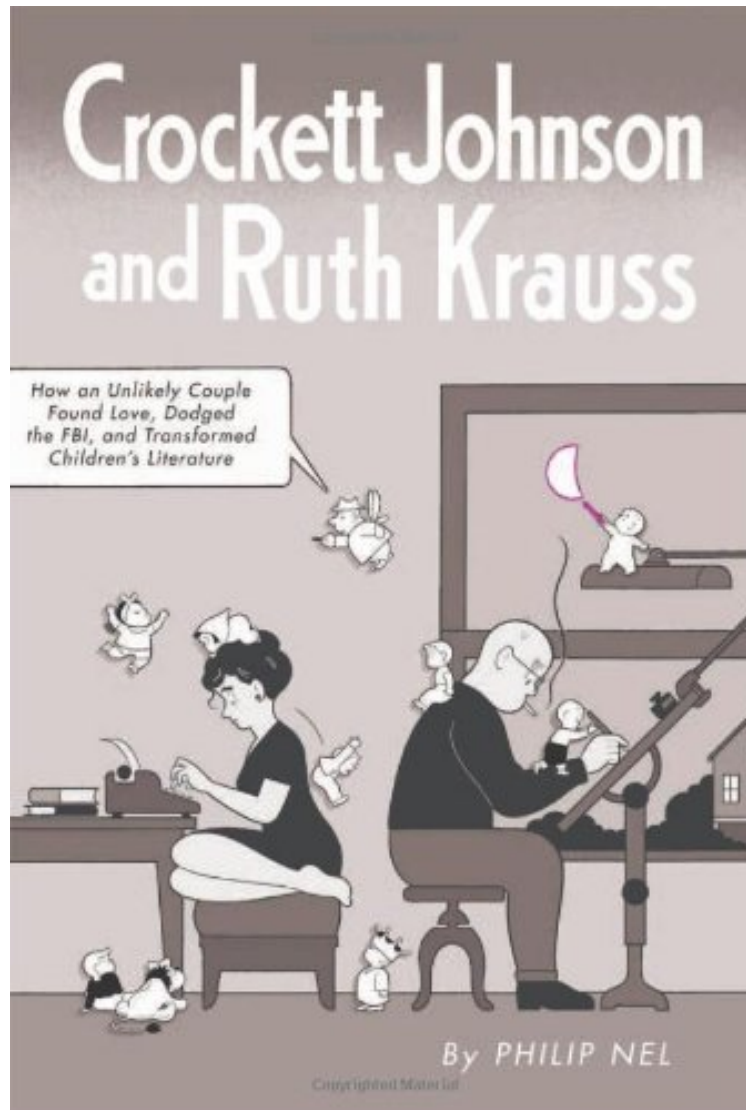


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Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How an Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature (Children's Literature Association Series)

Philip Nel

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Philip Nel : Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How an Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature (Children's Literature Association Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How an Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature (Children's Literature Association

Series):

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Excellent read
By Claudia Reder Philip Nel has done it again. He makes this history of two beloved children's authors read like a novel. Who doesn't remember Johnson's Harold and the Purple Crayon, and Ruth Krauss' Carrot Seed (among others)? Get a glimpse of American culture through the eyes of children's literature.

Crockett Johnson (born David Johnson Leisk, 1906-1975) and Ruth Krauss (1901-1993) were a husband-and-wife team that created such popular children's books as *The Carrot Seed* and *How to Make an Earthquake*. Separately, Johnson created the enduring children's classic *Harold and the Purple Crayon* and the groundbreaking comic strip *Barnaby*. Krauss wrote over a dozen children's books illustrated by others, and pioneered the use of spontaneous, loose-tongued kids in children's literature. Together, Johnson and Krauss's style whimsical writing, clear and minimalist drawing, and a child's point-of-view is among the most revered and influential in children's literature and cartooning, inspiring the work of Maurice Sendak, Charles M. Schulz, Chris Van Allsburg, and Jon Scieszka. This critical biography examines their lives and careers, including their separate achievements when not collaborating. Using correspondence, sketches, contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts, archived and personal interviews, author Philip Nel draws a compelling portrait of a couple whose output encompassed children's literature, comics, graphic design, and the fine arts. Their mentorship of now-famous illustrator Maurice Sendak (*Where the Wild Things Are*) is examined at length, as is the couple's appeal to adult contemporaries such as Duke Ellington and Dorothy Parker. Defiantly leftist in an era of McCarthyism and Cold War paranoia, Johnson and Krauss risked collaborations that often contained subtly rendered liberal themes. Indeed, they were under FBI surveillance for years. Their legacy of considerable success invites readers to dream and to imagine, drawing paths that take them anywhere they want to go.

Nel has a gift for stitching together his exhaustive research into a brisk, highly readable narrative. His affection for his subjects is evident, and he has a firm grasp on the innovations they brought to their respective fields.
Jack Feerick, Kirkus's book blog network
From the Inside Flap
An illustrated biography of the innovative geniuses who created children's classics
About the Author
Philip Nel, Manhattan, Kansas, teaches courses in children's and young adult literature, and serves as the director of Kansas State University's Program in Children's Literature. His books include *Keywords for Children's Literature* (co-edited with Lissa Paul), *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature* (co-edited with Julia Mickenberg); *The Annotated Cat: Under the Hats of Seuss and His Cats*; *Dr. Seuss: American Icon*; and *J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novels: A Readers Guide*.