

The Love Story of Two Amazing Bald Eagles

Ann Parris-Stewart

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A story of an eagle pair's adulthood is intertwined with facts about their species in the informative picture book The Love Story of Two Amazing Bald Eagles.

Ann Parris-Stewart's educational picture book *The Love Story of Two Amazing Bald Eagles* concerns the US's national bird.

Kea and Semaj are two American bald eagles who have been friends since childhood. They decide to be mates for life. After a brief courtship, they build a nest together and alternate warming the two eggs Kea lays. When the eggs hatch, the mates enjoy raising their two babies, Elin and Arden, until they are ready to fly off and begin their own lives. Semaj reassures despondent Kea that they "can certainly have more babies," reinforcing their adoration for each other and the fact that their lifespans are long.

The story of the eagles' adult life and parenthood is intertwined with informative facts about bald eagles, including that they have a lifespan of up to thirty years and that their eggs' incubation period is about thirty-five days. Some "facts" bend the truth, such as that bald eagles live only in the US, though most of the information is more grounded. Information on how eagles court and how they raise their young is woven in through engaging action, as when Kea and Semaj begin to dismantle their nest to encourage Elin and Arden to learn to fly. When the eagles convey facts in conversation, however, the effect is awkward, as when Kea and Semaj tell each other that they have white heads and pale yellow eyes.

Kea and Semaj's story moves at a steady pace. They are cheerful about expressing their devotion to each other and their children, often embracing to show their love. Their conversations are sometimes expository, though this is balanced out by the eloquent portrayals of their theatrical "zigzagging" flights and hunting expeditions. There are also vibrant descriptions of the scenic landscape they inhabit. The illustrations complement these descriptions, depicting the eagles' elegant soaring, dark-rimmed eyes, and perching talons in a lively fashion. Lush green trees and majestic mountains backdrop the eagles' story, though the inclusion of the Washington Monument in the Alaskan setting is incongruous. Further, the eagles' intimidating, stern expressions jar with the tenderness of their conversations.

In the endearing picture book *The Love Story of Two Amazing Bald Eagles*, mated birds build a life together and share facts about themselves for the audience.

AIMEE JODOIN (January 11, 2025)

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