



## ***Final Crossing***

Sean Rodman

Reading level: 3.8

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### **Book Summary**

When brothers Big O and Will plan to break into cars and steal money while on a ferry trip, they do not expect to find a kidnapped girl or to deal with a ruthless kidnapper—but that is exactly what happens. Scared, but willing to run with the boys to safety, the girl is recaptured more than once while the brothers are held at gunpoint, beaten up and chased by both good and bad guys. All three of their lives are at stake, and the boys risk jail if they are caught. This could be their final crossing!

### **Prereading Idea**

Ask students to look up “car ferry” on Google images so that they will have an understanding of the setting to the story. Then ask students to make predictions about the plot after reading the back cover. Have students record their predictions and discuss them as a class. As students continue to read, have them revisit and revise their predictions as new information is presented.

**Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas**

- Marissa is like thousands of children every year who are kidnapped. Ask students to investigate kidnappings and to list some statistics about how and why children are kidnapped, the ages and gender of the victims, and the area of the country where kidnappings occur. Then ask students to find state and federal programs that help locate victims, programs that help families of the victims, and programs that work to prevent child abduction. In small groups, students should write an informational brochure to distribute throughout the community.
- Ask students to make a list of the issues Will and Big O have with their father and the lifestyle he modeled for them. Then ask students to assume the voice of one of the brothers and to write a letter to his father in prison expressing the son's feelings about life on his own. The letter should include specific details from the book for support. Have students share in small groups and post letters around the room.

**Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel***Theme*

The theme of a book is often based on what the main character learns. Ask students to work in small groups to write a thematic statement based on the lessons Will and Big O learn as a result of their ferry crossing. Then have students create a thematic message poster that visually represents the theme statement. In addition to the theme statement, students may include excerpts from the text, symbols, sketches, colors, allusions to other texts, etc. to create their thematic message. Display posters in the classroom.

*Point of View*

*Final Crossing* is told from Will's point of view, so the reader knows only what Will feels and thinks about people and situations and what he explicitly states. In small groups, ask students to select a scene where Will has conflict with another character and to rewrite the scene from that character's point of view. Have students produce and present to the class a skit based on the rewritten scene.

*Character*

Ask students to create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Big O and Will. Students should compare the brothers' physical characteristics, mental abilities and personality traits; for each item listed, students should provide one or more pieces of textual evidence to support the claim. Ask each student to select one of the two brothers and to write a character analysis on that brother. Have students share their essays, including the textual evidence, in small groups.

**Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions**

1. Why does Will set the ground rules for the brothers' operation? How does Big O feel about Will being in charge?
2. What skills has Will learned from his father that help him on the brothers' operations? How does that skill save his life?
3. Why is Will willing to risk his life for Marissa? What does this say about his character?
4. How does Marissa convince Will not to return to the car deck to find Big O? How does Will's decision prove to be a bad one?
5. How do Big O, Will, and Marissa save each others' lives?
6. In what way does Marissa repay Will and Big O for their help and kindness?
7. How does helping Marissa change the brothers' lives?

**Writer's Craft****Personification**

The author uses personification to help the reader visualize the scene; for example:

*the belly of a big ferry* ch. 6

*feeling the ferry shudder* ch. 9

Ask students to find other examples of personification used by the author and to find three sentences in the book to rewrite using personification. Students can illustrate and share their rewrites with the class.

**Strong Verbs**

Strong verbs move the action forward and help create an image in the reader's mind. Ask students to find the verbs listed below and to read the sentences for examples of powerful verb usage. Then ask students to find sentences in their own writing that they can revise. Ask them to share their "before" and "after" sentences with the class. Post the exemplar revisions as mentor texts for the students as they continue revising with strong verbs throughout the school year.

clank	ch. 6	scramble	ch. 3	stumble	ch. 12
contort	ch. 5	screech	ch. 5	wince	ch. 8
creep	ch. 3	scurry	ch. 5		
gestures	ch. 2	scuttle	ch. 8		

**Author Biography**

**Sean Rodman** lives and works in Victoria, British Columbia. He is the child of two anthropologists, parents who gave him a keen eye for observation and a bad case of wanderlust. His interest in writing for teenagers came out of working at some unique schools around the world. In the snowy mountains of Australia, he taught ancient history to future Olympic athletes. Closer to home, he worked with students from over 100 countries at a non-profit international school. He currently works at the Royal BC Museum.