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Local woman turns husband's pandemic-related job loss into children's book

Promoting authors is nothing new to Cincinnati native and local public relations professional Julie Whitney, but she never dreamt the day would come when she would be publishing her own book.

"Publishing a book was never on my bucket list," says Whitney. "Although I have helped dozens of authors with book launches, publicity and signings throughout my career, I never actually intended to become one myself."

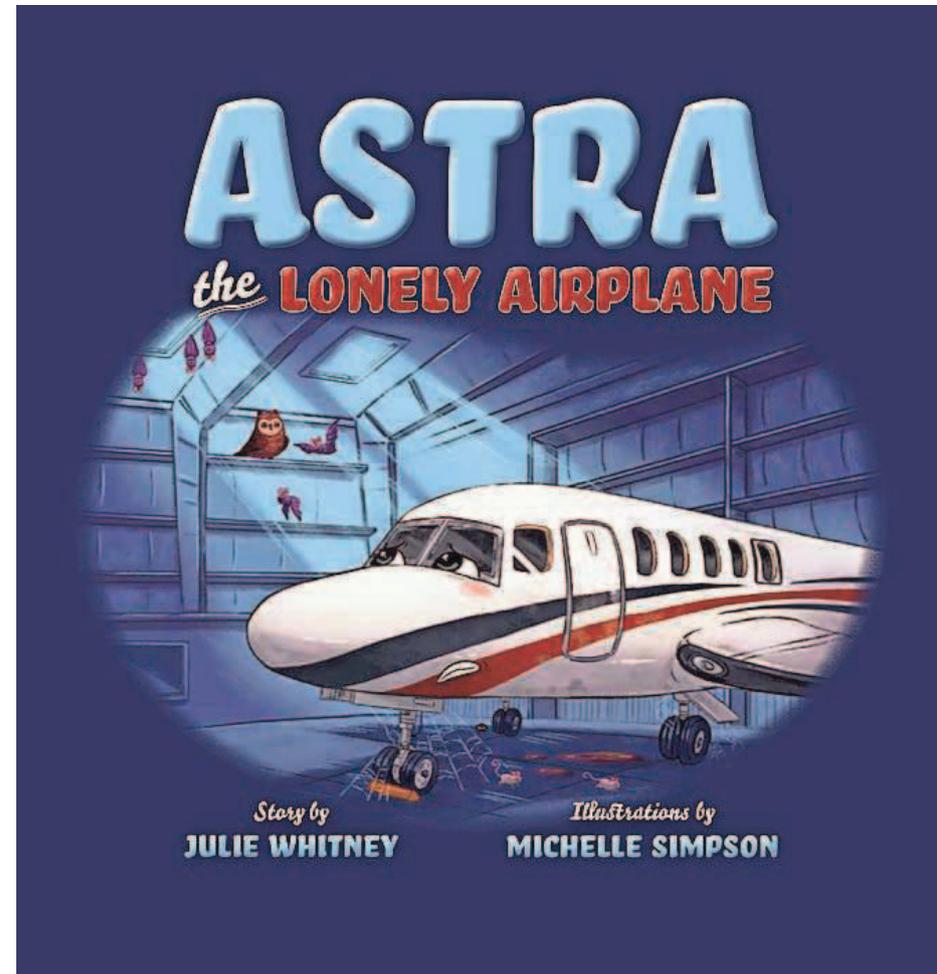
Whitney continues: "2020 was one tumultuous year for all of us. I turned 60 during the pandemic, and had intended to celebrate the major milestone in Italy. Instead, I had a Zoom party with friends, while eating pizza in honor of the celebration that should have been."

"Additionally, my husband lost his job as a chief corporate pilot on May 5,



Julie Whitney COURTESY OF JANEL LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

2020, very unexpectedly with no notice. As I went with him to clean out his



Front cover of "Astra The Lonely Airplane" PROVIDED

office in the hangar I asked if I could sit in the beautiful Gulfstream 100 jet one more time. As I climbed inside her, I openly wept, feeling sick to my stomach, and wondering what would be-

come of her as she sat all alone in the hangar night after night wondering where Captain Dan was, and if she

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would ever again be flown?”

“I literally sat down that night and began writing ‘Astra The Lonely Airplane,’ a rhyming children’s picture book, turning lemons into lemonade. It was highly therapeutic for me, and I decided to shop it around to some literary agents and publishers. I signed with BrandyLane Publishers/Belle Isle Books in Richmond, Virginia on Aug. 19, 2020, which happens to be National Aviation Day, and the very same day my husband, (Captain Dan), landed a new job. I have already written two additional books in the Astra series, with a fourth one in the works.”

Whitney continues: “The book is appropriate for young K-5 readers, and also for preschoolers who will enjoy memorizing the rhyming verse. It teaches children lessons in overcoming hardship and adversity, dealing with difficult people, and about embracing new circumstances that may occur in their lives, such as a move to a new city, coupled with a bit of math

and geography. It also includes a glossary of plane terminologies and interesting facts that children will learn about the G100 jet. Additionally, the quirky, and colorful human characters in the book represent many different ethnicities, an element that was critically important to me.”

And as a bonus, the book comes with a three-minute video of an up close and personal tour of Astra with the real Captain Dan, (Julie’s husband), via a QR Code that readers may scan located inside the book. The video was shot and edited by former, longtime Cincinnati Enquirer photo-journalist Glenn Hartong, who is the owner of ChiliDog Pictures.

The illustrator is Michelle Simpson, who resides in the Niagara region of Canada.

The book is now available for pre-orders for hardback (\$24.95) and softback (\$14.95) on Amazon.com, BN.com, Target.com and Bookshop.org. The official release date is March 2, 2022, during Right To Read Week, at which time it will also be available at select local bookstores.

For more information, to contact the author about an appearance, or re-



An inside illustration of “Astra The Lonely Airplane” PROVIDED

quest a review copy, visit www.Astrathelonelyairplane.com. You can follow Julie on Instagram @juliewhit-

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