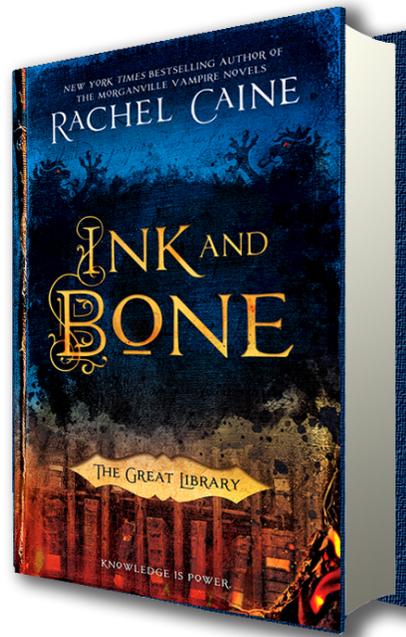


A Discussion Guide for



INK AND BONE



Volume 1 of the Great Library

by

Rachel Caine

Author of the Morganville Vampires series



Penguin Group (USA)
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

www.enterthelibrary.com

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

In a world where the legendary Great Library of Alexandria never burned, books are sacred objects ... more valuable than human lives. Everyone can read, but no one can own them, under penalty of prison, or death.

Jess Brightwell is the son of a black market book smuggler, and a book lover himself, and when he has the chance to be sent as his family's spy into the Library itself, he's eager to learn the secrets of the greatest center of knowledge in the world ... at least, until he begins to find them out.

In a world where the printing press was never invented, Jess and his friends are about to commit the greatest heresy of all.



A note from the author:

I love books.

Books are wonders we take for granted ... they're time travelers, coming to us across distances, across lifetimes, across centuries and even millennia.

The stories they tell us not only communicate knowledge and information, they give us a human, emotional connection to events that would otherwise just be dry notes on a timeline. Wars become real for us by reading the stories of those who are caught up in them. The death of someone a thousand years ago can still move us to tears, because the grief of losing someone you love remains the same.

I wanted to write a story about books ... about their importance and power. But every story about power has to concern itself with the consequences and misuse of that power. Book lovers universally mourn the death of the Great Library of Alexandria ... what if it hadn't burned? It was both a shining ideal, and a political institution with the same flaws of any other. Humanity lost a huge amount of knowledge when that library—and many others over the centuries—were lost flames and destruction. Imagine what we'd know now if they'd survived.

Now imagine that free exchange of knowledge isn't so free, after all.

Jess's world is one of wonders and danger, thrills and real terrors. I hope you find it as amazing to read as I did to write it.

Rachel Caine

Discussion Guide for Students/Groups

See following pages for Teacher/Leader guidelines



- *Ink and Bone* is told from the point of view of Jess Brightwell—the eldest surviving son of his smuggler family. Do you think he fits into his family? If not, why doesn't he?
- If someone said you couldn't own a book for yourself, how would you feel about that? How about if someone said you couldn't read it? The Library decides these things, in Jess's world. Is it good or bad, or both?
- While religion is present in Jess's world, it doesn't have the fanatical extremes of the world we live in today ... why not? What about the influence of the Library would cause people to become more moderate in their views?
- Over the years, we've seen fanatical groups destroying ancient artifacts, cities, and museums. Many libraries have also been burned and destroyed—and as of the writing of this book, estimates are not a single intact library still operates in Iraq. How does this relate to the destruction of libraries and centers of knowledge in the past?
- The Library's system of the Codex is similar in nature to how our Internet operates ... but it is closely regulated by them, and only "approved content" is available. If books weren't legal to own, and the printing press had never been invented, how do you think people would exchange secret information? How dangerous would it be?
- What do you find most like our own world in this book? What's most different?
- If you could pick one thing in history to change to make a big difference, what would it be? What kind of changes do you think would come from that?

Discussion Guide for Teachers/Discussion Leaders



- *Ink and Bone* is told from the point of view of Jess Brightwell—the eldest surviving son of his smuggler family. Do you think he fits into his family? If not, why doesn't he?

Jess's family is pretty dysfunctional. His father is abusive, his mother distant, and even his twin isn't on his side that much. His real family exists in the form of the books he smuggles and hoards for himself. He's a bookworm. Like us!

- If someone said you couldn't own a book for yourself, how would you feel about that? How about if someone said you couldn't read it? The Library decides these things, in Jess's world. Is it good or bad, or both?

This feeds into an open discussion about many great topics ... censorship, banned books, even the ebook world in which a book can be "pulled" from devices when/if the rights owner wishes, or if there's a legal issue. Get a list of books that have been challenged in your own library and discuss it. Talk about why a book should ever be removed—is there ever a good reason? If so, what is it?

- While religion is present in Jess's world, it doesn't have the fanatical extremes of the world we live in today ... why not? What about the influence of the Library would cause people to become more moderate in their views?

There's a constant tension between religious extremism and tolerance, and typically, the more people are exposed to new ideas, the less intolerant and rigid in their beliefs they become. Because the Library stands neutral between religions, but is a gathering place for all, it has acted (not entirely deliberately) as a calming influence. An open-ended discussion topic ... does knowing more about other people, places and things cause you to re-evaluate what you think you know? How does it apply to topics like racial tensions in the US?

- Over the years, we've seen fanatical groups destroying ancient artifacts, cities, and museums. Many libraries have also been burned and destroyed—and as of the writing of this book, estimates are not a single intact library still operates in Iraq. How does this relate to the destruction of libraries and centers of knowledge in the past?

The Great Library might be the most famous of our lost libraries, but there are hundreds of note, and more that happen every year, though the overall loss of "original" knowledge is progressively less because of technology and—of course—printing technology. Still, priceless works are lost, and many are lost to extremism. What can we do to better preserve our cultural heritage and world knowledge? What would the students suggest? A good statistic to use is the current estimate of how much of the world's knowledge has been captured in electronic form on the Internet: out of

the estimated 130 million books printed in the world, only about 15 million have been made digitally available.

- **The Library's system of the Codex is similar in nature to how our Internet operates ... but it is closely regulated by them, and only "approved content" is available. If books weren't legal to own, and the printing press had never been invented, how do you think people would exchange secret information? How dangerous would it be?**

This would be a good opportunity to discuss the varieties of secret communication methods ... old-fashioned notes passed hand to hand, codes, face to face meetings. Even "dark web" applications might be possible, to those who know how to create them within the Library's own system.

- **What do you find most like our own world in this book? What's most different?**

Open ended discussion about not just what is different, but why ... why does the Library have its own army? Wars still exist, but have different rules. Discuss away!

- **If you could pick one thing in history to change to make a big difference, what would it be? What kind of changes do you think would come from that?**

This is an opportunity for some real brainstorming ... would your students prevent a war? Save someone? What's their reasoning, and what would this change do for the world as the change echoes through to the present?

About Rachel Caine



Rachel is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and #1 internationally bestselling author of nearly fifty novels, including the popular Morganville Vampire young adult series, the critically acclaimed *Prince of Shadows*, and the new smash hit *Ink and Bone*.

To request her for an event, signing, school or library visit, please email her directly at rachelcainewriter@gmail.com. You can follow her on Twitter @rachelcaine, and at her Facebook Rachel Caine Fan Page.

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

www.rachelcaine.com