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Posted on 13 July 2019 By Toni Buzzeo

On A Momentous Visit To The Aquarium, Elliot Discovers His Dream Pet A Penguin It S Just Proper Enough For A Straight Laced Boy Like Him And When He Asks His Father If He May Have One Please And Thank You , His Father Says Yes Elliot Should Have Realized That Dad Probably Thought He Meant A Stuffed Penguin And Not A Real One Clever Illustrations And A Wild Surprise Ending Make This Sly, Silly Tale Of Friendship And Wish Fulfillment A Kid Pleaser From Start To Finish An oh so proper young boy named Elliot finds his dream companion in this picture book from author Toni Buzzeo and illustrator David Small Attending Family Fun Day at the local aquarium with his father, Elliot falls desperately in love with the Magellanic penguins, asking his father if he can have one His distracted parent, thinking he is talking about a stuffed animal, duly hands over a twenty dollar bill and gives his permission , and soon Elliot and his new spheiscine friend are settling in together at home His clueless dad is oblivious to the goings on from Elliot cranking the AC in his room, to creating an ice rink for the new resident until he goes to take a bath and finds a live penguin already in the tub Will Elliot be in trouble Or will there be a surprise in store for him Readers familiar with David Small s hilarious Imogene s Antlers will smile in recognition at the amusing surprise ending here, in which Elliot s father turns out to have a similar pet of his own, in the form of a Galapagos turtle The story is engaging, and will keep children who long for a special animal companion of their own entertained, while the artwork is expressive and amusing All that said, somehow I just didn t find One Cool Friend to be quite the stand out that I

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expected it to be, based on my friends rave reviews I enjoyed it I appreciated the visual parallel created between the suit wearing Elliot and his penguin, as well as the little illustrative clues about Elliot s father and his own view spoiler turtle companion hide spoiler While I have absolutely adored David Small s accompanying illustrations they are lively, fun and expressive, and even though I am usually not that much of a fan of mostly black and white cartoon like renderings, in this case, for One Cool Friend, they work incredibly well with Toni Buzzeo s presented narrative, with especially the little splashes of depicted colour delightfully focusing one s eyes , I just cannot at all appreciate or even all that much accept the entire concept of the book, of what transpires within the actual pages of One Cool Friend For although I can indeed understand prim and proper Elliot desiring a penguin of his own because first and foremost, their physical appearance reminds him so much of himself and his own tuxedo clad demeanour , I can neither comprehend and in any way tolerate him crawling into the penguin exhibit of the local aquarium to basically take a young penguin chick from its parents, its family unit nor fathom that both Elliot s father and aquarium officials never even notice this, never even become aware of what the boy has done and that it takes Elliot s clearly completely oblivious father almost to the end of One Cool Friend to become cognizant of the fact that his son has a penguin chick stowed in their domicile, that really does take the proverbial cake for me Now perhaps I am being a trifle overly sensitive and hypercritical here, but yes, my personal reading reaction to Toni Buzzeo s narrative, to the entire storyline of One Cool Friend has pretty well been entirely negative and as such rather majorly similar to how I reacted to Richard Atwater s Mr Popper s Penguins when I perused said novel earlier this year that while these two books might indeed be funny and entertaining to a point, I just on a personal and also on an academic and scientific level cannot abide that in both Mr Popper s Penguins and in One Cool Friend, penguins are basically taken and housed in conditions not in any way appropriate or natural , and no, Elliot creating a skating rink for his kidnapped penguin friend Magellan, having him sleep in the kitchen freezer and letting him swim in a cold water filled bathtub are not what I would consider acceptable penguin friendly options in any way Therefore, and even though I did

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Awakening

Bound by Honor

chuckle once or twice whilst reading *One Cool Friend*, I mostly was and remain grumbling and pretty much frustrated even somewhat angry. And yes, my three star ranking is absolutely and only for David Small's illustrations for without them, I would definitely be considering a low two star ranking and perhaps even a high one star ranking for *One Cool Friend*. But David Small's delightful and fun illustrations do at least partially redeem this book for me however, and even though I do very much understand and celebrate that David Small won a 2013 Caldecott Honour designation for his accompanying pictures, his entertainingly expressive images, I still could really do without the entire concept and set up of *One Cool Friend* and really do much wish that Toni Buzzeo had created an entirely different type of penguin tale, or at least a story where young Elliot is actually made to see the error of his ways, is made to understand that his actions, his stealing, his taking a young penguin chick from the penguin exhibit of the aquarium was not and is not at all *comme il faut* acceptable behaviour. This story is so much fun I think it should be taken as pure fantasy don't get too up in arms about the penguin not being in his natural habitat and then it's just a delight I'm already a fan of David Small's illustrations and they shine here. That very proper, polite young Elliot has such a perfect look and it's so cute how he looks kind of like his new penguin friend I love the contrast between him and his father yet how alike they are in some ways, too. The father's look is great, too, and I love all the little details that provide clues to the surprise though I guessed it ending. This is one I could see reading over again to find little hints and knowing the ending would show everything in a new light. A winner I wanted to like this book. David Small is one of my favorite illustrators. But by page 11, the animals rights issues overshadowed everything else for me. Penguins are one of the most social birds there are, and family structure is very important see *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson. When Elliot takes a small penguin from the penguin exhibit, he is likely breaking up a family unit and I won't even go into the penguins in captivity thing. Sorry, I was not able to suspend my disbelief. The last time I criticized a book in the name of animal advocacy, I was attacked on this site. Whatev. P.S I'm pretty sure you can't freeze water by dialing the ac down to its coldest setting. This is a very humorous story about an

inquisitive, polite and intelligent boy who manages to acquire a very interesting pet The story is silly and the boy's efforts to make his new pet comfortable reminded us of Mr Popper's Penguins I loved how formal and polite the boy and his father are, and I love how the story emphasizes how completely absorbed his dad is in his own studies and oblivious to the boy's actions The ending of the story is very hilarious, and we had to reread the tale to see the obvious giveaways that I would never have noticed if our youngest hadn't pointed them out I think she'd read the book already and knew the ending We really liked the illustrations and we recognized David Small's style from some of the other books that he's illustrated The humor was very dry I thought perhaps the author was British, but from the book jacket, it seems that she is not Overall, I thought this was a very entertaining book and we really enjoyed reading it together. Elliot is not your typical kid, he's very proper Perhaps, so proper that his father doesn't notice that he brings home a real penguin from their outing to the aquarium Elliot and his penguin, Magellan, become friends and it turns out Elliot's father has a special friend of his own too Fun story, illustrations are both proper and silly to compliment the text. This is, imo, indeed worthy of the Caldecott Honor Not only are the illustrations and design delightful, taking on a large share of the story telling, but both text and art are funny in complementary ways If you liked this, don't forget to read I was enthusiastic about this book because I'm a fan of David Small's illustrations, and they are wonderful here, but so is the story It's completely charming and absolutely adorable, and very amusing Both story and pictures are at times very, very funny. The story and pictures are both stellar I love the boy, the penguin, the father, and the surprise twist ending, and the science too. The book's humor reminds me somewhat of the Bad Bears books by Daniel Pinkwater and that is high praise indeed. Some warnings vegan kids might have questions and their adults might want to have discussions, very young kids might need to be told a freezer is not conducive to staying alive, kids will probably clamor to go to the aquarium or other places to visit penguins, kids might ask for a penguin as a pet But it's all worth it This book is worth owning and it's also gift worthy It's a winner. Highly enjoyable A tremendous amount of gratitude for Goodreads friend Kathryn's review for motivating

me to get to this one Unlike Kathryn, I did not see the end coming Off now to reread. My opinion is I really, really liked this book The book was about a penguin named Magellan and his friend Elliott The main idea was Elliott getting a penguin friend My favorite part was when Elliott made his wading pool into a skating rink in his bedroom And his dad didn t even know

