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Parents' Guide to

Eleanor & Park

By Sandie Angulo Chen, Common Sense Media Reviewer

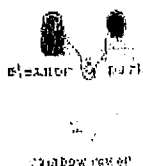
age 14+

Intense '80s romance is a fabulous pick for mature teens.

Book Rainbow Rowell Romance 2013

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A Lot or a Little?

What you will—and won't—find in this book.

Educational Value

Teen readers will receive the equivalent of a soci

Positive Messages

Eleanor and Park's friendship and romance show

Positive Role Models

Park and Eleanor love each other and want to help

Violence & Scariness

Park instigates a fight with a classmate who was m

Sex, Romance & Nudity

For a long while during their relationship, Eleano

Language

There's definitely strong language, but it'

Products & Purchases

Brands are mentioned within the context of the

Drinking, Drugs & Smoking

Eleanor's stepfather is an alcoholic who's

Parents Need to Know

Parents need to know that *Eleanor & Park* is a coming-of-age romance about two high-school misfits in the '80s who meet and fall in love on the school bus. There's strong language and mature themes about poverty, domestic abuse, and emotional/financial instability. The central characters explore...

<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2014/aug/15/review-eleanor-and-park-rainbow-rowell>

Eleanor and Park is defiantly not the typical high school romance. Eleanor is the new girl, the girl with the crazy red hair and the strange clothes. Park is the quiet Asian boy who does everything in his power to avoid bringing attention to himself: until Eleanor walks onto the bus. The two awkwardly sit together never speaking, until they come to the conclusion that they share a common interest in comics and good music. Once their barrier of silence is broken they are propelled into a whirlwind of first love. And while neither has a perfect life they manage to find solace with each other.

I just have to start with the fact that this book just blew me away. After I finished it I genuinely contemplated re-reading it straight away. I couldn't pick up another book for three days, I was dazed.

Eleanor and Park is a beautifully crafted masterpiece of a book. Rainbow Rowell has truly outdone herself and in my opinion this is her best writing so far.

From the very first page I knew I would enjoy this book, even at this early stage the characters appeared perfectly cast and I could immediately identify with them. Shortly following, it appeared that Rowell had structured this book to be in both Eleanor's and Park's point of view. A better decision has never been made. Having the ability to switch

between what both characters were feeling and their backgrounds made this book whole. Some romances can be very one sided and you read through it constantly having to guess about the secondary character; thus not developing as much a connection with them. However both characters were so unique and well written that I felt personally intertwined between their story. Eleanor comes from a very dysfunctional family. After Eleanor's father left them, Eleanor and her four siblings are forced to move into a tiny shack of a house as their mother remarries. They have so little money that toothbrushes have become a luxury and all five sleep in one cramped room. To top this off their new stepfather is a beast who will stop at nothing to get rid of them one by one. Eleanor's family life causes her to become somewhat of an introvert but her true character always shines through. She is made to have quite a sceptical personality but deep down she knows what she wants and that she does truly love Park.

While Park has a much more stable family life he constantly struggles for the approval of his father. However, after years of trying Park eventually just comes into himself whether his father likes it or not. This persistence speaks volumes about his personality. While Eleanor has her doubts Park makes them work. Their relationship is realistic and it is obvious that they were meant to find each other. His devotion saves Eleanor in every way it possibly can. He is truly a hero.

All in all while the two fell in love with each other I simultaneously fell in love with them.

Not only can Rowell write a kick-ass plot and characters, her actual writing was frankly some of the best I have read in a long time. Whatever came out of either characters mouth was silky and beautiful. Any page can be opened and a quote will be there, good enough to memorise. The way they speak, to, and about, each other makes me renew my faith in humanity. One of my favorites: "Eleanor was right. She never looked nice. She looked like art, and art wasn't supposed to look nice; it was supposed to make you feel something." How can you not fall in love with this? There is just such an overwhelming power to this book that will swallow you and not leave. Rowell encapsulates everything that a good romance should be, together with so much more. Everything is unwrapped from the awkwardness to the love. The ending left me craving so much more of it. The last page left me confused and a complete wreck. Honestly, it hurt, and I was left hoping that there was an epilogue that had gotten secretly ripped out of my copy... Overall this is quite a perfect book and I recommend it to everyone over the age of thirteen. I don't believe I have conveyed even a fraction of how utterly fantastic it was and all I can do is prompt you to grab a copy and brace yourself.