



2016

Eleanor and Park

Katelyn Osborn

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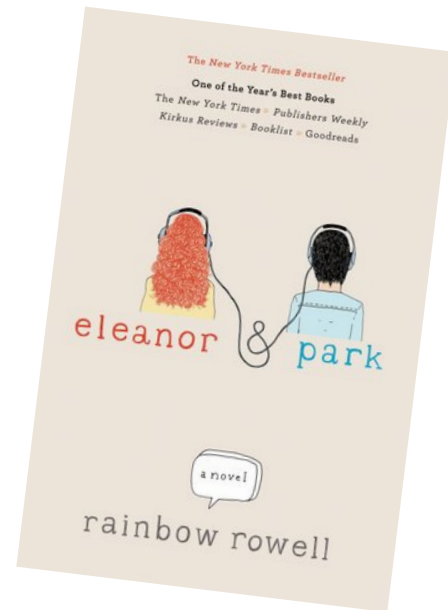
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Osborn, Katelyn (2016) "Eleanor and Park," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 37 : Iss. 2 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss2/9>

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Book Review

Title: Eleanor and Park
Author: Rainbow Rowell
Reviewer: Katelyn Osborn
Publisher: St. Martin's Press
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9781250012579
Number of Pages: 325
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Dependable



Review

When Park sees the chubby new girl with the oversized clothes and a big frizzy red mop of hair looking for a seat on the bus, he knows what his friends are thinking and what he would usually think – stay FAR away. But inexplicably, he moves over so she can sit down next to him. Thus begins the unlikely relationship that is “Eleanor and Park”. What starts as an innocent friendship founded on comic books and punk music turns into something more, something they’ve never felt before, something that makes Eleanor feel like the incessant bullying at school and living with her abusive stepfather, mousy mother, and throng of little siblings could be bearable. Park sees her for the strong, independent girl she’s always been, but somehow never saw in herself, and ultimately gives her the courage to make her life her own – even if it might mean she leaves his for good.

Rainbow Rowell creates an interesting, although flawed, first love story with *Eleanor and Park*. It is written from both Eleanor and Park’s point of view in alternating chapters, which gives us a look inside both of these character’s minds. This alternating viewpoint usually works well with the story, although the characters can sound homogenous in some places. The plot tries to get out of the predictable nature of the story by taking some unexpected turns, which sometimes work and sometimes feel a little out of character and forced. Readers will run the gamut of emotions, from elated or blissful to frustrated and disconcerted, which will drive them even faster to devour the book to see what happens to Eleanor and Park. From their first kiss to their first real disagreement to when they say goodbye, this book is young love at its most vulnerable, and consequently, its most relatable and sincere.

*Sensitive readers beware: this book also deals with mature content (implied sexual violence/abuse, drugs and alcohol) and uses severe language throughout.