



Airborn

By Kenneth Oppel

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Airborn By Kenneth Oppel

Sailing toward dawn, and I was perched atop the crow's nest, being the ship's eyes. We were two nights out of Sydney, and there'd been no weather to speak of so far. I was keeping watch on a dark stack of nimbus clouds off to the northwest, but we were leaving it far behind, and it looked to be smooth going all the way back to Lionsgate City. Like riding a cloud. . . .

Matt Cruse is a cabin boy on the Aurora, a huge airship that sails hundreds of feet above the ocean, ferrying wealthy passengers from city to city. It is the life Matt's always wanted; convinced he's lighter than air, he imagines himself as buoyant as the hydrium gas that powers his ship. One night he meets a dying balloonist who speaks of beautiful creatures drifting through the skies. It is only after Matt meets the balloonist's granddaughter that he realizes that the man's ravings may, in fact, have been true, and that the creatures are completely real and utterly mysterious.

In a swashbuckling adventure reminiscent of Jules Verne and Robert Louis Stevenson, Kenneth Oppel, author of the best-selling *Silverwing* trilogy, creates an imagined world in which the air is populated by transcontinental voyagers, pirates, and beings never before dreamed of by the humans who sail the skies.

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Airborn By Kenneth Oppel Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #40296 in eBooks
- Published on: 2009-09-10
- Released on: 2009-09-22
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

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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From [Booklist](#)

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

Firewing: "Plenty of rousing action; special effects on a grand scale; a leavening of humor as well as stimulating thoughts."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ralph Garibay:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what you problem? How about your time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They have to answer that question because just their can do that. It said that about book. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on pre-school until university need this particular Airborn to read.

Sheryl Hicks:

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Amelia Page:

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