

boneshaker the clockwork century 1 cherie priest

Boneshaker, the first installment in Cherie Priest's Clockwork Century series, is a captivating blend of steampunk, alternate history, and adventure. Set in a reimagined version of 19th-century America, the novel explores themes of survival, technology, and the human spirit amidst a backdrop of a civil war and a mysterious gas that transforms people into monstrous creatures. Priest's intricate world-building and memorable characters make Boneshaker a standout entry in the steampunk genre, appealing to fans of both speculative fiction and historical narratives.

Overview of the Setting

The Alternate History of the Clockwork Century

The Clockwork Century is an alternate version of the 19th-century United States, where historical events diverge significantly from our own timeline. The narrative begins in Seattle, Washington, during the tumultuous period of the American Civil War. However, unlike the real history, this version of America is marked by the presence of advanced steam technology, airships, and clockwork devices.

- Civil War Context: The civil war rages on, but the stakes are heightened by the introduction of a mysterious gas known as "zombie gas." This gas is a byproduct of a disastrous invention by the protagonist's father, which leads to a series of catastrophic events.
- Technological Innovations: The world of Boneshaker features impressive steampunk inventions, including the titular Boneshaker, a massive drilling machine that wreaks havoc on the city of Seattle. These technologies drive the plot and add depth to the setting.

The City of Seattle

Seattle serves as a crucial setting for the events of Boneshaker. The city is a place of both opportunity and danger, where the remnants of civilization coexist with the chaos brought on by the zombie gas.

- The Wall: In response to the gas, the citizens of Seattle have built a wall to contain the toxic fumes and the creatures it creates. The wall serves as a physical and symbolic barrier, representing the divide between safety and the horrors beyond.
- Underground Society: Inside the wall, the remnants of society struggle to survive. An underground community thrives amidst the adversity, showcasing the resilience of human nature in the face of disaster.

Main Characters

Cherie Priest populates *Boneshaker* with a diverse cast of characters, each contributing to the rich narrative tapestry.

Brassie "Briar" Wilkes

The protagonist of the novel, Briar Wilkes, is a strong and resourceful woman determined to rescue her son from the dangers of Seattle.

- Motivation: Briar's journey is fueled by maternal instincts and a desire to confront her past. She is a character who evolves throughout the story, transforming from a passive figure into an active participant in her fate.
- Skills and Strengths: Briar is resourceful, using her intelligence and determination to navigate the challenges she faces. Her character represents the strength of women in a society that often restricts them.