

“Ink and Bone”

Julie Buxbaum

Reviewed by: Laura Zhang, 13

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In a world where knowledge is the most dangerous and powerful force, Jess Brightwell must overcome numerous obstacles to protect himself, his friends, his family, and the morals of the Great Alexandria Library. The Great Library shines like a beacon of hope, encompassing all the knowledge in the world for humans to freely study and learn from. The use of original books is highly classified with the invention of mirroring, which makes the handling of knowledge extremely dangerous. However, like any illegal product, a large black market has developed for these prized books, with Jess Brightwell being right in the middle of it.

Born into a family business of book smuggling, Jess has spent his childhood running across London delivering original books to the rich. Although he has no love for the business, Jess has found a profound love with books themselves and learning. When he gets accepted to be a postulate for the Great Library, Jess is elated to finally be in his place. However, he soon learns that the Great Library isn't at all what it seems to be. Inside it lies ground-shattering secrets that if came to light, could destroy the whole foundation of the Library itself. When his friend and fellow Postulate Thomas invents a device like the printing press, his plans are discovered and he is taken away for questioning and ultimately, execution. The Library kills Thomas because this would allow anyone to spread their own ideas and would undermine the Library's careful control. This is the breaking point for Jess as he realizes just how many talented inventors and thinkers will be silenced if the Library continues its tight rule.

The best thing about this book was how different and unique the plot was. This was the first time I read a book with knowledge being so highly valued; even more than human life. It was eye-opening to see a different version of the world we live in and how drastically different other peoples' morals would be compared to ours. Another thing I found intriguing was how dynamic Jess was. He comes from a questionable background and has so many sides to him that make him such an interesting protagonist. I also really liked how the author incorporated a bunch of ideas I've never heard of before, such as a Codex, daughter Libraries, and Obscurists. There was just a hint of romance in the novel which added some nice contrast to all the violence that took place in the book. It didn't overpower the main plot of the book though, which I found extremely refreshing. The author also included manuscripts outside of the main story to help explain the history of the Great Library as well as messages between characters in the novel. All the elements the author included to add dimension to the story really worked well together and crafted a daring and vivid tale.

I enjoyed this story immensely and think it would be perfect for any reader older than twelve years old. There is a significant amount of violence, with some gruesome deaths and gory battles, but overall isn't too bad for more mature readers. This book would be a great gift for avid readers as it is one of those novels you just must read over and over again. For readers looking for a thrilling adventure in an alternate world, *Ink and Bone* is the book for you.

Recommended Titles:

Paper and Fire by Rachel Caine
Ash and Quill by Rachel Caine
Divergent by Veronica Roth
The Maze Runner by James Dashner