, both of whom are professors at Watford. Penelope herself is a student at Watford and best friends with Simon. Early on, it seems as if Penelope may have romantic inclinations toward Simon, but these are never borne out. Penelope becomes a central part of the efforts of Simon and Baz to root out the killer of Baz’s mother and to destroy the Humdrum. Penelope is so devastated by the war that she ultimately drops out of Watford.

Agatha

Agatha Wellbelove is the gorgeous girlfriend of Simon when the novel begins, though the romance is headed south. Agatha dislikes the expectations placed upon her as the girlfriend of the Chosen One. She is being led on by Baz because he has feelings for Simon. Agatha’s feelings between Simon and Baz are confused, but any inclinations she has toward either boy are done away with when Simon and Baz begin dating. Agatha becomes a part of the efforts to find Baz’s mother’s killer and to stop the Humdrum, but the experience traumatizes Agatha. She is constantly unsure of herself and her role in things, but she endeavors to help out the others as she can. She abandons the magical world to live as an American Normal in California.

Baz

Tyrannus Basilton “Baz” Grimm-Pitch is the eighteen year-old son of Natasha Grimm-Pitch. He is the roommate and initial enemy of Simon. Baz, turned into a vampire during



the vampire attack on Watford back in 2002. He has spent his school career hating Simon. Ironically, he is secretly in love with Simon. Baz is a wealthy member of the Old Families, and personally dislikes the Mage. Baz is thrilled when Simon offers to help him find the murderer of his mother. He is even more thrilled when the truce struck with Simon turns romantic. Baz and Simon work together to uncover the mystery of Baz's mother's murderer, while uncovering the truth behind the Humdrum himself.

The Mage

The Mage, known also as David and Davy, is the head of both Watford and the magical world of the United Kingdom. He serves as an unwitting villain in the novel. As a young man, he was obsessed with knowledge, prophecy, and magical and political reform. He fell in love with Lucy, and through her, sought to fulfill prophecy by conceiving a Normal child with magical abilities that Lucy named Simon. The Mage later orchestrated a vampire attack against Watford to demonstrate the need for reform, but the attack unintentionally killed Baz's mother, leading to the Mage becoming head of the school and the magical United Kingdom. The Mage went on to allow low-magicians and others into the magical school and to oversee Simon's education. However, the Mage's plans backfired as Simon became the enemy of the magical world through his inadvertent creation of the Humdrum, leading the Mage to turn against Simon. Ultimately, the Mage is killed by Simon.

Humdrum

The Humdrum is the apparent arch-villain of the novel when the story begins. The Humdrum, so named for the insidious humdrum of the absence of magic from the places he draws the magic out of in the world. The absence of magic creates dead-zones. The Humdrum is bent on destroying the magical United Kingdom. As it turns out, the Humdrum is an echo-like shadow of Simon's use of magical power, a creation from a negation of magic. To rid the world of the Humdrum, Simon must replace his power in the Humdrum. Though the Humdrum is gone, Simon has lost all of his powers.

Ebb

Ebeneza "Ebb" Petty is a beautiful and sensitive young woman in her thirties who works for Watford as the goatherder. Distraught over the defection of her brother, Nicodemus, Ebb was given permission to remain working at Watford because she did not want to go back out into the world. It is through conversations with Ebb that Simon learns about Nicodemus. Ebb herself is later taken captive by the Mage for a ritual sacrifice, though to what end is never clearly explained. Ebb is stabbed to death by the Mage in preparation for the sacrifice.



Lucy

Lucy Salisbury is the mother of Simon and the former girlfriend of the Mage. Lucy is a gorgeous, sweet, and compassionate girl who falls in love with the Mage because he is full of good ideas that no one listens to. She is alarmed by how focused on magic he is, but she refuses to leave him because he decides he wants to have a child with her. When Simon is born, Lucy finally breaks away from the Mage and flees to America, leaving Simon to be raised in an orphanage –or so the rumors say. What Lucy's true fate is, is never learned.

Nicodemus

Nicodemus “Nico” Petty is the brother of Ebb. Immensely powerful, Nicodemus chooses to become a vampire so that he may evolve as a species. Nicodemus fails in his quest and becomes a two-bit gangster in a pool hall. Nicodemus is approached by the Mage to strike a deal to sneak vampires into Watford, but Nicodemus refuses because he does not want his sister to be hurt. Nicodemus later reveals what he knows to Simon and Baz in a limited way, fearing for his own life. Toward the end of the novel, Nicodemus reveals all he knows to Baz.

Natasha

Natasha Grimm-Pitch was the mother of Baz. She was an immensely powerful magician who served as head of Watford and head of the magical world. She was the third headmistress to die defending the school. She was defending the school from a vampire invasion. The mystery of her murder is what sets Simon and Baz off on a search that reveals the identity of the Humdrum as well.



Symbols and Symbolism

Normals

Normals are human beings without magical abilities. They are not allowed to have any place in the magical world. Normals do not even know of the existence of the magical world. They take its physical effects to be something other than what they are. For example, Watford is believed by Normals to simply be an exclusive and elite preparatory school. Initially, Simon is considered the Chosen One because he is a Normal who has magical abilities –though it is later demonstrated that he is the son of two magicians.

The Sword of Mages

The Sword of Mages is the magical weapon utilized by Simon throughout the course of the novel. It is metaphorical for Simon himself as the Sword of the Mage. Simon uses the Sword of Mages to defend himself against enemies, such as the goblin in the taxi on the way to Watford at the beginning of the novel. It is believed that Simon himself will be used as a sword by the Mage in order to destroy the Humdrum and save the magical world of the United Kingdom. The truth turns out otherwise.

The Veil

The Veil is the separation of the world of the living from the world of the dead. Early in the novel, the Veil weakens. The weakening of the Veil occurs every twenty years. During the weakening of the Veil, the dead cross the threshold to the living to deliver messages of truth to those still alive. The weakening of the Veil leads to the kidnapping of Baz so that the spirits may not reach out to him about the murder of his mother.

Dead Spots

Dead spots, also called dead-zones and magical holes, are areas of the United Kingdom where all the magic has been stripped away, leaving nothing behind. The spots are believed to be the work of the Humdrum, but it is later discovered that the Humdrum is just a side effect of the sucking away of the magic in those places. The dead spots, which first appear in 1998, arise whenever Simon uses magic. Because Simon's use of magic is so great and his existence defies the natural order, even the magical realm itself cannot handle his exercising of large amounts of magic. Simon actually destroys parts of the magical world by causing magical holes.



The Prophecy

The Prophecy foretells the coming of a great evil which will seek to destroy the magical United Kingdom. It also predicts the Chosen One who will appear to stop the evil. The Prophecy states: “And one will come to end us/ And one will bring his fall/ Let the greatest power of powers reign/ May it save us all.” The Mage, obsessed with prophecies in general, decides to jump-start The Prophecy by attempting to create the Chosen One through conceiving with Lucy. Everything backfires because prophecies cannot be forced. Simon did not come to end anyone, though he did save the magical world from himself by giving up his magical abilities.

Spells

Spells are spoken words that create magical conditions and effects. The novel is full of spells which are practiced and used by Simon and the other characters. For example, the spell “fine-tooth comb” allows a magician to find a piece of information buried in a book or a library, while the spell “Get well soon!” speeds up recovery from illness and injury.

Reforms

Political and magical reforms are sought by the Mage through the course of his life. They demonstrate his good intentions but duplicitous process of bringing about change. The Mage is horrified with the illnesses and suicides that plague many magicians. The ruling families do not care about such things. The Mage is also horrified by the bigotry toward low-magicians and magical creatures held by most other magicians –including those that keep such individuals out of Watford. The Mage plots and schemes his way into power, where he institutes his reforms, believing the ends justify the means. When the Mage falls from power, the Families begin to roll back his reforms.

Dark magical artifacts

Dark magical artifacts, ranging from books to dark objects, are sought by the Mage through the course of the novel. The Mage seeks these artifacts because he wants to try to find a way to fix Simon because Simon is unable to handle the power and magic he wields. The Mage conducts sudden raids on the libraries and homes of the Old Families to find anything he can use to try to save Simon, but he is unable to do so. The raids for the dark artifacts only cause the Families to turn further against the Mage.

Blackboard

Baz uses a blackboard to scribble down clues and evidence wherever he, Simon, Penelope, and Agatha are conducting their investigations. The blackboard becomes the



place where the four friends can physically lay out what information they have and try to make sense of it. It is from several meetings with Baz's blackboard involved that leads the friends to arrive at answers and leave to seek more clues and evidence.

Diploma

A diploma is the reward for successfully completing and graduating from Watford. Baz returns to Watford to receive his diploma following the death of the Mage and the chaos around his death because he does not want to be the first member of his family to go without a diploma. Penelope, on the other hand, is so haunted by the war and the violence that she cannot return to Watford to finish school and receive her diploma. Agatha is so stunned by the war that she does not return to Watford to earn her diploma. Instead, she leaves the country and leaves the world of magic behind.



Settings

London

London is the capital of England and the home of a large number of members of the magical community. It is also the home of a large number of the students who attend Watford. Among them are some of Baz's relatives, such as Aunt Fiona, and Agatha and her family. London is where Simon and Baz travel to in order to track down Nicodemus and where Baz later travels to track down the numpties. It is in London that Penelope and Agatha do greater research in attempting to learn more about the past, such as the relationship between Lucy and Davy, the rise of the Humdrum, and the first appearance of the magical dead spots.

Watford

Founded in the 1500s, Watford School of Magicks is located in rural England three and a-half hours from London, and is both the academic and political center of the magical world of the United Kingdom. Watford is where the Mage rules both the school and the magical world, and where Simon, Baz, Penelope, Agatha, and hundreds of other magical students attend classes where they learn and refine their magical abilities. Watford is surrounded by high walls, a moat, gates, a great lawn, the Wavering Wood, and the Hills Beyond. At its center is the White Chapel, which is in turn surrounded by numerous other buildings, including dorms and classrooms.

The White Chapel

The White Chapel lies at the heart of the Watford School of Magicks. The non-denominational chapel caters to all religions and faiths, and is the ceremonial hub of all campus and political formality. The White Chapel is where Simon is conceived by Lucy and Davy during a ritualized ceremony imbuing Simon with tremendous magical abilities. The White Chapel is where the climax of the novel occurs as the Mage attempts to begin a new ritual by ceremonially killing Ebb. The White Chapel is where Simon confronts and destroys the Humdrum. He then kills the Mage.

Hampshire

Hampshire is an area in rural England where Baz and his family traditionally hail from. Baz's Hampshire mansion and estate grounds are expansive, beautiful, and bordered by a forest. Simon spends Christmas at Hampshire with Baz, and it is in Hampshire that the two become romantically involved with one another. Hampshire becomes the scene of the greatest magical dead-zone to date, in which Simon expends the most magical power ever. As a result, Hampshire is not only made a dead-zone, but is actually destroyed.

California

California is the western-most state in the United States of America, and borders the Pacific Ocean. Lucy, upon seeking to escape from the Mage, is rumored to have traveled to live in California. Agatha, upon being traumatized by the war and the violence it brings, flees to live in California, leaving the magical world behind. When the novel ends, Agatha is now an American living in California, and is very happy to be so far away from the magical world in England.



Themes and Motifs

People have too much in common to let their differences tear them apart.

People have too much in common to let their differences tear them apart, argues Rainbow Rowell in her novel *Carry On*. When Simon arrives at Watford, the first thing he always sees in the inscription on the gate which reads, “Magic Separates Us From the World; Let Nothing Separate Us From Each Other.” Magicians are reminded that magic unites them as magicians, and that nothing else must separate them. In other words, their common ground should not be allowed to be torn apart by their differences because they have too much else in common.

When the novel begins, the magical world of the United Kingdom is confronted with an existential threat in the form of the Humdrum and his magical dead zones. The Humdrum is the greatest threat which the magical United Kingdom has ever known, and the magical world is united against the Humdrum—even if they do not always behave in that fashion. The Old Families hate the Humdrum, but they hate the Mage even more. They are willing to allow politics, class, and tradition to divide the magical families to oust the Mage, even if it means weakening everyone together against the Humdrum. As it turns out later, the Families are right to do this, and have allowed their common interests to unite them against the Mage.

For the past eight years, Simon and Baz have been mortal enemies. They hate each other and have no idea why they were paired as roommates. But as the two boys finally come to speak to one another and to learn about one another through events beyond their control—such as the Veil visiting ghost—they begin to realize they have more in common than they knew. They are both without mothers, and both are emotionally distraught by their situations in life. Both want to learn who killed Baz’s mother and to stop the Humdrum. Their commonalities unite both boys, bridging their differences and allowing them to save the magical world of the United Kingdom.

Note that the gate’s inscription—“Magic Separates Us From the World; Let Nothing Separate Us From Each Other”—is easily changed so that “magic” might be replaced with anything from “money” to “power” to “class,” and so on. Essentially, none of these things are worth being divided over because humanity draws everyone together. Simon and Baz, as well as Penelope and Agatha, are able to overcome their differences. Also, Simon and Agatha are able to overcome their differences to save the magical world. They all realize that they have more to gain by working together rather than dwelling on the things which divide them—a lesson that Rowell makes plain to the reader.



Personal interests must sometimes be put aside for the greater good.

Personal interests must sometimes be put aside for the greater good, argues Rainbow Rowell in her novel *Carry On*. In keeping with the theme that people have too much in common to let differences divide them, Rowell argues that circumstances sometimes mean deliberately and forcefully putting aside differences and disagreements for the greater good. Rowell contends that the good of one person is important. However, when it becomes necessary to consider the good of many, the individual's importance must defer to the good of several.

When the novel begins, Simon and Baz are bitter enemies. They hate each other, and their differences have everything to do with their class, their backgrounds, their attitudes, their support and opposition to the Mage, Simon's celebrity status, their (initial) sexuality, and so on. Simon and Agatha also begin the novel with profound differences. Agatha feels torn emotionally between Simon and Baz, believing she may also have feelings for Baz as her feelings for Simon fade. This leads to repeated fights and arguments between Simon and Agatha, which, in addition to Agatha's unhappiness being the girlfriend of the Chosen One, leads to their breaking up. Penelope, though friends with Agatha, is not thrilled with Agatha's actions; and Agatha is likewise suspicious of Baz, his motives, and his absence from school.

As the novel gets underway, Simon and Baz agree to put aside their differences to find the killer of Baz's mother. Simon recognizes what it is like to grow up without a mother, and knows it must have been horrible for Baz to see his mother die in front of him. Their decision to do so is momentous because it also allows them to focus on stopping the Humdrum –and the search for Baz's mother's killer leads them to the truth behind the Humdrum. Simon and Agatha put aside their own differences to work together for the same ends; and Penelope follows suit.

Initially, Simon is frustrated by the inability of the Old Families to put aside their own differences to fall in line with the Sage. If Simon and his fellows can do it, the Old Families should be able to do it as well. Yet, the Old Families are immovable and remain committed to seeing the Mage fall even if it endangers the magical community as a whole. As it turns out, the Families are actually dedicated to the greater good, opposing the personal differences of the Mage himself in order to protect the magical community as a whole. The differences between the Families themselves have been put on hold in order to ensure the vitality of the magical United Kingdom.

The truth must be pursued no matter where it leads.

The truth must be pursued no matter where it leads, argues Rainbow Rowell in her novel *Carry On*. Rowell's novel features a host of mysteries –some large, some small – which require the pursuit of truth to solve. The truth that lies at the bottom of these mysteries is necessary to know not only to solve the mysteries, but to save the magical



United Kingdom as a whole. These truths may sometimes be startling, unexpected, and discomforting, but that does not negate the need for the truth.

When the novel begins, Simon is confronted with a host of mysteries. Among these are who the Humdrum is, and why exactly he wants to destroy the magical world of the United Kingdom. Simon also wonders why he, in particular, is the Chosen One –and who it has been to choose him to be the Chosen One. He also struggles to understand how anyone from the Old Families could oppose the Mage, for the Mage's sole focus is destroying the Humdrum to save the magical world. Likewise, the mysteries of where Baz is during the first two months of the school year, who it was that arranged to have Baz's mother killed by vampires some thirteen years before, and who Nicodemus are, are among those that will become essential to defeating the Humdrum.

Simon is willing to do whatever it takes to find the truth to these mysteries. This includes making peace with Agatha, and calling a truce with Baz. Through old records, recollections, and evidence, Simon, Baz, Agatha, and Penelope are able to piece together the truth of many things. This begins with the finding of Nicodemus, who explains the vampires were let into the school by a traitor. This uncomfortable truth leads Simon and the others on in search of the remainder of the truths, most alarmingly of all that it is the Mage himself who is behind everything.

Simon learns, to his shock and horror, that he was essentially created to force The Prophecy and that the Mage was the traitor who let the vampires into Watford. Simon's hero, mentor, and guardian turns out to be the unwitting villain. Ironically, Simon kills him. As it is also revealed, Simon is both savior and Humdrum, and he must surrender his magical powers to defeat the Humdrum. This heartbreaking truth leaves Simon without magic, but it is a truth that Simon had to know in order to save the magical world because he time Simon used magic, he ripped a hole in the very fabric of the magical world.

Love and friendship make life worth living.

Love and friendship make life worth living, argues Rainbow Rowell in her novel *Carry On*. In previous themes, the importance of the inscription on the gate of Watford was noted (the inscription being "Magic Separates Us From the World; Let Nothing Separate Us From Each Other"). As noted earlier, in the reader's own life, there are no shortage of things which may divide people or which may come to dominate their lives –things such as money, power, lust, greed, class, religion, politics, and so on. But, these things are not the summation of a human life. They do not make life worth living. These things come and go, but love and friendship remain.

When the novel begins, Simon is obsessed with magic, explaining he loves it so much because he once lived without it. Simon believes there is nothing else in life like magic, and cannot imagine his life again without it. Because of this, he takes much for granted, and refuses to deal with the realities of life –such as troubles with his girlfriend. Magic must always come first. In part, this leads to his break-up with Agatha, who already has



her own doubts about her relationship with Simon apart from magic. Simon, though he still has magic, no longer has Agatha, and realizes only too late just how much Agatha truly meant to him.

When Simon begins his relationship with Baz, he feels completed once again. He no longer takes romance and relationships for granted. He commits himself totally to Baz. Simon is not the only one who learns that magic is not everything. Nicodemus, who became a vampire as a way to gain more magical power, refuses to make a deal with the Mage to lead vampires into Watford because he worries about his sister's safety. His sister –a familial relationship –is worth more than his own capabilities and powers. Love and family provide a belonging, a loyalty, and a compassion that things like power and politics do not.

As Simon, Baz, Penelope, and Agatha come to work together to bring down the Humdrum and find the killer of Baz's mother, they realize they are getting along and have more than expected in common. Actual friendship develops which sustains the four of them through their darkest moments and their most dangerous encounters. It is their love and friendship (not money, power, or magic) which help to see them through such circumstances. Even following their victory, the four remain friends. While Baz and Simon date, Penelope is around them all the time, and Penelope keeps in touch with Agatha, who has moved to California. Agatha, though she can let the world of magic go because she is not only traumatized by the war, but recognizes there are more important things to life than magic, remains in touch with Penelope because they are genuinely friends –and it is a light point in Agatha's life.

There are not always happy endings in life.

There are not always happy endings in life, argues Rainbow Rowell in her novel *Carry On*. Rowell's novel, which revolves primarily around young adults, believes that young adults do not have happy endings, but only beginnings because they are only starting their lives. Likewise, happy endings/outcomes in real life are rare, and young readers must be aware that things will not always turn out the way that they should.

Rowell presents this hard thematic lesson to readers through the Mage and his death. The Mage is not the hero Simon thought he was. Just because a person may be a guardian or in a position of power does not make him or her automatically good. Likewise, that the Mage should die –without being reformed or surviving and going to prison –is further proof that not all endings are happy. Simon is devastated by the truth surrounding the Mage and by the Mage's death. As it turns out in the end, Simon is not the Chosen One. He is directly responsible for the creation of the Humdrum without actually realizing it.

When Simon must go on to defeat the Humdrum, it comes at the expense of his own magical powers. What Simon has valued more than anything else in his life apart from Baz is magic, and now Simon is without it. There is no magical fix that allows Simon to keep his magic. By killing the Humdrum, Simon surrenders all his magic. It is a very



unhappy ending for Simon. Likewise, the death of Ebb means an unhappy ending for Ebb and for Nicodemus, while the war has so traumatized Penelope and Agatha, neither finishes school –and Agatha leaves the world of magic altogether.

Happy endings, which are known to tie up loose ends, do not occur. There are many mysteries left unsolved and many questions left unanswered. For example, the true purpose of the ritual for which Ebb was involuntarily sacrificed is left unknown. Whatever became of Lucy –whether she was murdered, died of natural causes, died accidentally, or is even somehow still alive –is left unclear. Whether or not the Old Families will undo all of the good reforms of the Mage is also left uncertain. In the novel, as in life, there are not always answers to the questions that face people. Sometimes, people must accept getting along without ever knowing something.

Styles

Point of View

Rainbow Rowell tells her novel *Carry On* from the first-person, limited-omniscient views of Simon, Baz, Penelope, Agatha, the Mage, Lucy, and others. Each character narrates a portion of the novel –usually a chapter –and shares their own thoughts, feelings, and the events which occur during a particular period of time. The first-person narrative gives an intimate glimpse into the minds and hearts of the characters who are narrating. This allows the reader to experience firsthand the things the characters are themselves experiencing. The author allows the characters to tell their own stories in their own voices so readers can gather multiple perspectives on the same events and situations.

Language and Meaning

Rainbow Rowell tells her novel *Carry On* in language that is generally simple and straightforward, but varies according to each character. This is in keeping with the fact that the majority of narrators are young adults, no older than eighteen. Each of them is telling a story as a unique individual. Short words, frequent cursing, and slang are indicative of the youth of the younger characters. The language is geared toward the target audience of the novel, young adults. Each narrator therein assumes a unique take on the language. For example, Simon's attitude is generally kind and passionate given his humble beginnings. Drawing on a background of power and prestige, Baz speaks formally and calls people by their last names. Actually he is very insecure because he is haunted by the death of his mother and torn apart by his feelings for Simon. Penelope's sections are kind and full of questions, which is in keeping with her intelligent nature. Agatha's sections are full of questions and indecisive considerations, keeping with her nature as being self-confident and unsure of what she wants.

Structure

Rainbow Rowell divides her novel *Carry On* into five major parts, with each part further divided into chapters. Some chapters are then subdivided into smaller sections. Each part assumes the name of a Book and is numbered therein (Book 1, Book 2, etc.). Each Book deals with a major arc in the plot. For example, Book 1 deals with Simon's return to Watford and Baz's mysterious absence, while Part 2 deals with Baz's return and Simon's decision to help Baz find his mother's murderer. The chapters in the novel are numbered from 1 to 85, and each deals with a specific part of the Book's story arc. Some chapters are very long; others are only a sentence composed of a few words. The four major Books are supplemented by an Epilogue, which occurs several months after the events of Chapter 85. The Epilogue tells what has become of the major characters of the novel and predicts the next steps in each one's life.



Quotes

I made myself sick thinking about the Watford School of Magicks –daydreaming about it –until it started to feel like nothing more than a daydream. Just another fantasy to make the time pass.

-- Simon (Chapter 2)

Importance: Simon explains that ever since he was little, he wanted to attend the Watford School. It was something which singularly possessed him like nothing else. When the Mage invited Simon to begin attending Watford when he was eleven, it was a dream come true for Simon. Because of this, nothing would ever be the same.

But no one loves magic like I do.

-- Simon (Chapter 2)

Importance: Simon explains that magic has only been entrusted to Old Families. His being entrusted with magic is an immense and important thing. Simon explains that no one else in the world loves magic like he does, because none of them have ever had to live without it. As a result, Simon will do whatever it takes to keep magic available to himself.

MAGIC SEPARATES US FROM THE WORLD; LET NOTHING SEPARATE US FROM EACH OTHER.

-- Watford Gate inscription and school motto (Chapter 3)

Importance: The inscription on the gates of Watford declares that magic separates magicians from the world and is something that all magicians have in common. The magicians, separate from the world, should not allow their differences to tear them apart. In other words, magicians –or people in general - have more commonalities than differences. Therefore, they should not let what differences they have tear them apart.

And one will come to end us/ And one will bring his fall/ Let the greatest power of powers reign/ May it save us all.

-- The Prophecy (Chapter 5)

Importance: This is the prophecy which not only foretells the rise of Humdrum, who will destroy all the magicians of England, but of the one who stop Humdrum from succeeding. Simon is believed to be the Chosen One, because he is a Normal born with magical abilities. He is not a magical orphan, as no magical parent has ever abandoned a magical child.

They care more for their own wealth and power than for our world.

-- The Mage (Chapter 19)

Importance: The Mage, speaking with Simon, laments the unfolding magical political situation. The Old Families, oppose to the Mage's rule, would rather see the Mage fall



than the magical world protected against the Humdrum. The divisions among the magical world are the very things Watford has attempted to avoid happening, and these growing divisions now threaten the very existence of the magical world.

And I'm hopelessly in love with him.
-- Baz (Chapter 32)

Importance: Baz confesses to the reader that he is in love with Simon. This changes the dynamic between Simon and Baz. Baz does not operate out of a place of hatred. There is jealousy. There is also the pain of knowing he is in love with someone he can never have. It now makes sense why Baz was trying to come between Simon and Agatha, but it was for a very different reason than Simon had previously believed.

I'll help you find whoever killed your mother.
-- Simon (Chapter 40)

Importance: Simon promises Baz he will help Baz find his mother's killer. Although Baz and Simon are essentially enemies, Simon explains he feels bad that Baz's mother was killed in front of him. He also explains that Watford was attacked, and must be avenged. Baz is grateful for the offer, and the two boys declare a truce.

It was the same person who sent vampires after your mother!
-- Penelope (Chapter 65)

Importance: On Christmas Eve, Penelope, Simon, Baz, and Agatha get together and share what information they know. Penelope comes to the conclusion that whoever ordered the vampires to come after Baz's mother also ordered the numpties to come after Baz to prevent Baz from learning the identity of his mother's killer from his mother's Veil visitation.

You're the Chosen One... But you're also the greatest threat to magic. You're a bad guy!
-- Baz (Chapter 71)

Importance: When Baz is taken over by the Humdrum, and when Simon barely manages to save Baz, Baz comes to a realization. Simon is the Humdrum, and the Humdrum is Simon. Simon is both the Chosen One, and the one who will destroy the magical world. Somehow, Simon is and is not the Humdrum, and it is something that they must now figure out.

By the Mage... They say he's controlling the Humdrum –maybe even that the Mage is the Humdrum.
-- Penelope (Chapter 74)

Importance: Following the attack at the Pitches' in Hampshire, Simon learns from Penelope that things have gotten very bad. The Pitches blame the attack on the Mage, saying that the Mage either controls, or is the Humdrum himself. The Pitches will stop at



nothing to bring down the Mage, even if it means lumping him in with Humdrum. What is more, they are saying that Simon laid the groundwork for the dark magic to happen.

Nothing is more important than my mother!"
-- Baz (Chapter 75)

Importance: When the Humdrum grows in power, Simon suggests going to the Mage and refocusing their efforts on fighting the Humdrum. Baz disagrees. Baz insists nothing is more important than his mother—a statement that can only come from a son in Baz's situation. Baz's love of his dead mother is more than just emotionally charged in his declaration, but is far more prescient. By finding the killer of his mother, they will find the creator of the Humdrum.

It was the Mage. It was the Mage all along.
-- Baz (Chapter 76)

Importance: As the novel heads towards its conclusion, Baz, Simon, and the others come to realize that the Mage is behind everything—the war, the violence, the political unrest, the murder of Baz's mother, and so on. It is a startling and heartbreaking truth for Simon, but it is a validation for Baz and those opposed to the Mage as it is. Because of the Mage's actions, Simon must give up his magic to defeat the Humdrum, and kill the Mage.