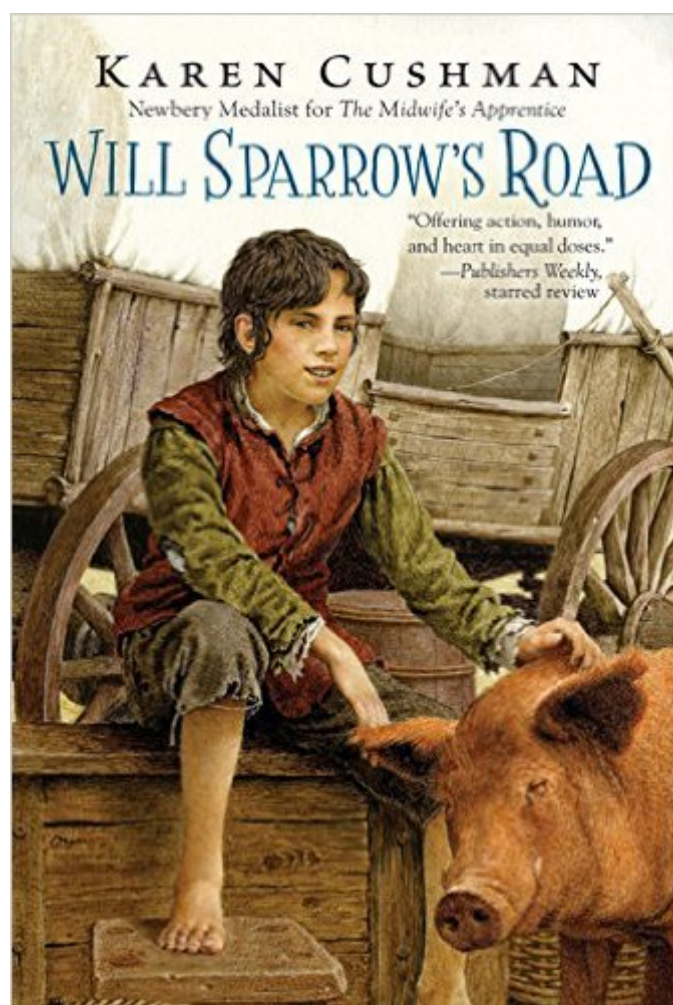


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Will Sparrow's Road



Synopsis

In his thirteenth year, Will Sparrow, liar and thief, becomes a runaway. On the road, he encounters a series of con artists—a pickpocket, a tooth puller, a pig trainer, a conjurer—and learns that others are more adept than he at lying and thieving. Then he reluctantly joins a traveling troupe of "oddities," including a dwarf and a cat-faced girl, holding himself apart from the "monsters" and resolving to be on guard against further deceptions. At last Will is forced to understand that appearances are misleading and that he has been his own worst deceiver. The rowdy world of market fairs in Elizabethan England is the colorful backdrop for Newbery medalist Cushman's new comic masterpiece.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 810 (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (November 4, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544336321

ISBN-13: 978-0544336322

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #807,690 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #112 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways #590 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe #1888 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Performing Arts

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Newbery-award winning novelist Karen Cushman is an expert writer of historical novels for youth, and is particularly drawn to tales set in "merry old England." I use this phrase a bit ironically, since one of the features of Cushman's writings is that she does not shirk from describing the hardships of life at that time, particularly for those children in the lower classes. Her newest book differs from all her past novels by featuring a boy as a protagonist rather than her usual feisty girl heroines. The novel opens by introducing its hero as follows: "Will Sparrow was a liar and a thief, and hungry, so

when he saw the chance to steal a cold rabbit pie from the inn's kitchen and blame it on the dog, he took it--both the chance and the pie."We learn that Will, not yet thirteen, has had a hard life, having been sold by his father to the innkeeper for free ale. With the threat of being once again sold to London to be a chimney sweep, Will runs away, preferring the dangerous life on the road, in which he must scrounge for food and some kind of shelter from the cold, to a sure early death as a "climbing boy." What kind of future faces our hero, besides an empty belly? Will meets up with all kinds of colorful characters on his travels in Elizabethan England, including a quack of a doctor who recruits Will to serve as his stooge, a blind juggler, and a cranky dwarf, and quickly learns to trust no one. Will manages to attach himself to a group of entertainers who perform at fairs, an Elizabethan freak show that includes a unicorn skull and a sea monster.

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