The Peculiars

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Book Review
The Peculiars

When Lena turns eighteen, an inheritance from her long-lost father allows her to get away from an overly protective home life. She sets out on the train to find him at the frontier, where outcasts and people with peculiar physical traits live. Nothing goes as planned, however. The train is held up, a dangerous prisoner is broken out, her purse is stolen, and she meets Jimson, a young man who is traveling to become a librarian for a famous inventor. She also meets Marshall Saltre, who wants Lena to spy on the man Jimson will be working for. Lena’s impulsive nature precipitates adventures for herself and those around her as she finally has her questions answered and discovers her family roots.

Maureen Doyle McQuerry has written a coming-of-age novel set in an alternate fantasy world in the 1800s. It is written primarily in the third person. The plot is well done and the author uses simile and metaphor throughout to create descriptive word pictures. She successfully builds a world whose history patterns our own, even to the discrimination and persecution of those who are different. This book prompts thoughts of a sequel to find out what happens to Lena and the Peculiars. One of the most striking things about this book is the beautiful cover art by Cliff Nielsen. This steampunk novel may appeal to readers of both genders, middle grade to young adult, who enjoy reading fantasy.