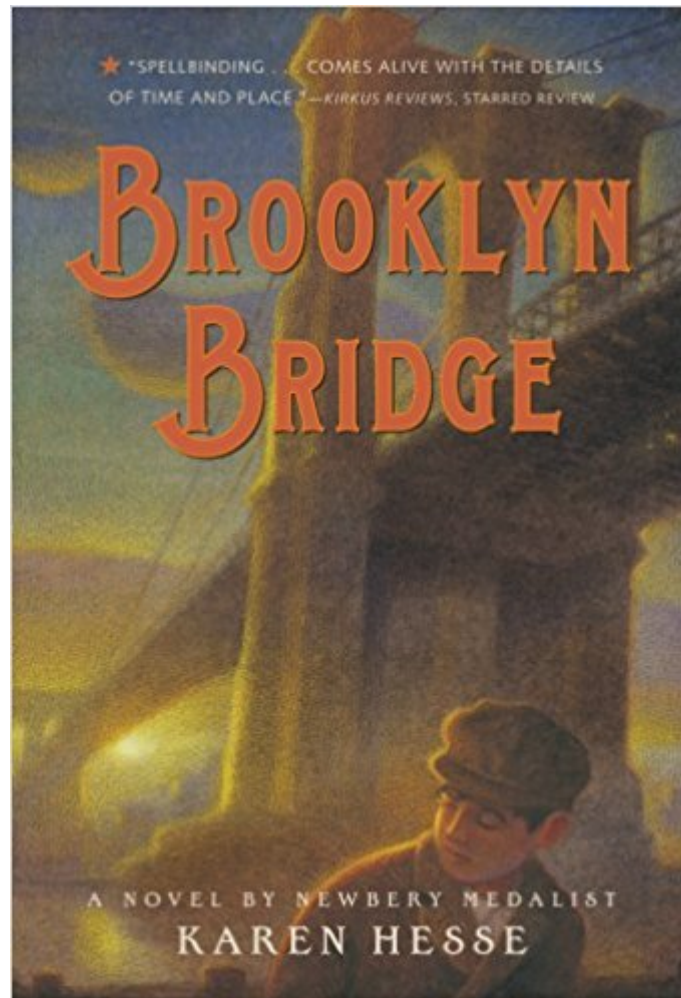




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# Brooklyn Bridge: A Novel



## Synopsis

It's the summer of 1903 in Brooklyn and all fourteen-year-old Joseph Michtom wants is to experience the thrill, the grandeur, and the electricity of the new amusement park at Coney Island. But that doesn't seem likely. Ever since his parents—Russian immigrants—invented the stuffed Teddy Bear five months ago, Joseph's life has turned upside down. No longer do the Michtoms gather family and friends around the kitchen table to talk. No longer is Joseph at leisure to play stickball with the guys. Now, Joseph works. And complains. And falls in love. And argues with Mama and Papa. And falls out of love. And hopes. Joseph hopes he'll see Coney Island soon. He hopes that everything will turn right-side up again. He hopes his luck hasn't run out—because you never know. Through all the warmth, the sadness, the frustration, and the laughter of one big, colorful family, Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse builds a stunning story of the lucky, the unlucky, and those in between, and reminds us that our lives—all our lives—are fragile, precious, and connected. *Brooklyn Bridge* is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

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*Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen*

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6—9 • Karen Hesse weaves a tale (Feiwel & Friends, 2008) about early 1900s Brooklyn and the Michtom family, Russian immigrants, who invented the first stuffed teddy bear. The story is told by 14-year-old Joseph Michtom who doesn't feel like the "lucky" Joe everyone calls him. The only thing the boy really wants is to visit the new Coney Island amusement

park, but now he must help out at his parents' business. Joe doesn't have time to spend with his friends and the family has little time together. Interspersed with Joe's story are newspaper headlines as well as a parallel story of lost, runaway, and cast-out children living under the Brooklyn Bridge. Fred Berman's narration is as authentic as the story. Listeners are transported to Brooklyn, into the homes, streets, and trolley cars, with fully voiced and accented characters brought totally alive. The Michtom family's emotions are clearly expressed and poignantly felt. The two layers of the story are vocally distinct in their telling, allowing listeners to shift seamlessly between the experiences. The only flaw is the mispronunciation of the author's last name in the introduction (it is correct in the closing credits). A compelling listen for school and public libraries. --Stephanie A.

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This unique amalgam of gritty and mystical, historical and visionary, is an intriguing, if somewhat complex, listening experience. It is set in 1903, and the parallel but disassociated stories -- one of a boy in a large extended family and one of children brought together by hopelessness and homelessness -- act more like the opposite ends of an extended metaphor than a cohesive plot. This requires a sophisticated listener -- willing to move back and forth between two worlds. Add frequent descriptions of Coney Island, and you have a complicated mix indeed. Berman narrates with abundant energy and a deep Brooklyn accent that helps engage listeners. Although an occasional word is misread (walking for waking, for instance), his ability to create and sustain the myriad of colorful characters is both impressive and entertaining. There is Papa, the teddy-bear entrepreneur; Mama, the disciplinarian who loves to get her way; and three eccentric aunts. And that's just for starters. This should find an audience among Hesse's many fans. Grades 7-12. --Kristi Elle Jemtegaard --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I greatly admire Hesse's writing, but I was disappointed in this book. The characters are sympathetic and the writing is fine, but the story lines of past and present just don't meet up. If the past needed resolving at the end, we should have had hints of that at the beginning and throughout the book. The italicized parts are, as another reviewer said, creepy. They add nothing to the story.

It seemed authentic and depicted a rich ethnic view of New York in early 1900 through the eyes of a young teenaged boy. The characters were nicely developed and the story was neatly tied up at the end. I would recommend this book to any age reader, male or female.

The book starts off boring but half way through the book it gets good If your reading for summer reading the start early because it takes a while to get the main idea

Family history that I have enjoyed reading

It's a kid book, but really for adults. I wouldn't buy it for a child unless she was very mature for her age. No mature contents, just too cerebral for most kids

My son read this book for school. He thought the book was well written, had a good story and he really enjoyed it. He is 12 years old.

This book was great with a lot of meaning, it brought me close to a bridge were I grew up and I got it at a great price...

This book is about an immigrant family's experience at the beginning of the 1900's in Brooklyn. Told from the perspective of their oldest child, and interweaving the older generations, the memories of leaving Russia, the current struggles of making a living in America, and the haunting reality of how some children are left orphaned or abandoned in the streets of NYC while the young boy telling the story has a life of love, family and stability.

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