

Matt, the Flying Penguin

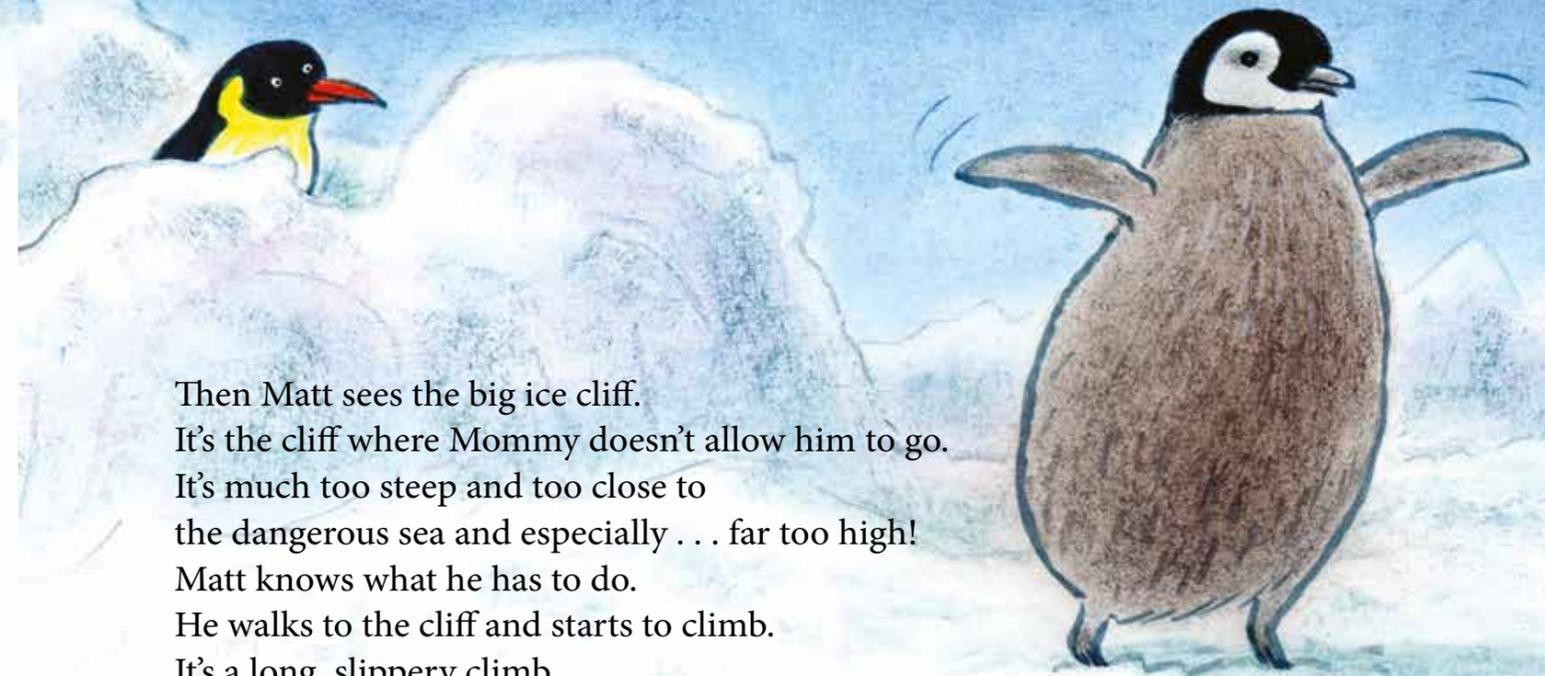
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Matt thinks it's cold today. Very, very, very cold.
The little penguin snuggles closer to his mommy.
Mmm, that's nice and warm. And he's sheltered from the icy wind.
"When I grow up, I'll just fly away from here," says Matt.
"I'll fly to a nice, warm place. I'm a bird for a reason, right?"
"You're a bird indeed. But you can't fly, just like me, Daddy,
and all the other penguins," says Mommy.
"But . . . what do we need these things for?" Matt asks, as he flaps his little wings.
"You'll see later," says Mommy. "Just be patient."
Matt looks at two flying albatrosses. They fly through the air with their
huge black-and-white wings. He wishes he could do the same thing.

*Mommy and Daddy don't even try to fly, he thinks.
Neither do any of the other penguins.* Matt sneaks away from the group of penguins.
When no one can see him, he stands firmly on two legs. He counts. 1 . . . 2 . . . 3!
As hard as he can, Matt waves his small wings up and down, but nothing happens.
He doesn't soar through the air like an albatross. He doesn't even get off the ground.

Disappointed, Matt lets his head hang.
He thinks, *maybe penguins just aren't good at taking off.*
But maybe they're very good at floating through the air. How do I get up in the air?



Then Matt sees the big ice cliff.
It's the cliff where Mommy doesn't allow him to go.
It's much too steep and too close to
the dangerous sea and especially . . . far too high!
Matt knows what he has to do.
He walks to the cliff and starts to climb.
It's a long, slippery climb.
When Matt is finally at the top, he carefully looks
down over the edge. There's the dangerous sea . . .



Then the little penguin sees the two albatrosses flying over.
I'm a bird, Matt thinks bravely. So, I can fly too!
He jumps off the cliff. He flaps his wings like a real bird. He flies!
Oh dear . . . Matt starts to fall. Faster and faster . . . **SPLASH!**
The little penguin falls into the sea.



The water feels less cold than Matt thought.
There's no ice-cold wind underwater.
Matt starts to like the water.
When he flaps his wings, he shoots like a rocket!
This is fun, he thinks. The sea isn't dangerous at all!
Suddenly someone grabs his neck. *Oh no!* Matt thinks.
Matt is lifted out of the water, and placed safely on the ice.
Who did that? he thinks.
It's Mommy! She looks angry and proud at the same time.
“Penguins can't fly, can they, Mommy?” Matt asks softly.
“No,” Mommy laughs. “But we can swim best with our wings. Shall we do it again, together?”



The Emperor Penguin



Passport

Habitat: on the ice of the South Pole

Weight: up to 82 pounds

Height: up to 43 inches

Favorite food: fish, squid, and shrimp

About them: penguins walk slow, but they're very fast underwater.

Fun fact

The emperor penguin is the biggest of all the penguins.



A mommy emperor penguin lays only one egg. The daddy penguin gets the egg and balances it on his feet for over two months! He keeps the egg very warm with his layer of skin.

While the male is hatching the egg, the female looks for food in the sea. After almost three months, the mommy comes back with food she brings up to feed the new chicks.



If it's very cold and the wind blows hard, the penguins huddle close to each other. This helps them stay nice and warm.

Penguins can recognize each other by their call, even if there are thousands of other penguins in one area. Each call is slightly different with every penguin.

