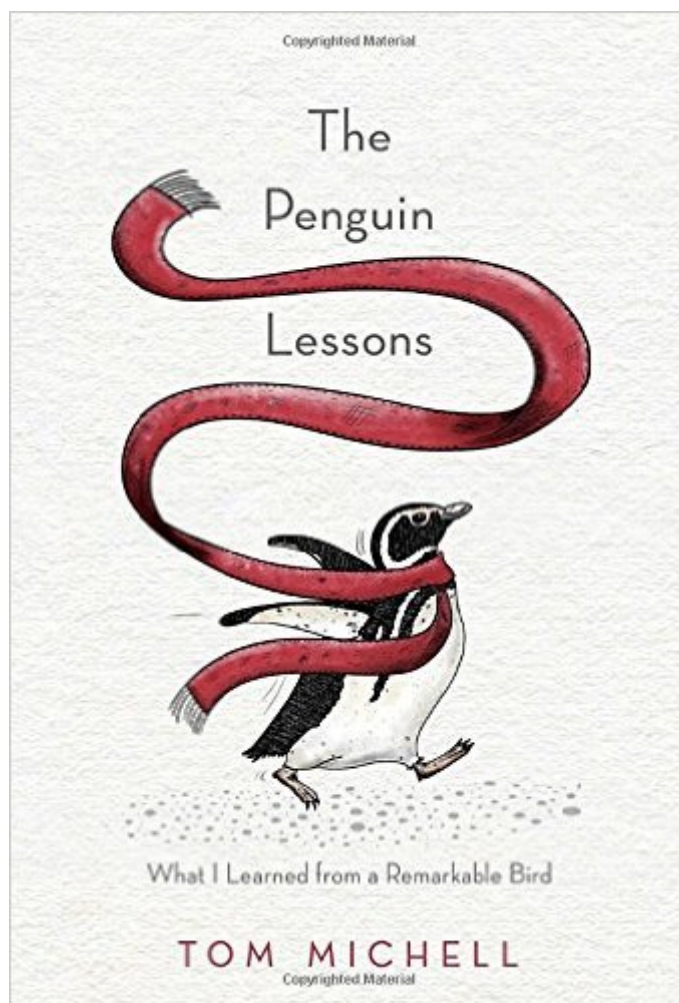


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# The Penguin Lessons: What I Learned From A Remarkable Bird



## Synopsis

A unique and moving real-life story of the extraordinary bond between a young teacher and a penguin, this book will delight readers who loved *Marley & Me*, *Dewey the Library Cat*, *The Good Good Pig*, and any book by Jon Katz. In 1975, twenty-three-year-old Englishman Tom Michell follows his wanderlust to Argentina, where he becomes assistant master at a prestigious boarding school. But Michell's adventures really begin when, on a weekend in Uruguay, he rescues a penguin covered in oil from an ocean spill, cleans the bird up, and attempts to return him to the sea. The penguin refuses to leave his rescuer's side. "That was the moment at which he became my penguin, and whatever the future held, we'd face it together," says Michell in this charming memoir. Michell names the penguin Juan Salvador ("John Saved"), but Juan Salvador, as it turns out, is the one who saves Michell. After Michell smuggles the bird back to Argentina and into his campus apartment, word spreads about the young Englishman's unusual roommate. Juan Salvador is suddenly the center of attention—as mascot of the rugby team, confidant to the dorm housekeeper, co-host of Michell's parties, and an unprecedented swimming coach to a shy boy. Even through the collapse of the Peronist government and amid the country's economic and political strife, Juan Salvador brings joy to everyone around him—especially Michell, who considers the affectionate animal a *compadre* and kindred spirit. Witty and heartwarming, *The Penguin Lessons* is a classic in the making, a story that is both absurd and wonderful, exactly like Juan Salvador. Praise for *The Penguin Lessons* "I loved this book, and you will, too! It's as charming, heartwarming, and surprising as a penguin on a roof terrace. What's more, *The Penguin Lessons* teaches an important truth: that a single act of compassion can be repaid a thousand-fold." —Sy Montgomery, author of *The Good Good Pig* and the National Book Award finalist *The Soul of an Octopus* "Tom Michell's tone suits the material perfectly. . . . You believe every word. . . . No fool, this penguin. No fools, these publishers, who have unleashed such a delightful and charming book just in time for Christmas." —Daily Mail (U.K.) "Heart-warming is a wholly inadequate phrase to describe this captivating story that is pure delight from beginning to end." —The Bookseller (U.K.)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A thoroughly enjoyable and heartwarming account of the chance encounter and relationship between man and penguin. The author's descriptions of the rescued penguin, Juan Salvador, including his body movements, eating habits and delight in human contact makes for an amusing and educational read. The many scenarios in the book had me both laughing out loud and misty eyed. The author offers the suggestion that man needs to further encourage the study of animal intelligence and behavior. A truly enjoyable book suitable for all ages!

This is a book I'm not going to stop talking about. It's profound, moving, entertaining and informed. The Penguin Lessons is simply extraordinary in every way. To begin with, the writing is eloquent and intelligent. It's filled with humour and insight. It's a travelogue and a small slice of social history, capturing to perfection the iniquities, deprivations and reality of living in a Peronist and post Peron Buenos Aires. It gives a sense of the essence of life in Latin America for a privileged minority, in sharp contrast to life as, for example, a gaucho. But over and above all of this, Tom Michell brings to life the beguiling charm and intelligence of a little penguin. He's aptly named Juan Salvador and his integration with humans and bond to them is just amazing. The sketches leap from the (electronic) page and I'd swear the little guy has a glint in his eye! My heart and soul ( and tears) went with every page of this totally absorbing journey. I'd never expected a simple tale about a man rescuing a penguin to be so completely captivating and rewarding. I've thought about the adventures since finishing the book and if there's any justice in this world, little Juan Salvador will be carried on forever in the hearts of those who read about him. I absolutely loved this book. My thanks to publisher for an advance copy via Netgalley.

Tom Michell grew up in southern England and wanted to travel. In his 20's, he went to teach at a boys boarding school in Argentina so that he could make money and travel. This was at a time

when Argentina's dollar value fluctuated widely from day to day. He was given an advance of 1 million pesos and told to spend it all on anything he think he might need right away. Otherwise it wouldn't buy as much the next day. When the school was on breaks he got to travel. He went to Uruguay for a few days and he discovered many penguins by the sea all covered in oil and dead. However, there was one penguin that was moving and he decided to rescue him. He took the penguin to the place he was staying and cleaned him up in the bathtub. He tried to bring him back to the sea where there wasn't noticeable oil but the penguin followed him. He figured that the penguin's feathers were no longer waterproof and felt there was no alternative but to smuggle him across the border to Argentina and bring him back to the school with him. He named the penguin Juan Salvador and everyone love him. Tom Michell shares many of the stories and escapades that ensued while Juan Salvador was with him. He also shared his travels and the turbulent times in Argentina. This is a tender hearted memoir with lots of laughs and, yes, some tears. The writing is lyrical and the book was near impossible to put down. It is a very fast read and enjoyable read. I adored this book and highly recommend it! I received the ebook for my honest review.

This book is one of the best that I have read in a long time. It captured my interest immediately and held it to the end. I enjoyed it so much that I re-read many parts of the story, just for the sheer pleasure of it. The author's descriptions were so vivid that I felt as if I were actually there, witnessing the events, people, and scenery firsthand. Altogether a wonderful true story!

I JUST LOVED THE PENGUIN LESSONS. WHAT A SWEET DARLING HILARIOUS AND KIND OF SAD AT THE END. TOM MICHELL FRIST BOOK IS JUST GREAT FULL OF LOVE AND LAUGHS. SADLY HE DIED BUT TOM FOUND ANOTHER PENGUIN AT THE END I THINK HE WAS GOING TO KEEP THIS LITTLE PENGUIN. HE LOVED JUAN AND JUAN LOVED HIM. THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE BOOKS THAT I HAVE READ FOR A LONG TIME. I HOPE TOM MICHELL WILL WRITE ANOTHER BOOK ABOUT A ANIMAL HE OWNED

This combination travel and animal narrative will delight the reader who finds animal stories set in unusual places entertaining. The author has a nice fluid style which means this reads well plus his shared experience of teaching and caring for a rescued penguin in Argentina is worth hearing about. For a change of pace from other literary fare I'd recommend this quick read which is a lot better than I initially thought it would be. It was a very pleasant book.

Tom Michell was a young Englishman teaching at a boys school in Argentina. While on a quick vacation in Uruguay, Tom discovers a live penguin in the midst of the hundreds of oil-covered deceased penguins washed up on the beach. Unable to walk away from the struggling penguin, Tom rescues him. In the delightful *The Penguin Lessons* by Tom Michell, he recounts his story with the lovable penguin and life at the boarding school. Named Juan Salvador, the penguin becomes a sort of mascot for the boys at the school. The story is endearing and thoughtful. I read the first few chapters of Tom's initial encounter with the penguin and his attempts to clean and rescue him from the deadly oil, aloud to my family while on a road trip. The kids were completely enamored by hearing about the adventures of Tom and the penguin. Though I read the rest of the book by myself in an evening, I think my kids would enjoy the rest of the book. It's a fun book for the entire family. Every now and then, it's just nice to read a nice story. *The Penguin Lessons* by Tom Michell is a story to share with your kids and your parents and your grandparents. It's funny and tender and hopeful. I kind of want a pet penguin now. The heartwarming story combined with the whimsical cover, makes *The Penguin Lessons* a great stocking stuffer this season too. I received a complimentary copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

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