

THRESHOLD GIRLS

A YOUNG ADULT GRAPHIC NOVEL

Written by Cat Seaton, Illustrated by Kit Seaton, with Colors by Sara Gomez Woolley

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

The cursed mining island of Brink is open twice a year to merchants willing to pay the blood price; the rest of the time, it's cleaved from reality. Teenage Roana finds herself trapped after trading time ends and unable to communicate with anyone except for businesswoman Nyx, who recruits Roana to help keep Brink functioning.

Soon, Nyx's strange dealings have Roana suspecting something is amiss in the dying city. When she tries to distance herself from the businesswoman's schemes, Nyx reveals a terrible truth: Brink is held to reality by the gruesome toll the traders pay, and Roana is trapped just like the rest of them. Help Nyx, or die.

Furious, Roana enlists her new friend, Ewa, to assist her. Together the girls learn that Nyx is planning to use the blood price to catapult the richest individuals in Brink to the world above, ripping the island and its visitors apart in the process.

Roana and Ewa recruit the citizens of Brink to aid them, but Nyx is one step ahead. Betrayed by those willing to trade their honor for a shot at freedom, the girls end up trapped between realities.

But their near-death experience reveals an important secret: the island itself is the desecrated skeleton of an ancient god, cursed when Nyx stole its calcified heart. In a final showdown, they lay the god's furious spirit to rest, thwart Nyx's plans, and return Brink to the right side of reality.

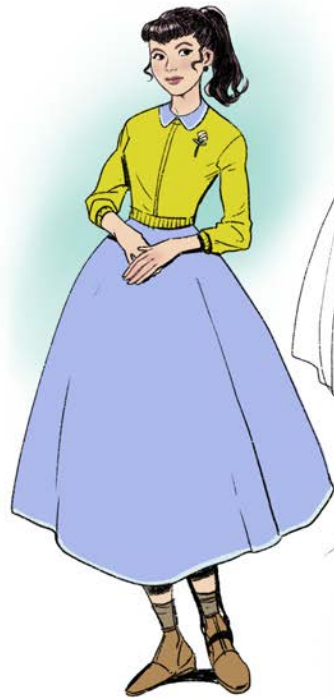
The girls reunite with their families and resolve to search the world over for mines like Brink, preventing the past from repeating itself.



THRESHOLD GIRLS
 BY KIT & CAT SEaton
 "ROANA"



EWA (EVA)



NYX



Threshold
 Girls

NYX IS AN ENTREPRENEUR
 AND A SPELLCASTER.
 GLITCHES RESULT IN TOO
 MUCH "MALLOW" SUBSTANCE
 THAT AFFECTS SPELLCASTING
 ABILITIES.

EWA'S MICHAŁ'S
 MUM & DAD



MICHAŁ



KASIA (KASHA) & JACEK
 (YASEK)

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SCRIPT

[Page 1]

ROANA, 15, disembarks a merchant ship with her PARENTS, FRANCES and SADIE. She is excited and nervous, but trying to maintain an edge of “too cool and adult.” They head towards Brink. Think the MYST island for Cog World before you get inside—a rock with a cleft in it. (Perhaps on its side it looks not dissimilar to a pelvis bone.) There’s a mirror inside. There is a line of traders and merchants waiting to check in. Others, who have already checked in, are carrying boxes of cargo.

FRANCES: (putting his hands down on Roana’s shoulders, startling her) Are you nervous?

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ROANA: Dad, please. I’m not a little girl anymore.

They reach the glass, which casts a reflection of the CITY OF BRINK out onto the water. It is surrounded by natural stone structure reminiscent of ribs. BRINK is brutalist daydream meets hectic old medina built directly into the body of the island. Curiously, no one who is identifiable as a BRINK citizen is leaving. Any boxes they have for trade are simply set down, to be picked up by the merchants who have arrived by ship.

ROANA squeezes her eyes shut and holds her breath as they cross through the glass.

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Her eyes go huge as she beholds the bustling market. Her dad grins to her, while her mother goes on ahead to tell the CUSTOMS AGENT about ROANA.

SADIE: Roana, come here.

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(ROANA approaches her mother)
SADIE: Hold out your hand.
CUSTOMS AGENT: (Smiling, taking ROANA’s outstretched hand) Hello dear. Now I’m just going to prick your finger all right? I’m sure your parents have told you all about the tithe. Its contributions like yours that keep the city afloat!
ROANA: ...of course.

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ROANA's blood drops into it, and there is a ripple/shiver through the bowl. A bell chimes, and ROANA looks to try to pinpoint the source. This whole process has made her uneasy.

CUSTOMS AGENT: Thank you very much. Welcome to Brink, Ms. Carrick.

ROANA: Thank you....

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ROANA puts her pricked finger into her mouth, rubbing her arm with the opposite arm. Spooked.

She catches sight of her mother's disapproving gaze, and straightens up. She strides through to catch up with her father.

ROANA: Should I go get the rest of the crew?

FRANCES: (Wrapping an arm around her, much to ROANA's distress) I've got a better job than loading and unloading for you.

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(FRANCES gives ROANA a small bag, looking to SADIE as he exaggeratedly whispers) Finding a birthday present for your mother.

(SADIE rolls her eyes, but ROANA refuses to be dissuaded)

ROANA: I'm supposed to be helping with the—

FRANCES: Don't tell me your mother's birthday isn't important to you?

ROANA: (Frowning) You don't trust me to help.

FRANCES: (Sighing) That's not it at all, Ro. I thought you'd want to look around, get into some trouble.

ROANA: Well I don't. Mom—

FRANCES: Your mother agrees with me. (SADIE doesn't look like she agrees with FRANCES at all)

ROANA: Why even take me to Brink at all, if you're just going to treat me like a baby?

(SADIE gives FRANCES an "I told you so" look)

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SADIE: Frances, give her the manifest.

FRANCES: What?

(SADIE pulls it out of her husband's shirt pocket and presents it to ROANA, who looks suitably awed)

SADIE: You know how important it is that this makes it to the port authority, don't you? Get it signed and stamped for us.

ROANA: (Preening) I will.

SADIE: (Dragging her close by the neck, and kissing her hair) And then go and take a look around.

ROANA: (Pulling away, smoothing her hair back into order as she does) Fine. I'll see you soon! (She gives her mom and dad a little salute, then runs off towards the port authority building.)

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(ROANA gets in line behind a few other traders. She eavesdrops on a pair who have finished their business, and stopped to chat in the lobby)

TRADER 1: —spooky, I'll tell ya. Found one of 'em floating off the coast of Mere last week. Thought he'd been fish eaten but it weren't that. Something else.

TRADER 2: We found one near Seven Devils. Looked like it had been pressed through a cheese grater. And it wasn't the first one we've found, either. There've been more and more of them.

TRADER 1: Bad times, bad signs. One of our crewmen up and vanished—there one minute, gone the next. Only thing left behind was his pipe, still hot!

TRADER 2: You're not the only one. I was talking to Callahan, he had a cabin boy walk off in the middle of the night—open ocean! The waters have always been strange by the Marrow Mines, but—

CLERK: Next!

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(ROANA has completely lost track of the line, and is several feet behind. She darts forward guiltily.)

ROANA: Here. Frances and Sadie Carrick. Manifest for The Antoinetta.

(As the CLERK looks over her manifest, she glances back at the two traders, who are no longer there. In their place is a tall, imposing woman with a scar on her face. She's walking with a young woman in the same uniform as the CUSTOMS OFFICER)

WOMAN: —see to it they don't let any of the alternative fuel sources off the island. They haven't been vetted yet.

WOMAN: Of course, ma'am.

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(The CLERK clears her throat to get ROANA's attention)

CLERK: I need you to sign here.

ROANA: Yes, of course.

(ROANA packs up the manifest, and jogs back to see her parents. FRANCES in the background is shaking hands with who will later be revealed as JACEK CROWE, and there is a large object covered with burlap between them. ROANA hands the manifest off to her mother, who waves her back towards the market.)

SADIE: Go explore.

ROANA: But I can—

SADIE: Roana. No buts.

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SADIE: (ROANA starts a sulk, but she puts a sack into ROANA's hand) I bet you can't get anyone to trade you for that.

ROANA: (Grinning a little—this is a game they've played before) Bet you I can.

SADIE: You're on. (Grinning back to her) Don't disappoint me—I expect to see premium goods for that.

ROANA: I won't.

SADIE: And Ro--

ROANA, who has started to go, turns back.

SADIE presses a pocket watch into her hand. She grabs ROANA by the back of the neck, to pull her in and press a fierce kiss to the top of her hair.

SADIE: Be back before the siren.

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ROANA waves as she heads into the market.

She looks down at the pocket watch to admire it for a moment. The back is engraved with her grandfather's name: OSCAR CARRICK.

ROANA brushes her cheek impatiently, certainly not crying. She pockets the watch as she wanders into the market.

She spots a stand selling gloves and hats, and makes a beeline for it. The HAT SELLER looks bored as hell.

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ROANA: How much for this one?

HAT SELLER: (not looking up from a trashy, mass market paperback) More than you can afford.

ROANA: I have an entire bag of almonds

HAT SELLER: Wow. (Turning the page) Almonds.

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While the HAT SELLER isn't impressed, a 15 year old boy (MICHAL) lurking in the background certainly is. He creeps closer as ROANA puts the bag into her coat pocket.

ROANA: That's not all I have... (She thinks) I have a book, too.

The HAT SELLER pauses, eyes darting up and then back down again.

HAT SELLER: Oh?

ROANA: It's about a wild horse who—

HAT SELLER: Oh. (Disinterested again)

ROANA looks down just in time to see MICHAL making off with her almonds.

ROANA: Hey!

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Not thinking it through, ROANA chases after the thief. He does a baseball slide under a market stall and, never one to shy away from a challenge, ROANA slides after him. At the same time, the HAT SELLER stands up. She knows the thief.

HAT SELLER: Michał!

ROANA: Get back here!

[Pages 17, 18]

ROANA chases the thief down twisting, narrow alleys. Eventually, hopelessly turned around, she loses him. As the air raid siren goes off, signaling it's time to return to her boat, she whips around, eyes wide.

ROANA: No! No no no. Oh no.

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ROANA takes off running towards the direction she believes the market is in, but only succeeds in getting more hopelessly lost. The siren goes off the second time, and she climbs on top of a wall where she can see the market. She starts running along the wall, leaping when she has to, towards her destination. She has to jump down at one point, but it looks like it's a straight shot.....

Until a house blocks her path.

ROANA turns down another alley and takes off again—another dead end. Eventually, as the third siren goes off, she is sort of outside the main bulk of the city, able to see her parents ship as if through a veil. She can see her mother waiting on the dock, her hand over her mouth. Waiting.

A shadow passes over ROANA's head as the siren call ends, and her hair begins to float. She looks up. A whale is swimming above her head. We have a violent perspective shift. Suddenly ROANA is upside down on the underside of a mirror, and on the other side is her ship and her family in it. Everything is upside down. The sea is the sky, and the sky is now the earth. ROANA, freaked out, runs along the glassy surface of the mirror to where the ship is.

ROANA: Mom! I'm here!*

(*Roana's text is backwards and upside down—it can be read by turning the book upside down and using a mirror)

ROANA bangs on the glass directly beneath her mother.

ROANA: I'm right here! Don't go!

She watches as her father leads her mother away, and the ship sails away.

ROANA: (small) Come back.





I'm here!
Wow!



Don't go;
I'm right here!