Elvis and the Feathers
School of Music

Illustrated by
Laura Liberatore

Emily Lim
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Every morning, a flock of birds got together for one reason.

“Robin, you take the lead,” said Owl. “Woodpecker, come in on the second verse. Flamingos, you are the backup singers. Cockatoo, you hit the high notes. Kingfisher, let’s hear you sing the bass. Everyone else will join in the chorus!”

Feathers School of Music was known to only accept birds since they have the best voices.
There was one extra student, Elvis, who took his lessons from behind the bushes.
I don’t think this school will ever take me since I’m not good enough, Elvis sighed. So, he practised his singing alone.
One day, Elvis overheard exciting news.

“We will be putting up a big concert,” said Owl. “Everyone will have a chance to sing. But for the finale, we need the six best voices.”
News spread and soon, birds from near and far came to try out for these six important spots. Everyone also knew that the best voices earned the most food from visitors.
Soon, five of the singing spots were filled. Only one spot was left!
Elvis thought and thought about the last spot in the concert till he could not sleep.
One night, Elvis went back to school. He climbed onto the stage and sang with all his heart:

“Nobody knows how much I love singing. Nobody knows my dreams to better my life for tomorrow. Nobody knows how much I love singing. But I can only sing in secret sorrow.”

Suddenly, Elvis heard clapping.
“Bravo!” cheered Owl. “Your voice is perfect for the final spot. Would you like to be part of the concert? I can give you a few music lessons!”
Elvis learnt quickly all that Owl taught and practised hard for the big day.
A few birds grumbled.
"How can a frog attend our school?" complained Magpie.
“This nature reserve belongs to us because of our lovely singing. A frog isn’t good enough to join our concert!” Parrot said.

“If the frog sings too well, visitors will start to give him our food!” Kingfisher complained.
Owl replied, “Everybody has a right to an education and opportunities to develop their potential.”
“Everyone should also have a chance to work towards a better life as that is good for our community as a whole,” said Owl.
Meanwhile, news spread of a little frog singing in a school of birds. A huge crowd turned up to watch the concert.

The voices of the birds and frog blended beautifully.
Owl was especially pleased. “When Elvis sang with us, the diversity of voices made this our best concert! From today, our school will no longer be for birds only!”

To this day, everyone remembers a little frog with a dream and a wise owl who helped make that happen.
Children have a right to survival and development in all aspects of their lives, including the physical, emotional, psycho-social, cognitive, social and cultural.

– Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Elvis has a good ear for music and a passion to develop his singing ability. Owl offers him an education to develop his potential. Eventually, Feathers School of Music opens its doors to other animals in the community so they can also reach the highest level of music education they are capable of.
About Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) aims to bring a sharper focus on enhancing social safety nets for the needy, improving the delivery of social services, and further strengthening families. At MSF, we are professionals with passion for people. Through our policies, community infrastructure, programmes and services, we hope to nurture resilient individuals and families, and play a part in helping our citizens achieve their hopes and aspirations for themselves and their families.
Emily Lim is an award-winning author of numerous children’s books. She is the first outside North America to win three medals for children’s books at the IPPY Awards, the world’s largest book awards. She is also the first in Southeast Asia to win the Moonbeam Children’s Book Award.

Laura Liberatore is an award-winning illustrator of over 20 books. Her awards include Best Children’s Book of the Year awarded by the Venezuela Book Council and Best Book of the Year by the National Library in Venezuela.
A music school for "birds only" is having a concert where its performers will be able to develop their potential further.

Elvis the frog dreams of singing at this important event. But can he ever be accepted?