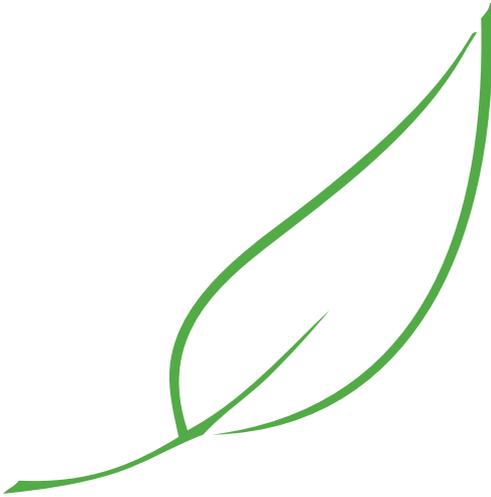


Why Penguins Can't Fly, And Other Tales Of Antarctica

by T. James Belich



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WHY PENGUINS CAN'T FLY, AND OTHER TALES OF ANTARTICA

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WHY PENGUINS CAN'T FLY, AND OTHER TALES OF ANTARCTICA

By T. James Belich

SYNOPSIS: Welcome to Antarctica! Home of the South Pole, the world's coldest desert, and the only uninhabited continent on Earth. Uninhabited by you folks, that is. Lori the penguin here. My brother and sister and I have come to show you all around this charming little continent of ours. At least that was the plan until Bill the leopard seal showed up and threatened to eat us if we don't find the magical Fallen Star that once gave penguins the ability to fly (that's the story, anyway). Throw in a hyperactive seal, a conniving little skua bird, several hungry carnivores and... Well, if I make it home in time for dinner it'll be a miracle. But along the way we'll share a few of my favorite stories, while we do our best to stay off everyone's dinner menu and discover the truth of Why Penguins Can't Fly.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 female, 3 male, 9 either, 5+ extras; gender flexible, doubling possible)

LORI (f)	A king penguin. (226 lines)
LONNIE (f).....	Lori's younger sister. (31 lines)
LEROY (m)	Lori's younger brother. (44 lines)
SAM (m/f).....	A fur seal. (120 lines)
GIL (m/f).....	An albatross. (13 lines)
SANDY (m/f).....	A snow petrel. (11 lines)
TERRY (m/f)	A kelp gull. (12 lines)
BILL (m).....	A leopard seal. (125 lines)
SUE (f).....	A skua bird. (78 lines)
A BLUE WHALE (m/f).....	(31 lines)
A CRAB (m/f).....	(38 lines)
THE HEAD OF THE SQUID (m/f).....	(36 lines)
KARI (f).....	A krill (43 lines)
EARL (m)	An elephant seal. (73 lines)
SAM'S FISH (m/f)	A cartoonish-looking fish from Sam's imagination. (8 lines)
ORCA (m/f)	(3 lines)

EXTRAS:

THE SQUID TENTACLES (m/f)..... Minimum of 4. (*Non-Speaking*)

A FISH (m/f)..... (*Non-speaking*)

Extra PENGUINS, SEABIRDS, SEALS and TENTACLES as desired

DURATION: About 70 minutes

SETTING: The Antarctic Peninsula, the present day

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Acton Cooperative Theater – July 2012

Hawkeye Community Theatre – December 2012

SPECIAL EFFECTS

No special effects are required. However, some characters, such as the SQUID, may be accomplished through puppetry, if desired.

PROPS

- The Fallen Star – A brightly-colored meteorite
- Multi-colored wings
- Several handfuls of colored feathers
- Several fish
- A container of junk, which includes an anchor, gold coins, the bone of a whale, and a shiny piece of metal
- A jellyfish
- Several eggs

SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Antarctica, somewhere along the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula where the landscape is a mixture of ice, rock, and water. As the audience settles in, LEROY enters and waddles across the stage. About halfway across LEROY stops, sees the audience, squawks in surprise, and quickly scuttles off stage again. After a few moments LEROY returns with LONNIE. They both poke their heads out furtively, looking at the audience. When they realize the audience is watching them, they both squawk and disappear again. They then emerge and quickly scuttle across the stage, trying not to make eye contact with the audience. After they exit again we hear them squawking excitedly.*

LORI: *(Offstage)* What, now?

LORI waddles on and inspects the audience. LONNIE and LEROY poke their heads on, afraid to venture any further.

Hi! *(She waves to the audience. To LONNIE and LEROY.)* Don't be shy, they won't bite.

They don't move and so she pushes the two PENGUINS back onto stage.

Oh for krill's sake! Like a couple of scared chicks. *(To the audience.)* Don't mind them. We're not much used to humans in this part of the world. I think Leroy's afraid you're a pack of leopard seals or something.

As LORI talks LEROY and LONNIE secretly exit, still nervous around the audience.

Anyway, I suppose I should introduce myself. I'm Lori. I'm a king penguin. You know, with the flippers, and the black and white, and the swimming and eating of fish. You know. So. Welcome to Antarctica! The world's coldest desert, home of the South Pole, and the only uninhabited continent on Earth. Uninhabited by you folks, that is. There's plenty of us penguins. You must have had quite a journey to get here. Here on the Antarctic Peninsula we're still over 600 miles from the southern tip of South America. You know, I just flew in from Chile and boy are my flippers tired! *(Slight pause as she waits for laughter.)* It's funny because I'm a penguin. *(Over explaining.)* And penguins can't... *(She flaps her flippers.)* Never mind. My brother and sister and I are here to show you around this wonderful little continent of ours. You picked the perfect time to visit. We're right in the middle of the Antarctic summer: 30 degrees and sunny, downright tropical. And just look at this view! If you're looking to relocate we've got everything you could ever want right here. Snow, ice, water... more snow. I'm telling you, it's paradise. Well, at least if you're a penguin. Now if you'll all just follow me we'll take a look at...

Suddenly we hear the other PENGUINS squawking offstage.

Oh for the love of fish. Now what?

LONNIE and LEROY run back on followed by SAM, a small brown seal.

SAM: *(Chasing LONNIE and LEROY playfully.)* Arf, arf, arf!

LORI: Oh, hi Sam. *(To the audience.)* This is Sam, he's a fur seal.

SAM: Hi Lori! What are we playing?

LORI: We're not playing anything, Sam. Lonnie, Leroy, and I are here to show these folks around, maybe tell them a few stories...

SAM: Oh I love stories! Can we tell the one about "The Fish I Ate for Breakfast"? Or maybe "The Time I Chased my Shadow"? Arf, arf! Or "I Stared at the Ice for Two Hours Yesterday and It Was So Bright That When I Looked Away All I Could See Were Spots"?

LORI: Yeah? How does that one go?

SAM: I stared at the ice for two hours yesterday and it was so bright that when I looked away all I could see were spots.

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LORI: Uh huh.

LONNIE and LEROY tug at LORI's flippers.

LONNIE: Let's tell stories now.

LEROY: Yeah!

SAM: Oh please say yes, Lori. If you do, I will give you a fish.

LORI: Yeah? What kind of fish?

SAM: Um, I think it is wet... *(He starts to look for it.)*

LEROY: Please, Lori?

LORI: Oh all right, we'll skip ahead to the stories. *(To the audience.)*

Really, the whole continent looks the same anyway.

SAM: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, this will be fun.

In his excitement he begins to chase LONNIE and LEROY again.

LORI: Sam, no! Honestly, it's like he was raised in a zoo. OK, how about we start with one of my favorites: Why Penguins Can't Fly.

LONNIE and LEROY: Yay!

LORI: Our story begins long, long ago when the first penguins came to Antarctica.

SAM: Oh I love penguins. I wish I knew some.

LORI gives the audience a look and continues.

LORI: And how the penguins loved it here. They swam and dove for fish...

LONNIE mimes diving and grabbing a fish.

LONNIE: Yum!

LORI: ...slid across the ice and snow...

LEROY: *(Zooming across the stage.)* Wheel!

LORI: ...and knew that it was home. There was just one little problem: they couldn't fly. Oh they tried...

LONNIE takes a flying leap and lands on the ground.

...and tried...

LEROY does the same and lands on LONNIE.

...but they just couldn't get the hang of it.

SAM tries as well and lands on top of LONNIE and LEROY.

LONNIE and LEROY: Ow!

SAM: Oh that is hard.

LORI: (*Waddling across the stage.*) And let's face it, when you're built to swim you look a little funny on land.

GIL the albatross, SANDY the snow petrel, and TERRY the kelp gull enter.

GIL: What kind of bird waddles like that?

SANDY: And just look at that plumage, like chickens in tuxedos.

GIL: You said it. (*To LORI.*) Waiter!

Laughing, GIL and SANDY exit.

TERRY: Wait, dudes, I don't get it.

TERRY exits after GIL and SANDY. The lumbering shape of BILL the leopard seal looms up behind LORI and the others. LORI and the others don't notice.

LORI: Yeah. Never heard that one before. Oh, how the penguins envied the other birds as they soared gracefully over the ice floes. And then, one day...

SAM: (*Noticing BILL.*)...a really big thing came up behind you.

LORI: No, Sam, one day the penguins saw –

SAM: No, there is a really big thing behind you.

BILL: Hello Sammy, how's your mother?

LONNIE and LEROY hide behind LORI.

SAM: Oh, hi Uncle Bill.

LORI: Uncle Bill? Your uncle is a leopard seal?

SAM: Yep!

BILL: Why don't you introduce me to your friends, Sammy?

SAM: Oh you bet, Uncle Bill. *(To BILL.)* This is Lori and Lonnie and Leroy. *(To LORI, LONNIE, and LEROY.)* This is my Uncle Bill.

BILL: Big Bad Bill of the Southern Ice Floes, so nice to meet you.

LORI: Yeah. So what brings you to this bit of the coast? Uncle Bill.

BILL: Usual migratory patterns.

LORI: Yeah, us too.

LORI, LONNIE, and LEROY start to scuttle off.

Heading inland this time of year.

BILL: *(Blocking their path.)* Is that so. Know where I might find myself a bite to eat?

LONNIE: Nope!

LEROY: Nope!

LORI: Sorry! So nice to have met you.

SAM: Uncle Bill, Lori was just telling us a story.

BILL: Was she now?

LORI: *(Gesturing to audience.)* For these nice folks here.

BILL: *(Turning to see the audience.)* Oh hello there, good to meet you. I'm Bill, a leopard seal. I'm what's known as an apex predator. That is, I eat other animals, but none of 'em eat me. Isn't that right, Lori?

LORI: Yes, sir.

SAM: Orcas eat seals.

LORI: Not now, Sam.

SAM: And sharks. Sharks definitely eat seals.

LORI: Gotta love the circle of life.

BILL: Don't you just.

LORI: So, about that story...

BILL: You know, I know one about a leopard seal and three penguins who came to dinner.

SAM: Oh I do not think I know that one.

BILL: We'll act it out for you.

LORI: I was telling them the one about Why Penguins Can't Fly.

BILL: A shame, isn't it? It'd come in so very handy right about now.

LORI: Boy would it.

BILL: Tell you what, Lori, been awhile since I heard a good story. Why don't you finish yours and if I like it I just might consider not eatin' you.

LORI: That doesn't exactly sound like a promise.

BILL: And there's a reason for that.

LORI: So, as I was saying, one day the penguins saw a really bright light in the sky.

SAM, LONNIE and LEROY: *(Looking up.)* Ooooooh!

LORI: It grew brighter and brighter and brighter until it crashed to earth.

They all watch it fall and land offstage.

It was a Fallen Star.

LONNIE and LEROY retrieve the Fallen Star, a beautiful meteorite covered in many colors, from offstage and give it to LORI.

LEROY: It's so pretty!

LONNIE: What should we do with it?

LORI: We should make a wish. *(To the audience.)* Because you wish on a falling star.

LONNIE: I have a wish! I wish that penguins could fly.

LEROY: Yeah!

LORI: And their wish came true.

LONNIE and LEROY retrieve a pair of beautiful, multi-colored wings from offstage and dress LORI in them.

Suddenly the penguins had the most beautiful wings in all Antarctica. And fly, boy could they fly! *(She "flies" around the stage.)*

LONNIE and LEROY: Wow!

LONNIE and LEROY run offstage and return with handfuls of colored feathers that they use to "fly" after LORI. GIL, SANDY, and TERRY enter.

SANDY: Is that...?

GIL: It can't be.

TERRY: Woah.

SANDY: (*Entranced.*) Oh it is. They're beautiful.

LORI: With their new wings the penguins became the kings of the ice.

They could fly, they could swim... which made the other birds more than a little bit jealous.

LONNIE and LEROY "fly" in a circle around the SEABIRDS. SUE the skua bird enters.

LONNIE and LEROY: Whee!

TERRY: Hey!

GIL has found a fish and is about to eat it.

LEROY: Yum!

LEROY snatches the fish from GIL and "flies" away with LONNIE.

GIL: Why you lousy, no-good little ice rats.

SUE: Got yourselves a little penguin problem, have ya?

SANDY: It's because of those wings. Those gorgeous, gorgeous wings...

GIL: I say we gather up all the other birds and –

SUE: And what? Have you seen how many of 'em there are? Naw, what you need here is a different approach.

The SEABIRDS huddle as SUE whispers to the others.

LORI: Skua birds. They'll steal anything and everything from anyone. They'll even eat carrion. You know, not too fresh. No one likes a skua bird, though you can't argue that they're clever.

GIL: Not bad, Sue, not bad at all.

SANDY: I say let's do it. Terry?

TERRY: I dunno, seems a bit harsh...

LEROY "flies" by and nearly knocks TERRY over.

Not cool, dude. Not cool. (To SUE.) Go for it.

SUE: I'm all over it.

GIL and SANDY exit.

LORI: Now the penguins' new wings didn't work very well in the water and so they always left them on shore when they went swimming, along with one penguin to guard them.

LONNIE and LEROY hand their feathers over to LORI, who puts them with the Star.

See you later, have a nice swim.

LONNIE and LEROY wave to LORI and run towards the water.

LONNIE: Last one in's a rotten egg!

LEROY: Hey! Mom said that's normal.

LONNIE and LEROY exit. SUE saddles over to LORI, who is admiring her wings, while TERRY hides and pretends to be a drowning bird.

SUE: Hey you! Yeah, you! Ya gotta help me!

LORI: What's wrong?

SUE: My chick's fallen in the water, right over there.

TERRY: Cheep, cheep! Help, help! Cheep, cheep!

SUE: Ya gotta save 'im for me. I've gotta... a bum wing, that's it, yeah.

(She starts to walk with a limp.)

LORI: That's your leg.

SUE: Whatever. Ya gotta hurry!

TERRY: Cheep, cheep!

LORI: But I have to guard the wings.

SUE: I'll look after 'em for ya. Just save my chick. She ain't never been in the water before.

LORI: All right! *(She quickly takes off her wings and puts them with the Star. She starts to run off and then stops.)* Wait, I thought it was a he?

SUE: Just scram!

LORI: I'm coming, little chick! *(She runs to the water.)*

SUE: *(Chuckling.)* See you around, you monochromatic chicken. *(She gathers up the Star, the wings, and the feathers and exits.)*

LORI: But of course there was no drowning chick.

TERRY: Dude, let's just all chill now, OK? *(LORI glares at TERRY who exits.)*

LORI: And when the other penguins came back...

LONNIE and LEROY enter.

LONNIE: Our wings, they're gone.

LEROY: Where'd they go?

LORI: You know, it's a funny story...

LONNIE and LEROY look at each other and start to cry.

Try as they might the penguins never found out where the skua bird hid their wings, or the Fallen Star, and that is Why Penguins Can't Fly.

SAM: Oh that is such a sad story.

BILL: Well now, Lori, that was charming...

LORI: Yeah?

BILL: ...but I don't believe it.

LORI: What do you mean?

BILL: You're tellin' me that penguins could fly?

LORI: Well...

BILL: And that your wings came from a rock?

LORI: A really pretty rock.

BILL: Honestly.

LORI: I think it's a metaphor.

BILL: Sure it is.

LORI: Hey, I didn't make up the story.

BILL: Tell you what I'm gonna do here, Lori...

LORI: Look, you said you wouldn't eat us.

BILL: Now don't get your flippers in a knot. If you can prove to me that your story isn't all fluff and krill droppings...

LORI: Ew!

BILL: ...then I promise not to eat any of you.

LORI: Prove it how?

BILL: You say that skua hid this Fallen Star?

LORI: Yeah...

BILL: So find it for me.

LORI: But I don't know where –

BILL: 'Cause if you don't find it then you and your little siblings here will be joinin' me and some krill for dinner, if you catch my drift.

LORI: Right.

BILL: Oh, and Lori?

LORI: Yeah?

BILL: Sammy here will be keepin' an eye on you for me. Won't you, Sammy?

SAM: Oh you bet.

BILL: That's a good boy, Sammy. Don't lose 'em now, and there'll be a nice, big fish in it for you.

SAM: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!

BILL: Be seein' you, Lori. *(He exits.)*

LORI: Sam, why didn't you ever tell me that Big Bad Bill was your uncle?

SAM: Oh he is not so bad, Lori. Just because he likes to eat penguins...

LORI: Sam, we're penguins.

SAM: No, Lori, I am a seal. *(He demonstrates.)* Arf, arf!

LORI: *(Gesturing to LONNIE and LEROY.)* No we're...Never mind. Just don't let him find us, OK?

SAM: But Uncle Bill invited you for dinner. Oh he makes the best penguin, Lori, you will love it.

LORI: Sam, we're penguins.

SAM: I told you, Lori, I am a seal.

LORI: Oh for krill's sake.

LONNIE tugs on her flipper.

Yes, Lonnie?

LONNIE: Are we dinner?

LEROY: I don't want to be dinner.

LORI: We're not going to be dinner. At least you won't be.

LONNIE and LEROY: Yay!

LONNIE and LEROY hug LORI.

LORI: Yeah, yeah, I'm a saint. Remember me when I'm gone. Too bad that Fallen Star's just a story, huh?

LONNIE: We'll find it for you, Lori. We won't let you be eaten either.

LEROY: Yeah!

Excited, LONNIE and LEROY run off and exit.

LORI: Lonnie, Leroy, where are you going? Get back here! Hey!

She chases after LONNIE and LEROY and exits, followed by SAM.

SAM: Arf, arf, arf!

END OF SCENE 1

SCENE 2

AT RISE: *The same scene. LORI enters, followed by SAM, who sniffs around like a bloodhound.*

LORI: Lonnie! Leroy! Where are you? Sam, can you tell where they went?

SAM: I think that they went this way. *(He starts off one direction and then stops.)* Oh no, this way. *(He heads a different direction, still sniffing, and stops again.)* Um... that way?

LORI: I'm sorry I asked. All right, let's think. If they're trying to find the Fallen Star that gave penguins the ability to fly, then where would they go first?

SAM: I do not know, Lori. Where would you go?

LORI: Well, I guess I'd look for a blue whale. They live practically forever so if anyone knows where to find the Star...

SAM: Are blue whales big, Lori?

LORI: Pretty big, Sam.

SAM: And are they blue?

LORI: Bluish, I think.

SAM: And do they eat krill?

LORI: Almost exclusively.

SFX: Whale Sounds.

SAM: And do they sing, Lori?

LORI: Yes, Sam.

SAM: OK. *(He returns to sniffing around.)*

LORI: Is there a reason you ask?

SAM: Oh I just thought that might be one over there.

LORI: Where?

The head of a BLUE WHALE enters from the "water." LORI turns around and is face to face with it. The BLUE WHALE speaks in a way that reflects whale songs.

WHALE: Hellooooo. Are yooooou Loooooriiii? Ooooooh?

LORI: Uh, yeah. Hi. You're a...

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WHALE: Bluuuue whaaale.

LORI: Right. How did you know my name?

WHALE: Sommmme peeenguuuins caaame byyyyy.

LORI: Lonnie and Leroy! Where did they go?

WHALE: liiiiii sent theem oooooonnnnn.

LORI: Oooooonn? Sorry, on where?

WHALE: Tooooo fiiiinnnd whaat they seeeeeeeeeeek.

LORI: They're looking for a Fallen Star.

WHALE: Yeeessssss, annnd sooooo liiii seeeent themmmmm
ooooonnnnn.

LORI: Wait, are you telling me it actually exists?

WHALE: Of cooooooourssse.

LORI: Well what do you know. Maybe I actually have a chance of not
being eaten. So where did my brother and sister go?

WHALE: liiiiii shalllll teeeeeelllll yooooooooo...

LORI: Great!

WHALE:buuuuut fiiiiirsssst liiiiii muuuuust telllll yooooo a
storrriiiiii.

SAM: Arf, arf! I love stories! Is it about a fish?

LORI: Can't you just tell us where they went?

WHALE: Nooooooooo.

LORI: Then at least cut out the whale songs. They're starting to give
me a headache.

WHALE: *(In a more normal voice.)* Fine, if I must.

LORI: That's better.

WHALE: My story begins long, long ago...

SAM: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!

LORI: Is this going to take long? Because Lonnie and Leroy don't do
very well on their own.

WHALE: *(Singing again.)* Paaaaatieeeence.

LORI: Really, knock it off.

WHALE: *(Normal again.)* How the Whale Found Its Song.

LORI: *(Aside.)* Yeah, I can tell this is going to be really relevant.

SAM: Shhhh!

WHALE: Long, long ago there was a whale who lost something it treasured very much.

As the BLUE WHALE speaks the lights grow dim and strange.

Filled with grief it took a deep breath and dived, swimming deeper and deeper until at last it came to the bottom of the sea.

A giant CRAB enters, scuttling sideways.

CRAB: Hey, whadya doing down here, huh? Huh?

WHALE: What manner of creature are you that lives in this strange realm?

CRAB: Uh, nothin' you can eat, yeah, yeah.

WHALE: But food did not interest the whale. *(Starts to cry.)*

CRAB: What's with the cryin', huh? Huh?

WHALE: I have lost something, lost it forever!

CRAB: That so? A lot of things, they fall down here, and I, I take 'em, take 'em all, yeah. *(The CRAB pulls out a container filled with random pieces of junk. The Fallen Star is near the top, but no one notices it.)* Things, things, I got things. This one, that one.

CRAB grabs LORI in one claw.

LORI: Hey!

CRAB: These. I got lots of these.

WHALE: What I have lost can never be found in such a place as this.

CRAB: You sure? What'd you lose, huh? Huh?

WHALE: What have I lost? I have lost my heart, for the whale I dearly loved is gone.

LORI: Oh that's so sad!

The BLUE WHALE throws her a look.

Sorry.

CRAB: Hey, hey, I promise to find your heart, OK? Whatever that is. Must have it here somewhere, yeah, yeah.

WHALE: Oh! But you seek to mock me! Find it then or be crushed, for I shall lay myself upon this cold, wet earth and move no more.

CRAB: Hey, hey! No crushing! I'll find it for you, yeah, yeah. (*CRAB finds an anchor and shows it to the BLUE WHALE.*) Hey, how 'bout this?

WHALE: That is an anchor, you foolish creature. Cast out by man from their boats.

The CRAB rummages around some more and takes out a handful of glittering gold coins.

CRAB: Here, here! Very shiny. You want 'em? You take 'em, yeah, yeah.

WHALE: (*Groaning.*) Ohhhhhhhhhhh!

CRAB: Take 'em all! (*The CRAB shoves the coins at the BLUE WHALE.*) Don't want 'em, nope, nope. (*The CRAB rummages around again and pulls out a large bone.*) How 'bout this? You like it, huh? Huh?

WHALE: But – oh! – the crab now sealed its doom, for this was the bone of a whale. (*To the CRAB.*) You have deceived me! You knew all along that my heart was gone. (*To the audience.*) The whale shook with fury, certain that this was the bone of its beloved.

CRAB scrambles through its trash to find something to protect itself. It finds a shiny piece of metal and holds it between itself and the BLUE WHALE.

CRAB: Hey, hey, tried to help!

WHALE: The great whale prepared to throw itself down when suddenly it stopped.

CRAB: Hey, what?

WHALE: For in the piece of metal the whale saw for the first time its own reflection and took it for the face of its beloved. Filled with joy the whale began to sing for the first time. Ooooohoooohooooohoooooh!

CRAB: I'll just... Yeah, yeah. (*CRAB quickly exits, dragging its junk with it.*)

WHALE: (*Offstage.*) Ooooohoooohooooohoooooh!

WHALE: And the whale's song was answered! Overjoyed it followed the sound and was reunited with its beloved. Together they taught their new song to all the other whales so that none of them would ever lose each other again.

The lights return to normal.

SAM: *(Sniffing.)* Oh that was such a beautiful story.

LORI: It was touching, I admit, but what does it have to do with my brother and sister?

WHALE: I have sent them oooooooooonnnnnnn.

LORI: What, you mean to the bottom of the ocean?

WHALE: But of course. Where else could your Fallen Star be but with the crab who finds lost things?

LORI: Oh great. Figures those two knucklehead siblings of mine would listen to you.

The lights begin to grow dim again as the BLUE WHALE disappears offstage.

What kind of animal sends two defenseless penguins to... *(She turns to see that the BLUE WHALE has gone.)* Hey, where'd you go? And where are we?

WHALE: *(Offstage.)* At the boooooooooottommm of the seeeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaa...

LORI: But how did we...? Oh whatever. So all we have to do now is find a crazy crab with a hoarding fixation.

The CRAB enters behind them, scuttling around looking for items.

(To the audience.) Sorry about the detour, folks. Let me know if you see a giant crab, will you?

SAM: *(Seeing the CRAB.)* Lori, Lori, Lori!

LORI: Just a second, Sam. *(To the audience.)* Once we find Lonnie and Leroy we'll head back to the surface, I promise. So if you can all hold your breath just a little while longer...

SAM has cornered the CRAB.

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SAM: Lori!

LORI: Hey, you found the crab. Catch it!

CRAB: Yikes!

SAM: Arf, arf, arf!

SAM and LORI chase the CRAB and capture it.

LORI: OK, I'll make this quick: where are my brother and sister?

CRAB: Dunno, OK? Kay? What are brother and sister?

LORI: What, are you oxygen-starved? Two birds who look like me, have you seen them?

CRAB: Black and white, yeah, yeah? Have those things? (*Points at LORI's flippers.*)

LORI: Yeah, yeah. I mean, yes. Where are they?

CRAB: Gone. Funny fish gone.

LORI: Oh for krill's sake. When I find those two...

CRAB: They want special thing, to fly, yeah.

LORI: Right, they're looking for a Fallen Star. Have you seen it?

CRAB: Mine, all mine. Came down, sink down, and I, I take it.

LORI: And the "funny fish"?

CRAB: They want it, they take it, and I think, "Hey, hey! Thieves!" So I pinch 'em, pinch 'em like this, yeah, yeah. (*Demonstrates.*)

LORI: Watch where you're pointing those things, all right?

CRAB: Then big thing came, very big. Took the funny fish, took 'em away.

LORI: You mean it ate them?

CRAB: Eat 'em? Nope. They bit it, bit it hard, but it took 'em away, yeah, yeah.

SAM: And the Star?

CRAB: Take that too. Had arms, lots of arms.

LORI: You mean tentacles?

CRAB: Yeah, yeah, that!

SAM: What is it, Lori?

LORI: Sounds like a squid.

CRAB: Big, very big.

LORI: A colossal squid.

SAM: Ooooooh.

LORI: Just show me where they went.

CRAB: That way, yeah, yeah.

LORI: You're lucky I don't make crab cakes out of you, letting a squid take my brother and sister. Now get out of here, shoo, shoo!

CRAB: (*Scuttling away.*) Rude fish, very rude! (Exits.)

LORI: Come on, Sam, let's find Lonnie and Leroy and get out of here.

SAM: Oh you bet.

A SQUID TENTACLE slowly enters and approaches SAM, soon followed by a SECOND TENTACLE.

LORI: Now watch yourself, Sam. Squid are tricky and one of those tentacles, all covered in hooks and suckers, can sneak up on you in a second and – bang! – you're squid snacks.

The TENTACLES grab SAM and cover his mouth so that he cannot speak.

They mostly eat fish, but I'm sure they wouldn't mind a nice, tasty seal or penguin if they could get one. So we'd better be careful or else...

She turns to see SAM enveloped by the TENTACLES.

Sam!

She tries to pull the TENTACLES off of SAM, but only succeeds in getting grabbed herself.

Well this is just great.

Other TENTACLES enter holding LONNIE and LEROY. Their mouths are also covered by the TENTACLES.

Lonnie, Leroy, there you are! Do you have any idea how worried I was? Sam and I have been looking everywhere for you. Haven't we, Sam?

SAM: (*Freeing his mouth.*) Lori, Lori, I found the squid.

LORI: Yes, I can see that, Sam.

SAM: And look! It is Lonnie and Leroy.

LONNIE and LEROY manage to wave.

LORI: Uh-huh, I see that too.

SAM: And the squid, it has the Star.

LORI: Really?

LONNIE and LEROY nod vigorously, and LONNIE manages to show LORI that the TENTACLE holding LONNIE also has the Star.

Well I'll be an orca's uncle.

SAM: Just like the whale told us.

LORI: Yeah, yeah, the whale's a genius.

SQUID HEAD: (*Entering.*) Mmmmmm, hello there. And what might all of you be? You do not look very familiar.

LORI: Hi there, Mr. Colossal Squid, sir. Ma'am. Do you think that you could let us go? We really don't taste very good.

SQUID HEAD: Are you sure? You certainly look tasty.

LORI: Trust me, I wouldn't want you to get a stomachache.

SQUID HEAD: Well that is considerate of you. Perhaps I should eat one of you just to be sure.

The TENTACLE carrying LONNIE moves towards the HEAD.

LONNIE: Lori!

LORI: Wait!

The TENTACLE stops.

Um, OK, the truth is... we're sharks. Big, mean, squid-eating sharks. Right, everyone?

LONNIE and LEROY nod. SAM looks confused.

SAM: I did not know that, Lori, I thought you were –

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LORI gestures for the TENTACLE to cover SAM's mouth again, which it does.

LORI: So you'd better let us go or else.

She roars and tries to look menacing.

Rahhhh!

LONNIE and LEROY follow suit.

SQUID HEAD: (*Chuckling.*) Oh but you are funny little morsels. You, ferocious sharks? Delicious.

The TENTACLE holding SAM moves towards the HEAD.

Now this one looks especially crunchy.

SAM: (*Freeing his mouth again.*) Hi! I am Sam!

SQUID HEAD: Hello Sam. You don't mind, do you?

SAM: Oh no. Mind what?

He is pulled closer to the HEAD.

LORI: Really, out of all of us he'll taste the worst. You should see his table manners. Ugh.

The TENTACLE stops.

SQUID HEAD: I understand your desire not to be eaten, little snacks, but I am afraid that I have not had a good meal in months.

LORI: Wow, that's a long time.

SQUID HEAD: Oh it's not as bad as it sounds. We colossal squid have very slow metabolic rates and so we don't need to eat that often. And the cold and the dark do make me very, very sleepy...(*Pause as the HEAD starts to snore.*)

LORI: You've got to be kidding me. Quick!

They all struggle against the TENTACLES. The HEAD wakes back up.

SQUID HEAD: Sorry, just dozed off for a moment. Where were we?

LORI: You were letting us go.

SQUID HEAD: Oh yes, I... No, I think you are trying to trick me. I was just about to –

LONNIE: Tell us a story?

LEROY: Please?

SQUID HEAD: A story? No one has ever asked me to tell them a story before. I am so touched... *(Starts to cry.)*

LORI: There, there.

SQUID HEAD: Of course I shall tell you a story you... you whatever you are.

LORI: We're penguins.

SAM: *(Patiently.)* Lori, I told you, I am a –

LORI: *(Gesturing to herself, LONNIE, and LEROY.)* We're penguins. And frankly I'm a little insulted that nothing down here has heard of us.

SQUID HEAD: Now, let me think, what story would be fitting...

SAM: Oh boy, Lori, we get to hear another story.

LONNIE and LEROY: Yay!

LORI: You know, I'm not really sure you all appreciate the gravity of our situation.

KARI the krill, a tiny crustacean, enters.

KARI: *(In a high-pitched voice.)* Why it is my good friend Lori! Hello Lori, penguin of the order Sphenisciformes, it is I, Kari the krill.

LORI: Uh, hi, Kari, what are you doing down here?

KARI: I often swim thus through the deep, dark depths of the ocean. What brings you so far beneath your territorial ices?

LORI: Looking for my brother and sister.

KARI: *(Looking around.)* Why, I believe that is them, my avian friend. Hello Lori's brother and sister!

LONNIE and LEROY wave.

I am glad to have been of assistance to you, friend Lori.

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LORI: Look, Kari, I'd love to chat, but we're kind of in the middle of something here.

SQUID HEAD: Hmmmmm...

KARI: (*Looking at the HEAD.*) Ah, but I see. You are attempting to not be food for another, in this case *Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*, the colossal squid. How often have I faced a similar predicament. Life is not easy when you sit as I do at the bottom of the food chain.

LORI: And I'm sympathetic, Kari, but unless you have any brilliant ideas...

KARI: But of course! I shall be most glad to help my good friend Lori. Go nowhere. (*She quickly exits.*)

LORI: Where would I go?

SQUID HEAD: I have it! One of my favorites when I was a young squidling.

LORI: Squidling?

SQUID HEAD: It is an exquisite tale, filled with courage and heartache.

LORI: I'm sure we'll love it.

SAM: Oh boy, oh boy, I do love stories.

SQUID HEAD: Well aren't you a delightful little morsel? I am so glad to hear of your eager anticipation. I shall begin.

The lights start to return to normal.

My story takes place high up on the surface of the waters where we squid have made the acquaintance of many admirable creatures. Orcas, sharks, and of course the leopard seal.

BILL: (*Entering.*) How are you, Squidy? It's been too long.

SQUID HEAD: So it has, my old friend. How does life on the ice suit you?

BILL: Can't complain. Plenty of fish to go around, hm?

SQUID HEAD: (*Chuckling.*) Oh but yes. And so many tasty kinds. Truly there is no greater joy than to lie in wait for a fish.

BILL: Lie in wait? What sort of a way is that for a predator to behave? Nothin' better than the hunt, I say.

SQUID HEAD: Oh no, my friend, all that swimming around, too much effort. Why if you wait patiently just look at all the food that will find you.

The TENTACLES show LORI, LONNIE, LEROY, and SAM to BILL.

SAM: Hi, Uncle Bill!

BILL: Hello, Sammy, keepin' out of trouble?

SAM nods.

Good for you.

SQUID HEAD: And so the colossal squid and the leopard seal argued over who was the true master of the sea.

SUE enters.

BILL: I've an idea, Squidy. What say you and I have a little contest to settle this once and for all?

SQUID HEAD: Ah, now that is a most excellent idea. But who shall we find to judge between us?

SUE: Say, maybe I can be of service to ya fine predators. Assumin' I don't find myself on anyone's dinner menu.

BILL: Certainly not. (*Aside, to LORI.*) Rather tough and stringy, skua birds.

LORI: Why would I want to know that?

SQUID HEAD: I would be most delighted for you to judge our abilities, little bird, if that is acceptable to my esteemed associate?

BILL: Sure thing, Squidy.

SUE: Glad to hear it. Now to be fair I'll hafta test ya with three different challenges. First, stealth. Why doncha wait for whatever first swims by and whoever catches it wins. (*She eyes the Fallen Star and subtly moves towards it.*)

BILL: Agreed.

BILL and the SQUID get ready and wait. Soon a FISH enters and swims across the stage. The TENTACLE holding SAM lets go and prepares to strike.

SQUID HEAD: The squid waited patiently, oh so patiently, for the fish, while the leopard seal...

BILL: Come here, fishy.

He lunges for the FISH, but it escapes and rushes towards the free TENTACLE.

SQUID HEAD: ...why it drove the fish straight into the waiting tentacles of the squid.

The TENTACLE catches the FISH and pulls it towards the HEAD. The FISH disappears offstage and the HEAD chews it joyfully.

Delicious.

SUE: Looks like the squid's the winner.

BILL: Lucky break.

SUE: Next, whadya say I test ya both for speed? You'll race from here to that iceberg and back.

BILL: Hardly a challenge at all.

SQUID HEAD: So you think, you earless mammal.

BILL: Squidy, that hurts.

SUE: Ready... set... go!

The TENTACLES start to criss-cross each other and become tangled.

SQUID HEAD: The squid took an early lead...

BILL: ...but the leopard seal easily outmaneuvered it and returned from the iceberg while the squid was still untanglin' its many limbs.

SQUID HEAD: *(To the TENTACLES.)* No, no, you go over there. You, over there. And you... Oh, is it over?

BILL: Bad luck there, Squidy.

SQUID HEAD: One test still remains to us, my carnivorous friend.

SUE: The test of strength, yeah. How 'bout a wrestling match to decide the winner once and for all?

SQUID HEAD: An excellent idea.

The TENTACLES let go of the others and approach BILL.

BILL: I think you should know that I eat squid for breakfast.

SAM: Oh boy does he.

SUE: Begin!

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The TENTACLES try to wrap themselves around BILL, whose great strength holds them at bay. As the wrestling match continues, SUE takes the Fallen Star and sneaks off with it.

SAM: Arf, arf! Get it, Uncle Bill, get it!

LONNIE and LEROY cheer. LORI tries to drag them away, but they both want to stay and watch.

SQUID HEAD: The duel was epic. First the match would favor one...

The SQUID gains the upper hand.

LONNIE, LEROY and SAM: Oooh!

SQUID HEAD: ...and then the other. (*BILL gains the upper hand.*)

LONNIE, LEROY and SAM: Ahhh!

SQUID HEAD: But in the end the leopard seal could not match the fury of the many-tentacled leviathan.

The TENTACLES all seize hold of BILL.

BILL: Now hold on there, I think this story is lackin' in a certain shade of reality...

The TENTACLES push him offstage.

SQUID HEAD: And ever since all creatures beneath the sea have held the colossal squid to be the greatest predator of them all.

The TENTACLES, SAM, LONNIE, and LEROY all applaud.

Oh yes, thank you, thank you.

LORI: Wow, that was, um, unique.

LONNIE: I liked it.

LEROY: Me too.

SAM: Me four!

SQUID HEAD: How kind of you to say so. It is so rare that I find myself in the company of such appreciative, edible little creatures. It was a true pleasure to share with you this timeless tale.

LORI: And it was very nice to meet you, Mr. Squid, sir, ma'am, but we really should be going. *(Aside, to the others.)* Come on!

They try to exit, but the TENTACLES surround them.

SQUID HEAD: Oh, but you are a sly one. We have all paused to refresh ourselves with the pleasant waters of imagination, but now I am afraid we must return to the inevitable matters of life. *(To the TENTACLES.)* Bring us our dinner!

The TENTACLES grab hold of the PENGUINS and SAM and pull them towards the HEAD.

LORI: Sam, if by any chance you're hiding some small spark of genius, just waiting to reveal itself, now would be the time.

SAM: *(Distracted by a fish in the water.)* Um, huh?

LORI: There goes that last hope.

SAM finally finds his fish.

SAM: Look, a fish!

LORI: Excellent. *(She takes it and throws it at the HEAD. It has no effect.)* Well, at least we died fighting. Sam, Lonnie, Leroy, it's been fun.

KARI enters excitedly.

KARI: Friend Lori, friend Lori!

LORI: A little busy, Kari.

KARI: But friend Lori, I have brought help.

LORI: You have?

KARI: Look!

She points offstage and we hear a great roar.



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