

Ellie's Long Walk: The True Story of Two Friends on the Appalachian Trail

Pam Flowers

Bill Farnsworth, Illustrator

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Ellie's Long Walk is the true story of two friends, how their relationship began and the close trust and bond that developed over the course of their long walk on the Appalachian Trail in 2008. One of them is Pam Flowers, an intrepid hiker who lives in Alaska. The other is her dog, Ellie, aka Eleanor Roosevelt, a puppy she adopted and trained to partner her on this 2,000-mile journey.

The story describes the pair's enthusiasm to explore new places and their commitment to undertake the Appalachian Trail, which runs from Maine through to Georgia. They trained together, taking ever longer walks with heavy backpacks on their backs and shoulders. And initially, when they set off for the journey, things went well. In good weather Pam and Ellie were hiking twenty miles a day. In bad weather their pace slowed, but through it all their spirits were high.

With beautiful, watercolor-like illustrations, Bill Farnsworth's diagrams take us inside the tent they shared and to mountain precipices where they stood in silence, awed at the view. They helped and supported each other, and nowhere was this more crucial than after Pam took a fall, injuring her back and robbing her of strength. With Ellie's encouragement and patience, she was able to continue. But the situation worsened when Ellie headed out across an icy lake that cracked beneath her weight. With a stiff and sore back, standing on the shore, Pam knew there was no way she could retrieve her friend from the water. She saw her dog's head begin to slip beneath the surface and screamed "Ellie come!" Obeying the command, Ellie managed to oust herself from the icy water and make it back to land.

By the time they complete the trail Pam and Ellie are dirty and exhausted, but triumphant. They have made a great team and given each other the strength to surmount their respective physical challenges. An interesting read for children ages four through seven, *Ellie's Long Walk* is an inspiring story about the bond between canine and human.

LAUREN KRAMER (August 23, 2012)

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