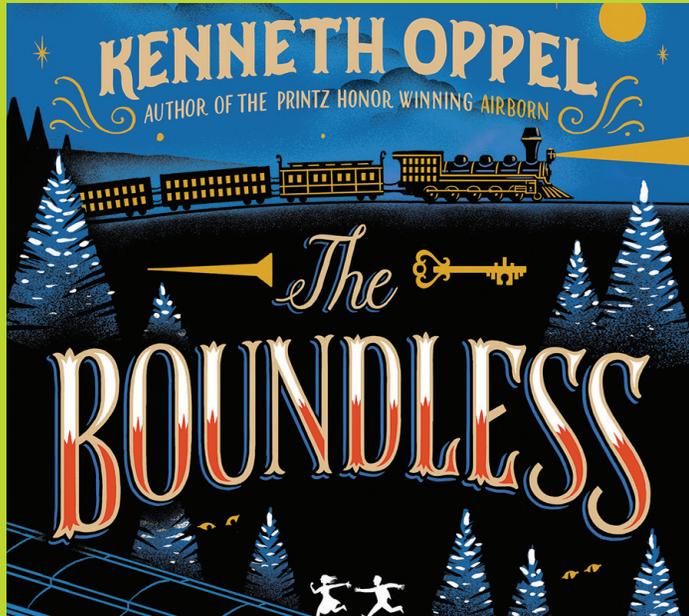


THE BOUNDLESS

KENNETH OPPEL

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH



THE STORY

Will Everett wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but after his family's fortunes change, he finds himself with a first-class ticket for *The Boundless*, the longest, most glamorous locomotive in the world, stretching more than eleven kilometres long and pulling an astounding 987 cars: passenger cars, shooting galleries, gardens, an onboard swimming pool, cinema and much more. But its maiden voyage won't be a smooth ride for Will. After witnessing a murder during a station stop, he barely makes it back onto the train (with a running leap!), then must work his way from the caboose forward to his father in first class—with the murderer and his cronies on his tail. Luckily, a clever and nimble friend is perfecting her act in *The Boundless's* circus car, and there the real thrill ride begins. Sasquatches, bog-dwelling hags and illusions abound in this outsized middle-grade adventure.

THEMES

History • Canadian Railways • Immigration • Circus • Mystery

AUTHOR PROFILE

Kenneth Oppel won the Governor General's Award for the *Airborn* series and is the author of the *Silverwing Saga*, which has sold over a million copies worldwide. His most recent novels are *Half Brother*, winner of both the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award and the Young Adult Book Award; *This Dark Endeavour*, finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award; and *Such Wicked Intent*, finalist for the CLA Young Adult Book Award. Oppel is also the Canadian nominee for the 2014 Hans Christian Andersen Award.

PhotoCredit: Ian Cryster



WEB RESOURCES

EXTENSION

- Author website: www.kennethoppel.ca
- Publisher website:
http://harpercollins.ca/authors/60000698/Oppel_Kenneth/index.aspx?authorID=60000698
- Kirkus review for *The Boundless*:
<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/kenneth-oppel/the-boundless/>
- Author profile – Quill & Quire : Kenneth Oppel
http://www.quillandquiere.com/authors/profile.cfm?article_id=12731

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- CPR photo gallery:
<http://www.cpr.ca/en/about-cp/our-past-present-and-future/photo-gallery/building-the-railway/Pages/default.aspx>

- Land grants:
<http://www.magnetawan.com/index.php/tourism/history-of-magnetawan/9-land-grants>
- Sasquatch and other cryptids:
<http://www.unknownexplorers.com/crypto.php>
- Settlers Guide to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, 1910, CPR:
<http://saskhistoryonline.ca/fedora/repository/spcoll%3A6735>
- Significant Dates In Canadian Railway History:
<http://www.railways.incanada.net/candate/candate.htm#1880>
- Bison shooting from train cars:
<http://myrockymountainwindow.com/2012/02/27/the-bison-massacre-all-for-coats/>

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DISCUSS

If you could jump in at any point in this book and become a part of the storyline, where would it be? Here are a few photos of the last spike ceremony in Craigellachie.

Photo Credit: The Globe and Mail, cr. Glenbow Museum



- How many people can you identify in the photo? What role did they play in the development of the Canadian railway? (William Cornelius Van Horne, Sanford Fleming, Donald A. Smith, James Ross)
- Behind CPR financier Donald Smith as he drove in the last spike, in the photo stands a young man eager to watch history in the making. Can you identify this young man (Edward Mallandaine), research his life and compare it to Will Everett's?
- The Boundless features a "shooting gallery". Why would such a car be featured on a train? Explain why travellers would engage in this type of behaviour. How would you describe the impact of the bison hunts by white or Meti settlers on the prairie people?
- How did European settlement affect the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples? Consider the introduction of technology, disease, loss of land and culture, etc.
- Mr. Dorian identifies as Métis. What exactly do we know about him from the book? What can we infer about his life before he boarded The Boundless. Imagine that you had to write an article about the life of Mr. Dorian. Compare Mr. Dorian's life with that of Gabriel Dumont (1937-1906), who was a famous Meti leader in the West.
- Compare Mr. Dorian's expectations of the painting he is looking for with the story of The Picture of Dorian Gray by

Oscar Wilde, (published in 1990) which is about a man who trades the purity of his soul for undying youth.

- Many cultures make reference to a large, hairy, shy but strong humanoid creature living in small groups in mountain areas. Identify at least 4 of these creatures and compare them (their features, their habitat, the relationship they have with the local population (NOTE: Sasquatch, Big Foot, Yeti, Barnamu, Almas are among the most popular researched creatures)
- During the desperate battle to complete the Canadian Pacific Railway, George Stephen and Donald A. Smith adopted 'Standfast Craigellachie' as their morale booster. The point in the mountains of British Columbia at which the railway lines were joined from east to west was given this 'jaw breaker' of a name in celebration of their triumph. Research and explain the roots of this slogan: "Standfast, Craigellachie". Note to teachers: "Craig Elachie" was the rallying point for the Clan Grants. When signal fires were lit upon the summit of Craig Elachie, or "The Rock of Alarm", members of the clan would gather there in order to organize for an attack or defense. Both Gentlemen were highlanders, although not necessarily from the Clan Grants)
- Throughout the book, there are several references to the difficulties of building a rail track on the "muskeg". What is the "muskeg"? Where can one find it (use a map)? Why is it so difficult to build road and rail tracks on it.

READING COMPREHENSION

- In any good story, the setting (place/time) helps develop the reader's interest. Read Chapter 3, "The Evening's Entertainment," and explain how the setting of this story makes the passage more interesting.
- After reading chapter 10 and 11, describe Will Everett's changing feelings throughout the excerpt. Support your answer with important and specific information from the excerpt.
- Compare a character, the storyline or a main event with the content from another book.
- Will Everett is crushed when he understands why Maren and Mr. Dorian agreed to help him. How would you resolve his conflict?

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SUGGESTED READINGS

By the same author:

- *Half Brother*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd
- *This Dark Endeavour: The Apprenticeship Of Victor Frankenstein*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd (YA)
- *Such Wicked Intent*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd (YA)
- *Airborn*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd
- *Silverwing*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd
- *Sky breaker*, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd

By other artists from Wordfest 2014:

- *The Night Gardener*, Jonathan Auxier
- *The King's Dragon*, Scott Chantler

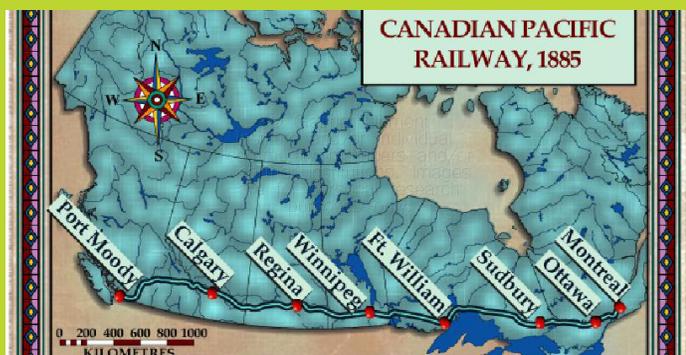
Other books and movies on related subjects:

- *The last spike, The great railway 1881-1885*, Pierre Berton, 1971.
- *Murder On The Orient Express: A Hercule Piorot Mystery* by Agatha Christie
- *I Am Canada: Blood and Iron: Building the Railway, Lee Heen-gwong, British Columbia, 1882* by Paul Yee

- *Ghost Train* by Paul Yee
- *Canadian Railroad Trilogy* by Gordon Lightfoot
- *The Kids Book of Canada's Railway: and How the CPR Was Built* by Deborah Hodge and John Mantha
- *I Am Algonquin* by Rick Revelle

DID YOU KNOW?

- Horses powered the first Canadian colonial locomotive that arrived in 1836.
- Sir Sandford Fleming also created Canada's first postage stamp in 1851.
- By 1885, the entire CPR project had cost the federal government more than \$60 million in grants and \$35 million in loans.
- Of the 5,000 or so Chinese workers who came to Canada in 1880, about 3,500 workers would be killed by the following year during construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.
- Chinese people were prevented from voting in British Columbia as early as 1875. They only gained the right to vote provincially and federally in 1947.



CREATE

Using a map of Canada, retrace the journey of The Boundless, doodling the train and all the landmarks (town sites, stations, landscape)

Identify all the booming towns along The Boundless journey. Research their current state - are they thriving or have they been abandoned...

See activity sheets

ACTIVITY SHEETS

A writing activity

Sam Steele is a famous Mounty who appears several times in the Boundless. Although present at the ceremony on Nov.7, 1885, he does not appear on the official photo. Pretend to be a journalist in 1919 when his death is announced, and write an article to resume Sam Steele's life and his accomplishments. Research journalistic writing style in use at the time, find photos to illustrate your articles and compose a 1 page article.

(View this activity sheet)

A research activity

A land deed was a proof of ownership of land (see The Boundless p.191). Research how colonists could obtain land deed as well as cost, size, condition. Calculate the present value of the average land deed and compare to current land purchase (for lot of similar size and location). Look at the "Necessities for Free Grant Settlers" and calculate how much saving they needed to acquire all these necessities. Based on the average income of people at the time, how easy or difficult would it have been for settlers to acquire these necessities. **(View this activity sheet)**

A Research / Writing activity:

http://histoiredurailhistory.ca/immigration_en.html

Examine all items and people that you see in images, comparing the advertisement to the real photo. Examine what was changed /edited from the photo compared to the advertisement and give your own explanations for these changes.

Write an essay, imagining the past life of the colonist, the preparations they had to make, their experience on the trains, and their hopes for the future. Use the questions below to inform your writing. **(View this activity sheet)**

A drawing (not doodle) activity

A hag is an old woman often found in folklore and children's tales. Hags are often seen as malevolent, but may also be one of the chosen forms of shapeshifting beings. The term appears in Middle English, and was a shortening of hægtesse, an Old English term for witch. Based on the description given in the book (P.82-83), draw your own rendition of The Hag that can be found in the Muskeg. **(View this activity sheet)**

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GRADE 7:

Social Studies:

Canada: Origins, Histories and Movement of People

Terms & concepts: assimilation, colony, demographics, immigration, imperialism, migration, National Policy, settlement, urbanization

- recognize the positive and negative aspects of immigration and migration
- recognize the positive and negative consequences of political decisions
- appreciate the challenges that individuals and communities face when confronted with rapid change
- understand the challenges and opportunities that immigration presents to newcomers and to Canada
- How did Asian immigrants contribute to the development of Canada (i.e., Chinese railway workers)?
- In what ways did the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway affect the growth of Canada?
- What was the role of the North West Mounted Police in the development of western Canada?
- What strategies were used by the government to encourage immigration from Europe?
- What impact did immigration have on Aboriginal peoples and on communities in Canada?

Dimensions of Thinking

Students will:

- **develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:**
 - determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
 - evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives

- demonstrate the ability to analyze local and current affairs
- re-evaluate personal opinions to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

• develop skills of historical thinking:

- analyze historical issues to form or support an opinion
- use historical and community resources to organize the sequence of historical events
- explain the historical contexts of key events of a given time period
- distinguish cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relations of events

• develop skills of geographic thinking:

- construct and interpret maps to broaden understanding of issues, places and peoples of Canada (i.e., elevation, latitude and longitude, population density, waterways)
- interpret historical maps to broaden understanding of historical events

English Language Arts

- explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences
- comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts
- manage ideas and information
- enhance the clarity and artistry of communication
- Use prior knowledge
- Use comprehension strategies
- Use textual cues
- Use references
- Access, evaluate, organize, information

READING LEVEL

	<p>INTERMEDIATE READ</p>	<p>Independent reading; Complex but well defined characters, situations and dialogue; Relatively challenging vocabulary and sentence structure; Well defined chapters.</p>
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