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Airborn



Synopsis

This swashbuckling adventure is set in a world where great airships ply the skies-- and where there are unknown lands and strange creatures to be discovered.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-10 — An original and imaginative Victorian-era fantasy. Matt, 15, only feels alive when he's aloft working as a cabin boy aboard the Aurora, a luxury airship that is part dirigible, part passenger cruise ship. When wealthy Kate and her chaperone come aboard, Matt soon discovers that she is determined to prove her grandfather's claims that he saw strange creatures flying in the sky in that area the year before. The man's diary describes them as huge, furry beasts with batlike wings and sharp claws. Soon after Kate arrives, pirates attack the ship and rob the wealthy passengers. A storm forces the damaged Aurora to set down on a seemingly deserted island. Kate and Matt discover the skeletal remains of one of the creatures, and, later, a live but deformed one that lives among the treetops. In their attempts to photograph "the cloud cat," they stumble upon the pirates' hideout and are captured. Can they escape in time to stop the brigands from stealing the Aurora? Will Kate prove the existence of this undiscovered species? This rousing adventure has something for everyone: appealing and enterprising characters, nasty villains, and a little romance. Oppel provides glimpses of the social conventions of the era, humorous byplay between the main characters, and comic relief in the form of Matt's cabin mate and Kate's straitlaced chaperone.

Reminiscent of Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* (HarperCollins, 2003), this adventure is much lighter in tone and has a lower body count. --Sharon Rawlins, Piscataway Public Library, NJ
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Gr. 6-8. Matt Cruse is a cabin boy aboard the luxury passenger airship *Aurora* when the ship encounters a battered hot air balloon with an unconscious man aboard. Before dying, the man claims to have seen beautiful creatures swarming in the air over an uncharted island. Not until a year later, when Matt meets the man's granddaughter, Kate de Vries, who boards the *Aurora*, does he learn that the man wasn't hallucinating. Pirates board, rob, and kill, and a fierce storm grounds the *Aurora* on the very island that Kate's grandfather spoke about--which proves to be the pirates' secret hideaway. Though readers will need to suspend disbelief of the mysterious flying creatures, which Matt and Kate call "cloud cats," details of life and work aboard the ship as well as the dramatic escapade itself make this a captivating read. Sally Estes
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Review by my 11 year old boy. The book *Airborn* is a very good book about how a boy works very hard on an airship to support his family who are in a lot of crises, due to the fact that the father had died on the same airship. I like how the book shows that how the boy does not lose hope and feels all is lost when he does not get the promotion which he had worked on for so long and that would help his family. I also like how a teenage boy stands up to some of the strongest, scariest and most dangerous pirates in the book and does not back away. And when the pirates board the airship a second time he shows great skill, knowledge and interest as he plays the role of many people aboard to do their job. The book has many descriptions on how life was being a steward on an airship and other jobs aboard. In the beginning the boy does some breathtaking, heroic stunts to rescue an old man who later on happens to cause many problems for him, the crew aboard and the passengers. The book is connected to many different parts of the story that link together, and you have to have to remember other previous events for somethings to make sense. If you leave this book for a period of time things might become hard to understand for you may have forgotten about what had happened. You cannot just reread some pages back to get some of the events. The book will be more enjoyable to people who like action, adventure and can stand little violence. All in all I think that *Airborn* by Kenneth Oppel is a great book.

It is deeply satisfying to not only read a well-crafted story with wonderfully engaging characters, an adventurous plot, and beautifully rendered setting; but to read a story so well written that the English language is once again a tool of beauty-- now that is a pleasurable experience I've sorely missed over the years. I highly recommend this book for all readers whose age is in the double digits! I'd give this book more than five stars if I could! This is one to keep on the shelf with other great classic adventure stories.

This book has it all, action, adventure, tragedy, and a little bit of romance. The book grabs you from the very beginning and never let's go. It follows the story of boy in his early teens (15 or 16) that is a cabin boy on an airship. While the boy, Matt, is on watch duty he spots a hot air balloon that's been damaged and they proceed to give assistance. There is an old man in the balloon, it's only occupant, and he is badly injured. Before he dies he tells young Matt about a beautiful flying creature that no one has ever seen before. But his ranting and raving are passed of as the words of a confused dieing man. Then a year later Matt meets the old mans granddaughter who's is hell bent on proving her grandfather actually did see a real creature. And thus begins a thrill ride of an adventure that you won't want to put down until you reach the last page. My thoughts on the book: I finished this book a little over 2 days while I was on vacation. The characters are very well written, you get a good sense of who they are and become very attached to the few leading characters. The two main characters are Matt Cruse and Kate de Vries. Matt is a level headed young man who thinks everything through and does it quickly and doesn't hesitate to act when he thinks it's needed. He is very adapt on the air ship, and because he has spent so much time on them he know what everything does as well as every inch of them. Kate on the other hand is a strong willed young woman who doesn't let anything get in the way of her goal, and this gets her into trouble, as well as Matt, throughout the book. Kate is definitely not your average female who is helpless, she is very well studied and reads a lot of books and is very knowledgeable about things Matt has never dreamed of knowing about. That being said she does relay on him for some of the more practical things such as how to find there way back when they go traipsing through the jungle. All in all I really enjoyed this book it reminded me of some of the Jules Vern books I have read. Very fun and enjoyable read.

Few books have drug me into their world and kept me up untill i finished them; this is among the few. It shows optimism and courage through dark times, and encourages the search for solutions even in times of peril.

My 8-year-old and 6-year-old sons and I were first introduced to Mr. Oppel when my mother gave them "The Boundless", which we read together (and also highly recommend). The boys loved that book and wanted to read more from this author, so I purchased "Airborn". To say that my boys were enthralled with this book would be an understatement! They begged me each night to read "just one more chapter!". The plot is intriguing but not overly complicated for younger children, the characters are very well developed, and the descriptions make you feel like you're there right along with the protagonists. I think that my 8-year-old could probably have read this on his own, but I personally enjoyed the story so much myself that I was more than happy to make reading it part of our bedtime ritual. We just received "Skybreaker", the sequel to "Airborn", in the mail this afternoon and the boys literally jumped up and down and said they can't wait to start reading it tonight. To see them so excited about a book absolutely thrills me. We look forward to reading all of Mr. Oppel's books.

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