



www.doublecluck.com

 Chicken House UK

 @Chickenhsebooks

CITY OF HALVES BY LUCY INGLIS

SYNOPSIS

In an unseen world hidden within modern London, girls are disappearing. Sixteen-year-old Lily was meant to be next, but she's saved by a stranger: a half-human boy with gold-flecked eyes. Regan is from the world of the 'Eldritch', where legendary creatures hide in plain sight.

As Lily begins to understand Regan's role in ensuring a harmonious co-existence between the two worlds, they uncover a plot by a shady government agency to use the Eldritch as experimental subjects in the development of new life-changing drugs. With the natural balance suddenly disturbed, Regan finds he can no longer hold back the tide of banshees, bandogges and plague-ridden beings attempting to take over London's streets. Both worlds are under threat, and Lily and Regan must race to find the girls and save their divided city. It is a journey that reveals Lily's role in the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy, and fuels their deepening relationship.

WHAT THE PUBLISHER SAYS ...

London is a very old, very strange city - magical, mysterious and mythical. And it's Lily's home. When she finds out it's defended by beings whose motives are not solely of this world, it's lucky she has the help of a boy who is one of them. Or is it?

I love Lucy Inglis's hauntingly romantic - and, frankly, totally believable - world where past, present and imagination collide in the most unexpected and loving story of friendship since ... forever.

BARRY CUNNINGHAM, CHICKEN HOUSE



AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Lucy Inglis is a writer, historian, blogger and speaker. She lives in the shadow of St Paul's Cathedral with her husband and a Border Terrier.

Her award-winning blog *www.georgianlondon.com* is the largest body of study on 18th century London freely available online. It welcomes up to 20,000 visitors a day, and in 2010 won an unprecedented two Cliopatrias in the US History News Network's Awards. Unearthing murders, love affairs, shady business dealings, spiritualism, corsetry and dog-napping, it is used as a secondary source by students from institutions including King's College London, University College London and Christie's. It has also featured in *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *Time Out*. Lucy writes for *The RIBA Journal*, *The Georgian Magazine*, *Rare Book Review*, *Fire & Knives*, the *Spectator Coffee House* blog, *The Lay Scientist* and *The Guardian*, and regularly speaks on the 18th century at the Courtauld Institute, the Institute for Contemporary Arts and the Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

“On a winter day outside St Paul's I saw a small, pale girl in skinny jeans and boys' boots, with the most beautiful hair. She was looking at her phone, head down. Then she shoved the phone into her back pocket and strode away towards Cannon Street, full of purpose. I watched her go, and I knew her name was Lily. Wherever you are now, thank you.”

LUCY INGLIS

THEMES

- History of London
- Relationships
- Conspiracy



- Reality vs. fantasy
- Segregation
- Teamwork

WRITING STYLE

City of Halves is a gripping urban-fantasy novel set in a hidden world within contemporary London, where ancient myth collides with modern technology. A beautifully-told romantic mystery, it depicts a teenage girl and a young half-human man who solve crime and fall in love along the way. It is a third person narrative, primarily told from the point of view of Lily, the female protagonist. The book contains many detailed references to the geographical and historical features of the City, intertwining elements of folklore and incorporating mythological creatures. There is a strong emphasis on the idea of a two-tiered London society, hence the title of the novel. There are some graphic depictions of violence. Twenty chapters, 340 pages, age 12+.

PUPIL ACTIVITIES

1. Mapping the City

City of Halves takes place in the City of London. The setting here is extremely important, as both the history and geography of the City are intrinsic to the plot. Lucy Inglis draws on her extensive knowledge of the area to create an intriguing and labyrinthine world in which the action is played out. As pupils read through the novel, their understanding and enjoyment may be enhanced if a map of the City is used and annotated at the same time. This would be an effective way for pupils to learn a little more about the geography of England's capital city, and would also encourage pupils to consider which points in the novel require marking out on the map. Pupils could perhaps attach pictures and carry out small research projects on the important sites in the book, such as St Paul's Cathedral, London Wall, Temple and the London Stone. It would be fun for pupils to note in which



areas particular incidents with the Eldritch take place, maybe even illustrating the map with some of the mythological creatures (here, pupils could be influenced by the look of some of the old mariners' maps, which included images of sea serpents and mermaids!). Once done, pupils could add in some new myths and creatures – citing them clearly on the map. These could be of their own design, and could feature in a piece of creative writing which utilises their knowledge of the City.

2. Look again

On page 6, we follow Lily as she walks through the London streets that are so familiar to her. At first sight, there is nothing remarkable about what she observes on her journey – it is only later we learn that the seemingly innocuous tramp and the street sweeper she passes are part of a hidden world of mystery and danger! Using this as starting point, pupils could be tasked with recording an apparently ordinary street scene (whether as a picture, a photograph, or even a short film) and creating a story around this. Just as in *City of Halves*, the people and the setting on show in these images may appear innocent, but the story it contains can be utterly fantastical and completely transform our first impressions. Pupils should try to use these images as much as they can to influence the path of the story.

3. Talisman tailoring

Regan presents Lily with a talisman which he hopes will offer her protection. It is described as being like a marble in appearance, and is something that she wears on her wrist. Pupils could research talismans – the meaning of the word, what they do, and even what talismans could look like. They could then be tasked with designing their own talisman – and making them if resources allow. Pupils will need to think about what their talisman is designed to do or achieve and how the look and construction reflect that. This could be an interesting class project, producing a great visual display.

4. In the news



Regan spends much of his time battling mythological creatures in order to stop them from freely roaming the London streets – which mostly goes unnoticed by the vast majority of Londoners. However, occasionally some incidents get reported in the press or are commented on through social media. Often these are half-stories and do not show a full understanding of what has taken place. Nevertheless, they do hint about some of the strange happenings – and viewed together, may make a curious person question if there is more to be discovered. Following the episode with the bandogge, we learn that Lily only really discovers the truth once her eyes are opened to the existence of the Eldritch. For most other people going about their lives in London, the truth remains obscured because they choose not to see what is really taking place. Considering this, it would be interesting for pupils to create news reports, Twitter feeds and eye witness accounts based on those that appear during the course of the novel. Importantly, these pieces of reporting should not reveal a full knowledge of the Eldritch, but reflect how people, oblivious to the Regan and Lily’s struggle, might try to rationalise what has taken place. How would a journalist report the incident of the burnt-out van and the dragon attack? Pupils may wish to come up with a number of separate ‘news’ stories which, viewed separately, may not suggest the involvement of the ‘other-world’, but when viewed together might give a more observant person the idea that something strange is going on!

5. The greater good?

Regan’s brother Ellis argues that his involvement in ‘Operation Harvest’ is for the greater good. During pages 280-288, he and Lily debate the morality of engaging in such an operation. While it may be easier to fall on the side of Lily in this debate (she being the protagonist), Ellis arguably gives a reasonable explanation as to why he would be involved. The notion of working for the ‘greater good’ (whether or not it means causing harm to some) is an interesting one to debate, and this passage in particular could be used to fuel a discussion as to the morality and ethics of the project. Pupils could be divided into two halves; one half having to argue for Operation Harvest, the other half against. Pupils could work in groups to compile arguments to state their case. Clearly the exercise is worthwhile in terms of it providing an ethical dilemma for pupils to consider, but it also gives pupils an opportunity to



thoughtfully construct a point of view on the subject for which they are arguing.

6. The file on Lily

Regan suspects that the 'Agency' has been tracking Lily's activity online. As a computer hacker, Lily is well versed in using the internet to provide her with the information she needs to help her father in his work as a barrister. Inevitably, if she is being tracked, her activities are going to give the Agency a strong picture of who she is and what she gets up to. Pupils could be tasked with compiling an Agency file on Lily. They would need to decide what sort of information Lily might give away about herself through her online activities. Her file might include information on the websites she has visited, extracts of online conversations and places from which she has accessed the internet. All this information would give a clearer picture of Lily as a character and might help pupils to think about how she would be viewed by the Agency. It might also encourage pupils to think about their own activities online and how they might reveal information about who they are.

WRITING PROMPTS/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Throughout *City of Halves*, Regan is often referred to as a 'half-human'. He is spoken about in this way because he is part human and part Eldritch. What do you think about this label? Why might he be called this by certain people? Do you think it is a positive or negative thing to be called? Explain your answer.
2. Lily helps her father in his work as a barrister by using her skills as a computer hacker. She does this in order to ensure that criminals are convicted; but computer hacking is a crime. Do you think she is right or wrong to do this? Explain your answer.
3. At the beginning of the novel we learn that Harris Stedman is a forger, providing false ID for clients. Consequently, Lily and her father work to have him prosecuted. However, as the novel progresses, we learn



that Stedman is providing documentation to keep the true identities of some of the Eldritch secret. Do you feel any sympathy for Stedman? Do your feelings towards him change throughout the novel? Why?

4. After Lily is stabbed by Mona (p292), Mona explains, “I only did what I was trained to do.” To what extent do you think Mona is responsible for her actions? Why do you think this?

