



A Penguin's Quest

Scott McDermott

Christine Anderson, Illustrator

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A Penguin's Quest is a spirited picture book in which an unconventional penguin's daring decisions inspire her friends.

In Scott McDermott's invigorating, largehearted picture book *A Penguin's Quest*, a penguin travels to achieve her dream of flight.

Ingrid wants to fly, despite discouragement from her well-meaning naysayers. When she meets pigeons who tell her about a way to learn, she sets out for New York with her parents' blessing. Making friends who guide her toward the Lake Placid Olympic Ski Jumping Complex, Ingrid trains with success, and then brings her skills back to her Antarctic colony.

This straightforward and delightful adventure story is clear about its setup and events. From hailing a sailor on a container ship, to meeting pigeons and rats in New York and startling her jump instructor who spots her natural talent, Ingrid's encounters with others are earnest and warm. She's a resourceful bird whose vision is buoyed by her optimistic self-talk, including the repeated reminder that all that is now possible once seemed impossible—until someone figured it out.

Ingrid's steps toward her eventual goal are taken at her leisure; the book's occasional linguistic flourishes slow its momentum. Still, the story is compelling because of Ingrid's maintained wonderment over new experiences. Her curiosity, as about New York's one-way streets, also results in informative turns. Throughout, the tone is light, avoiding big obstacles and doubt; the focus is on positive movement. The book's conclusion is both playful and ingenious.

The book's charming mix of black-and-white illustrations with full-page color spreads enhances Ingrid's story well. Whether she's depicted sleeping inside of an ice cream freezer or training in a helmet, she's a fun heroine. The scenes are infused with gentle, appealing humor, as when Ingrid flattens herself against a transit train while hitching alongside rats dressed in hip street wear. They also convey polar and urban spaces ably, through evocative blues and grays that pull the story's disparate settings together.

A Penguin's Quest is an uncommon, spirited picture book in which an unconventional penguin's daring decisions inspire her friends.

KAREN RIGBY (January 3, 2022)

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