

We Own the Sky
Author: Rodman Philbrick

Philbrick, Rodman. *We Own the Sky*. New York : Scholastic Press, 2022.

A thrilling historical adventure about the rise of the KKK in Maine.

Related Books:

[*The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*](#) by Rodman Philbrick

[*The Big Dark*](#) by Rodman Philbrick

[*Stella by Starlight*](#) by Sharon Mills Draper

[*Fearless Flyer*](#) by Heather Lang

[*What Were the Roaring Twenties?*](#) by Michele Mortlock

The Magical Land of Noom by Johnny Gruelle ([available through the Internet Archive](#))

Websites:

[Rodman Philbrick author website](#)

[Lit Lessons Book Review and Extension Activities](#)

[Scholastic Educator Guide - Combating Hate and Extremism](#)

Book Trailer:

[Rodman Philbrick introduces *We Own The Sky*](#)

[Penny Library Books booktalk](#)

Book Talk:

We Own the Sky is a thrilling historical adventure about the rise of the KKK, targeting immigrants in Maine in 1924. Davy and Jo Michaud have been recently orphaned. Taken in by a distant relative—a famous aviator—they are now working with a group of stunt pilots who spend their time wing walking, leaping from plane to plane, and flying through fireworks! But though the stunts are dangerous, the real threat is building behind the scenes. When Davy and Jo cross paths with the Klan, they get tangled up in a terrible revenge plan. Can they escape with their lives? - from <https://rodmanphilbrick.com/>

Discussion Questions:

- What do you know about circuses? Have you ever been to a circus? How was it similar to or different from Ruthie Reynard's Flying Circus?
- When the Klansman rides his horse into the church (pages 42-46), Davy observes that the people in the church do two things - they either seek the safety of the church, or they work together to turn the Klansman out of the church. What did Ruthie, Davy and Jo do? Why do you think they did that? What made the other people in the church and in Lewiston respond the way they did?
- When Jo promises Davy she won't take any chances (pages 62-63), are they agreeing on the same thing? Does Jo keep her promise? Does Davy change his mind about what taking chances means?

- What does the Klan's arrival at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds make Davy realize about the people in the stands (pages 80-85)? How do Davy and Ruthie respond? How effective do you think Davy and Ruthie's response was, and why?
- Why does the Captain take Jo and Davy to the newspaper after they report the abduction? What does he mean, "A good newspaper never sleeps"?
- The chapters throughout the book were very short. Did you think that kept the story moving? How did short chapters help the action of the story? Did you like reading short chapters?

Activities:

- At their mother's burial, Davy and Jo both mention going to work in a textile mill. Like New England, North Carolina had a number of textile mills in the 1920s. Explore their [history via NCPedia](#).
- Watch stunts performed in a [Curtiss Jenny biplane](#) here.
- Trace the route Ruthie Reynard's Flying Circus travels through the state of Maine, including stops in Biddeford, Waterville, Lewiston, Union, Skowhegan, Jackman, Cumberland, Farmington, and Portland.
- Design a poster or flyer advertising Ruthie Reynard's Flying Circus. Which act would you highlight as the most exciting?
- Explore Rodman Philbrick's amazing cousin, Ruth Law, in [this online exhibit](#) from the Smithsonian Institute's National Air and Space Museum.
- Watch 10-year-old [Mildred Unger dance The Charleston](#) on a plane in 1927. Take a poll of classmates willing to dance on the wings of an airplane versus not, and create a graph or chart reflecting the results. Try imitating some of Mildred's dance moves to test how much balance The Charleston would require on land.
- Use [History.com](#)'s explanation to introduce and explore the Ku Klux Klan.