



2018

Ink and Bone

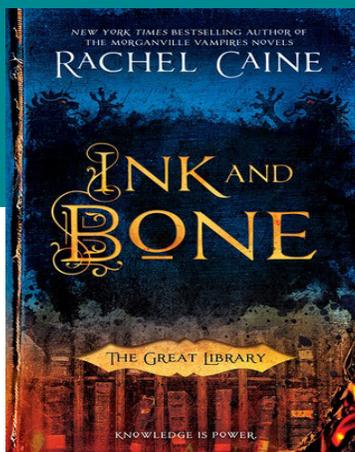
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Book Review

Ink and Bone

Author

Rachel Caine

Illustrator

Reviewer

Emma Patton

Rating

Excellent

Level

Young Adult

Pages

384

Year

2016

Publisher

New American Library

ISBN

9780451473134

Jess Brightwell lives in a world where the invention of the printing press never happened. Instead, all physical books became property of the Great Library, and citizens can only read scans of those books. Jess' father is a smuggler of illegal, physical books, and he needs a contact within the most powerful organization in the world: the Great Library. He decides that Jess is his best chance to infiltrate the mysterious organization. Soon, Jess finds himself in Alexandria, Egypt with teenagers from around the world, enrolled in a rigorous training program to become a Library Scholar. Jess quickly realizes that he truly wants to be one of six selected at the end, and not just to feed his father information from the inside. At first, he assumes that he is the only student with secrets. But, by the end of the book, he realizes that the other students harbor dark secrets of their own, and even the Library itself may be less virtuous than it claims to be.

Ink and Bone explores an original concept that is especially relevant in today's society. Reading is becoming more technologized with the rise of eReaders and audiobooks, and there are definite parallels between the world of Ink and Bone and our own society. For example, the characters have to grapple with the question of who information really belongs to and whether citizens should have free access to it. Furthermore, this story celebrates the power of friendship. Though there are a few romantic relationships in the book, there are also strong boy-girl friendships without any romantic interest. The characters do enter a war zone, so the book contains graphic descriptions of violence and starvation. Also, the ending makes it clear that the book is the first in a series. If the reader only finishes this book and does not continue the series, some key plot questions will be left unanswered. Though the book does present some complex and subtly political ideas, a reader could thoroughly enjoy the book without delving into those issues, as the plot is compelling and fast-paced.

*Contains moderate violence