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# Always Blue For Chicu



## Synopsis

"This heart-warming and delightful story will intrigue and interest children while it charms their parents. It is a pleasure to see a children's picture book that is exciting and amazing yet accessible and accurate. Always Blue for Chicu captures the life and spirit of this fascinating parrot and the saga of his finding a home with people who understand his needs."—Joanna Burger, author of *The Parrot Who Owns Me* Always Blue for Chicu recounts thirty years of an parrot's adventures. Captured as a young bird by smugglers, Chicu frees himself from a market-place cage, is befriended by a kindly sailor, Big Blue, and goes to sea, where he finds a new flock in the sailors on board. When Big Blue goes back to sea, friends agree to care for Chicu. Over many long years, Chicu is handed off from one owner to another until he is brought to a parrot sanctuary where, after a long search, Big Blue finds him again in a heart-warming finale. Karen Dugan includes elements of humor to lighten Chicu's story, a tale that might be similar to that of thousands of other exotic birds that are trapped, smuggled, and sold into lives of captivity. Parrots are long-living birds who flourish in flocks with mates and families, flying freely and happily through the treetops; in their captive existence—which may be fifty or sixty years, or longer—they often endure isolation and a tedious, neglected life without proper care or human attention. Through more than seventy striking, full-color illustrations, Chicu's story opens a window into the life of these exotic birds whose very beauty leads to their imprisonment, birds whose unique qualities call out for understanding and care.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 5 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 2

## Customer Reviews

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“In her beautifully illustrated Always Blue for Chicu, Karen Dugan captures both the pleasures and perils of sharing one’s life with a parrot. Following Chicu on his wild ride through decades of ups and downs, one might think that these are the experiences of several birds rolled into one. However, many parrots actually live this long, have this many owners, and form complex and powerful bonds with people. Indeed millions of parrots do, and Dugan has skillfully brought this truth to light in a gentle, fun, but always honest manner. This touching and hopeful tale will capture children’s imaginations and win their hearts; I highly recommend it for animal lovers of all ages.” • James D. Gilardi, Director, World Parrot Trust

“For anyone who knows, loves, and understands a parrot, this beautiful story of Chicu’s journey will tug at your heart. Karen Dugan’s insight into the souls of parrots is evident both in her story and in her illustrations. This is a book I will treasure.” • Karen Windsor, Executive Director of Foster Parrots, Ltd. “A brilliant tale of environmental stewardship. The stellar illustration and clever story twist keep us smiling as we explore the very serious human failure to preserve space for our animal friends. Shelve this with ‘The Lorax’ by Dr. Suess.”

• L. Russo, reader

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The author/artist Karen Dugan, born in New York City, is the prize-winning illustrator or author of 20 previous children's titles. A graduate of the Parson's School of Design, she is also a book-binder and lives a quiet country life in Massachusetts. The author/artist Karen Dugan, born in New York City, is the prize-winning illustrator or author of 20 previous children's titles. A graduate of the Parson's School of Design, she is also a book-binder and lives a quiet country life in Massachusetts.

Always Blue for Chicú by Karen Dugan captures attention on the first page with the picture of tiny baby parrots in the hollow of a tree. A good combination of an interesting story with many facts about birds woven in, this is a great book for libraries, schools, and nature centers. So far two children (6 & 10) have read and enjoyed it, especially the page on how birds communicate at the end of the book. The images are lively, the color combination spectacular and I anticipate that Chicú's adventure will appeal to the child who will receive it on her second birthday. Other books by Ms. Dugan that I often read to children include: Ms April and Mrs. Mae: A Fable, If I Had a Snowplow, No Nap Today, The Wild Swans, The Emperor's New Clothes and Beauty and the Beast.

kids loved

The visually stimulating, intricately detailed illustrations alone are enough to make this book a treasure. The author has taken a very important, morally relevant subject, and made it accessible to both children and adults. She chronicles the journey of a parrot's life, using humor and visual beauty to soften the edges of the serious topic while educating the reader, and listener. The illustrations capture the distinctive personalities of the characters magnificently allowing the reader to instantly understand them and often relate them to someone they know! In addition to the story of Chicú,

there are true stories of rescued parrots and detailed information about meeting and living with a parrot, as well as resources for further education on the subject. I highly recommend this book for parents and educators to share with the children in their lives. It will make you smile, tug at your heart strings, visually impress you, and educate you about the pet trade.

Ms Dugan has written and illustrated a charming book about parrots that children and adults will enjoy together. The illustrations are bright and colorful and will catch the eye of all who read it. This is a great book to introduce children to the world of birds.

Awesome illustrations and wonderful story line! I learned more about parrots in general and came away with the sense that Ms. Dugan has a great understanding and respect for all creation.

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