



## High in the Clouds

*Paul McCartney, Philip Ardagh, Geoff Dunbar*

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Forced to leave his woodland home, destroyed by the expansion plans of the evil Gretsch, Wirral the squirrel vows to find the fabled land of Animalia, where all the animals are said to live in freedom and without fear. Aided and abetted by Froggo the hot-air-balloonning frog, Wilhamina the plucky red squirrel, and Ratsy the streetwise rodent, Wirral's personal quest turns into a full-blown plan to save enslaved animals Everywhere - - a plan that is fraught with danger.

Exciting, poignant, and funny, this lavishly illustrated epic tale will delight children of all ages.

## High in the Clouds Details

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Author : Paul McCartney , Philip Ardagh , Geoff Dunbar

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## From Reader Review High in the Clouds for online ebook

### Jana Rucká says

This story is really different, however our kids love it, it took couple of night to read it, our small boy didn't want anything else. The story is full of adventure, characters are interesting and funny for kids, even I enjoyed reading this book. The right book for small boys :)

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### madziar says

Wiórek mieszka wraz z mam?, Bia?? Kit? w Zielonym Lesie. Pewnego dnia buldo?ery niszcz? ich dom a mama nakazuje synkowi odnale?? Animali? - wysp?, gdzie wszystkie zwierz?ta s? wolne i szcz??liwe. Wiórek rozpoczyna podró? od najbli?szego miasta, Megatropolii i odkrywa, ?e istnieje tam sie? fabryk nale??cych do ma?py Gerty, w których pracuj? zwierz?ta-niewolnicy. Greta dowiaduje si? o Wiórku i jego poszukiwaniach Animalii - chce zniszczy? wysp?, by zniszczy? jedyn? nadziej? zwierz?t. S?abszym zwierzakom udaje si? odeprze? atak i wszystko ko?czy si? szcz??liwie.  
Bajka Paula McCartneya jest przerysowana i wys?odzona, nie ratuje jej nawet czas powstania - 1988. Akcja opisywana jest skrótnie, ?li bohaterowie doczekuj? si? rehabilitacji (tego si? mo?na spodziewa? po poprawnych bajkach czasów nam wspó?czesnych) a dobrzy zwyci??aj? na przekór rozumowi, na fali pochwa?y bohaterstwa uci?nionych.

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### Chris says

It was a good, really fast-paced and really well-written children's picture book. It had really well done illustrations, really good characters, really great adventure and a very interesting story. I haven't read this book in a really long time. I'm going to give it 3 1/2 stars! I would recommend this book to both kids and adults.

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### K.D. Absolutely says

The best contemporary children's book that I've read for a long while. The story has everything a pre-school boy or girl will enjoy: mission, adventure, friends met along the way, hurdles that make success almost impossible, success despite all odds and big celebration in the end. For the parents who are supposed to read this book to their kids, the underlying theme is the destruction of the environment resulting to the displacement of the animals in the forests.

Good book. Good theme. However, that's not the reason why I bought and read this book. PAUL MCCARTNEY WROTE THIS BOOK! Yes, **Sir Paul McCartney** (born June 18, 1942) co-wrote this, his first, in collaboration with animator together with **Geoff Dunbar** and *Eddie Dickens* trilogy bestseller author, **Philip Ardagh**. McCartney says to have a lifelong interest in children's storytelling that grew out of his childhood love of classic Disney.

*McCartney is one of the artists who work hard on the protection of the environment*

This tells the story of a boy squirrel **Wirral** whose mother dies when the tree she is sitting on is cut by land developers. The mother squirrel is the official storyteller at Woodland that is being abolished in the name of progress and development. While dying, the mother tells her son Wirral to escape to Animalia where all animals can roam freely and far from the destructive habits of human beings. However, on his way to that promised land he meets all the wicked and good characters and they provide all the hurdles and assistance to the poor newly-orphaned boy squirrel.

The illustrations are superb: colorful, funky and lovable-looking characters. The layout on each pages is very intricately done, i.e., the ratio between the picture and the texts will not bore your kids who are fond of looking at big expressive pictures. The plot is not thin and definitely not pretentious. There are enough dialogues to make your reading-aloud nighttime sessions with your kid memorable.

I liked the story so much that I read this twice. I hope Disney turn this 2005-published book into a movie.

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### **Kristi says**

A young squirrel is forced from his home by invading bulldozers tearing down the forest and finds himself in the nearby city where he discovers other animals enslaved by a wicked hairless ape. He is on a quest to find Animalia, the land of the free for animals, and decides he must free the animal slaves in the city too. I do not like the way this story is written. It is like I am reading a script for a cartoon.

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### **Sannie says**

I bought this book after seeing it in a bargain bin and seeing that it was from Paul McCartney. I'm up for anything from the Beatles, but I have to say, this book wasn't all that fantastic. I don't have any kids, but I wonder how a kid would react to it? There are certainly a lot of words that would be impressive for a child to know at the age of 6 or 7 (incarcerate? serendipity? fortuitous?). Don't get me wrong, I think it's great that the kids are challenged, but if every other word is something that needs explaining, the story gets lost.

As for the story itself, it was ok. It's got the lesson that we shouldn't destroy the forests because it'll hurt the animals, slave labor and pollution is bad, and I guess they might as well just say sprawling metropolises are also bad. Animals are good, whether they are big or small.

It's a bit generic, there are not very many illustrations in comparison to text (though the illustrations have a lovely quality about them), but hey, if kids like it, that's what's more important.

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### **Shauna says**

Found this in the bargain books at wally-world, since it's a Paul McCartney, I \*had\* to pick it up. It really is a nice story, though I think it requires at least a 6-year-old's attention span to get from start to finish.

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### **Mary Lou says**

Sorry, Paul. I love you, but *High in the Clouds* is just awful. Let's put aside the blatant agenda (humans=bad/animals=good; rich=bad/poor=victim; industry=bad; military=bad, etc. etc.). Even if you agree with this simplistic world view, this story just isn't good. There's too much going on, too many poorly developed characters, too many unsuccessful attempts at humor. At 86 pages, the story is too long to be a picture book, but probably not interesting enough to hold an older child's attention. If you want to brainwash your kids, stick with *Ferngully*, *Pocahontas* or *The Gnats of Knotty Pine*, which all share the same ideology but are far superior to *High in the Clouds*.

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### **Bonnie says**

Ooo, I feel badly for reviewing this book this way, but... I really wasn't that impressed with *High in the Clouds*. I thought it was full of oversimplifications, that the characters weren't well developed, and things happened in the book because it was convenient for them to happen. From the start, I was put off - for example, Wirral's mother is killed when the bulldozers destroy the Woodland. However, amidst the mayhem and carnage, Wirral is able to get his father's old raft, put his mother on it, and then decorate it with piles of flowers? And even as this is going on, the forest is still being destroyed, with branches falling around him and others begging him to leave? Not only is the story muddled, but the artwork doesn't represent this at all.

I felt that the personalities of the characters were very much stereotyped. While the narrative has some fun asides, they often seemed to leave children out of the loop. It seems that no one settled on a particular writing style for the entire story. I really wish that more detail and revision had been put into this story - lots of the characters are very interesting, but we learn so little about them. For example, what are some of the 101 reasons that Alfredo the flea hates Gretsch? Why does Froggo have a wooden leg? And why on earth would the animals leave their children with Gretsch as a babysitter?

I really did want to enjoy this book, but I felt that it was incomplete.

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### **Kaye says**

Just because you're famous doesn't mean you can write a book. The illustrations were cute and cartoon-like. The story was weak.

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### **Jamie Tedesco says**

The idea if the story was a good one and I appreciated the real life story telling but there was way too much going on in the story and very little character development. It was hard to tell if the story was written for preschoolers because of the concept of naming some animals things like "Froggo" the frog and "Caw Caw" the parrot or 5th graders because of the over abundance of information to keep track of as well some words like "incarcerated". It's good to challenge but just seemed overwhelming without enough detailed

descriptions and information to connect to a character.

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## Apokripos says

### **High on but Short**

(Thoughts on *High in the Clouds*

by Paul McCartney, Geoff Dunbar, and Philip Ardagh)

#### **\*\*\*Blogger's Note: SPOILERS BE WITHIN!\*\*\***

It's no surprise that, time and again, some celebrities and personalities are turning to writing and of the plethora of genres to write for some of them turn to Children's Books. While some may challenge and ask the question that can celebrities write a *really* good storybook, we're still in some good company with the likes of Jamie Lee Curtis, Whoopi Goldberg, and Julie Andrews whose works have made it onto the *New York Times* bestseller list for children's books.

In 2005 Sir Paul McCartney joined this bunch with the release of his first children's book *High in the Clouds* co-authored with Geoff Dunbar and Philip Ardagh. This environmental fable concerns Wirral, a young squirrel driven out of his well-preserved forest home by bulldozers into the grimy, sprawling city of Megatropolis where he learned of animals forced into labor by the cruel Gretch with the help of her whip-wielding, right-hand man — or rat — Wrackford. He goes to a quest to find Animalia, a paradise where animals roam free and live in harmony far from the imposing clutches of evil enslavement where Wirral finds himself on a larger undertaking to liberate animals far and wide.

*High in the Clouds* overall is a funny tale that will somehow delight young audiences. Although I did enjoy Geoff Dunbar's peaceful nature imagery some of the animal drawings feel to some extent stiff, glossed over with skilled computer rendering and coloring. I don't know if this is just his style (since this is the first time I encountered his work) though to be honest some of the illustrations do strike me like those storyboards use for pitching in animation movies and indeed I read reports here and there that during sometime this picture book was slated to be an animated film but somewhat plans either stalled or never came to fruition.

The narrator seems playful at first but as it goes along it suffered from a breathless narrative that rambled on and on resulting in a story with characters that tend towards the generic — with a typical love angle to boot. It's just about telling a story with as little imagination and feeling as possible. I'm no writer just a simple reader who wears that cap with a child's point of view in mind and I wonder how can this story with a young reader's short attention span can sustain his/her interest long enough to slog this book through?

My main beef though was near its ending when the inhabitants of the island of Animalia defend their home against the invading nasty Gretch. Wirral, our supposed protagonist does NOTHING during the height of the fight. Wearing my child cap again I imagine as I set out to read his tale that he will be a bigger character by its end, learning life lessons any mother deprived squirrel of his kind will realize and discover, more so as he sees it as his task that he *must* protect this Utopian island from Gretch's grubby hands. Whether the exposition on this part was overlooked by the writers or not it pretty much looks to me that Wirral was relegated in the sidelines — giving no account of what he did at all! — offering the chance for Froggy to shine, the supposed side kick of Wirral that aside from doing his part defending the island is also *the one* who saved Wilhalmina (our supposed protagonist's love interest) from capture. By golly, this *should* have

been Froggy's tale after all since the title of the book, for the most part, equally relates to him given that he owns a hot air balloon and that he's always out there, "high in the clouds". Wirral, to put it bluntly, is one lousy squirrel.

With laudable themes such as putting a stop to unrestrained global capitalism, pollution and the destruction of the environment as effected by over population, and that sweatshop and forced labor work is a bad, bad, thing, *High in the Clouds* has potential only it's *short* in delivery.

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(Hardcover, 2005 US First Edition)

96 pages

Read on: September 11, 2011

My Rating: ★★

[See this review on my book blog **Dark Chest of Wonders** and for many others.]

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### **Liz says**

The writing was...not good. Jumpy alternating with run on. The plot was cute though and the illustrations were fun. And it's about squirrels.

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### **Tara says**

Maybe it's the painkillers (fractured ankle!), but this story didn't make any sense. Certainly cute, and I am inclined to like anything by a Beatle, this story just didn't work for me. I must also admit that I struggle with anything that kills off a parent in the first chapter. And then the child is over it by the next. Grrr.... stupid literary trend....

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### **(NS)Jennifer Reiner says**

In this story, Wirral the squirrel sets off to find Animalia, a tropical animal sanctuary. Wirral knows of this because of his mother. His mother has died. When bulldozers begin mowing down the Woodland she was crushed to death. Before she dies, she requests that he finds this island. On his journey he finds Megatropolis which is a loud and polluted city. Here he sees animals that are imprisoned in factories. While he is there he learns of a plot to destroy Animalia. Wirral and his two friends Froggo and Wilhamina find the island leads the animals of the Woodland and Megatropolis to a happy life. The cartoon illustrations are great to look at. This book will interest students who are ready to read lengthier books.

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