

# The Immortal Games

AUTHOR

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Mid to Upper Secondary  
(Violence)

## SYNOPSIS

Every Lunar Eclipse signifies the beginning of the Immortal Games: An epic set of games played by the Gods of Olympus, with randomly-selected humans as their Tokens. The stakes are high for the Gods who covet entertainment and glory above all else. For the Tokens, it's about survival. 17-year-old Ara seeks revenge. Revenge on the Gods for allowing her older sister to die in the Games. And now she is consumed with one ambition only—to find a weapon powerful enough to kill a God. But when Ara is plucked from the clutches of death by Hades, God of the Underworld, she realises that she has become a Token herself in the brutal games. Coached by the only God who has never won the games, the odds are stacked against her.

Hades is the outcast of the Gods, who selects a Token who is already about to die to give them a second chance at life. But he soon realises that Ara does not fear death, just as she does not fear him. And when a wager offers Hades unimaginable power should his Token win, the games take on a new meaning. As the Games progress, Hades teaches Ara the value of life and living. Ara—still grieving the loss of her sister—teaches Hades compassion. And with Tokens slowly succumbing to the quests, Ara must put aside her rage if she is to survive!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annaliese has always loved stories. As a child, she would regularly rollerskate to her local library to stock up on new books to read. She was nearly always in trouble with the librarians for having not returned her books on time. Annaliese would go on to become a librarian herself one day and use her position as library manager to be more understanding to the young readers at her library who returned books late.

Annaliese has always felt the power of good stories but equally enjoys being lost in the wonder of books with facts/nonfiction. As a child, Annaliese read her way through all 20 volumes of *The New Caxton Encyclopedia*. She also collected a magazine series called *Quest*, and its exploration of science helped trigger a love of physics and astronomy.

In 2013 Annaliese founded an astronomical society, DASH Astro.

One of her ambitions in life is to have her own observing dome.

**STUDY NOTES**

- Before reading the story, as a class, discuss the book cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
  - What do you think is happening in the cover artwork?
  - What can you tell about the protagonist of the story based on the cover illustration?
  - When and where do you think this book might be set, and why do you think this?
  - What items and symbols can you see surrounding the girl on the cover?
  - What do you think the different objects on the cover might signify?
  - What genre do you think this book might be?
  - What do you hypothesise could happen in this novel?
- Look at the map in the front of the book. What can we learn about the setting of the novel from this map?
- Having read Chapter One, as a class, discuss how the author has set the scene, and what we now know about where and when the action of the novel takes place, what characters we have been introduced to, and what we know of their past as well as their various characteristics.
- What do you know of the role of the three fates in Ancient Greek Mythology? In pairs or small groups, research who they were, and what their different roles were. As a class, discuss your findings, and compare their roles in the novel to their roles in Ancient Greek Mythology. Consider in your discussion both the similarities and differences shown between these two different representations of the fates, using evidence from the text to support your suppositions.
  - Research the roles of the fates within other mythological traditions, as well as the different ways in which they are represented, and the power held by a trio of women within different folklore and myths.
- The three fates are depicted as weaving the strands of lives into the tapestry of the world. Look online for instructions on how to create a simple loom from cardboard, then weave a bookmark, coaster or other small piece of fabric using your loom. As a class, discuss the act of weaving, the difficulties and the rewards, and consider why it is such a powerful metaphor for the fates and the lives they influence and track.
  - Are there any other weaving metaphors present in the novel? Look at the way the fates describe Zeus' thread, and consider what it means.
- The Immortal Games are said to take place every time there is a blood moon. What is a blood moon, and how often do they occur? Why might people in ancient times have associated a blood moon with turmoil amongst the gods?
- What do you know of the Ancient Greek Pantheon? Choose one of the gods mentioned in the story, and research them and their role in Ancient Greek mythology. Create a presentation to share your findings with the class, and include a commentary on how closely the traditional mythological representation of your chosen god matches their behaviour and characteristics as seen in the novel.
- Does the author portray the gods as regal and worthy of veneration, or as childish, entitled and sulky? As a class, discuss the various reasons and ways in which limitless power and adulation might create a dangerous and selfish person or deity.
- Identify at least two recurring themes that appear within the novel, and which inform the various characters' behaviours. Write a brief explication sharing what the themes are, what their roles are within the novel, how they are realised within the actions of different characters, and why the author might have chosen to include them in her work. Use evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- Heli tells the other tokens 'what the oracle told Zeus was not to his liking so to punish her he banished her to the Swamps of Sadness.' (p 97) As a class, discuss how this type of behaviour on Zeus' part is likely to affect people telling him the truth in the future. What truths do people generally not like to hear, and when do people often choose not to say what is true?
- Re-read the description of the Swamps of Sadness on p 106, then use oil pastels, charcoal and ink to create an artwork showing how you imagine the swamps to look.
- What is the common theme in the trickery used by the swamp creatures to entice the tokens into the mud? In small groups or pairs discuss what types of things they might use to lure you into danger. Individually, write a brief descriptive passage showing a scene where one of the creatures entices you into the murk—you can choose to use something that you would be genuinely vulnerable to, or you can use a fictional weakness. Describe how you feel,

what you see, smell and hear, and why you might be tempted to follow the falsehood towards your doom.

- Hades tells Ara that Zeus has his reasons for his actions, and Ara retorts that ‘. . . it doesn’t make them right, does it?’ (p 132) As a class, discuss the relevance of this statement of Ara’s to the story as a whole. Consider in your discussion the larger principle of whether having a good and valid purpose behind an act is enough to justify it, and if so why, when, and in what ways?
  - Individually write an opinion piece arguing for or against the idea that the end justifies the means, within the context of the novel. Use evidence from the text to support your position.
- Athena talks of having ‘learnt a thing or two about truth from the mortals, who are more aware of the fluidity of it and of the flexibility of wisdom and how the vessel through which both are seen is of the utmost importance.’ (p 151). As a class, discuss this statement of Athena’s, focusing on the different ways that truth can be fluid, and why wisdom needs to be flexible. Consider in your discussion the difference between knowledge and wisdom, and the need to consider long term consequences as well as the immediate impact of any actions or decisions made.
- If you were granted godlike powers on a similar scope to the ones held by the gods in the story, what area would you choose to rule over and why?
- Write a letter from Ara’s father to another family member, sharing what his experience of the Games is, what he saw happen, how he felt when Ara was chosen as the token of Hades, and his reaction when she returned not just alive, but also victorious.
- Create a two to four panel comic showing Ara using her gifts from Hades in her future life. Think of as many different and creative uses for the items as you can.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

**RAE CARLYLE**