



Steel Trapp: The Challenge

By Ridley Pearson

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In this riveting thriller, 14-year-old Steven "Steel" Trapp sets off with his mom and their dog, Cairo, on a 2-day Amtrak journey to compete in the National Science Competition in Washington, DC. Steel is both blessed and cursed with a remarkable photographic memory--just one look and whatever he sees is imprinted for keeps. Trying to be a good Samaritan on the train, he instead becomes embroiled in an ingenious, international plot of kidnapping and bribery that may have links to terrorists. Federal agents (first seen in Pearson's adult thriller, *Cut and Run*) track Steel and his new-found science geek accomplice, Kaileigh Augustine, as they attempt to put together the pieces of a complex puzzle. Using Steel's science contest invention--and with the help of Cairo--Steel and Kaileigh lead readers on an action-packed chase adventure as they attempt to prevent the unimaginable, before it's too late.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Steven Steel Trapp—so nicknamed for a photographic memory tight as a steel trap—is aboard a train on his way to the National Science Challenge in Washington, D.C., when he unwittingly runs afoul of a gangster with ties to overseas terrorist organizations. Steve joins forces with Kaileigh, a runaway, and the two take it upon themselves to rescue a woman they suspect is being held hostage. Now they just need to figure out by whom, and for what reason, all the while dodging meddling adults—from an overprotective mom and harried nanny to various federal agents—tripping over themselves, even as they stay one step behind Steel and Kaileigh. As the plot accelerates toward the conclusion, Steel realizes, This is just like *Spy Kids!* a serviceable benchmark. Pearson's leap into the youth thriller market is less successful than the Peter Pan books he coauthored with Dave Barry, but this has imaginative plot twists, and is a kid-friendly take on a familiar genre. Grades 5-8. --Ian Chipman

About the Author

Ridley Pearson is the best-selling co-author of *Peter and the Starcatchers* and *Peter and the Shadow Thieves*. He is also the author of eighteen novels, including *The Kingdom Keepers*, *Cut and Run*, "The Middle of Nowhere," "The Pied Piper," "Beyond Recognition," "No Witnesses," "The First Victim," "Undercurrents," and "Parallel Lies." He was the first American to be awarded the Raymond Chandler/Fulbright Fellowship in Detective Fiction at Oxford University. In addition, he secretly wrote "The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer," which was a companion book to the ABC-TV production of Stephen King's "Rose Red."

From [AudioFile](#)

Here's a thriller you might recommend to a young listener and then listen to yourself. Written by the creator of the well-regarded Lou Boldt series, it appears to be the first installment of a series in which the protagonist is age 14. Steven Trapp, nicknamed Steel because he has a photographic memory, is off to Washington, DC, for a science competition. There he becomes involved in a situation that suggests a terrorist plot is afoot. William Dufres has an ideal voice for most of the characters. He's equally believable as a female FBI agent and the 14-year-old hero. When he revs up the action, he's at his best. A.L.H. © AudioFile 2008, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Omar Stewart:

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Clarice Stephens:

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Nicole Powell:

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