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The Little Crow That Didn't Know How to Fly

Don Adolfson
Archway Publishing (Sep 22, 2017)
Softcover $12.99 (24pp)
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Prosy and heartfelt, The Little Crow That Didn't Know How to Fly *is a picture book celebration of early milestones on the road to independence.*

In Don Adolfson's picture book *The Little Crow That Didn't Know How to Fly*, a reluctant crow learns to hone his instincts. With classic themes of growing up and facing change, this story reveals how a little encouragement goes a long way.

The familiar plot features a crow who is afraid to leave his nest but who finds that he's more capable than he thought. The topic is suited to preschool readers who are similarly learning their limits, though the book reinforces its message about coping and learning to trust too often: the story is prefaced with a synopsis, and concludes with a stated moral. Little Crow is an instrument for delivering broad lessons, with less elan than he needs.

Within the text, fillers—including several uses of "so" to indicate transitions—repetition, and extra input from Little Crow's family members slow the pace. Misplaced commas and awkward, paragraph-long sentences disrupt the book's rhythm.

Actions and internal thoughts, such as about Mama bird's pride, are expressed through text rather than through illustrations. A rift between the book's style and writing and picture book format is apparent. Illustrations are purposeful and computer generated, and they do not interpret the text in depth. A sea green, cool palette is soothing for Little Crow's struggle, though.

Despite the potential highs and lows in the plot, from Little Crow's first attempt to fly to his emotional shifts as he gains confidence, intrigue is diminished by where lines fall before page turns, and how they interrupt the story's flow. A subplot about Mama Crow's delight in her new parenthood is distracting in the short text. Strongest is the main story line, in which Little Crow is gently guided by a neighbor who sees his trouble and gives him a wooden toy to pull along the grass. That nudge, with its challenge and inspiration, is the freshest plot point.

Prosy and heartfelt, *The Little Crow That Didn't Know How to Fly* is a picture book celebration of early milestones on the road to independence.

KAREN RIGBY (November 26, 2018)

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