

The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt Study Guide

**The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt by Blanche
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Plot Summary

The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt by Eleanor Roosevelt is the author's story of her life. Eleanor lived a long and full life from 1882 to 1962. She lived her life the way she wanted according to her own beliefs. The book illustrates her development as a person, from a shy young girl to a respected figure on the international scene. She was sought after by heads of state and royalty.

Orphaned at an early age, she was raised by her grandmother and other relatives. After attending boarding school in England and traveling through Europe, she returns to New York for her "coming out." She meets a dashing young law student named Franklin Roosevelt, who is a very distant relative. She is engaged at nineteen and married soon after.

Eleanor, coming from a privileged background, must learn how to cook, manage a household and raise children. At first, she relies totally on her mother-in-law to make her decisions. But Franklin is interested in politics, which thrusts the shy Eleanor into the public view. She learns how to deal with it and develops into her own person, with her own views and making her own decisions.

Her life centered around her husband and children. She supported Franklin in whatever he did, feeling that this was the proper role for a wife. Many times she did not even ask what his plans were or discuss any of his plans. No matter what her personal preferences were, she supported her husband in whatever he chose to do, as he moved through the ranks of New York democratic politics to his three terms as U.S. President.

Eleanor came into her own after Franklin's death when she had to be independent and makes her own decisions. She was named a delegate to the United Nations and served as the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights. Throughout her life, she wrote a newspaper column and remained active in the Democratic Party.

She traveled around the world, meeting heads of state and royalty in her travels and at the White House and at Hyde Park. Basically a pacifist, Eleanor's objective in life was to work for world peace, and this was often the reason for her travels during both times of war and peace. She cared about people and tried to help improve their living conditions.

Throughout the book Eleanor gives her views about the many public figures she met during her life. The book is about her travels and the various people she has met. She does present her views about many topics such as war, Communism and its dangers, and the conditions of the places she has visited. The reader watches her develop into a strong person over the course of the book and into the great lady that she became.



Chapters 1-2

Eleanor begins her story by introducing her maternal grandparents, the Halls. Her grandfather died young, leaving her grandmother to raise the children. Eleanor's mother, Anna Hall, married Elliott Roosevelt at the age of nineteen. The senior Elliott had a drinking problem and spent time in a French sanitarium. After the birth of Eleanor's brother, Hall, in France, Anna and the children returned to the United States without Elliott. He lived apart from them up until Anna's death in 1892. After that, the children went to live with grandmother Hall of West 37th Street.

Eleanor adored her father. When her mother died, he told her that someday they would be together, but her brothers were too small and they were all better off at grandmother Hall's. He would visit her whenever he could. Her aunts Pussie and Maude and her uncle Vallie also lived in the house on West 37th Street.

Many of Eleanor's family were involved in charitable efforts to help the poor and often took Eleanor along on their missions, so she was aware at an early age that there were many people who were suffering for various reasons. That winter, her brothers came down with scarlet fever and Ellie died. Her father died on August 14, 1894. The children spent their winters in New York City and their summers at Tivoli. There were French lessons, sewing lessons, dancing and music lessons and many books to read. The grandmother who had problems controlling her own kids when they were young was determined to be a strict disciplinarian with Eleanor and Josh. Even though there were servants, the young Eleanor helped out with the chores.

Chapter Two covers Eleanor's adolescent years. She had little contact with the Roosevelt side of the family, being allowed to visit only once or twice during the summer. She was not comfortable at the parties they had because she was not a good dancer and was ill at ease with boys.

At the age of fifteen in 1899, she was sent to Europe with her aunt, Mrs. Stanley Mortimer, or Aunt Tissie. She was enrolled in Mlle. Souvestre's Allenwood boarding school. Christmas was spent in London with the Mortimers and then to Paris to study French where she lived with a French family. Eleanor enjoyed the time she spent there. During this time, her uncle's Rough Riders became famous and Uncle Ted becomes the governor of New York.

Summer was spent in Saint-Moritz, the Austrian Tyrol and Munich with her aunt. At Easter she traveled to France and Italy with Mlle. Souvestre. During these trips, Eleanor learned how to make travel arrangements and how to be less rigid. At the end of the school year, she sails home to New York with Aunt Pussie.

Chapters 3-4

Eleanor spends her summer in the Northeast and then returns to school in England. Her cousin Corinne is also at the school and her aunt and uncle were living in England. She continued her travels with Mlle. Souvestre during holidays. Eleanor was now eighteen and this was her last year of school, and she returned to New York and spent the summer at Tivoli. This was the year of her "coming out," so she made the rounds of parties and dinners. She eventually makes some friends. She occasionally saw her cousin Franklin Roosevelt who was attending college.

The following year grandmother Hall closed the house on West 37th Street and Eleanor went to live with her cousin, Mrs. Susie Parish. Eleanor began her work with the Junior League and at the Rivington Street Settlement House. At nineteen, in 1903, she accepted Franklin's proposal of marriage.

In November 1903, when Eleanor's Aunt Gracie died, President Theodore Roosevelt attended the funeral. It was her first taste of what it was like to have a President attend any kind of event. Eleanor spent the winter of 1903-1904 in Washington D.C. with her Aunt Bye. Summer of 1904 was spent in Canada with Franklin's family and their engagement was announced in the fall. Franklin began law school at Columbia and Eleanor began to prepare for her wedding in 1905. Uncle Ted would give her away on March 17, 1905, first having attended his inauguration on March 4.

Chapter Four begins with the wedding. Most of the people were more interested in the President than they were in the newlyweds. They spent their first honeymoon at Hyde Park and then moved to a small hotel apartment while Franklin continued law school. That summer, they traveled to Europe where they visited England, France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. They met family members in various places and visited friends in Scotland.

They returned home to New York and a house that Franklin's mother had prepared for them, complete with servants. Franklin returned to law school and Eleanor easily stepped into her new life. She was taking her place as a society matron.

Cjapters 5-7

Eleanor's first child, Anna Elearnor, is born on May 3, 1903. They spent their summers at the Roosevelt home in Hyde Park and the summer home in Campobello. Since Eleanor had always had servants, she didn't know how to cook or take care of children. Their first son, James, was born on December 23, 1907. Franklin's mother brought them a house on East 65th Street. Eleanor relied on her a great deal instead of making her own decisions.

The first ten years of their marriage kept Eleanor busy with babies. Their second son, Franklin, was born on March 18, 1909 and died that same year. Eleanor had nurses to care for the children. Baby Elliott arrived on September 23, 1910 when Franklin was campaigning for state senator. At this time, Eleanor was too busy with the children to involve herself in public life. She saw her role as making the household plans.

In Chapter Six, Eleanor and the family move to Albany and Eleanor is introduced to politics. This is the first time Eleanor is away from her mother-in-law. She occasionally sat in the Capitol gallery listening to the speakers. Her interest in politics stemmed from her belief that it was a wife's duty to take an interest in her husband's work. Franklin's mother bought them a house in Campobello.

Eleanor attends her first political convention in 1912 and she understood very little of what took place. Franklin supported Woodrow Wilson. Both the Roosevelts became ill with typhoid fever after a boat trip during which they drank water from pitchers in their cabin. Eleanor recovers much more quickly than Franklin does, but he is still re-elected to the state senate.

In Chapter Seven, Franklin is appointed assistant secretary of the navy and in 1913 the Roosevelts moved into Auntie Bye's house in Washington D.C. The older children were attending school, and Eleanor took part in the social life of the city. They spend Sunday evenings at home, dining informally and during this time, Franklin added to his collection of navy items. Eleanor continued to perform her social duties of calling on other wives, even though she was expecting another child. She accompanied her husband on inspection tours and often took the older children with them. Eleanor did not like being separated from her children. The fifth child, Franklin, Jr. was born on August 18, 1914.



Chapters 8-10

In 1915, Eleanor accompanies Franklin and other government people to the World's Fair in San Francisco. Eleanor feels she is becoming more independent at this time due to her husband's frequent absences. She is still somewhat shy and feels ill at ease in public situations.

Europe at this time was fighting World War I. America was not yet involved but there were many debates about what role America should play. Eleanor was basically a pacifist at this time.

Chapter Nine opens with the birth of John Aspinwell, born in March, 1916. Eleanor and the children spend the summer at Campobello, with Franklin visiting when he could. They did not return until late September due to an epidemic of infantile paralysis. During this time, conditions in Europe worsened and Franklin is called back from Haiti. Preparations begin for U.S. entry into the war. The Roosevelts are living in a bigger house on R Street when the US actually enters the war. Eleanor was in the Visitor's Gallery to hear the President deliver the declaration of war to Congress.

After the declaration of war on April 6, 1917, the structure of Washington social life changed. There were no more social calls. There was work for the Red Cross and Navy League and entertaining members of foreign missions who came to discuss wartime matters. Uncle Ted came to Washington wanting to organize a division so he could go to the front, but his proposal was not well received. Her brother Hall was also not allowed to enlist because he was employed by General Electric in a position vital to the war effort. He was then allowed to enlist in aviation, which he did.

Eleanor was involved in running her household, maintaining an environment of normalcy for her children, and taking part in wartime activities, working in hospitals and other places. Eleanor feels she learned from these experiences and became a better person.

The Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. Chapter ten discusses the adjustments to life after the war. They departed for Europe in January, 1919 on government business during which time Uncle Ted died. Eleanor visited hospitals in and around Paris and visited some of the battle sites. The Roosevelts sailed home on the same ship as President and Mrs. Wilson. This ended Eleanor's two-month separation from her children.

During this time Eleanor became interested in woman's rights. Grandmother Hall dies in August.



Chapters 11-13

While Franklin attends the 1920 Democratic convention in San Francisco, Eleanor takes the children to Campobello. She learns that he receives the vice-presidential nomination. This meant that Eleanor and the children had more campaign obligations to fulfill. Franklin resigned as assistant secretary of the Navy, and they closed their house in Washington. Eleanor settled the kids in school and went on a four-week campaign trip with Franklin. Staff members take the time to show Eleanor what is expected of a candidate's wife. Franklin loses the election and forms the law firm of Emmet, Marvin, and Roosevelt.

The Roosevelts move to New York following the election. Without the social life of Washington, Eleanor is somewhat bored. She takes cooking lessons and attends business school. She also becomes a board member of the League of Women Voters and works with Elizabeth Read. At this time Eleanor drifts away from dependence on her mother-in-law and is more independent in her own decision making.

Chapter Twelve begins with the summer of 1921 and the trip to Campobello. Franklin joined them in August and becomes ill with infantile paralysis. When Franklin is able to travel, they move back to New York. Anna, now fifteen, is sent to boarding school. Eleanor never realized how unhappy Anna was because she still treated her as a child. It was a very stressful period for Eleanor, and she eventually works out her difficulties with her daughter.

Franklin recovers that summer at Hyde Park and returns to work. The older children were away at boarding school which made life simpler for them. They had to spend their winters in Florida because of Franklin's health. Eleanor continued her political work, as Louis Howe had suggested. Franklin was also active in a variety of organizations. His only political activity during this time was to convince Al Smith to run for governor.

In Chapter Fourteen, Eleanor travels and makes speeches. Eleanor discusses her husband and how he approached problems. In this section of the book, she discusses her role as a political wife. She says that she never tried to influence her husband politically. Eleanor learned from him.

Eleanor works in radio during the years of the depression and donates most of her earnings to charity.



Chapter 14-16

The Roosevelts were not in public office in the 1921-27 period. In 1925, Franklin became a partner in a law firm which became Roosevelt and O'Conner. He could walk with the aid of braces and crutches and could still drive a specially equipped car. He and Eleanor helped form enterprises which would promote employment, such as the furniture factory with Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman. This venture survived the early years of the depression and then was closed. Eleanor even taught for a while at the Todhunter School. She continued to teach even after Franklin became governor.

Chapter Fifteen opens with Franklin taking Elliott with him to Houston for the Democratic Convention in Spring of 1928. Alfred E. Smith was nominated for President. Franklin sends Louis Howe as his representative during the campaign. Eleanor was also working for the Democratic Party. Her youngest son was now in boarding school at Groton. It had been difficult for her to take all of her children to boarding school, but the youngest was the hardest.

Eleanor did attend the state Democratic convention that fall. They wanted Franklin to run for governor. Franklin was in Warm Springs for his treatment and did not attend the convention. They persuaded him, by phone, to accept the nomination. Franklin narrowly won the race, even though Alfred Smith lost. Smith thought that he would still be able to control Franklin and the governorship, but he was wrong. As governor, Franklin developed many of the programs that he would later promote at the national level when he was President.

Eleanor helped Franklin inspect many of the state institutions since it was so difficult for him to walk. During the summer, she took her younger sons to Europe. Franklin had wanted them to see firsthand the World War I battle fronts. In 1930, Franklin was re-elected New York Governor. He was already a leading candidate for the Presidential nomination.

Eleanor does not know when Franklin decided to run for President but she knew that Louis Howe had plans for Franklin's political future. A "brain trust" of advisors began to form around him. The convention was in Chicago and Alfred Smith was also trying for the nomination but didn't receive it. The Roosevelts flew to Chicago so Franklin could accept the nomination. The campaign began in September. They spent election night in New York City. His inauguration was on March 4, 1933, and they moved into the White House. Eleanor now had to learn how to manage the housekeeping tasks at the White House. She quickly developed her routine for managing her duties.



Chapter 17-19

Eleanor was very busy during her first year in the White House. The United States was in the Great Depression and, according to Eleanor, there was a great spirit of cooperation as they all worked to improve conditions. They worked out their own routine for visitors of which there were many because of conditions in the world.

As First Lady, Eleanor never consented to Secret Service protection. There were times when she went out alone to meet friends, driving herself. The Secret Service finally gave her a gun to carry in her car. Eleanor and Franklin always insisted on an uninterrupted meal together after either returned from a trip so they could discuss their experiences. Eleanor felt that her trips and reports were her way of helping him since she provided him with information that he wanted and needed to know. At this time, before television, the First Lady was able to travel without being recognized.

Eleanor would travel to various places and be appalled by the living conditions, such as in the mining areas of West Virginia. She would then help devise programs to help the people.

Chapter Eighteen covers the 1934-36 period, which Eleanor describes as one of peace. At Franklin's urging, she traveled to Puerto Rico and other islands, where she found deplorable living conditions. The administration implemented programs to provide housing and better living conditions. She did not actively campaign in Franklin's campaign for re-election in 1936. Election night was spent at Hyde Park and improving relations with Latin America. This was the Good Neighbor policy. While Franklin toured Latin America, Eleanor was on a lecture tour in America. She also toured the country to see the effects of the various programs undertaken by the administration.

Chapter Nineteen covers the years 1936-37. Eleanor involved herself in discussion of legislation which she favored, but Franklin did not always follow her advice. Eleanor began to be respected for her own views on various subjects. Franklin never criticized Eleanor for any of her views, but others did, saying it would hurt him politically.

Eleanor had been writing a weekly column for the *Woman's Home Companion* during her years as First Lady. She was becoming bored with it but signed a five-year contract in January, 1936, to write a daily column.

Chapters 20-23

This chapter covers the visits of royalty to the White House. The royal visitors would visit with the Roosevelts and then visit the settlements of their countrymen. These included the crown princes and princesses of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Conditions in Europe were becoming serious due to the rise of Hitler and fascism. When the King and Queen of England visited Canada, they accepted an invitation to visit America. Eleanor became involved with the issue of protocol but Franklin made the final decisions. The Roosevelts entertained the royal couple in the D.C. area and then at Hyde Park.

Chapter Twenty-One covers the years 1939-40. Eleanor is involved with various youth organizations at this time. She felt young people had the right to express their views and concerns. Some of the organizations had Communist affiliations. Many of these groups were under investigation by the Dies (named after the chair, Martin Dies, Jr) Committee and the FBI. Eleanor eventually separated from these organizations.

During the summer of 1939, while the Roosevelts were at Hyde Park, conditions worsened in Europe as Hitler invaded one country after another. Franklin tried to avert war while making preparations for war. It was at this time that Franklin began the preparations for a library at Hyde Park to house the memorabilia and papers on his Presidency. The cornerstone was laid in November, 1939.

Eleanor feels Franklin did not want to run for a third term, even though she never discussed the subject with him. Eleanor attended and addressed the convention in Chicago. Franklin is nominated with Henry Wallace as his running mate.

Chapter Twenty Two discusses events during 1941, before the outbreak of war in Europe. Franklin meets with Churchill to discuss the Atlantic Charter. After this Eleanor's mother-in-law and brother die within a two-week period. She also begins to work at the Office of Civilian Defense.

Eleanor is hosting a lunch when news of the attack at Pearl Harbor comes. She learns the news from one of the ushers and didn't have a chance to talk to her husband until later that evening. She is present in the Visitor's Gallery at the Capitol when her husband announces the Declaration of War. Churchill arrived on December 22 for meetings with Franklin. During the war years, people came and went without time to make any arrangements.

In Chapter Twenty-Three, Eleanor wonders how she performed all her duties and travels during 1942. There were many foreign visitors at the White House to discuss the war effort. Queen Elizabeth invites Eleanor to England to see the role of women in the war effort. She stays at Buckingham Palace and also visits the Churchills. Eleanor travels around the country staying at various estates and country houses.



Chapters 24-26

Eleanor returns from England and Franklin soon leaves for a secret meeting with Churchill in Casablanca. He tells Eleanor about deGaulle when he returns. Madame Chiang of China arrived in New York City for medical treatment. She recovers at Hyde Park and then came to Washington. In April there was a trip to Mexico.

In Chapter Twenty-Five, Eleanor tells about her trip to the Pacific. It was Franklin's idea. She wanted to add Guadalcanal and other battle areas to the itinerary and finally gained Franklin's approval. It was also decided that Eleanor would wear a uniform instead of civilian clothes while on the trip. Her son told her to be sure to take some of her meals with the non-commissioned officers and the enlisted men as this would make a better impression than always eating with the brass. Eleanor visited Australia, New Zealand and various islands, including Guadalcanal.

Chapter Twenty-Six begins with Eleanor's impression of her two war trips. Visiting the hospitals was hard on her, but she was proud of the effort of the women in the various countries. In November, 1943 Franklin departed for Cairo where he was to meet with Churchill and Generalissimo and Madame Chiang. Churchill and Franklin then went to meet Stalin in Teheran. Since Stalin and Chiang were adversaries and Russia was not at war with Japan, Stalin refused to attend the Cairo meeting. Roosevelt sensed Stalin's distrust when they first met and tried to alleviate it. He felt that the Russians needed all the help the U.S. and Britain could give. The three men worked more closely together after this meeting.

In January, 1944, Johnny's wife and children arrived at the White House for a long visit. Both of the Roosevelts were happy to have them there. Daughter Anna and her son arrived the following month. In March, Eleanor went on a trip to the Caribbean, including some countries in South and Central America.



Chapter 27-28

Franklin was sick with a low fever during 1943-44 and went to Bernard Baruch's plantation in Georgetown, South Carolina. In June, the Allied invasion of Europe began. There was another election in 1944 and there were discussions of whether or not Franklin was fit to run. In July and August, Franklin traveled to Hawaii, Alaska and the Aleutians and in September they traveled to Quebec for a war conference. Soon after Christmas, Franklin began to plan for the Yalta conference. Franklin had high hopes of working with Stalin before the conference but was not so sure after the conference.

By March, Eleanor notices a change in Franklin. He needs a nap in the middle of the day and decides to go to Warm Springs. On April 12, 1945, she receives a call telling her that Franklin fainted. She is advised to continue her engagements, and that night is requested to end her engagements and return to the White House immediately. Franklin had died of a brain hemorrhage. The funeral service was held in Washington with burial in the rose garden in Hyde Park.

After the burial, Eleanor returned to Washington on the train with President and Mrs. Truman. She wanted to move out of the White House as soon as possible.

Chapter Twenty-Eight is the beginning of Eleanor's life as a widow, and she has to make adjustments. Her secretary Tommy is still with her. She feels the adjustments she had to make were not that difficult because she had to make so many changes when Franklin became ill. Eleanor had made certain decision before reaching Washington with her husband's body. She wouldn't live in the big house at Hyde Park but would live in the cottage. The big house was given to the government. She also divided much of her jewelry and furs among her children. She also had her apartment in the city.

Eleanor continued to travel and work and had to learn to manage her own finances. She had to establish a charity fund for tax purposes and she lived off her own earnings. She also did volunteer work at the United Nations and gave lectures in the United States and abroad. Her only complaint is not having enough time for leisure reading.

Chapters 29-31

Eleanor always has plenty of people to meet with while living in Hyde Park, including visiting heads of state. She always kept the freezer well stocked because she never knew who would arrive when. Since Franklin was buried in the rose garden, she often entertained official state visitors at the cottage. Among those were Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Indian Prime Minister Nehru.

Eleanor did a great deal of traveling, some of it for pleasure. She traveled to England for the unveiling of a statue of her husband in the spring of 1948 and visited the King and Queen and met Princess Elizabeth.

In Chapter Thirty, President Truman asks Eleanor to become a member of the United Nations delegation. The organizing meeting of the General Assembly is to be held in London. She was paid a salary in addition to transportation and lodging. She also served as a member of the Commission of Human Rights and served at the UN for seven years. The trip to London was made on the Queen Elizabeth, and Eleanor is required to do a lot of reading on the voyage. She also attended briefings held by the State Department.

At the first session, they elected the first President and the first Secretary General of the United Nations. Most of the diplomatic old timers were skeptical about the UN. The enthusiasm for the future of the organization was with the newcomers. At first she was the only woman delegate, though she felt very welcome, but soon other women were added. Eleanor also served on Committee Three which dealt with war refugees who did not want to return to their own countries under Communist rule.

In Chapter Thirty-One, Eleanor explains what and how she learned about Soviet tactics. She became curious about Communist countries from her work with refugees. She toured some of the war devastated areas of Germany and met with some of the refugees. Her work at the UN resulted in a great deal of contact with the Russian delegates. They weren't very open with foreigners, even when they socialized. Unlike other Westerners, Eleanor tried to understand the Russians.

Chapters 32-33

Eleanor considered her work on the Human Rights Commission to be more important than her work in the General Assembly. She found the experience to be very educational and was eventually elected chairman. They worked on an International Bill of Rights. Eleanor's work for the United Nations occupied five to six months of the year. This meant that she maintained a very busy schedule.

Working on the International Bill of Rights resulted in many tedious discussions and meetings with the Russians, who kept trying to incorporate Communist philosophy into the document. In addition, the different economic and governmental structures in the different countries complicated the situation in making it hard to gain acceptance. By the 1948 Paris session of the General Assembly, they had the document prepared. Eleanor thought it would meet with quick approval but was wrong. The committee debate alone lasted more than two months, but the declaration was finally accepted on December 10, 1948. Eleanor served as chairman until 1951 and remained a member of the Commission after that time. Her formal duties came to an end when the Republicans came to power in 1952, but she worked as a volunteer for the American Association for the United Nations after that.

Chapter Thirty-Three concentrates on Eleanor's foreign travels, which she undertook in earnest after the 1952 elections. Instead of returning to America after the 1952 Paris session, she accepted an invitation from President Nehru to visit India. She visited Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and also the Arab refugee camps. She found most of the people in the camps were idle. They were not allowed to work because they would take jobs from the local citizens. The living conditions in the camps were deplorable. After the Arab countries, Eleanor visited Israel and was impressed by what she saw. From Israel, they went to Pakistan and learned of the problems faced by that country, which had recently separated from India. Eleanor arrived in New Delhi on February 27 and was greeted by President Nehru. She traveled around the country learning of their programs and problems.

Her secretary of thirty years, Tommy, dies on April 21, 1953. In the fall, Eleanor took part in an exchange program and traveled to Japan. She spent five weeks traveling around the country learning of their customers, problems and programs. She also visited Hiroshima.



Chapters 34-37

Eleanor's travels continued as she went on to Hong Kong. She visited the border with Red China and learned about the Chinese propaganda against the United States and the United Nations. Her second visit to Hong Kong was in 1955. She also visited Istanbul where they were unexpectedly greeted by the consul general who insisted on taking them to tour the area. In Athens, Greece, she met Governor Stevenson and had lunch with the King and Queen. They discussed rehabilitation hospitals; when the King and Queen of Greece visited New York, they spent five days making unofficial visits which Eleanor arranged. They stopped at a firehouse so the Queen could see how the firemen responded to a call.

From Greece, Eleanor went on to Yugoslavia where Eleanor interviewed President Tito. She traveled around the country and learned about the labor organizations and workers' councils and how they functioned. She discussed the political and economic situation with Tito. Eleanor was impressed but convinced that the Yugoslav model could never work in the U.S. but felt that the US could work with Tito's government as they had been doing.

Chapter Thirty-Five has Eleanor involved in Adlai Stevenson's campaign. While she was with the United Nations, she was careful to keep political activities separate from her official duties. Eleanor campaigned for Stevenson in 1956 because she was not impressed with the policies of Eisenhower and felt that Stevenson would make a good President. He had discussed the possibility with her before declaring himself as a candidate. She had to send her grandson to Europe alone in order to attend the convention in Chicago since she was told it would look like she was withdrawing her support of Stevenson if she did not attend. When her duties at the convention were finished, she flew to Europe. After returning, she traveled giving lectures and campaigning for the Democrats.

Eleanor continues to talk of her travels in Chapter Thirty-Six. In 1955, she attends a World Federation of United Nations meeting in Bangkok. She spent a week in Japan noting how conditions had changed since her last visit. From there she flew to Manila and then to Indonesia.

Eleanor also journeyed to Morocco. Franklin had attended a meeting in Casablanca when he was President so Eleanor was eager to see the country. She had been invited by the Sultan.

Chapter Thirty-Seven covers Eleanor's trip to the Soviet Union in 1957. Her trip lasted for one month. She tried to view the Soviet Union from the perspective of the Soviet people. Representatives of the US Embassy met her in Moscow. Intourist had arranged her travel schedule. Eleanor was visiting as a reporter and did not always stick to the schedule but the Intourist people accommodated her. She was allowed to visit many institutes and projects and to interview many government officials.

In Leningrad she visited the institute of medicine and viewed an experiment based on the works of Pavlov. She saw the kind of training and conditioning to which the Russian people were subject. The government could rely on the masses to respond in an expected manner without any revolts.



Chapters 39-40

When Eleanor wanted to interview Premier Khrushchev, she had to put the request in writing along with a list of questions she wanted to ask. The request was granted three days before her scheduled departure and she traveled to Yalta for the interview. They discussed the questions she had prepared and she came away from the two-and-one-half hour interview feeling that Khrushchev recognized the dangers of war.

After a month in the Soviet Union, Eleanor realized the difference between life in the East and West when she reached Copenhagen where people seemed happy and could talk freely.

Eleanor discusses her second visit to Russia in Chapter Thirty-Nine. She now does not undertake projects or foreign travel unless it is for a useful purpose. She has seen most of the world and is aging. Eleanor is still worried about conditions in the Soviet Union because she feels Americans don't grasp the situation or the meaning for the future. Many Americans still believed that the Russians would revolt and didn't understand what conditioning was. She worried that the Americans were not properly informed to meet the challenge of the Soviets.

The next year, 1958, Eleanor and her travel companions returned to the Soviet Union. After visiting the World's Fair in Brussels, they went on to the Soviet Union to attend five days of activities for the Soviet Association of the United Nations. After the meetings Eleanor's primary interest was to investigate emotionally disturbed children and how they were dealt with. She concludes that emotional disturbances and juvenile delinquency are less of a problem in the Soviet Union than in America.

Eleanor is impressed with the changes in Moscow in the course of one year. There were more cars on the streets and many new apartment buildings. The people seemed happier and better dressed.

In Chapter Forty, Eleanor feels her travels have made her believe Americans should re-think their approach to world problems. Her visits to Morocco showed her the problems that are encountered when a nation transits from colonization to independence.

In 1959, Eleanor takes her granddaughter to Israel, Iran, Paris and London. She felt that Iran was characterized by poverty and poor health. The difference between Israel and Iran and the Arab people is the excitement and hope that the young people of Israel have for the future.

From her travels, Eleanor concludes that the Russians are doing more to help the people of the world on a practical basis than the Americans were and this bothered her. The American young were not as well trained to do this as the Soviets were. They are not doing the right things to extend the American Dream to the rest of the world. This is why Eleanor concentrated on lecturing to young people particularly at Brandeis University.

Chapters 41-43

Eleanor is seventy-five in October, 1959. She looks at what she has accomplished in her life. She had never planned a career and her only objective had been to experience life as fully as possible. Eleanor was always interested in learning and never had to find anything to fill her time. She was always busy.

Eleanor looks at how she changed over the course of her life. As a youngster, she was shy and afraid. As a young wife, she followed the lead of her mother-in-law, not making her own decisions. Her life centered around his husband and children, and she didn't develop any interest of her own until she reached middle age. She learned to confront and face her fears. Her overall objective was to work for world peace. American must fight the Communist threat and show the world that democracy works.

At seventy-five, Eleanor realizes that she cannot maintain her hectic travel schedule. She decides to concentrate on radio and television but is told that she is too controversial. She accepts an offer to make a margarine commercial. In 1960-61, she does a program of refugee stories as part of the UN's Refugee Year. Eleanor continues to lecture and entertain visitors at Hyde Park, including Premier Krushchev and his wife.

Chapter Forty-Two concerns the 1960 Democratic Convention. Eleanor had vowed to never take part in another campaign after 1956, but she didn't like the boss ruler of the party. At the convention, Eleanor made a seconding speech for Stevenson.

In Chapter Forty-Three the refrain of Eleanor's children to slow down is repeated. She doesn't see how she can given condition in the world. Still involved with work for the UN associations, she attends a State Department briefing in July, 1960. She is to attend a meeting of the World Federation of United Nations Associations in Warsaw, Poland. This was her first trip to Poland and she visited Warsaw and Krakow. She is able to compare and contrast life in Poland with that in Russia. Her view was that people in Poland had more freedom than the people in Russia.

Eleanor still writes her newspaper column, which she has done since 1935. Now it is a longer column that is published three times a week. She also campaigned for John Kennedy, with whom she was very impressed at his Hyde Park visit. After the election, she is back to her regular activities, telling herself that she should slow down.



Important People

Eleanor Roosevelt

Eleanor Roosevelt was born in October, 1884 to Elliott and Anna Roosevelt. Elliott and Hall were her younger brothers. After her mother's death of diphtheria in 1892, the children went to live with grandmother Hall. She attends boarding school in England at the age of fifteen and travels around Europe. Eleanor becomes engaged to Franklin at the age of nineteen, and they marry on March 17, 1905. They have six children together.

Eleanor travels with her husband during his political career, learning to manage a household and children while performing according to what was expected of her. She worked for the Democratic Party after Franklin's bout with polio as well as teaching part time. She was also active in a variety of other activities. Eleanor continued to support her husband in whatever he decided to do.

As First Lady, Eleanor met and entertained many heads of state and other people. She discusses the various people and her role as First Lady. Throughout those years, she also works as a journalist writing columns for magazines and newspapers. She also goes on lecture tours during her years in the White House. During the war years, she continued her travels to the various war areas to visit the men.

After Franklin's death, Eleanor has to adjust to living life on her own. She figures that the adjustments were not so hard because she had to make so many adjustments during her husband's illness. She gives the big house in Hyde Park to the government and keeps the cottage and New York City apartment. She continues to work and travel on lecture tours and becomes a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations and the Commission on Human Rights for seven years. She continues to travel and write her column. At her seventy-fifth birthday, she admits that she should slow down, but she doesn't see how she can.

Franklin Roosevelt

Franklin is a distant cousin of Eleanor's. He was educated at Harvard and graduated from Columbia Law School. He worked for the law firm of Carter, Ledyard and Milburn before running for state senator in 1910. He serves as assistant secretary of the navy in the Woodrow Wilson administration. He ran for vice president in 1920, but loses and forms the law firm of Emmet, Marvin and Roosevelt. He contracts infantile paralysis (polio) in the fall of 1921. After he recovered, he could only walk with the aid of crutches and braces. In 1928, he ran for and became the governor of New York. He was easily re-elected to a second term and was now considered a front runner for the Presidential nomination. Franklin is elected President and serves three terms. He developed the



programs that brought the United States out of the depression. Roosevelt led the nation to victory in World War II, traveling to various places to meet with different leaders.

Franklin had experienced a low grade fever on and off during the winter of 1943-44 but continued his schedule and attended the Yalta Conference. By March he was slowing down and taking afternoon naps. He decided to go to Warm Springs for a month. He died there on April 12, 1944.

Louis Howe

Louis Howe was a friend and associate of Franklin Roosevelt from his early days in politics. He is married with children and decides to stay and help when Franklin contracts infantile paralysis. Howe was basically the mastermind behind Franklin's career. When Franklin was out of politics, Howe encouraged Eleanor to become involved in politics as a way of stimulating Franklin's interest. Howe lived in the White House for a while with the Roosevelts but his health was failing. He died on April 18, 1936.

Elliott Roosevelt

Elliott Roosevelt was Eleanor's father. He spent one year at St. Paul's School and then went to Texas for health reasons. He received his inheritance, traveled around the world and then married Anna Hall. His brother is Theodore Roosevelt, who would become President of the United States. Elliott began to drink heavily when Eleanor was a child. He entered a sanitarium in France in 1890 and was there for several months, while Anna and the children returned to the U.S. Elliott dies in August 14, 1924.

Hall Roosevelt

Hall Roosevelt is Eleanor's brother who was born in France. He was called Josh by the family. He is educated at Groton and Harvard, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa. Hall marries Margaret Richardson of Boston in June, 1912. During World War I he was employed at General Electric in a position vital to the war effort and was not allowed to enlist in anything but aviation, which he did. He dies on September 25, 1941.

Anna Hall

Anna Hall was the mother of Eleanor. She married Elliott Roosevelt at the age of nineteen and had three children - Eleanor, Elliott and Hall. She contracts diphtheria and dies on December 7, 1892.



Grandmother Hall

Grandmother Hall was Eleanor's grandmother. She was the mother of seven children. She took in Eleanor and her brothers when Anna dies.

Franklin

Franklin, born March 18, 1909, is the second son of Eleanor and Franklin. He dies of the flu in November, 1909 and his buried at Hyde Park.

Franklin, Jr.

Franklin, Jr. is the fifth child of Eleanor and Franklin. He is born August 18, 1914. He attended Harvard and law school and served in the naval reserves.

Grandfather Hall

Hall had homes in New York City and a home on the Hudson River near the village of Tivoli. He was Eleanor's grandfather and was very interested in theology. He dies at an early age leaving his wife with young children to raise.

James Roosevelt

James is the first son born to Eleanor and Franklin on December 23, 1907. He works for a while in his father's administration and quit on the advice of his doctors.

John Aspinwell

John Aspinwell is the last child born to Eleanor and Franklin. He was born in March, 1916.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

Anna Eleanor is the first child of Eleanor and Franklin. She is born on May 3, 1906.

Ellie Roosevelt

Ellie was the younger brother of Eleanor. He contracts scarlet fever and diphtheria as a child and dies.



Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt is the brother of Elliott and the uncle of Eleanor and Josh.

Elliott Roosevelt

Elliott was born on September 23, 1910 to Eleanor and Franklin. He enlists as an aviator during World War II.

Alice Longworth

Alice Longworth is the daughter of Theodore Roosevelt.



Objects/Places

New York City

New York City was the home of the Roosevelts and Halls.

Hempsted

Hempstead is a city on Long Island where Eleanor's family had a summer home.

Italy

The European country of Italy was the site of the Roosevelt family vacation in 1890, when Eleanor was a child.

Neuilly, France

Neuilly is a suburb of Paris where the Roosevelts rented a house while Anna was awaiting the birth of a baby.

Oyster Bay

Oyster Bay was the home of the Roosevelt side of the family where Eleanor visited Theodore.

Allenswood

Allenswood is the boarding school in South Fields, England which Eleanor attended in 1899.

Hyde Park

Hyde Park was the family home of Franklin Roosevelt.

Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is the nation's capitol.



Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Fairhaven, Massachusetts is the family home of the Delano's, Franklin's aunt and uncle.

Campobello

Campobello is the Roosevelt summer home in Canada.

Albany, New York

Albany is the capitol of the state of New York.

Chicago, Illinois

Chicago is the site of several Democratic nominating conventions.

Latin America

Various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were visited by the Roosevelts.

South Pacific

Australia and New Zealand and various other islands of the South Pacific are visited by Eleanor.

Themes

Role of a Wife

Eleanor, like everyone else, lived her life according to her own beliefs and convictions. In the era in which she grew up, women were sheltered and their main role was to get married, run a household and raise children. In the years of her marriage, Eleanor saw this as her main goal in life. She supported her husband in whatever he did and usually did not even express her opinions about his choices. Whatever Franklin wanted, she coped with and saw her role as making a home for him and the children. She performed whatever was expected of her in whatever position she was in. When Franklin was assistant secretary of the navy, Eleanor spent her day making the required social calls on wives and spent her evenings entertaining. She attended legislative sessions and political conventions as required. As First Lady, she traveled around the world in support of the war effort. Whatever Franklin wanted her to do, she did because she considered it to be her function as his wife. But she learned from everything she did and developed into a strong and respected person in her own right.

Eleanor was a product of her times in her views on the role of a wife. At this time, few women had careers of their own, but Eleanor wrote her own newspaper column from 1935 on, even as First Lady. Many times in the book she presents her views about the role of a wife and how she adapted, no matter what her own preferences were.

Desire to Help

Eleanor's desire to help other is another underlying theme of the book. Coming from a privileged background, the duty to perform charitable work was instilled in her at an early age. Her elders brought her with them to various charitable activities when she was a child. This desire to help others never left her.

As the First Lady during the depression, she traveled around the country viewing the living conditions of the people. She tried to recommend progress to provide adequate housing, food and living conditions. She also traveled around the world doing this. Eleanor truly cared about people and tried to make life better for them. Because of this, her life was devoted to public service.

After Franklin's death, she worked for the United Nations and served as the chairman of the Commission for Human Rights. She remained associated with various organizations that have to do with the United Nations until the end of her life. Eleanor had always favored pacifism and her objective from World War II on was to work for world peace and to improve living conditions for people.

It was not in Eleanor's nature to relax and take it easy. She always maintained a hectic schedule, even into her seventies. She saw the dangers of Communism and tried to educate young people about the dangers and what their role in the world should be.



Because Eleanor sincerely cared about people, she was happy in what she did. She didn't do things because she felt she had to; she did things because she wanted to.

Personal Development

The development of Eleanor Roosevelt as a person is another theme of the book. The reader watches her grow and develop as a person over the course of her life. In the early years of her marriage, she let her mother-in-law make all her decisions because she didn't know how to make those decisions on her own. Whatever her mother-in-law wanted was fine with Eleanor because she really didn't have any opinions or preferences of her own. This changed as Eleanor grew older and Franklin became a political figure.

Eleanor learned from everything she did, especially from her travels. These experiences helped develop her views and strengthened her as a person. Her experiences during the depression and the war developed her concern for people, and she spent her life trying to make the world a better place. She didn't fall apart after Franklin's death. She made the decisions she had to make and lived her life the way she wanted to.

After Franklin's death, Eleanor was a respected international figure in her own right. She worked for the United Nations because she believed in the goals of the organization in striving for world peace. She continued to work as a journalist and went on many fact-finding missions to various countries. Her opinions were respected and her fulfillment and happiness came from the work she performed. Eleanor developed from a shy, young girl who was afraid to attend parties and social functions to a dignified and respected entertainer of world leaders and royalty.



Style

Style

Perspective

The perspective of the book is Eleanor's, as it should be because it is her autobiography. Eleanor tells her own story in the first person point of view, which is appropriate for an autobiography. The use of the first person makes the book more of a personal experience, as if Eleanor is personally talking to the reader.

The first person point of view is usually considered to be limiting for the reader because the knowledge of the reader is confined to the events that occur in the presence of the narrator. The reader does not have any knowledge of events that are not known to the narrator. This limitation is not a factor in this book. Eleanor is telling her own story in her own words. The use of the first person allows her to tell her own story and to present her views, opinions and experiences. Any other perspective would be clumsy and detract from the purpose of the book. The perspective chosen is the proper role.

Tone

The tone of the book is set by the author. The author is relating the story of her life in the autobiography. She is not always objective as she states her opinions, but she does not have to be. It is her story and her opinions and views and a part of the story and allow the reader to see Eleanor and other characters as human beings.

Eleanor's views and opinions of the places she has visited and the people she has met add to the richness of the book. The reader sees Eleanor and all the heads of state and famous royalty as human beings. Eleanor does not want to be, nor does she have to be, objective when she presents her views and opinions. She viewed Communism as a danger and she says so and explains why. She supported Stevenson over Eisenhower and Kennedy and she explains why.

If the tone of the book were different and more objective, it would not allow Eleanor to express her own views, and this would be a mistake. The reader wouldn't see Eleanor and the others as real people, and the book would be very dry. This kind of objectivity would not work well for an autobiography. The book would basically be a recitation of names, dates and places.

The tone of book allows the reader to view Eleanor as a real person. She is objective in reporting on the living condition in the various countries, but she is more personal in revealing her opinions of and concern for the people living in these conditions. This is evident in her discussion of Communism and the conditioning of the people and also in her discussion of how the young of the Soviet Union are more effective in helping the people of the less-developed nations.

The tone of the book makes the book what it is. It allows Eleanor to explain how she became the person that she was based on her own experiences.

Structure

The book is well written and very well organized. There are four parts to the book with a total of forty-three chapters. The first part, "This is My Story," covers the early years of Eleanor's life. She discusses her parents and grandparents and how she was orphaned at an early age. This part of the book explains where Eleanor's values came from and tells of her experiences as a child. The second part, "This I Remember," deals with Eleanor's years of early adulthood and the years of her marriage and life as the First Lady. She explains her functions and life as a political wife and First Lady and how she developed as a person.

The third part of the book is called "On My Own," and it deals with the years of Eleanor's life after the death of her husband. She talks about her various jobs, such as the United Nations, journalism and writing and why she undertook these projects. She discusses her travels and why she went to the places she visited. The last part, "The Search for Understanding," covers the latter part of Eleanor's life. She still maintains an active and hectic schedule and works for international understanding and peace.

The book contains a Table of Contents and an Index. The Index is very useful for the reader who wants to look up the various characters or events. There are many characters that appear at various places in the book, and many of them are only mentioned very briefly. There are two sections of illustrations presented in the book. Being able to view pictures makes Eleanor and the various people more real for the reader, since the readers are able to connect a name with a face.

The book, for the most part is chronological but not entirely. Eleanor wrote the book in her own way and jumps around in time and subjects in the last two parts. In spite of this, the chosen structure works well for the book.

Quotes

"I was always worried about my allowance, for my grandmother felt that we children should never know until we were grown what money might be ours, and that we ought to feel that money was something to be carefully spent, as she might not be able to send us any more." (Chapter 2, pg. 29)

"As I try to sum up my own development in the autumn on 1903 I think I was a curious mixture of extreme innocence and unworldliness with a great deal of knowledge of some of the less agreeable sides of life - which however, did not seem to make me any more sophisticated or less innocent." (Chapter 3, pg. 40)

"I know now that what we should have done was to have no servants those first few years; so I could have acquired knowledge and self-confidence and other people could not fool me about either the housework or the children. However, my bringing up had been such that this never occurred to me, nor did it occur to any of the other people who were closest to me. Had I done this, my subsequent troubles would have been avoided and my children would have had far happier childhoods. As it was, for years I was afraid of my nurses, who from this time on were usually trained English nurses who ordered me around quite as much as they ordered the children." (Chapter 5, pg. 58)

"I don't suppose that kind of shyness ever really leaves one and to this day it sweeps over me occasionally when I face a crowd, and I wish the ground would open and swallow me. Habit has a great deal to do with what one actually does on these occasions, and the next years were going to give me a very intensive education along many lines." (Chapter 8, pg. 81)

"I had come to accept the fact that public service was by husband's great interest and I always tried to make the necessary family adjustments easy. I carried on the children's live and my own as calmly as could be, and while I was always a part of the public aspect of our lives, still I felt detached and objective, as though I were looking at someone else's life." (Chapter 11, pg. 107)

"But for myself I was deeply troubled. As I saw it, this meant the end of any personal life of my own. I knew what traditionally should lie before me; I had watched Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and had seen what it meant to be the wife of a president, and I cannot say that I was pleased at the prospect. By earning my own money, I had recently enjoyed a certain amount of financial independence and had been able to do things in which I was personally interested. The turmoil in my heart and mind was rather great that night, and the next few months were not to make any clearer what the road ahead would be." (Chapter 16, pg. 163)

"Franklin never told me I was a good reporter nor, in the early days, were any of my trips made at his request. I realized, however, that he would not question me so closely if he were not interested, and I decided this was the only way I could help him, outside of



running the house, which was soon organized and running itself under Mrs. Nesbitt." (Chapter 17, pg. 177)

"I resented criticism of this kind deeply for him and for our other children, but it is useless to resent anything; one must learn to look on whatever happens as part of one's education and make it serve a good purpose. At the same time I could be amused at the attacks on me personally, especially the large campaign buttons announcing 'We don't want Eleanor either,' which many women wore." (Chapter 21, pg. 219)

"I imagine every mother felt as I did when I said good-by to the children during the war. I had a feeling that I might be saying good-by for the last time. It was a sort of precursor of what it would be like if your children were killed. Life had to go on and you had to do what was required of you, but something inside of you quietly died." (Chapter 24, pg. 251)

"I rode down in the old cagelike White House elevator that April morning of 1945 with a feeling of melancholy and something of uncertainty, because I was saying good-by to an unforgettable era and I had given little thought to the fact that from this day forward I would be on my own." (Chapter 27, pg. 283)

"'Mrs. Roosevelt,' one of them said, 'we must tell you that we did all we could to keep you off the United Nations delegation. We begged the President not to nominate you. But now we feel we must acknowledge that we have worked with you gladly and found you good to work with. And we will be happy to do so again.'" (Chapter 30, pg. 308)

"'We are not here,' I said, 'to devise ways of safeguarding human rights. We are not here to attack each other's governments, and I hope when we return on Monday the delegate of the Soviet Union will remember that!' I banged the gavel again. 'Meeting adjourned!'" (Chapter 32, pg. 320)

"My participation in political campaigns was interrupted after Franklin's death in 1945, partly because I became a member of the delegation to the United Nations and took great pains not to mix political affairs with my official duties. I believed that the questions we were dealing with at the United Nations were of the greatest importance to our country's position in the world and that they should not be approached from a partisan point of view." (Chapter 35, pg. 353)

"The more I traveled throughout the world the more I realized how important it is for Americans to see with understanding eyes the other peoples of the world whom modern means of communication and transportation are constantly making closer neighbors. Yet the more I traveled the happier I was that I happened to have been born in the United States, where there exist the concept of freedom and opportunities of advancement for individuals of every status. I felt, too, the great responsibility that has come to us as a people. The world is looking to us for leadership in almost every phase of development of the life of peoples everywhere." (Chapter 36, pg. 368)

"To me, the democratic system represents man's best and brightest hope of self-fulfillment of a life rich in promise and free from fear; the only one hope, perhaps, for the



complete development of the whole man. But I know, and learn more clearly every day, that we cannot keep our system strong and free by neglect, by taking it for granted, by giving it our second-best attention. We must be prepared, like the suitor in *The Merchant of Venice* - and, I might point out, the successful suitor - to give and hazard all we have." (Chapter 40, pg. 401)



Topics for Discussion

How did Eleanor's upbringing affect her performance as a housekeeper and mother?

How did Eleanor become interested in politics? What were her views concerning the role of a wife?

Why was Eleanor troubled about becoming the First Lady? What were some of her concerns?

How did Eleanor view her role as First Lady?

Explain how Eleanor developed her independence during her marriage.

Discuss Eleanor's views on her role at the United Nations.

Why did Eleanor consider international travel to be important? What perspective did she feel Americans should have?