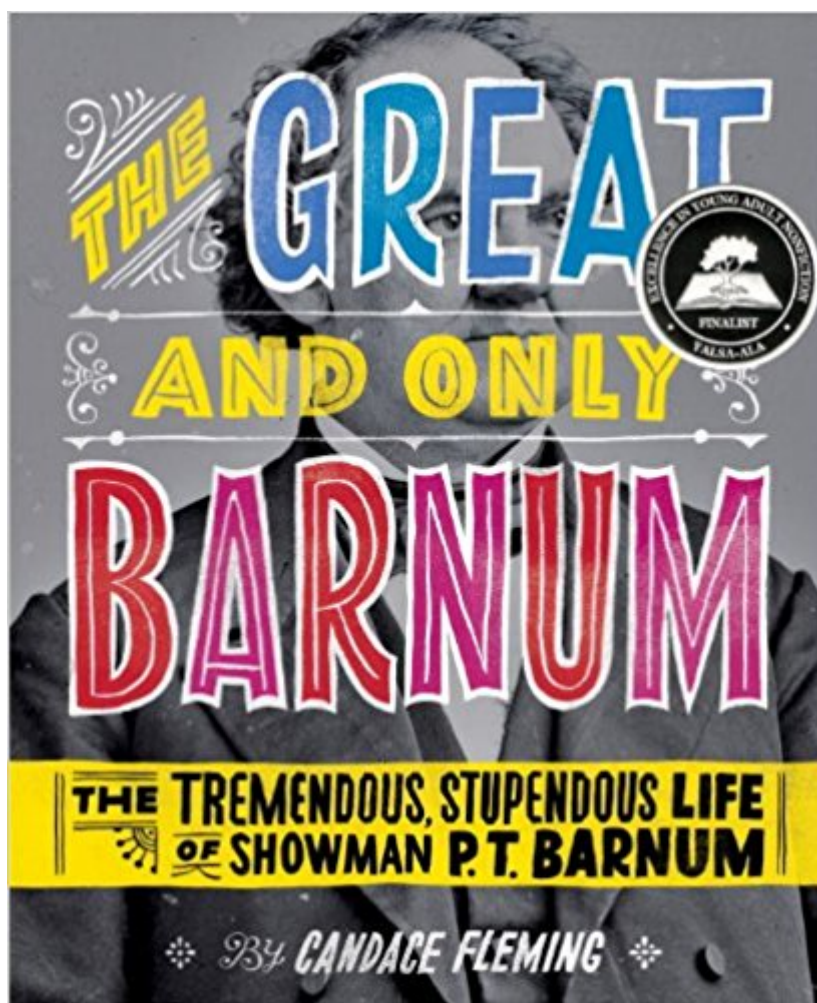




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# The Great And Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life Of Showman P. T. Barnum



## Synopsis

Step right up! Meet the astounding . . . the amazing . . . P. T. Barnum! The award-winning author of *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary, Amelia Lost, and Our Eleanor* brings us the larger-than-life biography of showman P. T. Barnum. Known far and wide for his jumbo elephants, midgets, and three-ring circuses, here's a complete and captivating look at the man behind the Greatest Show on Earth. Readers can visit Barnum's American Museum; meet Tom Thumb, the miniature man (only 39 inches tall) and his tinier bride (32 inches); experience the thrill Barnum must have felt when, at age 60, he joined the circus; and discover Barnum's legacy to the 19th century and beyond. Drawing on old circus posters, photographs, etchings, ticket stubs and with incredible decorative art by Ray Fenwick, this book presents history as it's never been experienced before—a show-stopping event!

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 980L (What's this?)

Series: AWARDS: ALA Best Books for Young Adults 2010

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Schwartz & Wade (September 8, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375841970

ISBN-13: 978-0375841972

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.7 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #209,349 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #57 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts #131 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1800s #429 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Social Skills

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up—It is unlikely that Barnum ever actually said "There's a sucker born every minute," but he freely admitted to being a master of the "humbug"—a spectacle that both fooled and entertained the public. This highly readable biography uses primary sources, including

Barnum's own words, to trace the man's roller-coaster life from his boyhood in Connecticut to his early career as the creator of the country's most famous "museums" (comparable to sideshows) to his later role as the master of enormously successful circuses, winning and losing several fortunes along the way. Fleming captures Barnum's exuberant personality and describes how his gift for promotion and dedication to delivering what the public wanted made him the world's most famous showman. She also reveals the private Barnum, a man who valued culture, had deep religious beliefs, and devoted considerable time and funds to charity and public service. Fleming is admiring of Barnum, but does not dismiss his weaknesses and faults. The text is supplemented with sidebars and reproductions of period photos and illustrations, including several of Barnum's advertisements. The bibliography includes Web sites and a selection of primary- and secondary-source books, and notes are done in paragraph format. This book goes beyond traditional biography to give students an objective and informative glimpse into the sometimes-exploitative world of 19th-century entertainment. An outstanding choice for all middle level and secondary collections. — Mary Mueller, Rolla Junior High School, MO END

New York Times Book Review, December 6, 2009: "Lively | an engrossing portrait | honest and fun" • Starred Review, Booklist, June 1, 2009: "The material is inherently juicy, but credit Fleming's vivacious prose, bountiful period illustrations, and copious source notes for fashioning a full picture of one of the forbearers of modern celebrity." • Starred Review, Kirkus Reviews, August 15, 2009: "As revealing as it is entertaining." The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, October 2009: "the extensive gallery of period photos, engravings, and advertising bills, are worth the price of admission, and bibliography, source notes, index, and web resources will assist students in turning a rousing good read into an entertaining school report." Publishers Weekly, August 31, 2009: "Audiences will step right up to this illuminating and thorough portrait of an entertainment legend" School Library Journal, September 2009: "An outstanding choice for all middle level and secondary collections." Instructor, November/December 2009: "You'll want to invite readers to step right up to this three-ring circus of a biography, which not only tells the story of P.T. Barnum, but also the circus culture he helped create and his impact and modern entertainment."

Interesting reading for sure!

I've always been curious about P.T. Barnum. He wrote a few business books, and he intended to

public an autobiography, but just never got around to it. There have been a couple other books about Barnum. There has been a lot said about him. Some of it true, and some of it not. He never said, "There is a sucker born every minute." Actually, it was a competitor, commenting on Barnum's success, who possibly uttered these words. It was believed that Barnum had sucked people into visiting his museum and circuses, but in reality, he just put on a good show, and gave the people what they wanted. Sometimes, people wanted to be fooled. In-fact, part of the fun of Barnum's museum was trying to guess what was real and what was not. People often knew they were being tricked. The game was to determine how he was tricking you, much the same way magic works. Barnum also introduced many things, to many people, that they had not seen before. He revolutionized show-business. Before Barnum, the circus simply could not travel everywhere, and be seen by everyone. Barnum created a way for the circus to travel by train, that is still used to this day. Barnum also created the 3-ring circus, because his show was the largest in the world, and he wanted to make sure, that everyone had a good seat, and didn't miss a moment of the action. To his dying day, all he really wanted to do was entertain people. I think this book is good for both children and adults. Its a pretty easy read, and I purchased the audiobook, which I listened to during my work-out. I really enjoyed the narrator, and the audiobook came with an interactive CD-Rom program, that featured extra trivia, and photos. We can still see Barnum's influences in everyday life. The way things are marketed are influenced by Barnum. Even the word Jumbo refers to an elephant once owned by Barnum, which was the largest Elephant in the world. Barnum's story is jumbo, just like his life.

Ordered for school summer reading. My 16 year old found it very interesting.

good

Excellent read, captures all the fun and excitement of Barnm

On time and exactly what was described.

Everything was great, as usual.

Some parts of the book were a little slow but there were some really good prats  
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