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The Story of a Seagull and the Cat Who Taught Her to Fly

Laura Wadley

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Sepulveda, Luis. *The Story of a Seagull and the Cat Who Taught Her to Fly*. Illustrated by Chris Sheban. Arthur Levine, 2003. ISBN 0439401860. \$15.95. 126 pp.

Reviewer: Laura Wadley

Reading Level: Intermediate;

Rating: Outstanding;

Genre: Adventure stories; Humorous stories;

Subject: Seagulls--Juvenile fiction; Cats--Juvenile fiction; Book--Review;

Kengah, a female gull, and Zorba, a tomcat, run afoul of each other (you'll excuse the expression) when Kengah is caught in an oil slick and uses the last of her energy to land on Zorba's roof. Zorba tries to help the stricken gull, but it is too late for everything except for Kengah to lay an egg before she perishes and to extract three promises from Zorba: 1. Don't eat the egg; 2. Protect the egg until the chick hatches; 3. Teach the chick to fly. Zorba promises with the expectation that Kengah will live, but she does not, so with the help of three friends—Einstein, Secretario, and the Colonel—Zorba keeps his promises.

Mr. Sepulveda is a Chilean who now lives in Germany so this delightful story has a cosmopolitan air—cats with Italian accents, a highly atmospheric Hamburg setting, and all the characters you might expect to find in a port city. Though the book is short, the characterizations are rich and full, the story filled with gentle lessons about art, caring for the earth, loyalty and honor.

Witty illustrations by Chris Sheban accompany this text which as near as I can tell is exquisitely translated from the Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden.