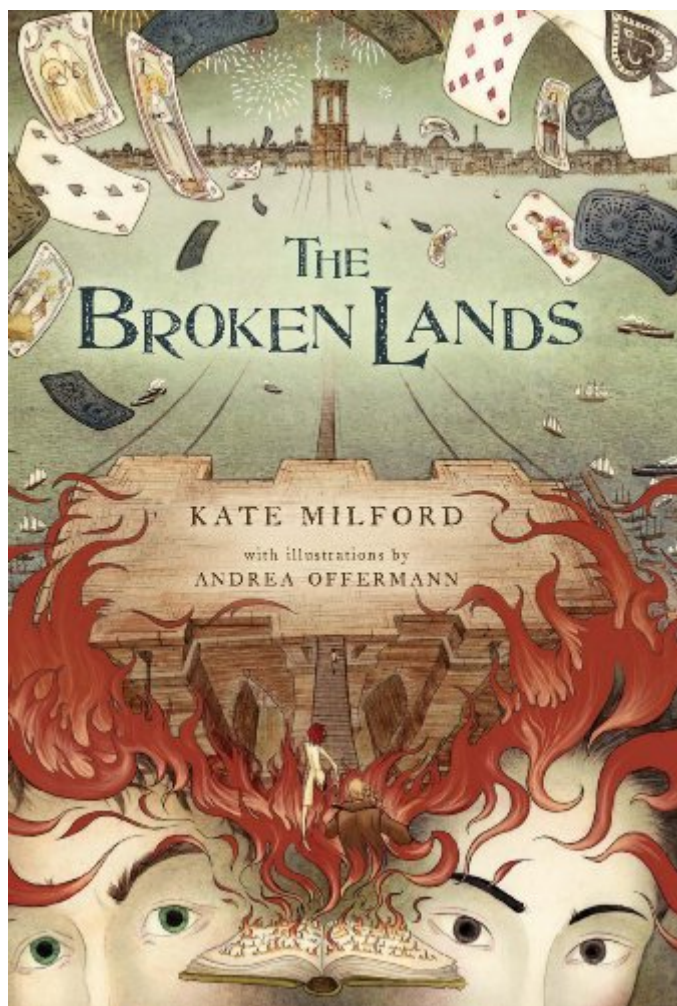


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The Broken Lands



Synopsis

A crossroads can be a place of great power. So begins this deliciously spine-tingling prequel to Kate Milford's *The Boneshaker*, set in the colorful world of nineteenth-century Coney Island and New York City. Few crossroads compare to the one being formed by the Brooklyn Bridge and the East River, and as the bridge's construction progresses, forces of unimaginable evil seek to bend that power to their advantage. Only two orphans with unusual skills stand in their way. Can the teenagers Sam, a card sharp, and Jin, a fireworks expert, stop them before it's too late? Here is a richly textured, slow-burning thriller about friendship, courage, and the age-old fight between good and evil.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Five stars, were I still in the habit of giving out meaningless yellow shapes to such contrary things as stories. An absolutely wonderful read, filled with things that made me grin in glee. (Santine! OMG the

game of Santine!). It's not a book made of deep complicated characters, there are no anti-heroes here, but the characters are bright, firework bright, and I love the meeting of folktale and myth, and the history of New York and Brooklyn. This is urban fantasy at its finest, where the fantastical and the city meet and mingle, and it becomes impossible to separate the two. Kate Milford has written a book that can sit comfortably alongside Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* and Clive Barker's *Abarat*, and seasoned it with a dash of Tim Power's *Last Call*. I will most definitely be reading more of her work.

I loved Milford's novel "The Boneshaker" and have bought several copies to give away. Even my mom liked it! This book was a little harder to follow, the characters were not drawn as well, and I felt it was pretty dark for the intended audience (presumably pre-teens to young teens?). Also, the plot just didn't hold together well. The illustrations were just as lovely as those in *The Boneshaker*, though, and it was nice to get some backstory on Jack and Tom, who are in both books. I'll keep following Milford's work, as I do like her style and overall aesthetic, but this didn't enthrall me like I thought it would (and I just can't give it to my mom--too violent!).

Kate Milford is a wonderful writer. I enjoyed her first book tremendously which is why I'm quite cross at the moment with *THE BROKEN LANDS*. *BONESHAKER*, you see, was wonderful. It had a great cast of characters --good and bad-- and it had a well paced story with a decided 'voice' and tone. *THE BROKEN LANDS* has interesting characters, but a bland tone and little voice. Overall, it felt like a fog of verbiage stood between me and all that went on in the story. Everything seemed overwritten, and much of it not all that crucial to moving the story ahead. When brings me to the length. I know that long books are all the rage for middle-graders. But personally I grow weary of gratuitous length, and would add that if you are going to have lots of pages for this age group, for heaven's sake fill them action and not descriptions of architecture. Not a book I'd suggest as a read for guys. Patient, mature readers (more patient than myself) might want to track this one down if they enjoyed *BONESHAKER*. The concepts are interesting, the characters okay. The story never quite grabbed me, but it's important to remember 'that not all books are for all people'. Some people, after all, don't like Shakespeare. Pam T~

Kate Milford has combined fantasy and historical details in her latest novel, "The Broken Lands." In a battle between good and evil, friendship and love; courage; and self sacrifice are emphasized. The historical setting - late 1800's New York City - as well as the glimpse into immigrants' lives as they help build this country adds to the scope of "The Broken Lands." Social issues and cultural

mores comprise a portion of the narrative; these add to the novel's depth rather than becoming preachy or pedantic elements which might interfere with the reader's experience. The principle characters, Sam Noctiluca - a young card sharp whose father was killed during construction of the Brooklyn Bridge - and Jin - an orphaned Chinese girl whose background is even more tragic - are allowed to develop as individuals and to grow in their relationships with others. Sam learns to trust in himself; Jin in herself. The two learn they must trust in one another and in others to achieve their goal. They are allowed to mature and are given a depth of character that moves the story forward and makes their actions believable. Secondary characters Tom Guyot and Walter Mapp, in addition to Liao who is Jin's mentor, provide an element of mystery and mysticism. Susannah, whose half-sister sacrificed her own life so that Jack Hellcoal's plan might be stopped; Constantine Liri, Sam's friend; and Illana Ponzi, the landlady's daughter play important roles in the story. Detailed, descriptive passages add to the appeal of this novel. "The Broken Lands" is a wonderful and exciting book. In the grip of this novel, I found myself silently cheering for Sam and Jin; hoping they would be able to defeat Jack Hellcoal's plan. On pins and needles, I turned page after page as the "pillars" are hunted and the novel races toward its conclusion. Evil characters are menacing; their threats are frightening. The situations, emotions, and characters are often so authentic that one may forget this is a fantasy. The novel's story contains elements that brought memories of the 9/11 attacks on Towers 1 and 2 of the World Trade Center. Jack Hellcoal seeks to create Hell on earth - Hell is a place of fire and death. The attack by Hellcoal's minions is to take place at the two towers of the Brooklyn Bridge; fiery explosions will either further Hellcoal's goal or will thwart his attack. Walker, his front man, creates and directs Bones - the instrument of bringing deaths which will terrorize the populace - from sand. That sand is found on the waterfront of New York City, it was already inside the "targeted" location. Ordinary citizens must overcome their own fears and band together to rescue the city and its people; courage and self sacrifice will be called for. Well written and imaginative, "The Broken Lands" is a book that can be enjoyed by all ages of readers. Parents should note that it does contain some intense scenes of violence which might disturb less mature readers. I look forward to reading other novels written by Kate Milford - "The Broken Lands" is an excellent novel and deserves its 5-star rating.

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