

HOTEL
FLAMINGO
FABULOUS FEAST



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Hotel Flamingo

Holiday Heatwave

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FLAMINGO
FABULOUS FEAST

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Piccadilly
PRESS



First published in Great Britain in 2020 by
PICCADILLY PRESS
80–81 Wimpole St, London W1G 9RE
www.piccadillypress.co.uk

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-84812-839-2
also available as an ebook

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Printed and bound in Poland



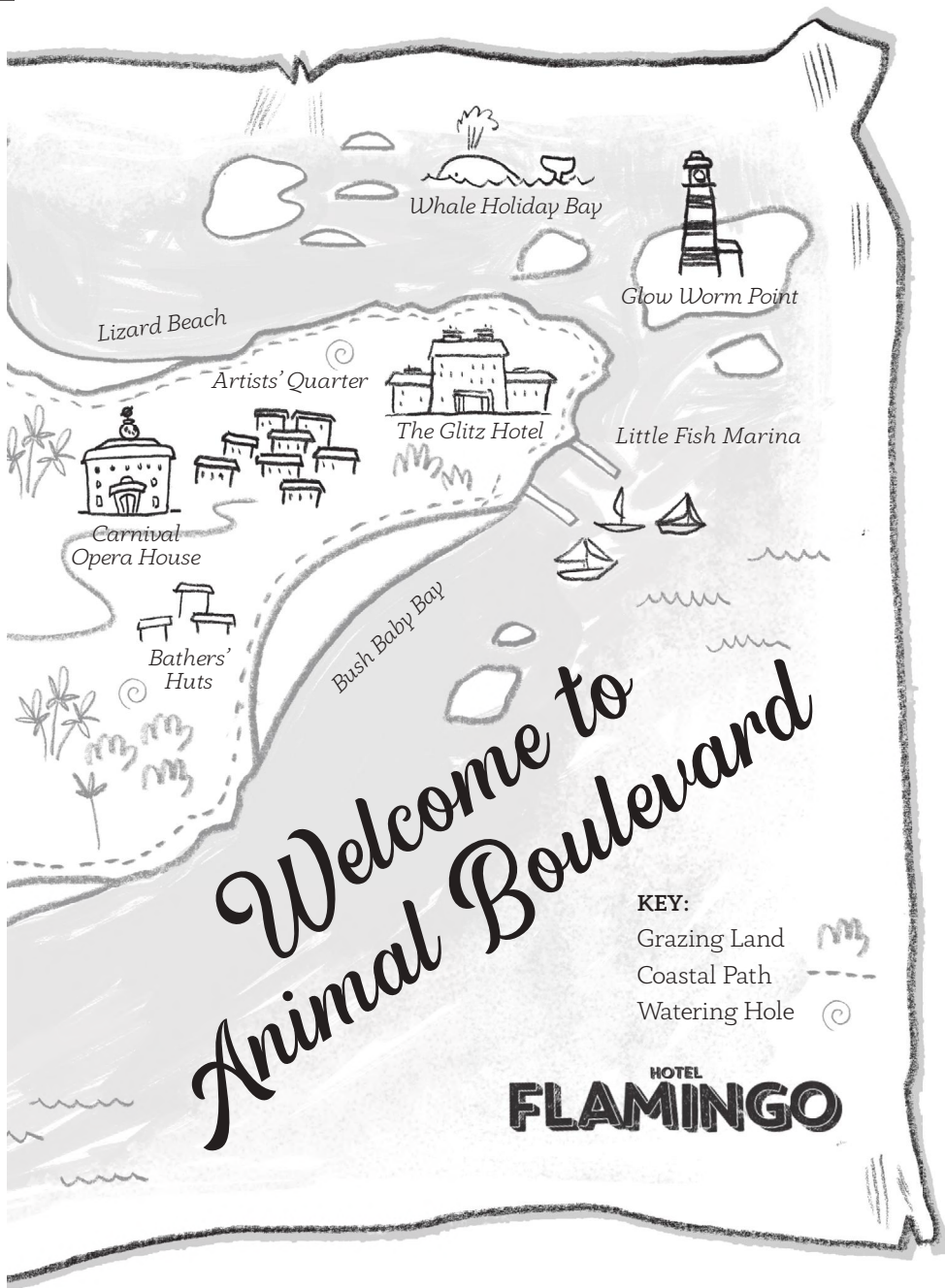
Piccadilly Press is an imprint of Bonnier Books UK
www.bonnierbooks.co.uk

For Cecily

CAN YOU
FIND ME
IN THE STORY?











1

The Guest from Above

The snow was melting after a long, quiet winter, and the staff of Hotel Flamingo were determined to enjoy what little remained. There was always time for one last snowball fight.

‘Duck!’ yelled T. Bear.

‘Where?’ cried Anna, as a fresh ball of slushy ice knocked her hat off.

She slammed her fist into her palm.

‘This means war!’ she grumbled.

But before the battle could commence, Anna heard a crash and a clunk from the roof of the hotel.

‘Miss Anna!’ roared T. Bear, pointing upwards. ‘DUCK!’

‘I’m not falling for that again!’ said Anna.



At that moment a bewildered and slightly frosty bird fell from the sky and crashed into the pavement, knocking Anna off her feet. T. Bear rushed over to help.

‘Miss Anna!’ he growled.

‘Ouch!’ said Anna.

‘Sorry, ma’am,’ said the bird, ruffling his feathers. He pulled his flight goggles up on to his head and helped Anna off the ground.





‘It’s OK,’ she said, rubbing her arm.

‘But you’re no duck!’

‘You’re darn right,’ he said. ‘I’m a pigeon. The name’s Alfonso Fastbeak –’

The pigeon looked suddenly dizzy.

– and I think I need to lie down.’

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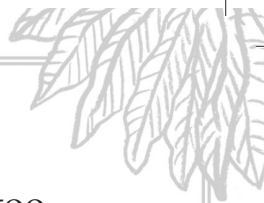
Alfonso was resting in a chair in the lobby, enjoying a hot cocoa. All the staff of Hotel Flamingo were huddled around him, listening to his tales of derring-do.

‘It was a triple loop with two forward rolls,’ he said, taking a sip of his drink.

‘Followed by my signature move – the Impossible Twisting Backflip!’

‘Wow!’ said Lemmy in awe.

‘I know,’ said Alfonso. ‘I thought I had time to complete the routine. I managed



the loops, but the backflip was a step too far and I ended up clanging into your roof.

‘Amazing,’ said Eva. ‘And you survived all that?’

‘Sure was a close shave, ma’am,’ said Alfonso.

‘But why did you do it?’ asked Anna. ‘It sounds terrifying.’

‘Miss, I am a stunt pigeon,’ said Alfonso. ‘It’s what I do – or rather, it’s what I did.’

He pulled out a poster from his pocket and handed it to Anna. It showed Alfonso spinning through the air.

‘I’ve got a record-breaking attempt planned for a week’s time at Lookout Point,’ he said. ‘I’ve been working up to it for years.’

‘You’ll manage it!’ said Lemmy. ‘I know you will.’





Though his legs were wobbly, Alfonso found a way to his feet. He liked a grand gesture as much as he liked telling stories.

‘Up there, alone above the clouds,’ he said, raising his wings to the ceiling, ‘you think you can go on forever. You can spin, duck, fall and stall again and again, wowing crowds and audiences the world over. But, boy, this time my nerve gave out.’



‘It sounds to me like all you need is a good rest,’ said Anna.

Alfonso slumped back into the chair.

‘I hope so, miss,’ he said.

‘I know so,’ said Anna.

The pigeon flashed her a smile. ‘You lot are too kind,’ he said, taking in the lobby and hotel for the first time. ‘Gee whizz,’ he said, ‘and I think this hotel is possibly the most beautiful hotel I ever saw.’

‘You’re right there,’ growled T. Bear.

‘Say! Any chance of me taking a room while I recuperate?’ asked the pigeon. ‘It could be just what I need to get my wings flapping again.’

Lemmy flicked through the bookings diary at the front desk. It was pretty much empty.

‘Absolutely, sir,’ he said. ‘How long will you be staying?’

‘Now that’s a question,’ replied the pigeon. ‘How many seeds are there in a birdfeeder?’

‘I don’t know, sir,’ said Lemmy.

‘Then let’s leave it at that for now,’ said Alfonso.

Lemmy handed over a key. ‘Room two-one-seven. Second floor. Need any help with your luggage?’

Alfonso turned round to reveal a thin flight bag strapped to his back.

‘Flying aerobatics with these wings,’ he said with a smile, ‘a pigeon has to travel light!’

Alfonso wobbled off towards the lift, testing his wings as he went.

‘Looks like we have our first guest of the season,’ said Anna with a smile.

