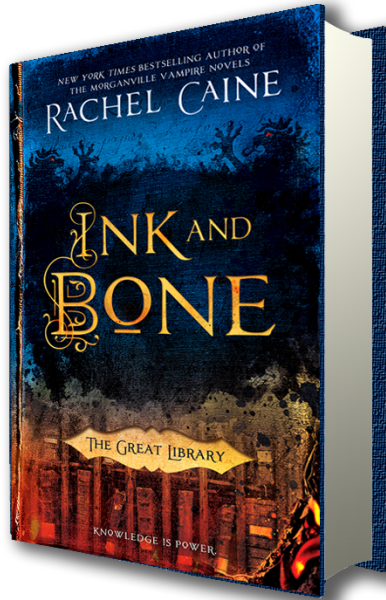


A Teacher's Guide for



INK AND BONE



Volume 1 of the Great Library

by

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Rachel drew on many sources of inspiration for this novel, including the history of the Great Library of Alexandria, as well as the loss or destruction of many other great centers of human knowledge throughout the ages. The central conceit of the story is that the Great Library was *not* lost, and inside the hundreds of thousands of volumes were many discoveries that might have completely changed our world—for better, or worse.

While this is most definitely an adventure story, it also contains some overarching ideas and issues that make it ideal for class discussions.

You can download READ posters and the booktrailer at the Great Library website:
<http://www.enterthelibrary.com>



CONTENT WARNINGS

While this book doesn't contain any sexual scenes, there is some romantic content (on a scale of 1 to 10, perhaps a 2), and an adult gay couple, which is revealed in an entirely matter-of-fact way and passes without much comment from the group of young adults.

There are, however, scenes of war, violence, and death at the hands of both humans and automatons (specifically, lions). While not closely described, it may be upsetting to younger readers.

ALTERNATE HISTORY

This book fits the definition of *alternate history*, which is a brand of science fiction; it describes a world in which history proceeded on a different course, normally from a single important event. In this world, the Great Library of Alexandria was saved by a common accord between (first) Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, who agreed that it should be always sacred, even in war, as a great resource to all nations. This agreement spread to include almost all nations over time, and while the Library did experience periods of trouble, the formation of their army (the *High Garda*, a term adapted from the Irish) assured the survival of not just the Great Library itself, but other libraries it annexed and put under its protection, one by one. Because of this, there has been remarkably little information lost.

However, there is one great truth about the Library that is *also* drawn from history: it was not, as one might assume today, a totally altruistic organization. In fact, many of the first volumes placed within the Library were done so by Pharonic orders—confiscated from owners and visitors, and placed into the collection by force. In addition, the Great Library's vast resources were *not* available to the general public, but to a select group of scholars. The development of the *Serapeum*, the daughter library that became open to the public (though, again, a select few), came later.

With that in mind, and the fact that *any* organization, no matter how originally pure, develops internal politics and an entrenched mindset over time ... the Library becomes a nation-state of its own, much like the Vatican. That requires it to engage in politics and self-preservation of the status quo.

The development of the printing press would have meant the death of the Library's stranglehold on power and knowledge ... and so, it was suppressed, the knowledge destroyed or hidden away. But it's a development that is so logical and important that it keeps surfacing, and forcing the Library to defend itself again and again against a purely good thing ... which makes the Library itself the evil in the world.

This is a book about the nature of information, ownership, and guardianship of heritage. It's a book about books and e-books, the Internet and print, rigid beliefs and violent revolution.

I think there's a lot in it that speaks to our modern world.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

Part of creating the world of the Great Library led to many fun and interesting discoveries, so here is a partial list of classroom resources you can use to discuss the novel, history, and other fun and fascinating topics.

The Great Library

- Here's a great, brief summary of the history and end of the Library:
http://www.serageldin.com/ancient_Library.htm
- Bede's Library online has another great summary:
<http://www.bede.org.uk/library.htm>
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Lost Libraries

- A great list of 11 lost libraries, with descriptions (or at least estimates) of what was destroyed: <http://www.strangehistory.net/2014/04/29/12-burning-libraries-book-lovers-beware/>
- Wikipedia has a great list of lost and destroyed libraries from ancient times to modern, and it's a staggering number:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_destroyed_libraries
- Listverse has a fascinating record of great works (mainly books) that only narrowly avoided being lost forever: <http://listverse.com/2014/08/20/10-priceless-cultural-works-we-nearly-lost-forever/>
- And to bring it home, here's an article on the fire that destroyed two-thirds of the Library of Congress in 1851: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/fire-ravages-library-of-congress>

Automata

- There's plenty of evidence that the ancient Greeks were amazingly advanced in engineering that wouldn't be rediscovered for a thousand years or more ... lots to delve into here on the Ancient Wisdom site: <http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/greekautomata.htm>

I've also linked many resources at the Great Library website:
<http://www.enterthelibrary.com>

CHARACTERS

The key to writing interesting and engaging characters, whether they are to be seen as heroes or villains, is to believe that each of them, in their mind, is the hero of his or her own story. Their actions are driven by what they think is good – either for themselves, or for others.

- **Jess** is an adventurer—and a boy with a genuine love of books. When he agrees to take on the job as his family's spy within the Library, does he really intend to do that in the end? Who are his loyalties truly with? Discuss Jess's good and bad points ... what other characters does he remind students of, either in books or film?
- **Thomas** is more of a pure believer in the Library; he's never thought to question what the Library does, or represents. He's an innocent in a complicated world, and that makes him vulnerable. Who else does Thomas remind students of, and why?
- **Morgan** is one of the rare Obscurists to have been born outside the Library, and is running from what she thinks will be her destiny. Is she using others, like Jess, to accomplish her own safety? Or is she a desperate victim of circumstance? Is here another character students can think of who's in a similar situation?
- **Scholar Wolfe** seems like a real villain to his class, but by the end of the novel, readers learn that he has a complicated past and even more complicated motives. Who else do students think he's like?

These four are the prime movers of the story, and each has a unique perspective that *could* be written as the main character ... yet it would be a very different book from each perspective.

Ink and Bone can be a way to illustrate to students how every character in a book, no matter how incidental, can take on depth and life if allowed their own stage and perspective.

Sample class exercise



Choose a character from *Ink and Bone* and write a short scene from his or her point of view about things going on around them. Examples include scenes from Dario's point of view about Jess's arrival, Glain's visit to the black market to buy books, alternate viewpoints of the battle of Oxford, etc.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Creating a rich and varied world was very important to me, particular since the Library has a global presence, and therefore the students and professors of the Library would represent a global influence. *Khalila* is an important character to me personally, as a tribute to my many young Muslim women who read and love the Morganville Vampires series; *Dario*, Jess's rival, is a bright and important young man who I wanted to include as a thank you to my Spanish fans. Likewise, *Thomas* hails from Germany, *Glain* from Wales (which, in this world, is well on the way to conquering England), *Guillaume* from France (now completely owned by the Library, after a failed rebellion) ... there is a wide variety of diverse backgrounds, cultures and personalities included, and will be more in future books.

Likewise, while the novel begins in the relatively familiar setting of London, Alexandria stands as a clear contrast, with a rich, important culture that continues to influence the city, the Library and those who reside inside the city.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and #1 internationally bestselling author of almost fifty novels, including the popular Morganville Vampire young adult series, and the critically acclaimed novel *Prince of Shadows*.

To request her for an event, signing, school or library visit, please email her directly at rachelcainewriter@gmail.com.



She does not charge speaking fees for schools or libraries as a matter of policy, but may request defrayment of expenses for lodging and transportation.

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