

Kara Casanova

Illustrations by Anne Lipscomb

Elvis the Penguin



Press Kit



Elvis the Penguin

by Kara Casanova

Elvis the Penguin is a children's storybook about a young penguin with a pompadour who was born at the Wildlife Habitat at the Flamingo Hotel. After learning about his famous namesake, he decides he wants to sing and perform on stage just like Elvis Presley.

After several futile attempts to attain his dream, Elvis and his best friend, Lucy, seek the help of a gang of street-wise penguins who had been transferred to the habitat from New York City's Bronx Zoo. All of the gang's attempts to help Elvis lands everyone into one, hot, hilarious mess after another!

Throughout the story are refrains of Elvis Presley hits that support and enhance the plot, and will have children walking away singing the tunes.

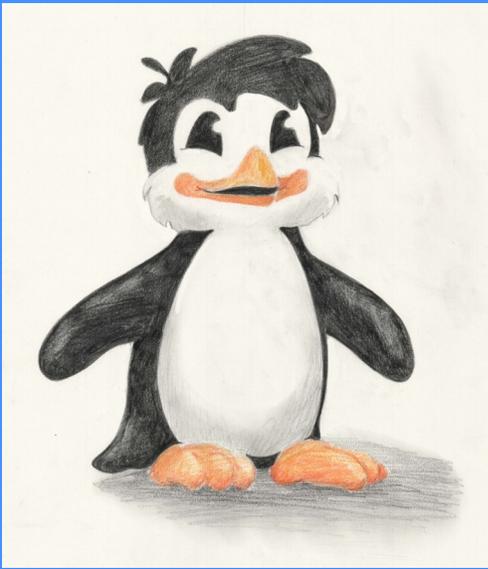
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Elvis the Penguin

Wingspan Press, November 1, 2013
ISBN: 978-1-59594-509-9
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Elvis the Penguin's Relevance



- **Introduces children to Elvis Presley's rich, musical legacy**
- **Promotes social values:**
 - Anti-bullying
 - Tolerance for others from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
 - Self-acceptance
 - Turning potential adversities into assets
 - Goal setting and perseverance
 - Risk-taking and determination
 - The value of enduring friendship
- **A fun and entertaining read with endearing characters**

There are multiple reasons for *Elvis the Penguin's* relevance.

For Elvis Presley fans, namely grandparents and parents, *Elvis the Penguin* will be the very first storybook available for them to share their love of Elvis with the children in their lives, further instilling an appreciation for him, his music and his life's work.

For children who have not grown up in fan households, *Elvis the Penguin* may be their first meaningful encounter with Presley's music and iconography.

For school and music teachers, the book is a charming and wholesome story for them to teach about Presley's music and instill the many social values inherent throughout the storyline.

Elvis Presley Enterprises estimates that there are 50 million fans worldwide that keep Presley's life and music thriving. However, there is growing concern that this number will decrease over time as the fan base ages. In the absence of bringing more children and young people into the fan base, this is a very legitimate concern. It is hoped that *Elvis the Penguin* can play a small role in keeping the legacy vibrant by inspiring more children towards a lifelong love and appreciation of Elvis Presley's music.

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Elvis the Penguin's Author



Kara Casanova has written magazine articles and essays in numerous publications throughout the United States and the UK, and has more than 25 years' experience writing business, marketing and media materials, as well as writing grants for children's charities and education.

Her style of essay has been called "beautifully poignant" by Lois White, former Editor-in-Chief, *Better Homes and Gardens Special Interest Publications*. Kara credits the late Erma Bombeck with influencing her essay writing, which fluctuates between humorous and keenly felt observations on life and motherhood. She received an Honorable Mention in *The Scriveners* for her short-short story, "Choosing Florencia's Brother" (1996).

Elvis the Penguin is her first published book, and her first fictional publication. She came up with the idea for the story while

baking cookies for her children.

When not dodging hurricanes, Kara resides with her family in a home beside a bayou in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Please visit Kara and Elvis the Penguin at www.elvisthepenguin.com or on Facebook and Pintrest.

Press inquiries may be made through the contact information below.

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Questions and Answers



You've instilled social values into the storyline of *Elvis the Penguin*. What are they?

There are many, which is one of the reasons I'm so proud of the book.

The most obvious is anti-bullying. From the beginning of the story, Elvis is bullied and ridiculed because the feathers on his head are unlike the rest of the penguins'. The flamingoes are very disdainful of him because of it, and even Mario, who eventually becomes one of Elvis' allies, initially makes fun of Elvis' hair, too.

I think most children will understand that making fun of Elvis' hair is un-

fair and unkind. And, too, I hope they'll come away with the understanding that what could have been a real deterrent to Elvis' success, his hair, is actually one of the things that makes him unique and successful. Let's hope children will extrapolate that concept into a form of self-acceptance of their own characteristics, and further, turn those particular characteristics into assets instead of liabilities.

Accepting others from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds is another value implied by Mario and his Gang, and is an extension of no bullying. The Gang are New Yorkers, and when they were moved to the Habitat, the penguins and the flamingoes ostracized them because they were different. In response, the Gang lived alone in a secluded area of the Habitat, and stayed to themselves.

In the process of helping Elvis, the Gang is made to come out into the open, and begin integrating into the Habitat. This infers the high value of cultural diversity into the storyline.

The other values that I hope children will intuit are goal setting, determination and perseverance.

Are there any other messages you hope children will take away from *Elvis the Penguin*?

Yes, there is, and it's a very important one. I believe that many of today's children don't know very much about Elvis Presley, or about the tremendous contribution that he made to music. Except for those children who've grown up in a family of fans, for many children today *Elvis the Penguin* may be the first time they've ever really heard of Elvis Presley. For children raised in a fan family, I hope the book will give their parents and grandparents another means of sharing their love of Elvis with the children in their lives. But for the rest, I'm hoping the book will expose Elvis' leg-

More Questions and Answers

acy to those children who might not otherwise hear of him.

I didn't grow up in an Elvis household, but I had the benefit of growing up in an Elvis Presley world. When I was a kid in the 60s and 70s, Elvis was alive, and he was just everywhere: in the news, on the radio, doing TV shows, etc. Like most kids at that time, I knew who he was and knew the words to some of his songs. He was just always *there*.

I visited Graceland three times in my 20s, but honestly, I didn't come to an awareness of Elvis' enormous contribution until after I had written *Elvis the Penguin*. I hope that future generations of fans won't have to wait as long as I did to gain an appreciation of him.

Then do you consider yourself an Elvis Presley fan?

I've been asked that quite often, and my answer is that I feel a tremendous reverence for Elvis Presley and his legacy. I find it staggering that this young man came onto the world scene, and literally changed the course of music forever. I mean, think about it; truly stop and think about what this man accomplished. The impact of Elvis' life and work has affected not only music, but so much of our culture, and on such an unfathomably world-wide scale, that it's simply awe inspiring.

When I think of the impacts that he made in his lifetime, I'm deeply amazed by it. I simply can't imagine one person having such a range of abilities – the talent, the charisma, the sex appeal and the ambition – to affect the world on so many levels.

And because of the reverence that I feel about Elvis, I also feel a very great sense for honoring the legacy that he left us, and to be respectful of him for the extraordinary human being that he was.

I certainly have a sense that Elvis did something so remarkable that no one else will ever be able to duplicate it. And I like to hope that *Elvis the Penguin* will touch a few children's hearts and imaginations enough that they'll look into this remarkable man and his music, become lifelong fans, and keep his legacy going strong for future generations. It's a legacy worth honoring and perpetuating for the future.

So in this context of being completely in awe of Elvis Presley and his legacy, then I guess that makes me a fan. Perhaps not a traditional, "die-hard" fan, but certainly someone who wants to see his legacy thriving for generations.

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Elvis the Penguin's Beginnings

How did you come up with the idea for the story, *Elvis the Penguin*?

It's a crazy story actually. I was just being a mom.

You were just being a mom?

Yes, I was just being a mom, baking cookies for my children. Christmas was coming and I was making packages of sugar cookies for my two youngest children to take to their friends at school. Each package was going to have a snowflake, a polar bear, and of course, a penguin inside.

My oldest daughter, Fifi, arrived home for the holidays from university. We put the two little ones to bed, and stayed up late into the night icing cookies.

Long about the wee hours of the morning, I got around to icing the penguins. I'd saved them for last because black icing can be tricky to work with, and I was

nervous about icing them. Finally, I started icing them, and sure enough, every time I'd come around their little heads, the black icing would do this really weird thing. It wanted to flip up in this really bizarre way, kind of like a pompadour. I just couldn't get it to work right. I kept trying and trying, but every single time, it just went cuckoo.

I finished the last one, stepped back to take a look, and couldn't believe what I was seeing.

I busted out laughing and said, "Fifi, look at these crazy penguins! They look like a bunch of Elvis Impersonators!"

Well, we just rolled. We were laughing so hard, we were literally falling off our stools. I don't know if we were just punch drunk from tiredness, or what, but those penguins were hysterical! I had a whole flock of Elvis Impersonators roosting on my kitchen counter. They were so ludicrous, I grabbed my camera and took pictures.

It took us forever to stop giggling. But after a while, I turned to my daughter and said, "Fi, if you were a penguin, and you wanted to be an Impersonator, I wonder what you would have to go through to make that happen."

All through the holidays, I'd get tickled every time I thought about those Elvis Impersonating penguins. I don't know why, but I just thought penguins being impersonators was the funniest idea! Finally, I decided to just write it down, mostly just to get it out of my system, but also because I was worried I'd soon get busy and forget all about it.



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