



Flora and the Flamingo

Molly Idle

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In this innovative wordless picture book with interactive flaps, Flora and her graceful flamingo friend explore the trials and joys of friendship through an elaborate synchronized dance. With a twist, a turn, and even a flop, these unlikely friends learn at last how to dance together in perfect harmony. Full of humor and heart, this stunning performance (and splashy ending!) will have readers clapping for more!

For more feathery fun, pick up *Flora and the Penguin*, *Flora and the Peacocks*, *Flora and Friends Matching Game* or, coming soon, *Flora and the Chicks*.

Flora and the Flamingo Details

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Author : Molly Idle

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From Reader Review Flora and the Flamingo for online ebook

Karen A. says

These lovely pink stylized illustrations make me want to eat sorbet and dance. One of the better no word books I have seen in quite some time. The mimicry between Flora and the Flamingo is priceless and young children will get the whole comedy of imitation and play between these two friends.

Minor complaint with the book design - I think the flaps will get chewed, ripped, and pulled off pretty quickly.

Still a fun fun book. And finally something that is pink that is not just designed for little girls and the high volume of sales that come with that color.

Tasha says

There are oh so many ballet books out there for little ballerinas who look for tulle and pointe shoes. So it was with that bias and perhaps a cringe or two that I opened this book. Inside it's very pink cover is a very pink world that is pure pink fabulousness! In this wordless book, Flora meets the flamingo and immediately imitates its stance and attitude. Then the flamingo launches into a dance that Flora struggles to match in her swimcap and flippers. It all goes well until Flora loses her footing and flops into the water. What happens next speaks to what friends should do when they see someone take a flop. Start again with plenty of support. All this with no words!

Idle has a stunning simplicity in this book. It has the draw of flaps to open, but that is all about the dance and the movement. There is a pleasure in lengthening the dance by having the two of them dance movements again and again by opening and closing the flaps. It turns readers into storytellers in a way that is engaging and free, just as this entire book is throughout.

I love Flora and her lack of tulle and ballet outfit. Instead wearing her swim gear, she is able to mimic the flamingo all the better. It takes the emphasis off of the clothes of ballet and back to the dance itself. Now all children need is a friendly flamingo. Appropriate for ages 3-5.

Samantha wickedshizuku Tolleson says

Such a wonderful story, even without words. The art was beautiful!

Cheryl says

Ok, now I get it. I read Flora and the Peacocks first, and wasn't at all charmed. This is somewhat more interesting to me. I still don't understand the point of the flaps, as opposed to another page, unless it's that the

reader is supposed to flip back and forth more than once? Still a very simple tale, with art that appeals, I'm sure, more to dancers and artists than to me. But still, I have no desire to read more in the series.

Barbara says

Wearing a pink bathing suit, Flora encounters a pink flamingo at the beach. Both notice the other one, and Flora tries to copy the bird's poses and moves. Things don't always go well for Flora since she can't move in the same way the flamingo does, which leads to her taking a spill. With gentle nudging, she gets back up and tries some new moves. Young readers will enjoy comparing the two dancers and laugh at the surprising friendship that springs up between unlikely friends in this wordless picture book. I especially liked the emotions that are shown on the characters' faces and through their posture. The lift-and-look flaps are fun too since they offer hints about the characters.

Jessica says

I had seen this book many times, of course, but had not read it until we bought a copy this week. Molly was in Salt Lake for her new book, Pearl, and I had met her and brought my daughter to her signing, and decided on a whim to get this, too. (I am trying to collect all the Caldecott books!)

So darling! The story (its wordless, but the story is clear) is a delight and the illustrations are gorgeous! We love it!

Ladiibbug says

Children's Book

2014 Caldecort Winner

A delightful picture book illustrating a flamingo's graceful, ballet-like moves, and the little girl who tries to copy them. The smaller flip downs on the pages add to the tale of the little girl struggling to attain the flamingo's graceful movements.

I loved this clever and feel-good book.

Saba N Taylor says

This book is just too cute for words!!! The fact that it is wordless allows readers to interpret the actions, reactions and interactions between Flora and the Flamingo she wishes so desperately to dance with. The illustrations are just adorable, simple yet elegant, detailed but not overwhelming. Children will see a reluctant relationship bloom into a wonderful friendship.

Kaethe says

The little flaps are a fun touch, but the book would still be great without them. I am at best a superficially informed art fan, but the lines here, the curves, the way a small child and a flamingo are shown moving together, this is stuff to make me swoon. I would never have guessed that it was possible to render dance so well on the page.

Library copy

Alice says

zzzzzzzzzzzz Boring! I really don't care for books with no words. Sometimes they can be amazing and this one was just boring. First, I don't care for pink so that was a turn off...the flaps and the book are going to get destroyed in our library but someone is going to find the 'peek a boo surprise' a kick. I didn't think the girl mirroring the flamingo was all the interesting. Having said that, My Co-worker loved it, so everyone has their own opinions!

Aaron Wyckoff says

Flora and the Flamingo comes without any words, but contains plenty of story just waiting for a child to discover it. Flora does her best to imitate a flamingo, both in her attire and her actions. The flamingo, noticing her and apparently disapproving, contorts into increasingly difficult poses until Flora topples. Then, noting her distress and feeling apologetic, the flamingo enters into a duet with Flora to finish out the book. The illustrations are simple but elegantly crafted. Ample white space, framed by trees and blossoms, focus attention on the characters and remove any background distractions. It is easy to follow the emotions on the faces and in the body language of both characters. Perhaps the nicest touch is the yellow of Flora's bathing cap, which keeps the book from being too pink. This book will appeal to a wide range of readers from preschool and adult. It is particularly suited to young children who do not want to be confined to a story with words, but would rather use their imaginations to tell their own story.

Laura (Book Scrounger) says

This book is very pink. If it came in movie form it would make a cute Pixar short. As it is, while I enjoyed the last fold-out flap, I found flaps an odd choice in this case, especially given all the white space that already exists. Plus several of them were situated close enough to the spine that they would be (actually, have been -- I feel bad being the first one to check out our library's copy) easily creased or crushed if a toddler ever got their hands on it -- the paper is even flimsier than Where's Spot?.

Betsy says

Did you know that flamingos are pink because of their diet of plankton? Did you know that the flamingo is the national bird of the Bahamas? And did you know that when it comes to a pas de chat or a particularly fine jetée, no bird exceeds the flamingo in terms of balletic prowess? No? Then you're clearly not reading the right literature these days. Now, before you get to thinking too hard about it, let me assure you that when I discuss a book like *Flora and the Flamingo* I should right off the bat say that this is NOT a book about a bird that wants to be a ballerina and must overcome obstacles to achieve that goal. That is, without a doubt, the most common storyline in ballet picture books today. I would not review such a book as that. No, *Flora and the Flamingo* is notable because it is a perfect amalgamation of wordless storytelling, likable (or at least understandable) characters, and an artistic sensibility that will make you forget its unique formatting and remind you only of the classic picture book days of yore. So forget what flamingos eat. Are you getting enough flamingo picture books in YOUR diet? If not, time to start.

A single flamingo lands and perches on one leg beneath the falling pink blossoms. It does not notice the single flippered foot that appears behind it nor, at first, the bathing suited little girl that mimics his stance. But when he starts to stretch (or is he dancing?) he can't help but see how she tries to imitate him, wing for wing. In a moment of cussidness he bleats at her, causing her to tumble head over heel into the water. Chastened, the flamingo offers a wing and the two embark on a fantastic dance, culminating in a joyous leap into the water and an elegant bow and curtsy.

Idle has the mark of the animator all over her. It's a style of drawing you'll find in the works of folks like Tony Fucile or Carter Goodrich. You can recognize an animator pretty easily right from the start. They tend to have very expressive protagonists. Take Flora, for example. Though at first she attempts to keep her face relatively placid, as the book goes on, a variety of emotions flit across her punim. From a miserable (mouthless) hurt glare to a skeptical raised eyebrow, to gentle trust, and, finally, pure pleasure. The white background sort of clinches it. Kirkus, in their review, said that there is a "courageous use of white space" in this book, and I have to agree. Yet for all that she has an animator's heart, Idle avoids the pitfalls that have felled many from her field that have come before her. I'm talking about storyboarding. The laziest kind of picture book is the kind that feels like it began life as a series of quick sketches tacked up on a wall somewhere. Storyboarding has its place in the world, but it is not an effective way to map out a picture book. There has to be a flow and a relationship between the pages. You have to know that by turning one you're advancing the story right there. Idle achieves that feeling, and the reward is a tale that is as emotional as it is visual.

Idle does something particularly striking with the book that many an early 21st century reader might notice. Flora is certainly an everygirl, and in no way is that more evident than her weight. I am sorry to report that in the children's book world, if a character is plus sized or larger than average, that will usually be the sole focus of their tale. The everyday adventures of kids that don't look like walking popsicle sticks are nigh unto impossible to find sometimes. The nice thing about this book is that unless you want to interpret it as an exercise book (don't) it isn't about Flora's pear-shaped body. Now if one were feeling somewhat cynical they might suspect that Idle is using her heroine's weight to make her comical. I don't think that's really the case. Certainly the contrast between her and the flamingo is set off by their different appearances (more on that soon), but you could also argue that by giving her heroine a little more meat on her bones, Idle makes Flora easier to identify with. There are lots of overweight kids in America right now. Seems to me it shouldn't be too hard to give them a happy dancing kid hero. Remember the "No Rain" by Blind Melon music video? It's like that.

The unspoken (ha ha - there are no words in this book) irony here is the fact that flamingos are not usually considered unusually graceful birds. There's a skinny gawkiness about them, and Idle makes use of that gawkiness to contrast her feathered hero with the very different awkwardness of the girl. Where he is all knobby knees and thin curled neck, she is circles and smiles. His elegant pink feet bear nothing in common with her ginormous brown flippers. This dichotomy is the striking difference that gives the book its visual kick in the pants. The white background and pink apple blossom-like flowers that frame the edges of the pages are perfectly suited to focus your attention on the bird and the girl. The flaps are just the icing on the cake.

I probably should have mentioned it before, but *Flora and the Flamingo* is actually a lift-the-flap picture book. If you want a fun exercise in clever book design, read just the pages with the flaps. You'll see that at first Flora's flap and the flamingo's are on opposite pages with the flamingo directly in the center of his page and Flora's flap slightly closer to the flamingo's page. Skip ahead and you'll see that Flora has traversed the gutter (the area found between pages) and suddenly her flap is touching the flamingo's (no wonder he gets tetchy!). After he hurts her feelings the flaps are as far from one another as they can be. The flamingo makes good and for the first time the two characters share a single, large flap. They dance and it all builds up to a gatefold in the book that can be opened to reveal the two cannonballing happily into the water. Beautifully done.

I could get a lot of good out of this book with kids, I can see it now. First up, it would pair amusingly with another make-a-flamingo-your-buddy book, *You WILL Be My Friend* by Peter Brown. As a ballet book, this title is also rather excellent. You can actually name the steps from time to time. I suppose if you absolutely had to you could even argue for this as an exercise book, but that's pushing it. At its heart, *Flora and the Flamingo* is just an unassuming little story about making a friend. There's nothing very complicated about that idea. It's just all in how you present it, baby. Consider this one book that's not afraid to let clever (yet essentially simple) design and good art do the heavy lifting.

For ages 3-7.

Calista says

This is a popular book at our house. A wordless picture book with open the flaps. My nephew can feel like he can read this on his own. He spent close to an hour by himself with the book in hand looking at pictures and opening flaps. He announced that he was reading. The Niece feels like she is too old for wordless books.

I think the artwork is beautiful and I like the relationship between Flora and the Flamingo. It's a very cute book.

Manybooks says

Molly Idle's *Flora and the Flamingo* is basically a sweet and simple wordless picture story of young Flora and a flamingo at first competing, at first trying to out-dance one another, and then realising that the two of them would work better as a team, joyfully and exuberantly dancing together.

The presented illustrations of *Flora and the Flamingo* are simple and sparse, without there being much

busyness and/or detail shown (in fact, one only ever does see Flora and the Flamingo). And for me, personally, as someone who has never been all that graceful and with a prima ballerina type of physique, I also do oh so much appreciate that young bathing suit, swim cap and flipper clad Flora (for I guess Flora and the Flamingo is supposed to take place at a beach) is shown not as lithe and willowy, not as a typical long legged and stunningly slender and beautiful ballerina, but as a little girl with a bit of a rounded belly area (much less visually intimidating to and for those of us who do not by nature have a perfect dancing, a perfect ballet type of figure). But even with the latter, both Flora and her flamingo dancing opponent (and later dancing partner) are visually stunning and show the epitome of grace and beauty, a perfect visual treat and treasure in every way (and yes, I actually have been much much more charmed by Flora and the Flamingo precisely because young Flora is depicted as a graceful dancer without the necessity of having her appear as some type of goddess of ballet with regard to her physical appearance, for it has always tended to bother me a bit that in most picture books about ballet and dancing, the main protagonists are generally depicted as being individuals whom I could never look like even if I tried, and yes, also individuals who would most likely have poked nasty fun at my physique when I was forced to attend ballet lessons as a child, an experience that was anything but pleasant).

And thus, even for someone like myself (who tends to be at best a bit ho-hum with regard to wordless picture books), Molly Idle's delightful and simple (read easily understood and visually followed) illustrations (and although the pictures are entirely pink hued, with a few splashes of yellow, not therefore really in any way my favourite colour combination by any stretch of the imagination) have been a wonderful and lovely reading (or rather "viewing") experience, and I do highly and glowingly, warmly recommend Flora and the Flamingo (and by the way, to truly enhance the entire experience of Flora and the Flamingo a bit, I would also suggest doing what I have done, namely playing some classical ballet music such as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* or Chopin's *Les Sylphides* in the background). Four stars (and I can certainly both understand and also much appreciate the Caldecott Honour designation for the engaging and uplifting pictorial images of Flora and the flamingo dancing).
