



# The Maze of Bones

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## **The Maze of Bones** Rick Riordan

Minutes before she died Grace Cahill changed her will, leaving her descendants an impossible decision: You have a choice - one million dollars or a clue.

Grace is the last matriarch of the Cahills, the world's most powerful family. Everyone from Napoleon to Houdini is related to the Cahills, yet the source of the family power is lost. 39 clues hidden around the world will reveal the family's secret, but no one has been able to assemble them. Now the clues race is on, and young Amy and Dan must decide what's important: hunting clues or uncovering what REALLY happened to their parents.

## **The Maze of Bones Details**

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Author : Rick Riordan

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## From Reader Review The Maze of Bones for online ebook

### Karin says

Grace Cahill changed her will moments before she died. For Amy and Dan, the loss of Grace, their grandmother, is a terribly sad event. They will miss their weekends spending time at the family mansion hearing stories of Grace's past adventures and exploring the many rooms.

After the funeral, certain family members are invited to the reading of the will. Amy and Dan are included. Everyone is anxious to find out what their inheritance will be. No one expects what happens. Everyone is given a choice - take one million dollars or give it up for a clue. A clue that will lead to a deep family secret. The one who follows all 39 clues and uncovers the secret will become the most powerful Cahill in the world.

Amy and Dan are 1 of 7 teams competing for the clues. The other teams may be made up of family members, but that doesn't mean they aren't dangerous. Everyone wants Amy and Dan out of the way. They think they have inside information since they were Grace's favorites. The problem is, Amy and Dan know even less than everyone else. They were never told how much influence the Cahill family has had in the world throughout the years. Because of their lack of knowledge and kind natures, Amy and Dan's lives are put in danger several times as they fly to Paris and search for Clue #2.

39 CLUES: THE MAZE OF BONES is a fast-paced, adventure-filled, mystery. Each book comes with a set of clue cards. You are encouraged to visit the website, create an account, and begin solving the puzzle. You can win over \$100,000 in prizes. The second book in the series is called ONE FALSE NOTE and is written by Gordon Korman and will be released December 2, 2008. Book Three is THE SWORD THIEF by Peter Lerangis and will be available on March 3, 2009. Seven more books are planned and the series will be completed in 2010. OH - and if this the clue cards and interactive website aren't enough, the books have already been optioned for a movie. Word has it, Steven Spielberg is going to direct. WOW!

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### Jim says

Book one of The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones, by author Rick Riordan, is an exciting young readers adventure book that will leave you sitting on the edge of your seat; your toilet seat. That's because the only place worth reading this book is while you've got a few minutes of privacy on the porcelain throne.

Amy and Dan Cahill are typical squabbling siblings who believe one another are the most annoying brother and sister in the world. However, that all changes when they get summoned to their mega-rich grandma Grace's funeral, along with the rest of the extended Cahill family. After the funeral they are all presented with a strange challenge from Grace given through her lawyer. They are offered the choice of either one million dollars or a clue to a riddle that the fate of the world depends on the Cahills solving. Amy and Dan reluctantly accept the clue, forgoing the million dollars, along with most of their relatives. This clue leads them on a wild adventure to many mysterious locations teeming with danger in an attempt to beat their rival relatives to the finish line.

And this book had me thinking about its finish line the whole time. Riordan and Scholastic, the publishers, have done an amazing job at pumping out a mass-marketed piece of crap. These are some of the shallowest,

most meaningless characters I have ever read about. This book is nothing more than a horrifically written kids' version of the National Treasure films. The only credit I'll give this book at all is that it seems my students, for the most part, really liked it. It is certainly written for a kid's mentality. However, I've read many young readers books that are still extremely well written and appealing to adults as well as kids, so this simply doesn't pass the grade.

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## Joe says

In Which Rick Riordan Attempts *Another* Harry Potteresque Cash Cow.

Good God, is this man the most shameless author currently working in children's literature? First the highly derivative (but at least marginally entertaining) Percy Jackson, and now this - a hokey *National Treasure* meets *Amazing Race* mash-up? 10 books, each written by a different author, that follow a sibling duo as they globetrot, attempting to piece together the titular clues in order to reveal a single earth-shattering prize that will restore the power of their family name? Come. On. I'm all on board for books that tantalize reluctant readers, but this is just one more poorly executed, paper-thin Money Train that sacrifices excellent ideas and promises of excitement for soulless character building and trite, episodic adventures.

For the sake of arguing about plausibility, I'm going to suspend all disbelief at the patently absurd plot, and pay attention to the most egregious errors - errors that cannot be cast aside simply because the book will appeal to many children. Reluctant readers aren't stupid. Aliteracy isn't the product of stupidity. But this book treats its readers like they're stupid and *that's* what I resent more than anything else.

The one dimensionality of Dan and Amy is insulting enough; they should have more development than Good At Math And Typical Male Impulsiveness (Dan!) and Loves To Read And Is Scared But Determined (Amy!). What's even more repulsive is the 'development' of the secondary and tertiary characters. Nellie, the au pair, is a lazy, iPod-attached twenty-something who suddenly starts speaking Spanish. Is it an attempt for Riordan to show off some of his linguistic know-how? Is it an attempt to create a multicultural character? Who knows? Nellie argues on the phone with her father in Spanish and then *it's never brought up again*, except for her to admit quite casually that she also speaks French, which comes in handy **when the kids go to France**. In Nellie's words: "Duh. My mom taught French. She was, like, French."

Perhaps the most insulting endeavor to add a 'multicultural' spin to the book is the character Jonah Wizard. A swaggering reality television star, Wizard is a crass attempt to create a thuggish, streetwise black character who plays up his "cultural identity" to the cameras, but is actually much less "black" around people he knows. Witness as he says, in front of the paparazzi, "Yo! My peeps!" and then, inside a car without the flashing bulbs of the press, speaks without any vernacular whatsoever. Even when the reader is first introduced to Jonah Wizard, we are told that he tries to act like a 'street punk', which makes his patois even more caricature-like. "Hand me the clue, homes!" he demands to the executor of the will. **ARE YOU KIDDING ME?** And then we learn his reality show is called *Who Wants To Be A Gangsta?*, that he has an album called *Gangsta Life*, and that France has just released his pop-up children's book called... you guessed it... *Le... Li'l Gangsta Livre Instantané*. Jonah Wizard is a disgusting stock character who is one freshly-rolled joint shy of being completely racist. The fact that author is a middle-aged white man makes the character even more insulting and less authentic. Riordan should be ashamed of himself.

Want more bad character development? Meet the pumped-up Holt family (who wear matching athletic gear and whose patriarch shouts ridiculous things like, "Company, FALL IN!"), the Kardashian-like Kabras who

jetset around and smuggle weapons onto planes, and Irina, the former KGB spy who hides poison-tipped needles in her fingernails. It's like Riordan sat down and pulled together every single unlikely but cliched character possible and thought, "But how can I cram them all into one book?" It would be a satire if it weren't written so damned seriously, which is a problem in itself.

The writing. Oy. The plot-driven storyline, filled with the typical "I-don't-know-how-to-write-a-mystery-so-I'm-just-going-to-have-the-characters-make-silly-guesses", is so ludicrously bad that it feels like it's been cobbled together by eight different ghost writers and smooshed into perfectly contained danger-filled episodes. During a house fire, Amy and Dan are crawling on their hands and knees below the smoke line (yay, fire safety!) when Amy notices ornate dragon carvings on the wall that all seem to be leading to an exit. They are. A secret passageway that leads the duo to safety. Seriously? Even Dan Brown, Grand Poobah Of Bad Action-Oriented Writing, would call shenanigans on that. Then there's the bombing of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia that decimates one team but leaves Dan and Amy curiously unscathed, even though they were inches from the detonation. Add to this that book is insanely predictable. Every time Amy and David find a clue or a scrap of information that will lead to a clue, one of the other teams has sneaked up on them and either hears the clue or steals it. Then there's a fight, both physical and vocal. That plot contrivance doesn't get old at *all*.

Riordan's final failure is his inability to capture a solid tone, which gives the book a truly obnoxious inconsistency. Panicky episodes are carelessly turned around with unbelievable sibling banter that paints Dan as a goofball and Amy as a shrill harpy (after being told that sedan chairs are not meant to be occupied by his scrawny 90-pound frame, Dan proclaims, "RESOLUTION: Start eating more ice cream.") Riordan must think that reluctant readers like corny humor because his misunderstanding of what young adults believe is funny is peppered throughout the book: a dog that rolls over and plays dead when commanded to pay attention, a hotel in Paris whose name translates into House of Roaches, and Dan's incessant ADD-laden distractions and quips will only provoke eye-rolling from much of its intended audience. It all smacks of Trying Too Hard.

Also Trying Too Hard? The heavy-handed Harry Potter copping. First in Percy (where the similarities were so obvious that even the names had the identical number of letters - Harry/Percy, Ronald/Grover, Annabeth/Hermione), now in *The 39 Clues*, where we read about a House divided into quarters, with each house representing a particular archetype. The houses are governed by a dying-then-dead figurehead whose encyclopedic knowledge is cherished by some and scorned by others. Additionally, the protagonists are reluctant heroes who realize their fate is to protect the world from falling in the hands of ne'er-do-wellers.

The fact that Gordon Korman, another author of dubious talents, writes the follow-up guarantees that I will definitely not continue with the series.

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## Daniel says

Još jedna knjiga koja mi je žao što nisam ?itao kada sam bio mnogo mla?i. Napušteni brat i sestra sami protiv sveta u borbi za kontrolom nad istim. Pa skoro sami, par saveznika imaju (od kojih je jedna ?angrizava ma?ka :)).

?ist stil pisanja, sa relativno jednostavnim likovima koji su skoro ?isto crno/beli mada imaju malo zatamnjenja ?isto da ne budu dosadni, interesantna pri?ica sa fokusom na pronalaženje i re?avanje zagonetki i tempo koji kre?e odma od po?etka i ne popušta do kraja.

Preporuka za svakoga, narožito ako ste 15 ili manje :D

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### **Cindy Dobrez says**

I've signed up for an online account, and am told I am a Lucien. Let the hunt begin. One of my 7th grade teachers read aloud the first chapter to her 130 students on Friday. Guess how many requests I have for the book now?

I finished the book last night, have entered one set of cards and unlocked my first clue, and have mastered the first five tasks the online game has presented to me. I wanted to be able to answer student questions about how to play or what was required. I plan to raffle off (for free) the other card sets to interested students and circ the books without cards. I'm planning to display the one card that can be reused by every player in a plastic stand near the computers with the website listed and I'll see what the interest is.

Riordan did a good job of kicking off the series, although I will agree with some other comments that it certainly is predictable in many places (our heroes do all the work to unearth a clue and the rival teams show up just at the right moment to steal it from them...) but I loved the history included. For instance, in their Ben Franklin research the boy learns that Ben wrote a whole essay about the importance of farting (true) and the magic number boxes that Franklin did for fun are part of the game (the kids say, "you mean Franklin invented sudoku?") They're leaving Paris now and are off to Vienna in the next book to follow the clues that lead to Mozart. I'll be there with them.

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### **Wendi Lee says**

My third grader's reading tests came back: he's reading at a fifth grade level. Yay! This means we need to find some good middle grade books! *The Maze of Bones* is a great start. Amy and Dan are orphans, and their grandmother has also recently passed away. When the whole extended family gathers for the reading of the will, however, they're given an ultimatum: take a million dollar payout, or embark on a dangerous adventure that may change the world.

There's enough adventure here to keep my stepson interested, and lots of interesting historical facts. I know that the books are written by different authors, so I'm wondering how the rest of the series will go, but *The Maze of Bones* is a compelling first book.

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### **Monica Edinger says**

Well, I've read MOST of it. The ARC is missing the ending. Scholastic did that on purpose because it is all part of the game, the cards, etc.

What I read was fun, but not amazing. It appears to be an Amazing Race sort of book --- a bunch of different groups all chasing around the world for clues that will solve a big mystery. This first one sets things up. Two kids (younger boy is a gaming/computer guy while the older sister is a shy bookworm) and their au pair (just happens to know the right languages and is easily convinced to do this whole thing, dangerous as it clearly is). Then there are all the other competitors --- nasty families, nasty siblings, nasty single uncles and cousins,

and an annoying celebrity from all over the place. The book is about the two main characters looking for the first clue. It is fun, quick, undemanding reading. Rick Riordan evidently has designed the whole series and wrote this book. The rest will be written by others (the next by Gordon Korman). It will be interesting to see the ending of this one and how the series plays out with the different writers involved.

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### **Sanchez.Bryan says**

I really don't plan on ever reading this series again I'm just not a big fan anymore

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### **Exina says**

Adventurous and exciting treasure hunt with great humor. The information about Benjamin Franklin and the scenes in Paris were interesting. A really intriguing start of the series.

*A few minutes later they stood in a muddy graveyard, looking up at the dark silhouette of St-Pierre de Montmartre. The church was made of gray stone slabs. A single square bell tower rose from the left-hand side, topped with a lightning rod and cross. Dan thought the building looked angry and resentful. If churches could frown, this one would.*

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### **Kian.R says**

Wow, I have been wanting to read this book since fifth grade, but I just never got to it. I always was reading 'I survived' back then.

The book starts off boring then gets better and better. It is about two kids and when they go to their grandma's funeral. They get invited to a 'scavenger hunt' to be the most powerful Cahill ever. Benjamin Franklin was a Cahill, and the two kids have to go around finding his clues to the thirty-nine clues. It is actually a very good story, authors take turns writing the book too. I highly recommend this.

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### **Rebecca says**

Reads like Luke W. was the ghostwriter. (Which means it's really good!) Starts with a bang!

I read this one pretty quickly, as it is definitely a page-turner. My expectations may have been excessively high, due to the fact that I like Rick Riordan and I've heard so much buzz about Scholastic's hope to keep themselves big in the post-Harry Potter market with this new "multi-platform" series (books, trading cards,

internet game, and cash prizes). I'm giving this four stars and not five for the facts that 1) all these efforts seem a bit forced, 2) they require purchase and/or computer access, 3) Rick Riordan still has a knack for capturing the middle-school mindset and dialogue, but this book's frequent mention of iPods and celebrities like Kanye West are going to date it, and 5) dang the cliffhanger ending, because in spite of it all, I want to know what happens!!!

What I really like about this book, as with the Percy Jackson books, is the seamless integration of a fair amount of historical fact and nonfiction. The main characters, Amy and Dan, spend a lot of time in libraries (much to Dan's dismay). This book does not have an alternate world like Hogwarts, and while there are sometimes \*too\* many ties to the world of 2008 (again with the iPods), Riordan takes full advantage of reality to draw upon history and science.

I'd call this a little like "The Da Vinci Code" for kids. Incidentally, I did join online ([www.the39clues.com](http://www.the39clues.com)) and found that I am a member of the Lucien branch (I have a bad feeling this is the equivalent of being sorted into the Slytherin House, but we shall see). I also got a confirmation that said "check your email and if you don't see one, check your junk folder. You may have been sabotaged." Ha!

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### **Angel Koychev says**

an easy read, very nice, refreshing and relaxing! certainly not a difficult book but nonetheless enjoyable. I am already starting the second one.

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### **Jessica Olson says**

It was a good read.

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### **Jessie says**

If you liked *The Westing Game*, *Chasing Vermeer* and enjoyed the movie *National Treasure*, this book will at the very least not put you to sleep. But if you're looking for a piece of kids' fiction that will knock your socks off the way Harry Potter knocked most of our socks off, this ain't it.

This is the first in a series that publishing house Scholastic hopes will buoy its financial success along after the conclusion of the Harry Potter series. If only this book were nearly as complex, well-written, imaginative or captivating.

It was ok...and it was written by Rick Riordan (of the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series which I love). My major issue with this book is that it is so blatantly derivative of many other works of fiction while at the same time being at times almost mind-numbingly dull.

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## **Noella says**

Grace Cahill has left behind her will and she has given those on the list a choice to take one million dollars or to be given a clue. That clue is one of 39 keys to unlocking the Cahills' greatest secret. Her grandson and granddaughter Dan and Amy are surprised their grandma gave them no warning given how close they were to her. Pitted against distant relatives, the siblings embark on the clue hunt which proves to be dangerous as they are seen as the prime contenders to solving the whole mystery and their relatives will do anything to be the ones at the very end.

The book was fast paced and exciting from the start. The characters were quirky and fun. Even the 'baddies' were kind of likeable even though they did some pretty crazy things to harm Dan and Amy. The whole plot line felt far-fetched but reading the book felt like watching a cartoon. There was never a lull in the story. I also learnt a few things about Benjamin Franklin and his fascinating achievements. It was a history lesson delivered in an interesting way. Mr Riordan masterfully intertwined history with fiction here just like he did with mythology and fiction for Percy Jackson. The next book is passed on to a different author and I'm looking forward to what they have in store for Dan and Amy!

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