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Paper And Fire (The Great Library)



Synopsis

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER In *Ink and Bone*, author Rachel Caine introduced a world where knowledge is power, and power corrupts absolutely. Now, she continues the story of those who dare to defy the Great Library—and rewrite history... With an iron fist, The Great Library controls the knowledge of the world, ruthlessly stamping out all rebellion, forbidding the personal ownership of books in the name of the greater good. Jess Brightwell has survived his introduction to the sinister, seductive world of the Library, but serving in its army is nothing like he envisioned. His life and the lives of those he cares for have been altered forever. His best friend is lost, and Morgan, the girl he loves, is locked away in the Iron Tower and doomed to a life apart. Embarking on a mission to save one of their own, Jess and his band of allies make one wrong move and suddenly find themselves hunted by the Library's deadly automata and forced to flee Alexandria, all the way to London. But Jess's home isn't safe anymore. The Welsh army is coming, London is burning, and soon, Jess must choose between his friends, his family, or the Library willing to sacrifice anything and anyone in the search for ultimate control...From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Actual Rating: 3.5 out of 5 If Rachel Caine's *Ink and Bone* introduced a steampunk future where the Great Library of Alexandria controlled the global distribution of published material, then *Paper and Fire* yanks out the first bricks for the Library's fall. Jess and his former co-Postulants are now in their new assignments, guarding the Library's goods as scholars-in-training or (in Jess's case) in the army. When Jess discovers that a captured friend he'd feared dead may be alive, he rallies his allies and launches a rescue mission. But tracking down a Library prisoner is no easy task. And as Jess's band makes plans that could break the institution's grip on knowledge-sharing, they quickly realize they're running out of places to hide - and out of time. *Paper and Fire* featured plenty of what I had enjoyed about *Ink and Bone*. Character diversity, international locales, the dangers in serving or rebelling against the Library - it made a fascinating premise before, and it works again here. Caine expands on her world-building, taking readers inside the Library militia, prison system, and the Black Archives, where the most forbidden books are stored in secret. Also, Christopher Wolfe is an intriguing twist on the mentor archetype. Mysterious and at times caustic, he's vocal about his views on the Library's abuse of power and his support for his students' ideas - because despite his tormented past, he remains a revolutionary at heart. At the same time, *Paper and Fire* suffers from the same issues I had with its predecessor, and then some. The chapters are quite long, and Jess and Morgan's romance still makes no sense to me. And the climax - gosh, was it chaotic and confusing. Plus, the official blurb pretty much spoils how it ends, so nothing about it surprised me. So, yes, I'm disappointed that *Paper and Fire* unraveled a bit after a strong start. But it was still a good read, and I'm curious to see how it all ends with *Ash and Quill* next summer.

This happens to be a cumulative review of the first 3 books in the series. An alternate reality where the Library of Alexandria survives?!?! It's a dream-sign me up!!!! Actually, that's exactly what I did. I originally put in a request through Netgalley to view *Ash and Quill*. I quickly learned that *Ash and Quill* was book number 3 in *The Great Library* series and I would need to be (better) acquainted with the characters AND story line. Luck must have been on my side because I also had the opportunity to review *Ink and Bone* (book number 1 in *The Great Library* series). I was destined to read this series- so I took it upon myself to purchase book 2 to bring them all together. What exactly does this world look like with preserved knowledge? Pretty similar to today, just a larger emphasis on knowledge running the

world. Even in this bookworm's world, someone is always hungry for power. People are still put into groups, and it seems each group has its own caste system. And yet again as we spiral down to the underprivileged, groups and caste systems dissipate and it's an absolute free-for-all for survival. The Library, which is essentially the government, primarily focus on: "Knowledge is Power" However, knowledge is not meant for all. It's true that the highest positions within the Library are privy to every and all information. It is up to the positions of power to filter out (or in) what they deem necessary. If it's an original work that could bring about rebellion, the inventor is labeled a heretic, his/her original text is sent to the black archives, and the library is saved. If it's an original work that benefits the present and future, the Obscurists (think of them ALMOST as magicians) will copy the original work into blanks. Blanks could be a hit or miss. Information may be omitted or added to depending on the idea the Library is trying to convey. "Knowledge is Power" It is in that simple motto where groups start to break down. Smugglers: wish to preserve original books: it is their trade: money to be made. Burners: political statement: will burn any book to break the Library's hold on originals. Obscurists: the group in the library that "mirror" original books. Scholars: protect any and all books, no matter the costs. Readers are introduced to Jess Brightwell- who at the time is 10 years old. The Brightwell family runs a book smuggling operation- not just any books; originals. Just because you are a young member of the family, does not mean you are exempt from smuggling duty. Jess knows for certain he does not want a future career within the family business. One prominent memory for Jess was a run where a customer dubbed an "ink licker" ate an original book, for: "there's no act of possession more complete than consuming the unique." Jess may have been born into a book smuggling business, but, "[he] was born with ink in his blood." making him consciously aware that he would do anything to protect a book. Tired of paying for a son who refuses to take over the family business, Callum (ever the opportunist) decides to use his son for bigger and better things; placement in the Library, and a chance to make return investment on years of tutelage. Jess passes the placement test, sending him to Alexandria with a train full of hopeful postulants. Whilst on the train ride, we learn of the other characters who will frequent the books: Thomas: from Germany. Has a large build, and hopes to get placed in engineering. Khalila: from the Middle East, very pretty, the first person to EVER score 100% on the exams. Glain: Welsh, solid dislike for Jess since he's English and

they're in a war; very plain, brash. Dario: spanish, arrogant- used to getting what he wants. Morgan: late arrival; on the run from the library, safest place is right under their nose for the time being. Scholar Wolfe: intimidating; black robes, shoulder length hair, not the average teacher. Forced into teaching as a punishment (although the reader will not know that until much later). Santi: member of the High Garda, assigned to Scholar Wolfe. So for the most part this is our rag tag team for the series. Naturally there are other minor characters introduced throughout, but these here are your main focus. Scholar Wolfe is expected to whittle down his applicants to 6; through lessons, practical life lessons, hand on tasks, as well as common sense training. The Library deems them fit to go on a mission to Oxford for the retrieval of Originals at the sister library. The problem? They are walking right in the middle of the English/Welsh war. Even in this alternate reality, history repeats itself. Usually, repeated ideas are the most dangerous, and most likely to draw (unwanted) attention from the Library; which is exactly what Thomas has done. Thomas has invented a machine that renders Obscurists obsolete, as well as challenging the powerful hold the library has on its information flow. What innocent Thomas is unaware of, is his invention has actually been "invented" before. . .centuries, decades, and years prior. Each invention discovered, each inventor silenced and/or tortured, and all evidence of either of the two ever existing wiped clean. Luckily, our crew of miscreants has someone seasoned in the Library's conduct; Scholar Wolfe. It is through Wolfe's intuition that leads Jess to realize Thomas has been taken. It is through a hypnotic trance that Wolfe is able to tell the group where Thomas may be kept, and it is Wolfe's ability to help everyone steer clear from the Library as much as possible. Throughout the 3 books

Battle
Rescue
Rest
Repeat. Not only do we have human obstacles our group must face, but also automated (specifically engineered for the Library) and chemical. Unbeknownst to me, I originally thought this was only a 3 book series. Upon looking up information on Goodreads, I learned that it is actually a 5 book series (YAY!!!!). In my personal opinion, this series (all around) is an amazing read. I typically love alternate realities, but lately it seems that they have been overdone. By breathing life back into the Library of Alexandria, it gives a historical spin on what "could have" been our future. The story line flows- for the most part, I did not hit a boring spot that I had to put down and take a break. Caine has developed this world beautifully- everything is well thought out, described, and intoxicating. The depth of the characters makes you easily fall in love with them- and I HIGHLY suggest at starting with book 1, do not skip

books. It is also my opinion that this series be developed either into a video game (yes you read that right!) or a TV series. Yes, I loved it that much, and I really think it would do well! So, here at Quitterstrip, I cannot wait to continue with this series. All 3 books get a solid 4 star rating

This is the second book in The Great Library Series, and so there are inevitable spoilers for the first book below.

Now that the requisite spoiler alert is out of the way, let's get down to business. Jess finds himself as a lowly grunt in the Library's Garda. Forced to abandon his dream of becoming a Library scholar, and very aware of the dark underside of the Library's rule, Jess uses his smuggling past to try to find more information of the imprisoned Morgan and murdered Thomas. When Jess uncovers a bombshell: Thomas is alive and held captive by the Library at a secret prison, Jess must reunite his old friends (and frenemies) in a desperate rescue attempt. Little does he know that this act of rebellion will spark a violent chain of events which could threaten the world as he knows it. Paper and Fire is a good sequel to Ink and Bone. The characters seem to have grown up quite a bit since we first met them, and the danger from the Library and its minions seems more devious and omnipresent than ever. We are given more information about the inner workings of the Library, and learn more about its past. I always enjoy the second book in the series, we've gotten over the awkward introduction phase and the characters can really stretch their legs. Caine lets Jess and his friends grow, but avoids the simple and comfortable and keeps things on a more realistic and complicated plane. If you enjoyed the first book in the series, you will almost certainly like this one. If you haven't read Ink and Bone yet, then you really shouldn't be reading this review, should you? But either way, fans of the Harry Potter or Hunger Games series will enjoy these books, which manage to be both about teenagers and very adult at the same time.

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