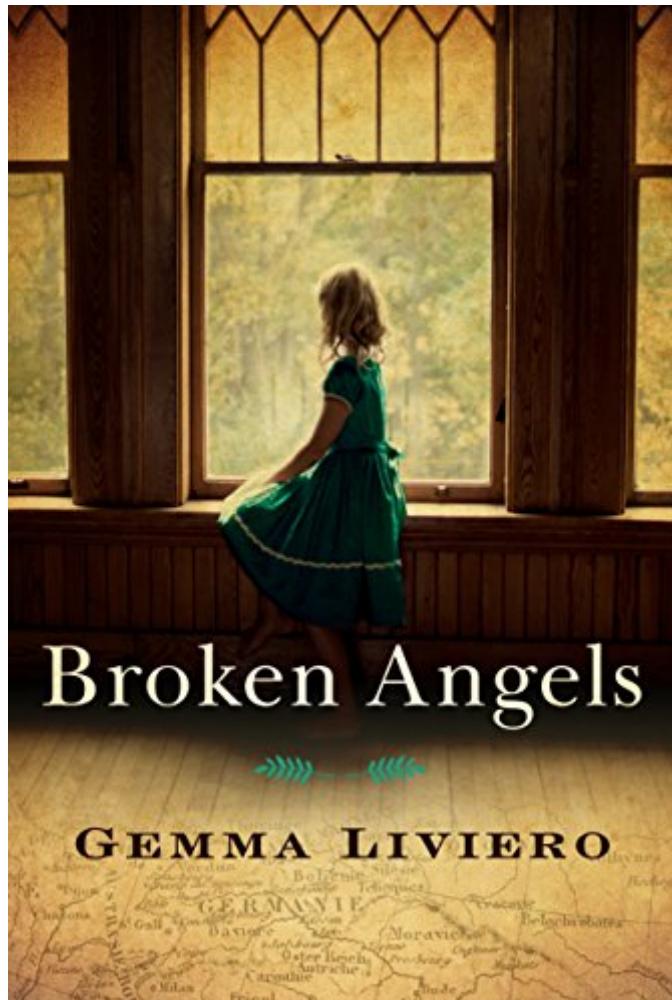


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# Broken Angels



## Synopsis

A Nazi doctor. A Jewish rebel. A little girl. Each one will fight for freedom— or die trying. Imprisoned in the Lodz Ghetto, Elsi discovers her mother's desperate attempt to end her pregnancy and comes face-to-face with the impossibility of their situation. Risking her own life, Elsi joins a resistance group to sabotage the regime. Blonde, blue-eyed Matilda is wrenched from her family in Romania and taken to Germany, where her captors attempt to mold her into the perfect Aryan child. Spirited and brave, she must inspire hope in the other stolen children to make her dreams of escape a reality. Willem, a high-ranking Nazi doctor, plans to save lives when he takes posts in both the ghetto and Auschwitz. After witnessing unimaginable cruelties, he begins to question his role and the future of those he is ordered to destroy. While Hitler ransacks Europe in pursuit of a pure German race, the lives of three broken souls— thrown together by chance— intertwine. Only love and sacrifice might make them whole again.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Having read many books about Nazi atrocities, both fiction and nonfiction, it's tempting to think there

is little left to learn about them. I think, though, that there is always more to learn. In this case, it's an opportunity to learn of the unique impact on women. Of particular interest to me are explorations of the motives of the people who were complicit, as well as the day-to-day impact on those deemed unfit for the new order. *Broken Angels* explores all of this, and does so in a way that draws the reader in, caring about the characters, wanting to know where it all leads. This is a highly readable fictional representation, but not an easy one. No detail is spared. This is not for the faint of heart. If you can read it, though, please do so. I acquired this book through a GoodReads giveaway. Not very many people tried to win it. I understand the reluctance to revisit a chapter of history that is so very grim and also so recent. But the more we understand about how the holocaust came to be, the better able we will be to recognize movement toward the unthinkable -- a repeat of history.

*Broken Angels* is a stirring story of Elsi, a young Polish woman who is part Norwegian and whose mother is Jewish; Willem, a handsome German officer and doctor, son of one of Himmler's top researchers; and Matilda, a part-German child torn from her family in Romania. I suppose the title reflects the brokenness of each of these characters. Elsi and her family have been thrown into the ghetto. Her Norwegian father puts on a yellow star to show solidarity and one day goes to work and never comes back, leaving his wife and two daughters to fend for themselves. Elsi's mother resorts to prostitution to support her children, the younger Leah, sickly and slightly handicapped. An unwanted pregnancy and botched abortion brings her, accompanied by Elsi to the hospital where Willem works in the women's clinic. Matilda's idyllic existence on her parent's lavender farm suddenly turns a macabre turn when a Nazi officer forces her mother to sign her away to go to a school to make her a better German but in reality was no better than a prison where she was constantly punished and tortured. But Matilda is headstrong and fights to maintain her identity. Willem is a Nazi officer but was grappling with a moral dilemma. He is torn between his allegiance to his country and the pity and compassion he feels for the Jewish women he treats. He is able to save Elsi's mother but Elsi's waif-like appearance haunts him. Although Willem is a Nazi, he, and probably other Germans as well, did not agree with what Hitler and the Nazis did. He uses his position to rescue Elsi and Matilda and together make a family. Although the story is told from three different points of view, I didn't have a problem with it. Sometimes, it was a welcome shift after a gut-wrenching scene. I think the author did an exceptional job in showing how the war and its aftermath impacted her characters. The ending was unexpected and I think it was great that the story ended the way it did. This review

is for an ARC from NetGalley.

As I was nearing the final chapters, I was pretty sure I'd give it 3 stars, but the climax and denouement were so good that I upped it to 4. On the positive side, it's a good story focusing on lesser known aspects of Nazi Germany's Aryanization program, and in the first half of the book, the Jewish ghetto of Lodz, Poland. The main characters, particularly Elsi (a teen) and Mathilda (child), are drawn in depth. The first-person, present-tense narration works well, providing immediacy. On the negative side, I feel the book is too long--padded and too wordy especially in the first third. The author's prose is more matter of fact than poetic or memorable. Having read a lot about WWII Germany and resistance heroine Sophie Scholl recently, I found it interesting that Scholl was quoted three times in the final chapters. It seems Ms. Liviero was partly inspired by her story. If you liked this book, you might also like a new Kindle book that's a historical novel about Sophie Scholl titled *With You There Is Light*, by Alexandra Lehmann, available at .com. Finally, in checking the publisher of *Broken Angels*, I saw that it's an imprint of Publishing. If an editor at Lake Union Publishing happens to be reading this, check out *With You There Is Light*, which is better in my opinion. Also, please fix these typos: "tress" should be "trees

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