

B BOOK CLUB PICK!

Inkbound: Meticulous Jones and the Skull Tattoo

KEY FACTS

Title: Inkbound: Meticulous Jones
and the Skull Tattoo

Author: Philippa Leathley

Illustrator: cover art by Brie
Schmida

Reading Age/Interest Age: 9+



Philippa Leathley © Derry Books

Author Bio: Philippa Leathley grew up in East Yorkshire, spending summers near London with her eccentric grandparents and writing feverishly as soon as she could hold a pen. When not writing, she enjoys learning new languages, studying anything from historical fashion to shipwrecks, and is passionate about protecting the environment. Philippa currently lives just outside Hull with her family and three rescue cats. Inkbound is her debut novel and its sequel, Inkbound: Meticulous Jones and the Shadow Compass, publishes in January 2026.

Teaser: What if your fate was to be a murderer? Metty Jones is about to find out. On her tenth birthday, she embarks on a journey to discover her destiny, only to find herself entangled with the Black Moths, a group determined to change the rules of magic forever. With her father missing and her own fate looming over her, can Metty find the courage to rewrite her story?

Setting and background of the book: Set in the fantastical flying city of New London, where magic and adventure intertwine, *Inkbound* takes readers on a thrilling journey through a world where fates are tattooed on children's hands at the age of ten. Metty's adventure begins in the shadows of Darkwell and spirals into the heart of a city that floats above the clouds, powered by magical ink and explores themes of family, bravery and the quest for identity.

Key characters to introduce:

- Meticulous 'Metty' Jones: A brave and determined girl who discovers on her tenth birthday that her fate is to become a murderer. She is eager to find her father and rewrite her destiny.
- Captain Moral Jones: Metty's father, a former navy captain with a mysterious past. His disappearance sets off Metty's quest.
- Aunt Magnificent: Metty's enigmatic Aunt Mag harbours secrets of her own and is very protective of her family.
- Sundar: Aunt Mag's ward and Metty's friend who joins her adventure, hiding his own secrets.
- Faith O'Connell: Metty's new friend, Faith is ill-fated as a thief but possesses quick wits, a kind heart and a strong sense of loyalty to her friends
- Madame Fayola LeBeau: A renowned prophetess who holds the key to Metty's fate and the mystery surrounding her family's history.

Book Club Questions:

1. What fate or magical tattoo would you want and why?
2. What do you think Metty's fate means for her character development throughout the story?
3. How do the themes of magic and fate intertwine in the narrative?
4. Discuss the significance of family and identity in Metty's journey. How do her relationships influence her decisions?
5. What role does bravery play in the story? Can you identify moments where Metty shows courage?
6. How does the setting of New London enhance the magical elements of the story?
7. What do you think of the Black Moths and their motives? Are they purely villains, or do they have a point?
8. If you could ask the author one question about the story or its characters, what would it be?

New vocabulary:

Fate - the development of events beyond a person's control, regarded as determined by a supernatural power (noun)

Ruddiness - a healthy reddish colour to the skin on someone's face (noun) **Enchantment** - a magical spell or charm (noun)

Squint - to look at something with your eyes partly closed (verb) **Exorbitant** - excessive, much greater than it should be (adjective)

Bulbous - round and fat (adjective)

Sashay - to walk in a graceful but rather noticeable way (verb)

Unfurl - to open something rolled or folded so that it spreads out (verb) **Excruciating** - extremely painful (adjective)

Gargoyle - a decorative stone carving on old buildings. It is usually shaped like the head of a strange and ugly creature, and water drains through it from the roof of the building (noun)

Ravenous - extremely hungry (adjective)

Preposterous - ridiculous, absurd or unreasonable, foolish (adjective) **Disenchant** - to remove the magical qualities from something (verb)

Best extract to read aloud:

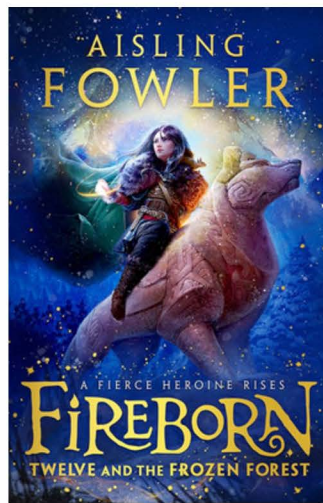
Chapter 1: Darkwell & Chapter 4: Metty's Fate

These chapters introduces Metty and the magical world of INKBOUND as she receives her fate tattoo, setting the tone for the adventure ahead.

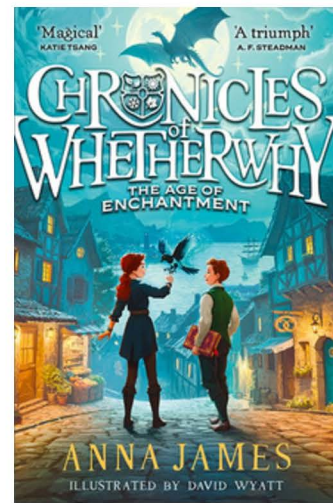
If you liked this...



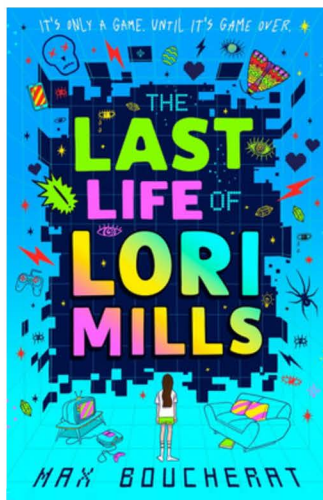
The Spick and the Span
By Pil Van Martin
9780008724788



Fireborn: Twelve and the Frozen Forest
By Aisling Fowler
9780008394189



The Chronicles of Whetherwhy:
The Age of Enchantment
By Anna James
9780008611583



The Last Life of Lori Mills
By Max Boucherat
9780008666484



Starminster
By Megan Hopkins
9780008626891



Cosima Unfortunate Steals a Star
By Laura Noakes
9780008579050

Inkbound - Classroom Activities

1. Character Exploration:

Create a character map for Metty, detailing her traits, motivations and relationships with other characters in the story.

What makes Metty different? What is important to her and how does it drive her actions in the story? How do the students relate to her?

2. Fate and Identity Discussion:

Hold a class discussion on the concept of fate. What do students think about the idea of fate being predetermined? How does it relate to Metty's journey and does their view of fate change from the start to the end of the story?

3. Dictionary Activity:

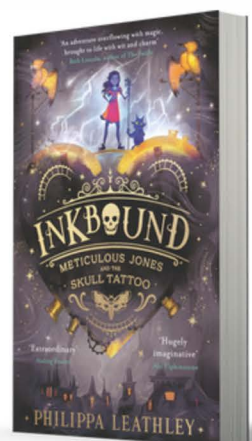
Discuss some of the examples given in the Dictionary of Fates and come up with five new examples to add with your own ideas for different tattoo symbols and how they might be interpreted as fates.

4. Art Activity:

Design your own fate tattoo. What symbols would represent your personality and aspirations? Create a visual representation of it.

5. Mapping New London:

Draw a map of New London based on descriptions from the book. Label important locations such as Winter's Knock, Sinner's Oak and the Naked Cathedral.



6. Group Role-Play:

In small groups, act out the scene from the book where Metty confronts the prophetess Madame LeBeau. Discuss how different interpretations change the scene's meaning.

7. Research Project:

Investigate the significance of tattoos in different cultures. Present findings to the class, comparing them to the concept of fate tattoos in *INKBOUND*.

8. Vocabulary Challenge:

Create a vocabulary quiz using the new words introduced in the book. Include definitions, sentences and illustrations.

9. Discussion on Choices:

Discuss the choices characters make throughout the story. How do these choices reflect their personalities and fates?



Inkbound - Writing Ideas

1. Write a book review of INKBOUND, discussing what you liked, what made you think and who you would recommend it to.
2. Re-imagine a pivotal scene from Metty's perspective. How does she feel about her fate?
3. Write a letter from Metty to her father explaining her feelings about being ill-fated.
4. Create a diary entry from Sundar's perspective after he learns about Metty's fate. How does he feel about it?
5. Design a new character who could help Metty on her journey. What would their fate be?
6. Imagine receiving your own fate tattoo. What would it be and why? Write a short story about receiving your tattoo, or a day in your life with that fate.

