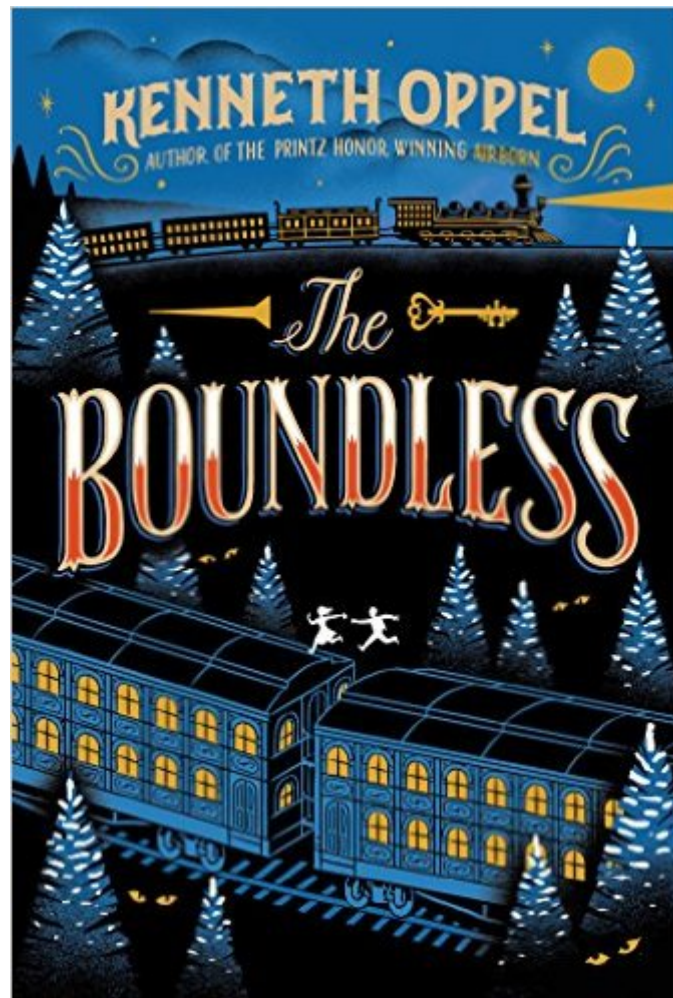


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# The Boundless



## Synopsis

The Boundless, the greatest train ever built, is on its maiden voyage across the country, and first-class passenger Will Everett is about to embark on the adventure of his life! When Will ends up in possession of the key to a train car containing priceless treasures, he becomes the target of sinister figures from his past. In order to survive, Will must join a traveling circus, enlisting the aid of Mr. Dorian, the ringmaster and leader of the troupe, and Maren, a girl his age who is an expert escape artist. With villains fast on their heels, can Will and Maren reach Will's father and save The Boundless before someone winds up dead? —Canadian railway history, fantasy, a flutter of romance—and a thoughtful examination of social injustice—collide in this entertaining swashbuckler from the author of Printz Honor-winning Airborne • (Kirkus Reviews, starred review).

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730 (What's this?)

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (May 5, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442472898

ISBN-13: 978-1442472891

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (94 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #54,963 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 in Books > Children's Books > Cars, Trains & Things That Go > Trains #594 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction #1404 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

The publisher's target audience is on the young side--as a middle school librarian, I'd say The Boundless is appropriate for well-adjusted, grounded-in-reality, middle schoolers, not eight-year-olds. It has themes of fairness, independence and courage, all of which I encourage in children. There have been reviews that say the book had sex in it. Not that I remember. There's

blushing and bare shoulders, both of which are appropriate for middle school students. Did I miss something? I recall the main characters don't have anything more going on than a crush---again appropriate for middle school children. There was a review that mentioned the word fecking. Fecking is considered a mild swear word in Ireland. It's a minced oath, much like dang or heck. Yes, it is a minced oath for "the f-word," but this provides parents a good opportunity to have a meaningful discussion with their middle school child about \*their\* family values--what is appropriate for them to say---and the difference between what you read and what you say or do. Now--looking at the book for children aged 11-13----- by the time kids get into middle school, many use words like hell---even if their parents don't know about it. And even if they don't use the words themselves, books that do not use appropriately authentic language are largely left unread. Children can spot phony a mile away. "Golly, Gee Willikers!" (Just to show how language evolves, gee was a minced oath at one time) But once again, in my opinion the publisher set the target audience too young. The book is a well written middle school book, incorporating Canadian history and folklore into a train adventure that both boys and girls can enjoy.

Because my son was learning through exploring facets of Stellanina I found Silverwing. We both enjoyed reading Silverwing because of its innovation and action. Then, I checked out Boundless. Why do adults that aim their writing at children INSIST on using foul language? In this book Mr. Oppel even introduces the "f-word" even though he spells it f e c k i n g using many instances of h e l l, not as the place. Also he introduces sex and prostitution. All in a children's book. Where are the editors? Does no other responsible adult read these books with kids in mind? Or is teaching these things to kids OK?

I was a little skeptical when I picked up this book about whether I would like it, yet after three or so pages I was hooked. I could not put the book down. Boundless is the story of a young man whose father goes from rags to riches after saving a railroad baron from certain death in an avalanche. After the baron's death, the father continues the baron's dream of building the world's longest train and that is where our story truly begins. The Boundless, the world's longest train car procession, is making its maiden voyage across Canada (sea to sea as the book puts it). Will, our young man, has just quarreled with his father after telling him he wishes to go to art school and not become a business man. In the midst of the first stop, Will witnesses a murder for the key to the funeral car (for the train carries the body of a railroad baron in a funeral car, which is rumored to be loaded with gold, jewels and other riches, much like a pharaoh's tomb). What follows is an elaborate plot

involving circus folk, an evil brakeman who is out to kill Will and anyone else standing in his way of those riches and a constant struggle of Will's conscience as to his purpose in life. I could not put the book down and finished it in a day. Everyone loves a good train robbery story as evidenced by its ever presence in movies and books as well as folklore and this book is no exception. The plot is expertly woven, the characters splendidly detailed, you hate the bad people and cheer for the good ones. The story never bogs down in its 336 pages. This is a wonderful tale for all audiences, though I do think younger children under the audience range of 8 might find it scary since there is some violence. All in all a terrific read.

In chapter 1, we meet Will, who lives in a rooming house with his mom, while his dad works on laying tracks for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Will spends his time drawing scenes of his daily life, and meets Maren, a performer in a traveling circus. Chapter 2 takes up three years later. Will's father has risen up in the railway ranks, and Will is travelling in one of the finest carriages on the maiden voyages of The Boundless: the world's longest, biggest, most fantastic train. Maren and her acrobatic friends are also on board, and Oppel spins a tale of magic and adventure as the two move from first class to baggage cars to dangerous escapades on the top of the train, encountering a captive Yeti, thieves with an eye on a legendary gold, a picture with magical properties and more. This adventure will captivate tweens and young teens looking for frontier adventure. Readers who liked this book might also enjoy THE MARK OF THE DRAGONFLY, and will almost certainly enjoy Oppel's SILVERWING books. Teen readers should also pick up Oppel's AIRBORN series - a high-adventure winner. About me: I'm a middle school/high school librarian How I got this book: Review copy sent by the publisher

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