



Flight School

By Lita Judge



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A persevering penguin is determined to fly in this adorably inspiring picture book from the creator of *Red Hat* and *Red Sled*.

Although little Penguin has the soul of an eagle, his body wasn't built to soar. But Penguin has an irrepressible spirit, and he adamantly follows his dreams to flip, flap, fly! Even if he needs a little help with the technical parts, this penguin is ready to live on the wind.



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Flight School By Lita Judge Bibliography

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- Published on: 2014-04-15
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- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

K-Gr 2—Little Penguin, who has the self-proclaimed "soul of an eagle," wants to fly. Steering his motorboat into a dockside flight school for birds, he announces to the other feathery students and teacher that "[he] was hatched to fly." Teacher and Flamingo are unconvinced, but they allow Little Penguin to take lessons anyway. Outfitted with goofy red goggles, Little Penguin certainly has the will, if not the talent. Even after practicing for weeks and enthusiastically jumping off the dock with a loud "Geronimo!" he still flops deep into the ocean instead of soaring above. Brokenhearted, he sets sail for home. But then Flamingo has an idea. Tying feathers and a fishing line onto Little Penguin, Flamingo helps lift him skyward while Little Penguin does his best to "Flip, flap, flip, flap, flap." Soon, he soars as he had always dreamed of doing. Alas, it doesn't last. Unfortunately, even with the soul of an eagle, "he still has the body of a little round penguin." Nevertheless, his dream achieved, Little Penguin leaves flight school one happy little bird. So happy, in fact, that he soon returns with another friend with his own dreams of flying—an ostrich with the "soul of a swallow." Judge successfully balances the humor in the storytelling, the drawings, and the situations. Rendered in watercolor and pencil and situated on a bright yellow background, the illustrations perfectly fit this delightful and charming book.—Roxanne Burg, Orange County Public Library, CA

From [Booklist](#)

A portly little penguin in bright-red flight goggles believes he has "the soul of an eagle," so he sets out to learn to fly. The teacher at flight school (a pink flamingo) kindly includes him in the flapping lessons, but when it comes time for his first liftoff, he instead plunges with a great "Gablub!" into the sea. "Penguins just aren't built to fly," says the teacher. But the flamingo pities poor Penguin, and soon the chubby flightless bird is trussed up with a fishing-line harness and hitched to the flamingo for his very first flight. Satisfied by finally fulfilling his dream of flying, the penguin happily heads home only to return later with a much-larger, similarly flightless bird friend. Judge (*Bird Talk*, 2012) is well known for her lifelike watercolor-and-pencil illustrations of animals of all kinds, and she uses similarly realistic detail when rendering the birds here, though these creatures have charmingly cartoonish personalities befitting the offbeat story. Little ones who struggle to meet their goals will delight in persevering Penguin. Grades K-2. --Sarah Hunter

Review

FLIGHT SCHOOL

Author: Lita Judge

Illustrator: Lita Judge

Review Issue Date: February 15, 2014

Online Publish Date: February 5, 2014

Publisher: Atheneum

Pages: 40

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Publication Date: April 15, 2014

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ISBN (e-book): 978-1-4424-8178-7

Category: Picture Books

A small round penguin with lofty aspirations finds success of a sort in a sweet, if slight, appreciation of the

resourcefulness of teachers.

The sign near a cluster of wooden pilings in the middle of the water reads “FLIGHT SCHOOL / WE TEACH BIRDS TO FLY.” “I was hatched to fly,” announces Penguin upon his arrival from the South Pole. “I have the soul of an eagle,” he assures the gently dubious Teacher. “Penguin and the other birdies practiced for weeks,” but he succeeds only in plunging into the ocean—not terribly gracefully. He is ready to give up when a solution devised by Teacher and Flamingo has Penguin flying, if only for a few moments, and his happiness at this one-time achievement is lasting. Judge’s edge-to-edge watercolor-and-pencil art is lively and amusing. Her various sea and shore birds—gulls, a pelican, a heron and a small owl among them—and their fledglings are just a little scruffy, and they are exaggeratedly, expressively funny in their anthropomorphic roles as teachers and students. Background shades of warm yellow, sea blue and green, and brown sand let the friendly, silly faces and bodies of the birds take center stage.

Though Penguin doesn’t discover any of his own true talents, young listeners will probably empathize with wanting something so far out of reach. (*Picture book*. 3-5) (Kirkus)

"A small round penguin with lofty aspirations finds success of a sort in a sweet...appreciation of the resourcefulness of teachers.... Judge's edge-to-edge watercolor-and-pencil art is lively and amusing. Her various sea and shore birds...and their fledglings are just a little scruffy, and they are exaggeratedly, expressively funny in their anthropomorphic roles as teachers and students." (Kirkus Reviews, February 2014)

Some are born to run; little Penguin believes he was “hatched to fly.” That’s why he’s come all the way from the South Pole (via a bright red motorboat) to attend a tropical shoreline flight school run for birds by birds. “I have the soul of an eagle,” he announces to the skeptical staff. Penguin soon discovers that zoology is destiny, no matter how nifty his red aviator goggles or how eager his new friends are to help get him aloft, which they manage to do, albeit momentarily, thanks to some engineering worthy of MacGyver. Up until the very final pages—in which Penguin returns to the flight school accompanied by a much larger friend whose aerodynamic potential is similarly problematic—the action has the tight comic pacing of a classic cartoon, one with heart to match Penguin’s own. Judge (*Red Hat*), working in watercolor and pencil, takes her hero into the sun-bleached sky and into the drink (oops) with aplomb, while her finely delineated feathered cast does its endearing best to ignore the obvious. *Agent: Linda Pratt, Wernick & Pratt. Ages 4–8. (Apr.)* (Publishers Weekly, 2/17/14)

Little Penguin, who has the self-proclaimed “soul of an eagle,” wants to fly. Steering his motorboat into a dockside flight school for birds, he announces to the other feathery students and teacher that “[he] was hatched to fly.” Teacher and Flamingo are unconvinced, but they allow Little Penguin to take lessons anyway. Outfitted with goofy red goggles, Little Penguin certainly has the will, if not the talent. Even after practicing for weeks and enthusiastically jumping off the dock with a loud “Geronimo!” he still flops deep into the ocean instead of soaring above. Brokenhearted, he sets sail for home. But then Flamingo has an idea. Tying feathers and a fishing line onto Little Penguin, Flamingo helps lift him skyward while Little Penguin does his best to “Flip, flap, flip, flap, flap.” Soon, he soars as he had always dreamed of doing. Alas, it doesn’t last. Unfortunately, even with the soul of an eagle, “he still has the body of a little round penguin.” Nevertheless, his dream achieved, Little Penguin leaves flight school one happy little bird. So happy, in fact, that he soon returns with another friend with his own dreams of flying—an ostrich with the “soul of a swallow.” Judge successfully balances the humor in the storytelling, the drawings, and the situations. Rendered in watercolor and pencil and situated on a bright yellow background, the illustrations perfectly fit this delightful and charming book. (School Library Journal, March 2014)

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? "Penguin, who has "the soul of an eagle," leaves the South Pole for flight school so he can learn to fly. . . . Judge keeps the primary visual focus on the birds, especially humorous little Penguin—all plump and furry—who may not have a body designed for flight but whose lovable enthusiasm and optimism will resonate with young readers with lofty dreams." (Horn Book Magazine, May/June 2014)

"Judge (*Bird Talk*, 2012) is well known for her lifelike watercolor-and-pencil illustrations of animals of all kinds, and she uses similarly realistic detail when rendering the birds here, though these creatures have charmingly cartoonish personalities befitting the offbeat story. Little ones who struggle to meet their goals will delight in persevering Penguin." (Booklist)

"Lita Judge's "Flight School" tells ...[a] funny — and emotionally credible — story about the power of the imagination.... Judge (of "Red Sled" and "Red Hat") has a delicate touch with expressions.... In the end, the flight he takes is a triumph of the imagination over experience. It makes him happy all the same." (NYTimes.com, April 2014)

Little Penguin believes he was born to fly, so he ditches Antarctica for a further-north avian flight school run by a heron-like teacher; unfortunately, even after weeks of lessons, he's still a lead balloon when it comes to getting airborne. His flight school pals have an idea, though, and wrap his wings with feathers attached with some fishing line. Penguin flaps and sure enough, he takes flight—with the help of a flamingo, who has grabbed the fishing line and is towing the overjoyed Penguin through the air ("Penguin was right. He *did* have the soul of an eagle. He'd just needed help with the technical parts"). Penguin leaves content and soon returns—with an ostrich who also wants to fly. Judge writes with a simple clarity that avoids any preachiness, and the streamlined emotion will resonate with young listeners: "Penguin was too brokenhearted to even wave good-bye. His teachers didn't know what to do." The watercolor and pencil illustrations are warm, robust, and thoughtfully composed, many positioned against a simple sunlit backdrop, with the tall flamingo frequently only partially seen due to its height. Penguin is a charmingly tubby and stout guy, and the skillful positioning of his red flight goggles visually convey his emotions: when he's

happy, the earpieces flip up jauntily, and when he's sad, they dejectedly droop. This could be a useful tool for many kinds of discussions—from the adaptations that some kids need in a classroom, to creative problem solving, to perseverance—or a cheerful addition to a unit or story hour about birds or penguins. JH (BCCB, June 2014, STARRED)

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"This is a book for anyone who ever tried to do something he or she may not have been born to do. . . The illustrations are bright and breezy, and this book could be a springboard for discussion about how persistence is crucial for success, no matter what the endeavor." (Library Media Connection, October 2014, Recommended)

This is a book for anyone who ever tried to do something he or she may not have been born to do. Penguin goes to flight school to learn how to fly. He claims to have the soul of an eagle. After a great deal of practice, penguin harnesses all his efforts in order to fly...and lands right in the water. Discouraged, but not defeated, he decides to try again. The other birds help him with the "technical parts." He relishes his one-time success and the next time, comes back with an ostrich in tow. The illustrations are bright and breezy, and this book could be a springboard for discussion about how persistence is crucial for success, no matter what the endeavor. (Library Media Connection October 2014)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Debra Rubino:

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Katherine Holt:

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Kent Brown:

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