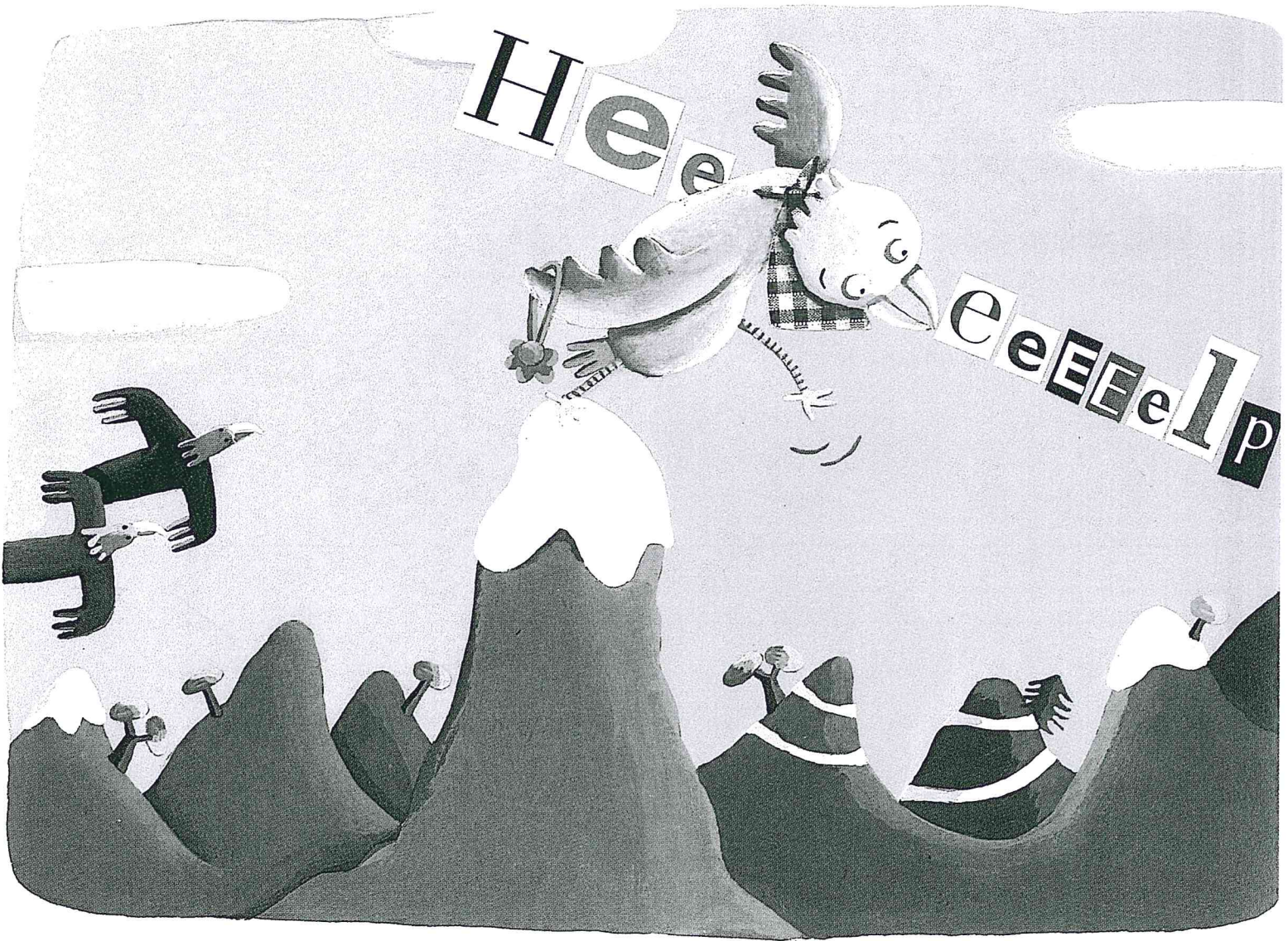


ELLEN *THE* EAGLE finds her place IN *THE* WORLD



when Ellen the Eagle was born, her first word was "HEEEEEELP!"

That was because the first thing she saw was the ground. But she was not on it.

Ellen was teetering on the lip of a ledge high, high, high on a mountaintop.

"Get me down from here!" she demanded. "And I mean **NOW!**"

"You're an eagle, dear," said her mother, Edie, putting a wing around the baby bird to protect her. "You don't want to live down there with things like sparrows and pigeons."

"This eagle wants a condo on the beach in Hawaii," Ellen shot back.

"You'll get used to it," Eddie, her father, put in. "*One day you'll be soaring in the clouds.*"

"There's no ground up there. In fact, I don't see anything up there. How am I supposed to walk around on blue nothing?"

"You won't walk. You'll fly — with these." And Edie opened her great wings.

"**Yikes!**" Ellen exclaimed. "You mean I've got to carry those around all the time?"

"Aren't they magnificent?"

"*You're nuts!*"

Being born an eagle didn't mean that that was what Ellen wanted to be.

Ellen learned to fly, but she didn't like it. For one thing, it was cold way up there with the clouds. Flying was also boring. There was nothing to do except go around and around and around in circles. Not only that, *flying did not make sense.*

"What's holding me up?" she asked herself. "Air, right? But **what is air?** What if I'm soaring around up here bored out of my skull one day and the air decides it doesn't like me? Or maybe the air will think it's more important to hold up some other bird, a junco, for crying out loud. Or maybe the air will get tired of having to be everywhere at the same time and take a vacation. After all, the air has been here since the world was born. It has been going in

and out of the lungs and cells of people and animals and plants and water. You have to admit that being air is kind of ***a yuck job. And boring!***

Suddenly, Ellen wondered if the air had been listening. What if the air disappeared right that second? Terrified that was what was going to happen, Ellen quickly dropped from the sky and onto the branch of an old dead tree. ***"That's it!"*** Ellen declared. "I am not going up in the air ever again. The air doesn't like me and I don't like it!"

Ellen did not know that she looked very regal and noble sitting there in the tree. But not having a mirror, Ellen didn't know she had any looks at all.

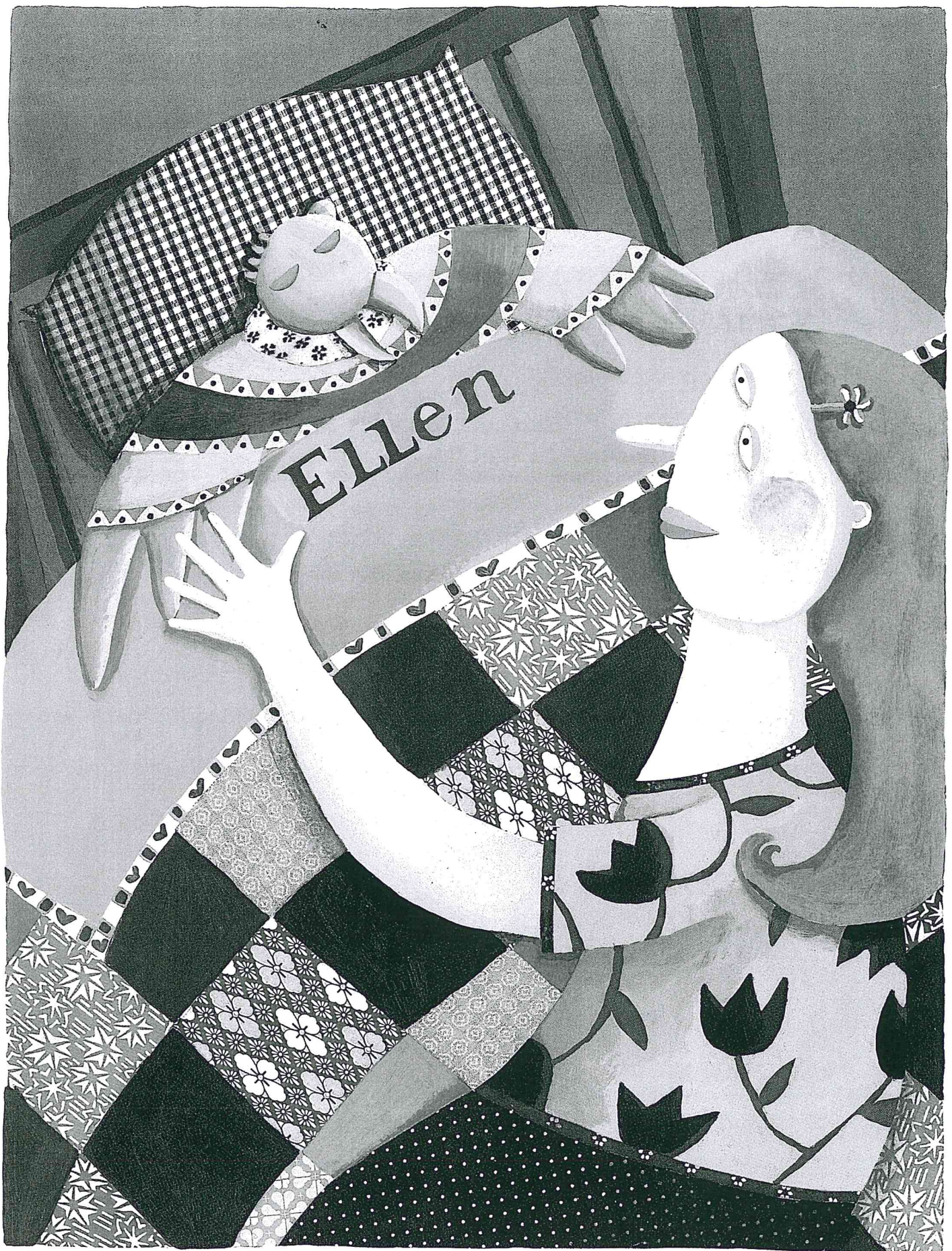
Just then a park ranger named Ellen came hiking by. ***"Wow! Isn't that eagle magnificent?"*** she exclaimed.

Ellen wondered, *Is she talking about me? Me? Magnificent?*

Ellen the Ranger admired Ellen the Eagle's beauty for a moment more and then she resumed hiking up the trail.

"Stop!" Ellen the Eagle yelled, but it came out as ***"Awk!"*** You can't leave me here. I'm no good as an eagle. I'm a rotten eagle. I'll die out here in the woods. Don't you know the air is going to go away and the clouds are going to fall and hit everybody on the head?!" Ellen was jumping up and down and flapping her wings trying to get Ellen's attention, when suddenly she lost her balance and, with a ***loud screech***, fell out of the tree, hit her head on a rock, and knocked herself out.

Sometime later Ellen woke up. ***Where am I?*** she wondered, feeling warm and cozy, lying in bed beneath a blanket. Her eyes popped open and she saw Ellen looking down at her. Ellen smiled eagerly. Of course, when an eagle smiles it looks like it is going to rip your heart out of your chest.



Ellen the Ranger jumped back. Ellen the Eagle knew she had done something wrong, so she turned her head away. After a moment, Ellen the Ranger came closer and, sitting down on the edge of the bed, she held out her hand and began gently stroking Ellen's feathers. Ellen sighed deeply and was soon asleep.

The next morning Ellen took Ellen outside.

"You're all better now," she said. "It's time for you to return to nature."

"Are you nuts?" Ellen said. "Nature is no place for an animal. Everything looks at everything else and all they see is dinner." And *she promptly fainted.*

Ellen the Ranger was upset. "Maybe she's weaker than I realized from that bump on her head."

She took Ellen back inside and radioed her boss and asked what to do with the eagle she had found.

"You won't believe this!" her boss exclaimed. "I just got a call from the President. He says that the eagle they have been using to pose for pictures on postage stamps and posters and in television commercials is unhappy and wants to go soar in the beautiful, spacious skies."

"Fantastic!" Ellen responded. "I have a feeling this eagle wants nothing to do with any spacious skies or purple mountains' majesty."

When Ellen heard that, she opened her eyes but kept her smile to herself.

The President sent his own plane to get Ellen and Ellen and fly them to Washington, D.C. To this day, they live in a penthouse apartment near the White House. Whenever anybody in the government needs a picture of an eagle for a stamp or anything official, a photographer comes to the apartment.

Ellen puts on her noblest look and the photographer takes her picture.

Now everyone knows eagles have very sharp eyesight. What people don't know is that clouds have sharp eyesight, too. Which is how Ellen's parents learned *she had a job*. One day they were soaring up in the sky where all the blue color is made. A cloud drifted over and told them that she had seen their daughter's picture on the side of a mail truck.

"Ellen's picture on the side of a truck?" Edie and Eddie said together.





They flew around until they spotted a mail truck.

"Look at her, Eddie!" Edie said proudly.

"I'd recognize that beak anywhere," Eddie agreed.

And they were very proud that their daughter had followed her mind.

Which proves two things:

1. If you were born a chicken but think you're an eagle, DON'T BE A TURKEY!

2. Make sure you're on the ground the day the air decides to TAKE A VACATION.

Name: _____

Ellen the Eagle Selection Questions

Mark only the BEST answer for each multiple-choice question.

1. What generalization does this selection support?
 - A. Use what you've been taught
 - B. Be who you want to be
 - C. Don't listen to anyone
 - D. You can overcome your fears

2. To Ellen, her wings symbolize
 - A. The freedom of flight
 - B. A future challenge
 - C. A fear to overcome
 - D. An expected way of life

3. What lesson can we learn from Ellen the Eagle?
 - A. Do as you are told
 - B. Adults always know what's best for you
 - C. Discover the true you
 - D. Do what is expected of you

4. At the beginning, Ellen the Eagle felt everything EXCEPT
 - A. Frustration
 - B. Boredom
 - C. Accomplishment
 - D. Fear

5. Ellen would MOST LIKELY want to be remembered as
 - A. An eagle who went her own way
 - B. A role model for all eagles
 - C. A disappointment to her parents
 - D. The icon for the post office

6. In this selection, the author's intended message is

- A. Life is full of obstacles
- B. Follow the crowd
- C. It takes courage to be yourself
- D. Ignore your fears

7. In this selection, the source of conflict is

- A. Ellen the Ranger wanted Ellen the Eagle to fly
- B. The air refused to hold Ellen the Eagle up
- C. Ellen's parents demanded she fly like an eagle
- D. Ellen the Eagle didn't want to live up to the expectations of others

8. The fact that Ellen the Eagle can talk is an element of which of the following genre?

- A. Science fiction
- B. Mystery
- C. Fantasy
- D. Historical fiction