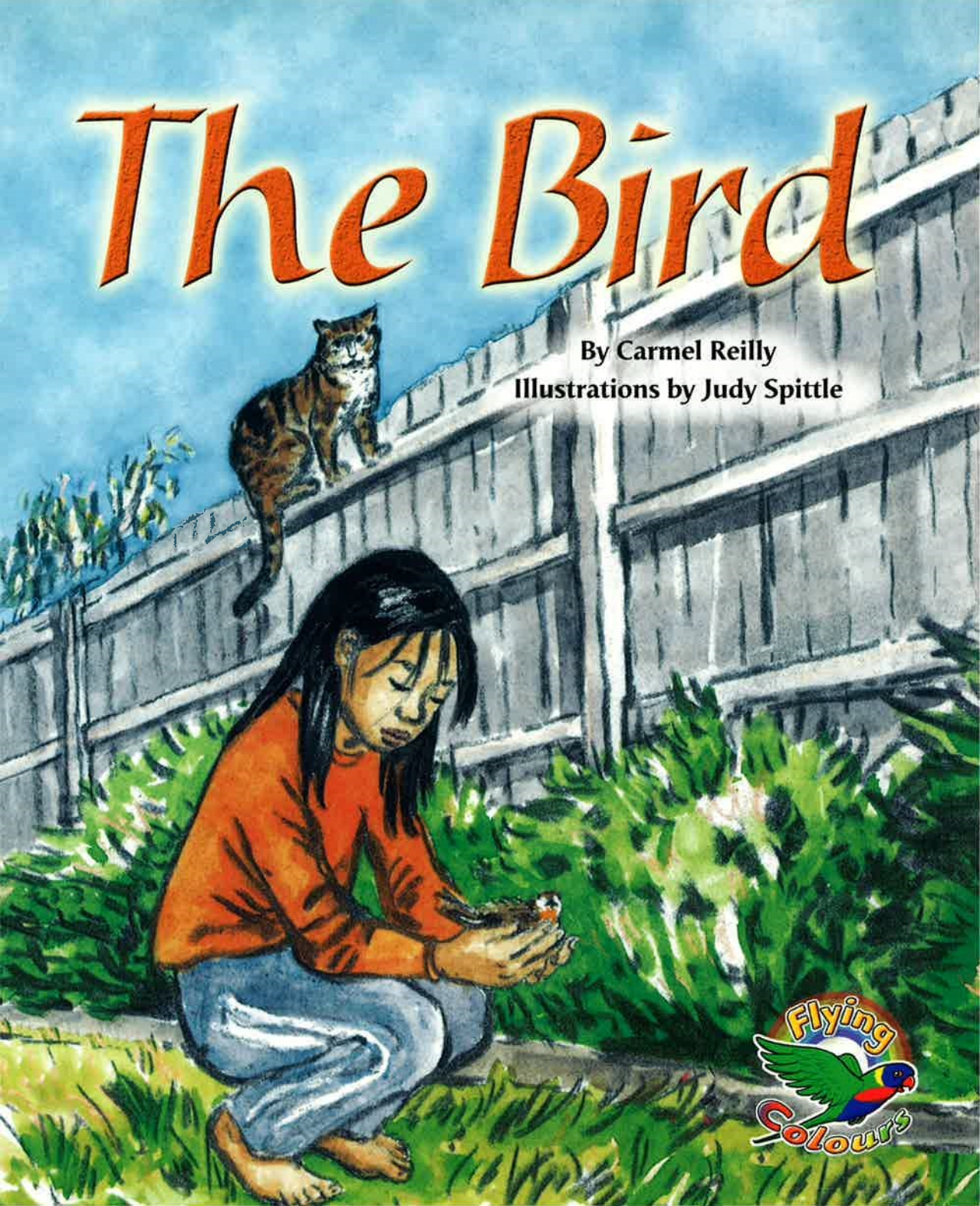

The Bird
By Carmel Reilly
Illustrations by Judy Spittle
Flying Colours



Title	*The Bird*
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Chapter 1	*Max Pounces*	2
Chapter 2	*Making a Nest*	6
Chapter 3	*A Surprise in the Night*	10
Chapter 4	*Say Goodbye*	14

Chapter 1

Max Pounces

It was late in the afternoon and Gemma sat outside watching her cat, Max.

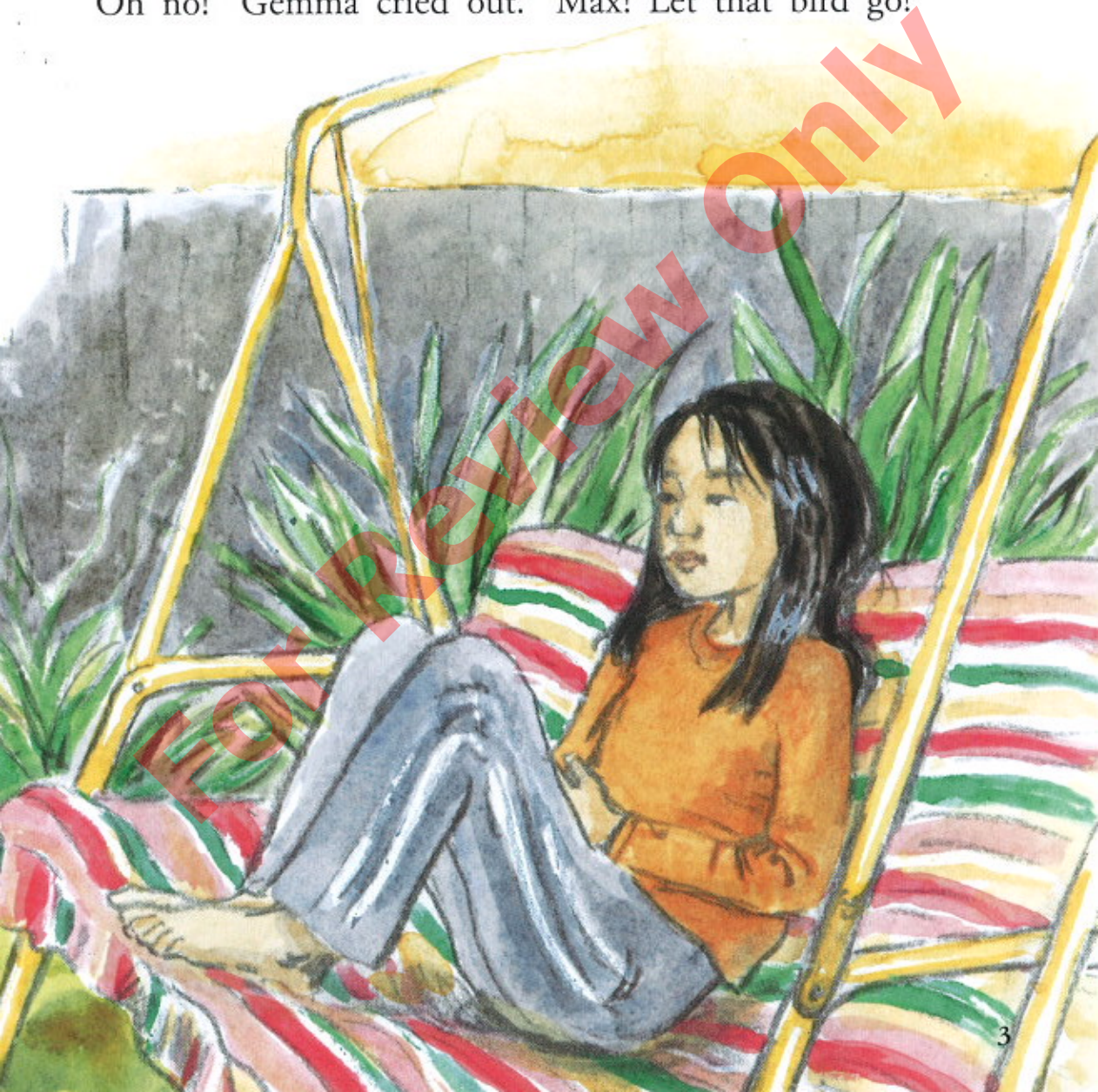
She could see him crouching low in the grass and she wondered what he was doing. Gemma was just about to call out to Max when she saw him creeping swiftly and silently across the lawn.



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Suddenly, he leapt into the air and pounced on a small bird that had just landed nearby.

"Oh no!" Gemma cried out. "Max! Let that bird go!"



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Max clutched the bird between his teeth and began to run towards the back fence. Gemma jumped up and followed him.

"You put that bird down, Max!" she yelled.

Just as Max reached the end of the garden, he dropped the bird and leapt up onto the fence. He sat on the top looking down grumpily at Gemma.

"Max," said Gemma, as she ran to where the bird lay. "Oh, what have you done?"



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The little bird lay very still on the grass. At first Gemma thought it was dead, but when she looked closely at it she could see its chest rising and falling in small jerky movements.

As Gemma gently picked the bird up, she saw that it was still very young – not much bigger than a chick. "I'm going to look after you, little one," she said, as she carried it inside.

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Chapter 2

Making a Nest

Gemma's dad was in the kitchen.

"Look, Dad," said Gemma. "Max tried to grab this bird in the garden, but I saved it."

Dad walked to the bench to have a closer look. "Oh dear, that bird doesn't look very well. It's had a terrible shock," he said.

Gemma looked straight at her father. "I'm going to look after it and make sure it's all right. What should I do?" she asked.

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