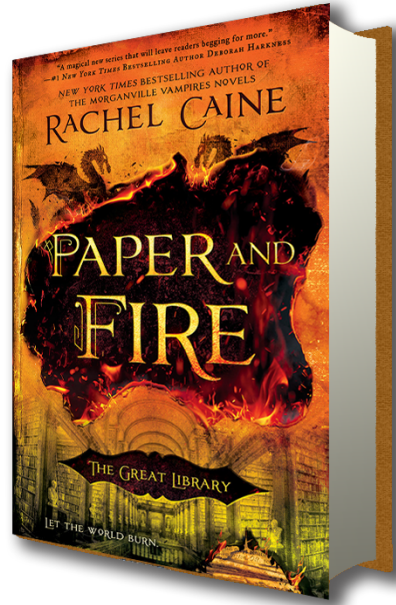


A Teacher's Guide for



PAPER AND FIRE



Volume 2 of the Great Library

by

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Rachel drew on many sources of inspiration for this series, 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 far-reaching ideas and issues that make it ideal for class discussions.

You can download READ posters and the book trailer 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 4), and an adult gay couple.

There are, however, scenes of war, violence, and death at the hands of both humans and automatons (specifically, lions). Thomas has been subjected to psychological (and possible physical) abuse while in prison. There are many intense scenes of danger.

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 Pharaonic 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. He’s been rejected by the Library as a Scholar, and instead has joined the High Garda army ... but he’s willing to throw it all away (including any support from his family, if necessary) to rescue a friend. Does this make him selfless, or selfish?
- **Thomas** has been imprisoned secretly, while the others think he’s dead. He’s been told that *they* are dead. How does this change him from the vulnerable, innocent young man we met in the last book?
- **Morgan** appears to have had all her choices taken away, but instead, she uses her skills to disrupt the system, communicate with Jess, and ultimately escape the Iron Tower to fight with them to save Thomas. What is her core characteristic?
- **Dario** continues to be competitive with Jess, even though he’s achieved his life’s dream, to be a Scholar. How does this result in conflict and danger?
- **Khalila** forfeits her lifetime appointment as a Scholar to go with her friends on a quest to save Thomas, and demonstrates physical courage many times. Did students expect that? Why not, if not?
- **Glain** is the most straightforward character of all of them, driven by honor and loyalty. Are students surprised by her at all? If so, why?
- **Scholar Wolfe** reveals in this book that he has old trauma from his stay in the secret prison. Does this make him more of a hero? More sympathetic?
- **Captain Santi** makes the decision to break from the Library, which means his own soldiers turning against him. Does this make him a traitor, or a hero? Or both?

Sample class exercise



Choose a character from *Paper and Fire* and write a short scene from his or her point of view about things going on around them.

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), *Captain Santi* from Italy ... there is a wide variety of diverse backgrounds, cultures and personalities included, and will be more in the next book, *Ash and Quill*.

We see outside of Alexandria into Rome, which retains its ancient flavor while becoming a bustling metropolis. We also revisit a London in the process of being conquered by the Welsh. And, at the last, we are swept off to Philadelphia—but not a Philadelphia we will recognize—for the next book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and #1 internationally bestselling author of fifty novels, including the popular Morganville Vampire young adult series, and the critically acclaimed novel *Prince of Shadows*, as well as the smash hit Great Library series (*Ink and Bone*, *Paper and Fire*).

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.

www.rachelcaine.com

Please visit the Great Library series website for bonus materials, free stories and more:
www.enterthelibrary.com