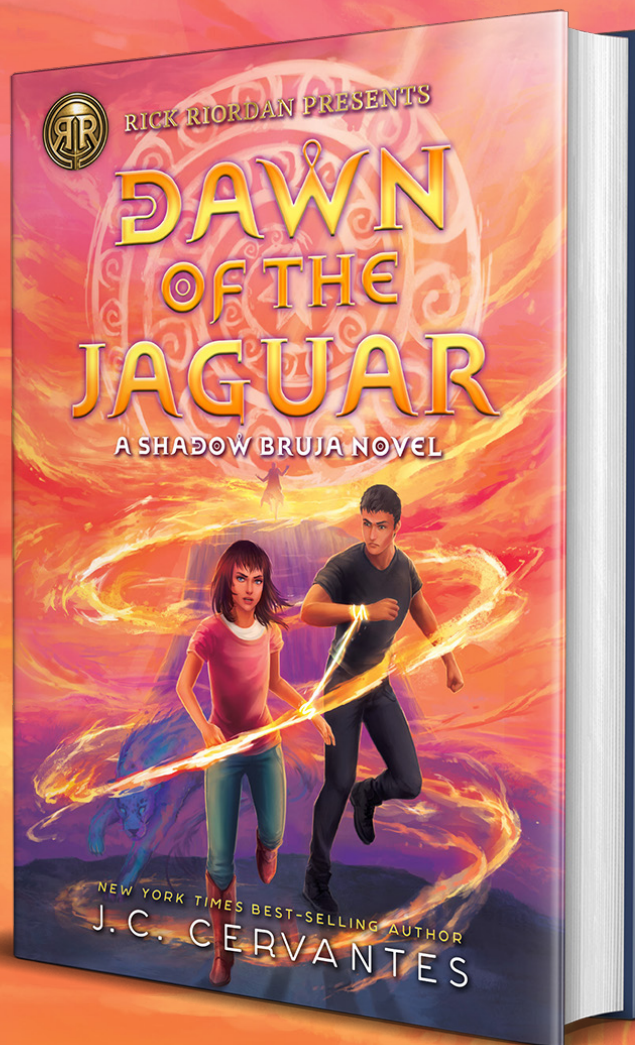




RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS



THE SHADOW BRUJA SERIES

BY NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

J.C. CERVANTES

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION





ABOUT THE BOOK

Renata “Ren” Santiago finds herself on an unplanned quest after discovering that the five rogue godborns are on a mission to awaken the Aztec Lords of Night in order to overthrow the Mayan gods. Unfortunately, she finds herself short of friends to help on the quest. That is, until she meets Edison, a demon, and Monty, an Aztec hunter. Both of them swear to protect Ren, but can they protect Ren from succumbing to the calls from the Lords of Night to be their queen? Ren’s quest takes on someone she was not expecting to save: herself.

AS-YOU-READ ACTIVITIES

TRAVEL LIKE THE GODS

The gods’ and the godborns’ use of gateways and magic portals have them crisscrossing the United States and Mexico in a matter of minutes. In order to keep oriented as they read, students can use any of the following mapping resources to record Ren’s quest, geographically and chronologically, documenting locations and events.

- Print the state maps of the United States and Mexico included in this guide to track changes in location.
- Use Google Maps to create a visual representation plotting and calculating distance in between each location.
- Create a Google Earth 3D project to map a virtual rendering of each location.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

1. Ren’s magic is awakened in Chapter 1. Her world becomes suddenly chaotic, and it appears that all she has to go on is her instinct to escape peril. However, her grandfather seems to know what to do, and she trusts his knowledge and judgment, putting her life in his hands. If you were in Ren’s situation, who is the person or people that you completely trust to guide you through unexpected danger?
2. With nothing else to guide her but instinct, how is it possible that Ren made it to Holbox?





3. Refer to the first 3 chapters of *The Lords of Night*. Why is it ironic that Ren's feelings are hurt by the comments being hurled at her on her alien blog?
4. Ren is crushed to hear from Marco how the other godborns had moved on, well into their own journeys. Is Ren entitled to feel lonely, maybe even forgotten, when she herself had not bothered to set up her new phone? Give details to support your answer.
5. Marco tells Ren he wants to win battles and be the best fighter in history. Ren tells him, "There are other ways to fight that don't include your fists" (page 21). Give an example of how a battle can be fought without the use of force. Help support Ren's statement by naming an important person in history that fought battles without physical force.
6. Though Marco is quite hostile toward Ren, she convinces him to meet her in Kansas to pursue the five rogue godborns. Marco agrees to do it but emphatically tells her that afterward he's coming home; he wants nothing to do with "quests, hunts, or other junk." Though he is the son of Nakon, the god of war, what reasons might Marco have to avoid hunts, quests, and battles? What do you believe is going on with Marco?
7. If Ren's shadows are her protection, explain how she was ensnared by the Fire Lord's shadow prison?
8. What do we know about Ren thus far that makes it highly likely that she is some sort of queen? Make a list of your reasons from the book to support your answer.
9. In Chapter 8, Ren states, "Anger is preferable to fear—it doesn't make you feel powerless" (page 41). List three reasons why Ren's statement is a good rule to follow. Then list three reasons why Ren's statement may not be a rule we should follow.
10. On page 50, Marco tells Ren, "You don't always make the right call . . . But your heart, it's too . . . trusting. Always getting in the way of the hard stuff." What does Marco mean by this statement, and do you agree? Provide examples from the book proving Marco right or wrong, depending on your answer.
11. How does the emergence of the Lords of Night affect Ren's shadow magic?
12. Ren believes that she has seen the translucent girl before but is unsure given the girl's nebulous state. If the girl is an astral traveler, she would have to be someone quite powerful to be able to separate her soul from their body. Give an explanation as to who you believe the translucent girl is and whether you believe she appears to Ren in order to help or hurt her.



13. Ah-Puch tells Ren that in order to understand her enemies, she must know their names and understand their powers. How is this similar to the voice on page 63 telling Ren “Maybe I now know your strengths. And weaknesses”?
14. As humans, we all face difficult decisions when our “heads” tell us to do one thing but our “hearts” tell us to do something different. On page 98, Ren realizes that “she didn’t have the luxury of being herself.” Analyze how Ren is responding to a similar struggle between her “head” and her “heart” as she starts her quest.
15. It is obvious that the lords are quite powerful since they are able to talk to Ren telepathically. What reasons would the lords have to lure Ren into a game instead of just outright taking her by force?
16. Edison loves to read books about inventions, which is why he named himself Thomas Edison. Having someone to look up to gives us inspiration to achieve great things ourselves. If you could rename yourself after a significant historical figure, who would it be and why?
17. Ren wants, more than anything, to prove to her online bullies that she is not a fake or loser. Winning the quest will be proof, at least to herself, that she is neither. Is Ren really being fair by placing so much pressure on herself? If a quest or game is lost, does that really mean a person is a loser? Explain.
18. Ren was not expecting to hear from Zane that Ah-Puch knew about the symbols and aliens. Ah-Puch had never mentioned this knowledge to Ren. Serena believes that Ren squandered her time-control power on a selfish god who had abandoned Ren during a time of need. Is Serena correct? Justify your answer.
19. In Chapter 24, Ren’s anger released dark and dangerous shadows. Does this outburst change your perception of Ren and her power? Give three reasons to support your answer.
20. “I am your queen” is all Ren has to say and the Prince Lord will spare her and Monty’s lives (page 168). Ren wants to save their lives, but it would mean assuming a role she says she does not want. Yet, Ren may also have selfish motives. What other motives might Ren have for agreeing to be queen of the Lords of Night?
21. *What have I done?* (page 172). Now that Ren and her friends are safe, the magnitude of the deal she made with the Prince Lord overwhelms Ren with dread. Write about a time you believed you made the best decision but soon regretted. What made your decision the wrong one?



22. While readers have information about most of the families of the main characters, there are some characters in this book for which we have little information, including who their parents are. Which of these characters is most likely to be the child of the Unknowns and the demon? Provide evidence from the book supporting your answer.
23. What makes this quest so personal to Ren that she is willing to go through the ominous maze of the Dark Mercado, risking her life and the lives of others?
24. In Chapter 30, Ren is scared when her shadows cast themselves off. Yet, for a fleeting moment, Ren wants to feed their cruelty. What is causing Ren's judgment and magic to shift?
25. We know Ren's mother is Pacific and her father was only human. How, then, could Ren have inherited this shadow magic she possesses?
26. In Ren's presence, Seven Death tells Ah-Puch you cannot kill the Lords of Night because it "would also mean killing pieces of [Ren]" (page 216). Knowing this, what possible strategy could Ah-Puch take to save Ren and put an end to the Lords of Night?
27. Ren and Edison seem to have a connection throughout the novel. What makes them so compatible?
28. In Chapter 33, a thought comes to Ren: "Negative thinking always equaled bad energy, and bad energy has always equaled unwanted consequences" (page 232). Create a statement that is the opposite of Ren's statement. How can you use your new statement to make sure you experience happiness?
29. Explain the purpose of Pacific's appearance to Ren in the Maze of Nightmares.
30. Centeotl makes it clear to Ren that being queen of the Lords of Night does not mean she will rule them. If this is true, then what would be the purpose of Ren's role as their queen?
31. Monty tells Ren that when hunters face difficult situations, their strength grows. Monty always wanted to achieve and acquire the Herculean strength, and now that she has it, she's relieved that she's not broken. Can a human achieve this kind of Herculean strength, too? Provide examples of people who have exhibited this type of strength.
32. Describe what you believe is happening to Ren internally that is making her susceptible to the forbidden magic of the Dark Market.
33. Though Ren has a plan for vanquishing the Lords of Night, she comes up with an alternate plan in case she sides with the lords. Were you in her shoes, would you do the same? What other alternatives are there for Ren?

34. Evaluate Zyanya's statement "Nothing wrong with darkness as long as you control it" (page 283). Do you agree or disagree with her statement? Defend your answer.
35. The Obsidian Blade rightfully belongs to Ezra, but Ren is the one who found it. Though Ren's need is great for the Obsidian Blade, why should Ezra not be entitled to have it given that it was created by her mother, Yohualli? If it were up to you, who would you give the blade to knowing that Ezra and Ren each have a need for it?
36. What does Jade mean when she tells Ren that her friends wear the invisible scars of her friendship and love? Are true friendships just about pure love for a friend or do true friendships sometimes have "scars"? Explain your answer.
37. Ren is left holding the Obsidian Blade after Zyanya disappears with Jade. Select one of the two statements and complete the answer:
 - A: Ren is now powerless holding the Obsidian Blade because _____.
 - B: Ren is now powerful holding the Obsidian Blade because _____.

POST-READING WRITING PROMPTS

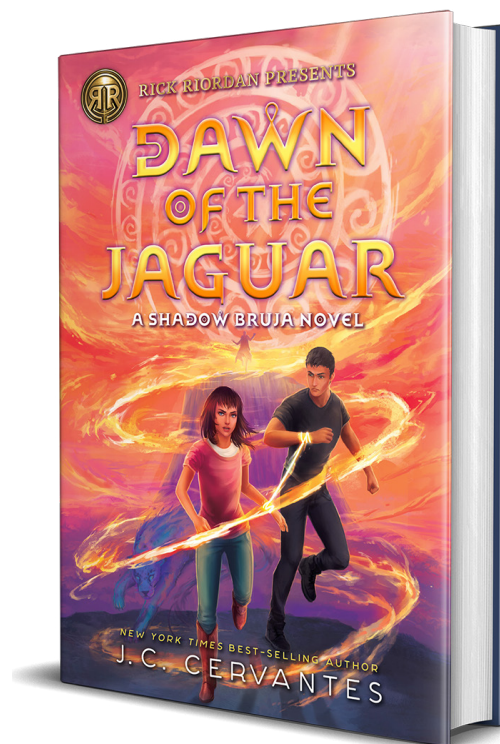
1. Readers often develop a fondness for characters in books. In *The Lords of Night*, the last arrow that Monty lets fly pierces Ren's heart, and also pierces the heart of the reader. However, we know the story has not ended! Imagine that you have been selected to write a book that follows *The Lords of Night*. How would you start the book, beginning from where the first book ended? Write the opening paragraph to book two, describing what you believe happens next.
2. As Ren walks through the Dark Market, she is drawn to several items of forbidden magic. Which one of the following would you choose, and why are you most drawn to it over the others?
 - A. Cacao bean: Make a dream come true
 - B. Honey love potion: Make someone fall in love with you
 - C. Beetle of immortality: You will live forever
 - D. Flower of knowledge: Know the secrets of the universe
 - E. The godly bean: Create your own prophecy





ABOUT THE BOOK

Nothing was as heartbreaking as Renata Santiago choosing death rather than reigning as queen over the Lords of Night. However, Ren has been given an opportunity not only to live but to also save her friends. In order to do so, she makes a dangerous and risky deal with Ixtab, the queen of the underworld, to bring Ixtab the crown of jade and shadow. With the loss of her shadow magic and the time rope, Ren's quest seems hopeless until she taps into something far more powerful than magic.



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

1. The teacher will read aloud the exciting ending to Chapter 45 in *The Lords of Night*.
2. Afterward, each student will list five adjectives that describe their feelings about the ending of the book.
3. Students will then work in pairs or in small groups and swap their adjective lists with each other, explaining why they chose the adjectives on their list.
4. After building consensus around a single adjective and choosing a group reporter, the reporter from each group will report why they picked the one adjective from their classmates' lists to describe the ending to the chapter.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

1. Ah-Puch finds himself powerless and unable to deny Ren's final wish that Monty be the one to end her life. For what reason would Ren make such a wish? Given Ah-Puch's history, do you believe that he was being honorable or cowardly? Explain both Ren's and Ah-Puch's motivations.
2. Ren received a time rope as a gift in the previous book. However, as we begin *Dawn of the Jaguar*, the time rope unexpectedly becomes the possession of Ah-Puch. Since it is supposedly earned only as a gift, how is it possible that Ah-Puch could have possibly been "gifted" the twin time ropes?



3. Though Ren's shadow magic made her feel powerful, she was still struck down. Discuss the various ways Ren might have prevented her own death.
4. In Chapter 2, Ixtab resurrects Ren. She gives Ren seven days to bring her the crown of jade and shadow. As a reward, Ixtab will give Ren her life back. Predict how Ren could possibly retrieve the crown without her shadow magic or her time rope.
5. In Chapter 7, the Sparkstriker says, "There is power in memory." Give an interpretation of what you believe the Sparkstriker is saying.
6. With the crown of jade being destroyed, how can Ren possibly follow through on the deal she made with Ixtab?
7. Pretend that you are a lawyer in court defending Ah-Puch. He is being charged with never playing by the rules and also encouraging Ren to break the rules by canceling her deal with Ixtab. What would you argue to the judge in defense of Ah-Puch breaking the rules? Give the judge 2–3 examples of when it could be justified to break the rules.
8. The time rope that bound Ren and Ah-Puch slithers away after the Sparkstriker slams her ax into the stone steps. The Sparkstriker tells Ren her journey is different from that of the time rope and that Ren must now make a choice of what to do. If you were Ren, what choice would you make? Give reasons why you selected this choice.
9. On page 73 of the book, Ren recalls Abuelo telling her that "letting go takes the greatest strength of all." Consider Abuelo's words and give your interpretation of what Abuelo is saying. Do you believe Abuelo's statement is true? Defend your answer.
10. Pacific tells Ren that in order to tap into her new form as a jaguar and her new magic, Ren will need to forget what her *limited* mind is telling her. Do you believe Pacific is critical of Ren? Support your answer with what you believe Pacific is saying.
11. Some readers may believe that Pacific does not want Ren to succeed in her quest because she chose to give Ren only one strand of the time rope instead of the whole rope. Other readers may disagree and believe Pacific had good intentions. Which side of this debate do you believe is correct? Provide an answer that is either for or against Pacific.
12. Eréndira grants Ren's wish for the obsidian blade that was lost. If you were in Ren's cowboy boots, would you have kept her wish or made a different wish as the best choice for Ren's quest? Defend your answer.



13. As she faces impossible tasks, Ren realizes that “everyone has their own prison: a lake, a blade, a promise.” We all feel trapped or imprisoned at times and believe that we cannot break out of a tough situation. Compose a paragraph of 3–5 sentences describing a difficult challenge that made you feel trapped in a tough situation and how you overcame the challenge.
14. Ren’s situation gets completely out of control in Chapter 17, with both Ah-Puch and the Prince Lord fighting over her. Ultimately, Ren tells Monty to shoot Ah-Puch. Is Ren’s request that Monty shoot Ah-Puch any different than when Ah-Puch had Monty shoot Ren? How are these two actions similar? How are they different? Explain your answers.
15. The feathers tell Monty that she, Ren, and their friends will be trapped forever in the stone palace and that the only way for them to escape is during the blood moon. What is a blood moon, and how is it important to their circumstances?
16. In Chapter 35, the author tells the reader that Ren possesses “*Ageless blood. A blend of old and new. . . . The jade carries the magic of old gods. And the shadow carries the magic of old beings.*” What does it mean for Ren to possess this kind of power?
17. Zyanya is willing to help Ren put the lords to sleep, but in return, Zyanya wants her freedom. Unfortunately, Ren no longer possesses the shadow magic needed to destroy the obsidian blade. How else can Ren possibly fulfill this promise to Zyanya?
18. Through the walls of the chamber, Ren hears Ezra whispering out to her telepathically to save her and Marco. Ezra tells Ren to “*use her shadow magic*” and that “*the night is still within her,*” but Zyanya tells Ren, “It’s a trap, I can smell it.” What consequences will it have for them if Ren musters her “shadow magic”?
19. Ren’s roar is so powerful that it can be painful to those who hear it. Explain how sound can be used as a weapon.
20. Zyanya is overwhelmed by the enormity of Cuauhtli and doesn’t think she can put it to sleep. However, Ren understands the “power of belief, of confidence and trust in oneself.” In the human world, how might the “power of belief, of confidence and trust in oneself” be similar to a form of magic? Explain your answer.
21. In Chapter 24, both Zyanya and Ren deplete their magic in order to save Marco and the godborns. Is it really a sacrifice if Zyanya and Ren are still alive? Do you believe that everyone should be willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good?



22. The relationship between Ah-Puch and Ren is unique. Explain what makes Ren and Ah-Puch's relationship work despite the fact that both of them have had Monty shoot the other.
23. Before Ah-Puch disappears, he tells Ren that when it comes time to marry the Prince Lord, Serena needs to be the one to "tie the knot." Give an argument on why you believe Ren should trust or not trust Ah-Puch.
24. Though she does not necessarily like Ren, Serena says she wants nothing more than to get even with the lords. It is for this reason that Serena chooses to help Ren. Is this enough for you to believe Serena is worth trusting? Provide evidence to support your answer.
25. In Chapter 29, anger and despair befall Ren after she has been duped by Jade Is Her Skirt. However, Ah-Puch drifts into her consciousness, telling Ren not to dwell in the depths of darkness but to seek the light. What makes this moment in the book ironic?
26. Pacific is not necessarily clear when Ren asks her how to activate the "*true essence of the time thread*." Describe how you believe Ren was able to discover and wield the time thread's "true essence."
27. What does K'iin mean when he says on page 274, "Sometimes the truth is too much to bear. It changes futures and demolishes pasts"?
28. On page 283, Ren finds Edison pouring light into Zyanya. Ren asks him if he was a healer, to which Edison replies, "*I can only feed magic back into someone*." Explain how any of us might help others by "feeding magic" into those in need.
29. What makes Edison an exceptional character in the book? Does knowing about his lineage change how you feel about him? Justify your answer.
30. How were Ren and her friends able to overpower the Lords of Night? What lesson does the reader learn from their victory?
31. To whom does Ren owe her life, and why is it so significant?
32. Provide a detailed answer to Ren's question on page 320: "And don't you agree that some things are secrets for a really good reason and should stay, you know, secret?"



POST-READING WRITING PROMPTS OR ACTIVITIES

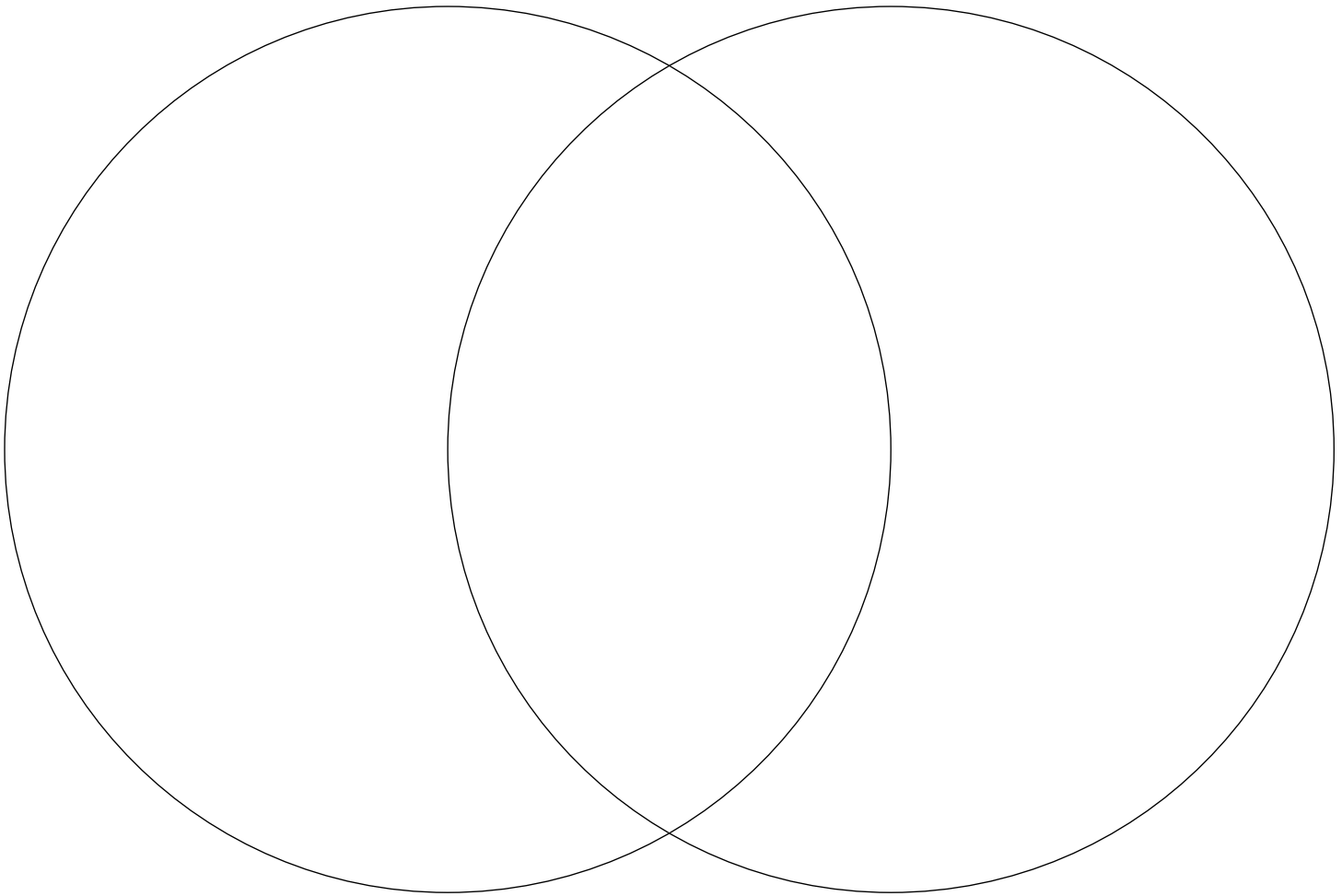
1. The Maya afterlife Xibalba is an underworld run by the lords of death. For the Aztecs, Mictlan is their underworld, where the dead go through a journey. Research with a partner or a group the characteristics of both of these underworlds. Distinguish similarities and differences between the two underworlds and note your findings in the Venn diagram handout.
2. Imagine that you are asked to be the author of a new book in the Shadow Bruja series with a new lead character other than Ren. Choose a title for your new book. Pick one character from the *Dawn of the Jaguar* book to be your lead character in your book. Write a paragraph of 4–5 sentences supporting why your new lead character would be an excellent choice for your new book.
3. Ren and the other characters from the book need your help! They want to offer vacations and tours to the Xibalba (the Maya underworld) and Mictlan (the Aztec underworld) and need to advertise so that people from all over the world can visit! They will need you and your classmates to make travel posters and travel brochures and hold a travel fair.
 - Use a poster board (for a travel poster) or a folded 8"x11" sheet of paper folded in thirds (for a travel brochure), and create ads for the vacations and tours. Students can work in pairs or small groups.
 - Poster board and travel brochures should have . . .
 - A travel theme (meet the underworld gods, magical underworld, scary adventures, travel arrangements)
 - Make certain that you include some of the following, as well as other ideas you have.
 - Transportation: How will tourists arrive and depart?
 - Lodging: Where will tourists sleep when visiting?
 - Activities: What fun activities will be available for tourists?
 - Meet ancient gods.
 - Try out some tools and weapons.
 - Learn magic.
 - Explore the underworld.
 - Meals: What restaurants and what kind of food will be available for tourists?
 - Ensure that your brochure or poster includes many items, themes, and ideas from the book. Each item should have plenty of text and color to make your brochure informative and appealing.
 - After all brochures are complete, hold a travel fair by taping all the items you created on the wall. Walk around the room to view the travel brochures and travel posters that everyone has made!

VENN DIAGRAM HANDOUT

The Maya afterlife Xibalba is an underworld run by the lords of death. For the Aztecs, Mictlan is their underworld, where the dead go through a journey. Research with a partner or a group the characteristics of the Maya afterlife Xibalba and the Aztecs Mictlan. Distinguish similarities and differences between the two underworlds and note your findings in the Venn diagram below.

Xibalba

Mictlan





STUDIO E

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. C. CERVANTES (www.JCCervantes.com) is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Storm Runner*, which *Booklist* called “a rip-roaring adventure” in a starred review. Her first novel, *Tortilla Sun*, was a 2010 New Voices pick by the American Booksellers Association and was named to Bank Street’s 2011 Best Book List. Jen grew up in San Diego and was fascinated by stories about Maya gods and magic. Follow her on Facebook, Twitter @JenCerv, and Instagram @AuthorJCervantes.

ABOUT THE GUIDE WRITER

This guide was written by **MARIBEL CASTRO**, a former school and academic librarian, currently serving as the director of technology and information services at Louise S. McGehee School in New Orleans, Louisiana. Castro has served on several reading list committees, served as president of the Texas Library Association, and was a member of the executive board of the American Association of School Librarians. She is the child of migrant workers from Mexico who did not have much in terms of wealth but got her a library card, opening up a rich world of words and thoughts. Castro believes that children of diverse backgrounds deserve to be reflected in the pages of the books they read.

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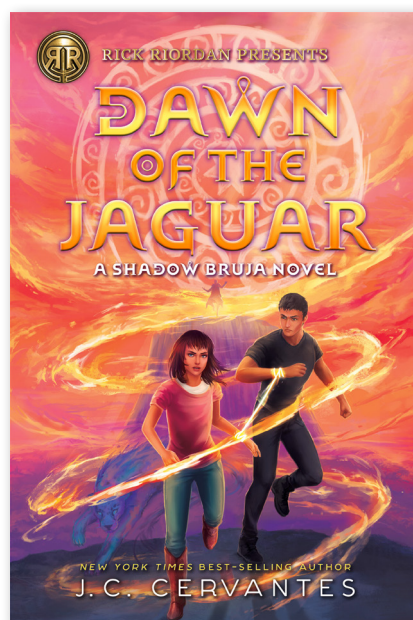
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