

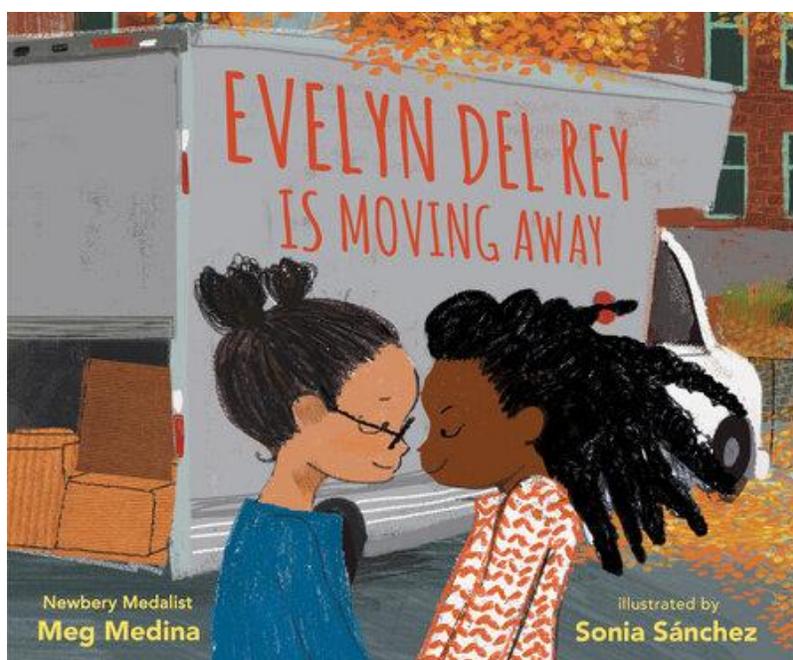
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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Review of *Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away* Written by Meg Medina & Illustrated by Sonia Sanchez

Adult/Educator Reviewer: Jennifer Ervin
University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Student Reviewer: Loretta, 5 Years Old



Medina, M. (2020). *Evelyn Del Rey is moving away*. Candlewick Press.

ISBN: 9781536207040

Adult Review: Jennifer Ervin

Evelyn Del Rey is *Moving Away* is a simply beautiful story that demonstrates the closeness of two friends, and what it feels like to a child when your closest friend- your whole world- moves away. It is an emotional glimpse into how closely connected two children can feel- an intimate connection cut through with moments of sadness as one prepares to move away.

The story takes place over the course of one day- Evelyn Del Rey's moving day. Evelyn and Daniela start out playing together as they always do, with Evelyn calling to her friend from across the alley that separates their nearly identical homes. They play with one another and try to pretend that things are normal, but there are constant reminders of the importance of the day coming through comments made by neighbors, and in the emptiness of Evelyn's home.

The connection that the girls feel with one another is symbolized in the similarity between their buildings and their bedrooms, which Daniela calls "almost twins." The loss and separation that is coming at the end of the day is shown in an empty room in Evelyn's house, which they fill with their imaginations. The connection that will remain between them, evident by the end of the story, is demonstrated through a rope the girls use to transfer toys between their windows.

Spanish phrases are woven gently into the English narrative, blending in naturally. The urban neighborhood, shown in the style of the apartment buildings, narrow alleys, and pigeons that a neighbor feeds, also includes a diverse group of characters that add to the familiar and true to life feeling of this story. The backdrop is full of refreshing and vibrant colors of an autumn day in the city.

Throughout the novel, Sonia Sánchez's illustrations include beautifully layered patterns over repeated parallel lines that give the pages an incredible depth, allowing the reader to see something new in the illustrations each time they read. The colors and textures on each page add to the emotional tone of the story. Some pages are full of fresh autumn leaves that lay over one another, other pages show empty spaces filled in only with the girls' friendship, one page is cluttered as they remake an empty space with their imaginations. The depth of the images shows the closeness of the girls, and then the distance between them, as they navigate emotional swings between joy in their playtime and anxiety about Evelyn's imminent move. Sánchez's drawings demonstrate the theme that distance will not separate us. The first pages of the story, showing Daniela as a child holding her pet as Evelyn calls to her, mirror the last pages, where we see an adult Daniela holding letters from Evelyn as a photo of Evelyn looks on.

This story is an excellent choice for any parent navigating the difficulties of moving with young children. It allows children to see how moving away can be a difficult experience, but that just because we move to new places, our friendships do not have to end.

Student Review: Loretta, 5 Years Old

What did you like about the story?

I kind of like how she is trying to make her friend not have to leave, even though her Mami does find her, it's kind of nice to me (*Loretta is looking at a page where the girls try to hide from their mothers). I also kinda like how they don't want to let go until they're on the floor because they really want to stay longer and spin, so it shows me that they really love each other. I like how at the end the girl was giving her so much letters that it lasts until she's grown up, it's kind of nice to me. It's also kind of nice to me that she drew a picture of her best friend that she very much loved. I kind of like how they move away but they still love each other.

What do you like about the pictures in this book?

I like how her walls are pink because pink is my favorite color. I also like how Evelyn's shirt is pink. I also like how her dress is so pretty and how she's wearing a beautiful dress that is mostly red because red is one of my favorite colors too.

What does this book remind you of?

This book reminds me of my best, best, best friend whose name is Miles... Miles is also somebody who I really loved.

How did you feel when you moved away from Miles?
I felt kind of happy and also sad...because I also felt kind of shy from moving away because I have to make new friends...

Is it sad to move away?

Not that sad, kind of lucky because you get to see new things but also kind of sad too.