

Eleanor & Park

Rainbow Rowell

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The setting of *Eleanor and Park* is in Omaha, Nebraska during 1986-1987. This book is written in the perspective of both Eleanor and Park. Eleanor is a sophomore; not only is she the new kid at school, she typically stood out from the crowd with her chubby appearance and her big red hair. Despite all this, she was very intelligent and aware of her surroundings. Eleanor's home life was deeply problematic, with an abusive stepfather and her four younger siblings all living in a small, dirty house. Her fellow classmate, Park Sheridan, has his own set of problems. He doesn't feel like he has any close friends that he could connect to. He is an Asian American, which is quite infrequent in a small town in Nebraska. Despite the fact that his home life is much better than Eleanor's, his father had always made him feel insecure about his masculinity. When these two teenagers sit together on the bus, they form a connection and a friendship during the bus rides. They begin to listen to music and read comic books together. After many bus rides and conversations together, they begin to fall in love. Unfortunately, not everyone at their school is a fan of their relationship. Not only were their taunts and bullies, their home lives worsen. This book captures a difficult-to-explain, but loving relationship between Eleanor and Park.

This book was so touching and moving; I was able to understand Eleanor and Park's suffering and pain through beautiful descriptions and words. I loved the way the book captured a lot of teenage emotions and expressions and how high school was not kind to everyone. I would definitely buy this book for a friend from the ages between 14-17. I think all readers would be able to learn something from this book, whether it be about them or the characters.

Recommended Titles:

Dumplin' by Julie Murphy

Love is Mixtape by Rob Sheffield

Like No Other by Una LaMarche

How to Say Goodbye in Robot by Natalie Staniford

The Summer of Chasing Mermaids by Sarah Ockler