

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Flames consume a forest, and an owl seeks refuge. Helicopter wings chop, and water drops to drench the branches below. Using spare, lyrical language, this debut picture book takes readers inside the journey of a screech owl that fled the flames to ride along with a firefighting helicopter during the 2020 California Creek wildfire. Vivid imagery highlights the fear and danger of the experience—as well as an astonishing moment of connection.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Cedar Pruitt** lives in owl territory just outside of Boston, Massachusetts, where she is a champion for green space. Her home is with her husband, children, and a crew of animals that cluck, sing, and hiss. It's a

hoot! When not writing, Cedar teaches people how to connect with one another across their differences. *Fire Flight: A Wildfire Escape* is her first published picture book. Visit her at [www.CedarPruitt.com](http://www.CedarPruitt.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



**Chiara Fedele** was born in Milan, Italy, and earned a degree in illustration from La Scuola del Fumetto. Since then, her illustrations have been published in many countries around the world. Chiara loves bright colors

and contrast, and her art style uses a combination of mixed traditional media and digital. She has won multiple awards, including a 2018 silver medal for the Sydney Taylor Book Award. Chiara currently lives in Tromello, a little village near Milan, with her family and pets.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## BEFORE READING

1. Where do owls live? What do they eat? Have you ever heard an owl?
2. What is something you know about Screech-Owls?
3. What stories have you read in which people and animals have a special connection?
4. Do you have any special connections with animals?
5. Forests are much more than trees. What animals do you think live in forests?
6. Why do you think forests are important?

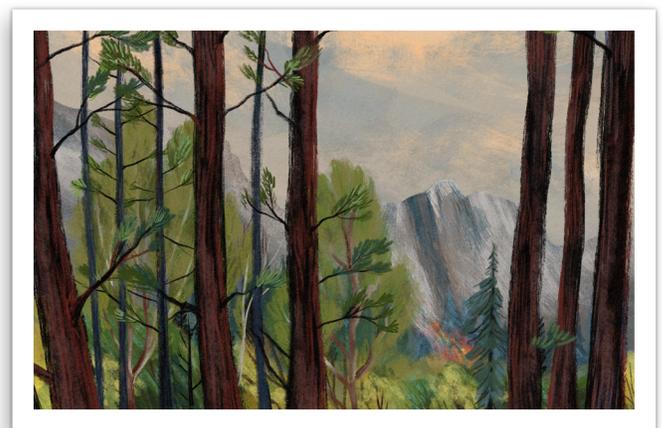


## WHILE READING

1. What do firefighters do? What does a fire-fighting helicopter do?
2. Why do you think the owl in the story flew inside the helicopter window?
3. What do you think the pilot was thinking when this happened? If you were the pilot, what would you have done?
4. What makes you feel safe? (*Being with people you trust, gentle animals, in calm places like a quiet forest or on a couch with a soft quilt.*)

## AFTER READING

1. How can forest fires start? Why do dry forests catch fire more easily?
2. Do you know what drought is and how it makes forests dry?
3. How do you think wildfires affect the environment? What do you know about climate change?
4. How did this story make you feel? (*Worried, afraid, sad, comforted, curious.*)



# CLIMATE CHANGE

The word “**climate**” means the weather, but not just for yesterday, today, or tomorrow. It means the weather over a long period of time. Our climate has been changing over a long period of time. How has world’s weather changed over the past hundred years? It’s slowly gotten hotter as a result of human activities that have increased certain gases in the air. Even a small amount of increased heat can result in big changes, like much drier forests in California, where this wildfire happened.

## WHAT HAVE WE ALREADY DONE?

We’ve made lots of positive changes that have helped slow the change in our climate. We’ve created more renewable energy sources, cut back on the gases we put in the air, and made advances in technology that have helped. But we have more to do, and we must keep going.



## WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

We must all work together to take steps, both big and small, to make a safer environment for all of Earth’s inhabitants.

### Here are some actions we can take:

- Walk, bike, or take the bus instead of taking a car
- Turn off lights and computers when not in use
- Use only the water we need and no more
- Find ways to use renewable energy sources like hydropower, wind, and solar
- Recycle and compost everything we can
- Learn about climate change, and share information with friends and family
- Always make sure to fully extinguish outdoor fires

## DID YOU KNOW

### WESTERN SCREECH-OWLS ARE:

- Nocturnal, meaning that they stay awake at night and sleep during the day
- Predators who eat small mammals (such as mice), birds (such as cardinals), insects (such as cicadas), and other animals that they can find, like crayfish and reptiles.
- At home in the western parts of the United States, Mexico, and Canada
- Makers of many sounds, including whistling, trilling, and whinnying...but they don’t screech!



# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## TEST YOUR OWL KNOWLEDGE

- 1. True or False:** Owls can't move their eyes from side to side.
- 2. True or False:** Owls can spin their heads all the way around in a complete circle.
- 3.** The smallest owl at only 5 inches tall is the:
  - Cutest Owl
  - Elf Owl
  - Burrowing Owl
- 4.** Blakiston's Fish Owl is one of the biggest owls living in the world today, at about 2.5 feet tall and ten pounds. It lives in:
  - Apartment buildings
  - Caves
  - Big trees
- 5. True or False:** There are 254 species of owls known in the world today.



## Answers

1. True! Their eyes remain fixed forward while their head swivels to help them see.
2. False! They can swivel their heads 270 degrees...and then they need to turn it back the other way.
3. The Elf Owl is the smallest owl in the world today.
4. These big owls need forests with big, old trees in order to survive.
5. True! There are 254 species worldwide, and only 19 species living in North America. But both Western and Eastern Screech-owls are common on this continent.

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

## LABEL THE FIRE-FIGHTING HELICOPTER

Can you label the helicopter with the correct parts?

- A. Bucket
- B. Cockpit
- C. Landing Skids
- D. Main Rotor
- E. Rotor Blade
- F. Tail Rotor
- G. Water/Fire Retardant



## Answers

