



SCHOOLWIDE BOOK REVIEW

***Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* by Pam Munoz Ryan**

Scholastic Press, ISBN 0-590-96075-X

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Everything about this fictional account of a true story is big and exciting—from the big personalities, big dreams, big accomplishments, and big thrills, to the big illustrations and big type. Pam Munoz Ryan recounts the clear April evening in 1933 when two good friends, Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt, left their fancy White House dinner party to fly a plane together. The Author's Note in *Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* reveals Munoz Ryan's inspiration for writing this story about two remarkable women. After hearing a vague reference to their escapade, she spent hours researching newspapers until she found proof that the event occurred.



Brian Selznick's unique pencil illustrations capture the momentous night, both in beauty and in authenticity. His drawings depict each scene boldly and provide readers with a close-up view of these two amazing historical heroes. To research scenes, Selznick lived in Washington D.C. so that even the patterns on the White House china and wallpaper are accurate.

Selznick discovered a photograph from that infamous night, which appears on the last page as a wonderful surprise to readers still wondering. The author's deep admiration of Amelia and Eleanor, combined with the proof she and Selznick uncovered, create a delightful and powerful fictional narrative.

In the Classroom

Amelia and Eleanor go for a Ride is fantastic book for your classroom library and serves as a touchstone text for writing and research. Because the story is a model for combining history and fiction, students are encouraged to think of other events in history to which they may apply a fictional narrative. The Author's Notes unlock the writer's secrets to generating ideas (her heroes), selecting a topic (their special night), and collecting (researching actual details).

Amelia's love of flying and Eleanor's love of driving—their passions—are paralleled in this historical picture book. Munoz Ryan's story structure elicits class discussions comparing and contrasting the two most admired and respected women of their time using language from the text. Creating a Venn diagram entitled "Birds of a Feather," show students the strength of character and personality that distinguished these two incredible women:

<i>Both</i>	Amelia	Eleanor
outspoken	female pilot	first lady
determined	flies planes	drives cars
daring	in the cockpit	behind the wheel
tried things other women wouldn't even consider		
married		
famous		
fun & adventurous		
wore gloves & scarves		
could do anything she set her mind to		
feeling of independence		

Lead a Social Studies historical discussion on hobbies and careers for women in the 1930's to further students' appreciation of these two women and the qualities that made them outstanding.

Facilitate artistic appreciation for Selznick's larger-than-life illustrations that illuminate the night sky as well as the heroes' adventure that night. Guide students to consider the big bold text that compliments the big bold night and the font styles chosen to boost excitement and indicate importance.

Encourage further research into both women's lives.