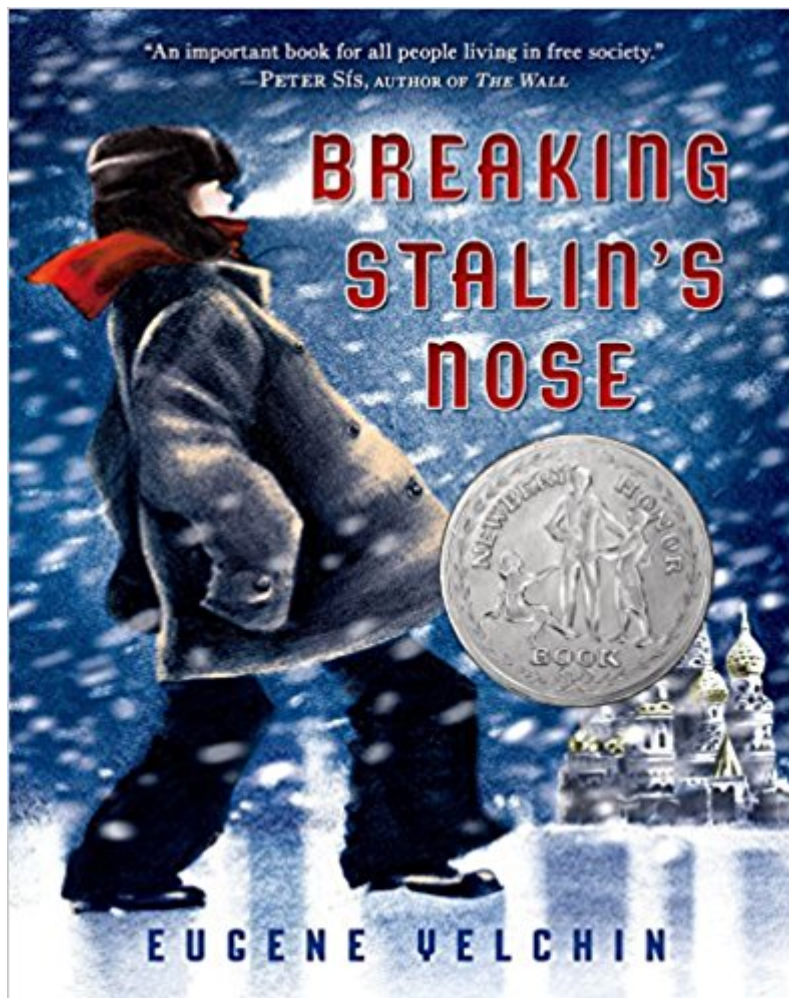


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Breaking Stalin's Nose



Synopsis

A Newbery Honor Book. Sasha Zaichik has known the laws of the Soviet Young Pioneers since the age of six: The Young Pioneer is devoted to Comrade Stalin, the Communist Party, and Communism. A Young Pioneer is a reliable comrade and always acts according to conscience. A Young Pioneer has a right to criticize shortcomings. But now that it is finally time to join the Young Pioneers, the day Sasha has awaited for so long, everything seems to go awry. He breaks a classmate's glasses with a snowball. He accidentally damages a bust of Stalin in the school hallway. And worst of all, his father, the best Communist he knows, was arrested just last night. Eugene Yelchin's moving story of a ten-year-old boy's world shattering is masterful in its simplicity, powerful in its message, and heartbreaking in its plausibility. *Breaking Stalin's Nose* is one of Horn Book's Best Fiction Books of 2011

Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; 9/15/13 edition (October 15, 2013)

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 13.2 x 178.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 107 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #24,009 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe](#) #87 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Boys & Men](#) #120 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

Customer Reviews

“Mr. Yelchin has compressed into two days of events an entire epoch, giving young readers a glimpse of the precariousness of life in a capricious yet ever-watchful totalitarian state.”
“A miracle of brevity, this affecting novel zeroes in on two days and one boy to personalize Stalin's killing machine of the '30s. . . . Black-and-white drawings march across the pages to juxtapose hope and fear, truth and tyranny, small moments and historical

forces, innocence and evil. This Newbery Honor book offers timeless lessons about dictatorship, disillusionment and personal choice. *San Francisco Chronicle* "The cat-and-mouse chase that pits Sasha's whole world against him will rivet middle-grade readers, but this title will hold special appeal for older students whose grasp of content outstrips their reading proficiency." *BCCB* "Picture book author/illustrator Yelchin makes an impressive middle-grade debut with this compact novel about a devoted young Communist in Stalin-era Russia, illustrated with dramatically lit spot art." *Publishers Weekly* "This brief novel gets at the heart of a society that asks its citizens, even its children, to report on relatives and friends. Appropriately menacing illustrations by first-time novelist Yelchin add a sinister tone." *The Horn Book*, starred review "Yelchin's graphite illustrations are an effective complement to his prose, which unfurls in Sasha's steady, first-person voice, and together they tell an important tale." *Kirkus Reviews* "Yelchin skillfully combines narrative with dramatic black-and-white illustrations to tell the story of life in the Soviet Union under Stalin." *School Library Journal*

Eugene Yelchin has illustrated several books for children, including *Who Ate All the Cookie Dough?* and *Won Ton*. He lives in California with his wife and children.

Breaking Stalin's Nose by Eugene Yelchin is a historical fiction novel. The main character is a boy named Sasha Zaichik, and adores Stalin, his 'Great Leader and Teacher'. His father works for the State Security. After his father's arrest and imprisonment, he realizes that all that he once thought perfect is actually more doubtful than it seemed. This book is great and insightful. The book tells of not just a boy's life, but of the effects and consequences of Communism. Even the children are not unaffected, and are sometimes called upon for to denounce and humiliate their fellow classmates. It is a great lesson for us from an author who grew up in the Soviet Union and wishes to expose and denounce the acts of the Soviet Union. The killings, the suspicion, the betrayals, it tells of them all. This is not just a novel, it is a lesson to us all.

I purchased this book for some of my world history students to use as a component of their personalized learning plans during the study of Russia from Revolution to Cold War. I specifically liked the readability, so it could easily be added as a component for students who either do not enjoy reading or are struggling readers.

I read this aloud to 3 of my children (ages 10, 8, 5) as part of our homeschool history study of Stalin. Not only was I interested in what was going to happen next to Sasha, my children begged me to keep reading every time I tried to put the book down. We finished reading in just two days because they were so intrigued and couldn't wait to find out what happened next. The story opened the door to a lot of quality discussion about freedom and different types of government. There were definitely some "adult" themes in the book, but I addressed them as we read and didn't have an issue. I'd highly recommend this book!

What a great book! And the author's illustrations are fantastic! You'll follow a young boy in Stalin's USSR who is about to achieve his goal by becoming a Pioneer. The story takes place over a couple days, so it is similar to *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. But instead of the setting being the Gulag, this story is about the day before one goes to the Gulag. I wish the author would publish more books about life under Communism. These lessons need to be read and re-read.

I walked away, after reading this book, a thankful human being. Thankful I live in a country where I can be free and have true self-expression. Mr. Yelchin has written an emotional roller coaster which takes a young man's sincerest beliefs from the epitome of joy to the pit of despair. Two days of his life gives witness to appalling living conditions, but he gives thanks for a life he believes to be the best offered to mankind. It is heartbreaking to go on his journey of learning the truth of an oppressive society led by a totalitarian.

This book is utterly fantastic. What a gem! Although written in an easy to read format with some pictures the content really makes you think, even as an adult. Such a great story. I required my 7th grader homeschool co-op to buy this book and many of the moms have told me how fascinating they find this book. It is not on a 7th grade level, rather a 4th grade level??, but the topics of communism, Stalin, and totalitarian government reach far beyond even 7th grade of course. We will use it as a springboard to deeper discussion of this time period in world history. Make sure you read the author's comments at the end. To find out that parts of the story were based off his experiences was very eye-opening.

Yelchin is a master of using pictures and words to tell the story of Sasha. He creates a very straightforward world where we follow the young Soviet as he learns of the world around him in Russia. Having met Yelchin, I can say he puts a lot of himself in this story and echos his upbringing

into this award-winning masterpiece. I highly suggest this book for upper-middle readers (sixth grade and on up to sophomore year of high school). I plan to have students read this on in Literature Circles prior to "Animal Farm" and "1984".

Disappointed with book. Hoped for more that children's story.

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