

Penguin Problems

by

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From The Book by Jory John, Illustrated by Lane Smith

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Characters

Mortimer- A young penguin. Likes taking naps and sharing introvert memes.

Louise- A young penguin. Likes brunch and self-help books.

Bob- A young penguin. Likes parties and extreme sports.

2-3 ensemble members to play penguins, Leopard Seal, Shark, Orca, Walrus, Octopus

(A piano bar with an Antarctic theme to its decor. If there is a live piano player wearing their "penguin suit", they take audience requests as the crowd enters. As the lights dim to blackout:)

VOICEOVER

Hello, and welcome. This is Morgan Freeman. Each year, in the harshest place on earth, love finds a way. For 20 days and 20 nights, the emperor penguin marches to a place so extreme, it supports almost no other life. The emperor penguin endures this hardship just to make a family. This is the incredible true story of the March of...

(A phone rings.)

Hello?...what's that you say?

This isn't March of the Penguins? Then what am I-

Penguin Problems? What kind of a title is that? Well what's it about?

Oh my...

That's not on *my* bucket list. I'm outta here. Somebody get my agent on the phone. I'm going to go full "Seven" on him for this mess up...

(A huddled group of penguins is seen, each one with their head tucked into a wing for warmth. Bob snores loudly. Louise snores. Everyone is asleep except Mortimer, who looks right at us.)

SONG: Penguin Problems

MORTIMER

It's too early.

(shifts his position)

There's no coffee here.
(changes spots again)
Not that I'm a big fan of Starbucks anyways.
(he can't get comfortable)
But a warm drink sounds nice right now.
(really can't get comfy)
My beak is cold.
(touches his beak)
I've got so many problems.

ALL

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

PENGUIN 1

EVERY DAY THAT HE WAKES UP
LOTTA PROBLEMS GONNA SHAKE UP, YEAH
'BOUT TO HAVE A LITTLE BREAKDOWN
'CAUSE THE WAY THAT THINGS GO ROUND

PENGUIN 2

LITTLE FELLA'S GOT A COMPLEX
EVERY DAY HE'S SO UPSET
' 'CAUSE OF THINGS THAT DON'T GO RIGHT
AND IT LEAVES HIM SO UPTIGHT

PENGUIN 3

HE THINKS NOBODY CARES

BUT HE'S JUST NOT AWARE
OF THE GOOD THINGS GOIN' ON

ALL 3

SO WE GOTTA SING THE SAME OLD SONG

ALL

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
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EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
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NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

(Mortimer slowly readies to poke Bob
awake, but a big Bob-snore startles
Mortimer. Mortimer pokes Louise.
Nothing. He pokes Bob. Still asleep, Bob
says:)

BOB

Party?

(Mortimer pokes Louise again. Still
asleep, Louise sings:)

LOUISE

...The cold never bothered me anyway...Let it go, let
it go...

(Mortimer is confused by this. Bob and
Louise both turn and start sleep-leaning
on Mortimer. He is stuck. Tries moving

one leg, then the other, to step away from this penguin-vice. Bob and Louise wrap their flippers around Mortimer, snuggling with him. Mortimer Removes one flipper, then as soon as he goes to remove the other, the first one returns. Repeat. Then he summons the strength to lift both of their flippers off of his shoulders, only to have them come crashing down. He falls)

MORTIMER

Ugh!

LOUISE

Oh Mortimer. Good morning!

MORTIMER

It's too early.

LOUISE

Judging by the position of the sun, I'd say it's about...

MORTIMER

It's pitch black out.

LOUISE

But not for long!
Look at you, seizing the day down there. Doing yoga at sunrise. Though that's not how you do a downward facing dog pose.

MORTIMER

I'm not doing yoga.

LOUISE

No?

MORTIMER

I fell.

LOUISE

Oh no! Let me help you up.

(They try. But they are penguins. The kind without opposable thumbs, and it is slick. She ends up slipping while pulling him up and slides onto the ground, while he is standing. Then when Mortimer goes to help her up, the same thing happens to him. They see-saw like this for awhile. Finally, when both are finally standing, they realize Bob has woken up and has watched this whole thing.)

BOB

(That was funny!) Party!

LOUISE

Oh thanks for the help Bob.

BOB

(I thought it was a comedic bit.) Party, party, party.

LOUISE

(noticing Mortimer is back on the ground)

Mortimer?

MORTIMER

My beak is cold.

LOUISE

...we are in Antarctica...

MORTIMER

Colder than usual. Like really, really cold.

LOUISE

Oh that's simple to fix. I've got a great idea. Here get up.

(She offers a flipper and they start to

look like they will begin to see saw
again.)

MORTIMER

(breaking away from her. Standing up.)
Oh nevermind. I'll stand up myself.

LOUISE

But if you could do that the whole time-

MORTIMER

The beak. Let's focus on the beak.

LOUISE

Right. Anyway. Here you go buddy.

(Cheerfully putting his beak in her
"flipper-pit")

All better.

(A beat.)

MORTIMER

(From inside Louise's "flipper-pit")
I don't think this is helping.

LOUISE

I've got another idea.

(Louise looks at Mortimer and then blows
on his beak. No reaction. She blows
again.)

(A beat.)

MORTIMER

I'm not a birthday cake, you know.

LOUISE

But is it working?

MORTIMER

I think it's actually making me colder.

LOUISE

I'm not sure what to do for you. I'm out of ideas.

MORTIMER

(falling to the ground melodramatically
again.)

Me too. I guess I'll have a cold beak forever.

BOB

(*I've got a great idea!*) Party!

LOUISE

What is it Bob?

(Bob clears Louise away from Mortimer.)

BOB

(*I've got this*) Party.

LOUISE

Ok.

(Bob slowly starts to lower his bum down
towards Mortimer's beak.)

LOUISE AND MORTIMER

(Pushing Bob away)

No Bob!

MORTIMER

I'm not an unhatched egg.

LOUISE

We're not sitting on anyone's beak today.

BOB

(*It was worth a shot*) Party.

MORTIMER

Being a penguin is hard.

LOUISE

You got some of that Antarctic ennui buddy?

MORTIMER

I just wish seasonal depression wasn't...all season.

LOUISE

(noticing that it is brightening)

Good news though. The sun is coming out!

BOB

(*Snow!*) Party!

LOUISE

And it looks like it snowed more overnight!

MORTIMER

Yay.

BOB

(*I love the snow. It's so pretty!*) Party. Party!

LOUISE

Me too Bob!

SONG: Sparkling White

LOUISE

WELCOME TO A LAND WHERE YOU FEAST YOUR EYES ON TRULY
SOMETHING SO GRAND
AND YOU BEHOLD A MARVELOUS A SIGHT
'CAUSE EVERYTHING'S SPARKLING WHITE!

ENSEMBLE

WINTER IS A TIME WHEN WE COME ALIVE AND OUR SOULS
REALLY CAN THRIVE
WITH FUN AND GAMES TO OUR HEARTS' DELIGHT
'CAUSE EVERYTHING'S SPARKLING WHITE!

PENGUINS 1, 2, 3

WE GOT SNOW CONES ALL THE DAY LONG
WE GOT SCOTT FROST HUSKING ALONG
WE GOT THE MOON'S REFLECTION LIGHTING OUR HOMES

WHILE WE WATCH JON SNOW ON GAME OF THRONES

LOUISE

GLIDING THROUGH THE DAY TO SEE LOTS OF FRIENDS WHO STOP
US WAITING TO PLAY
AND THEN WE START A SNOWBALL FIGHT

ALL

'CAUSE EVERYTHING'S SPARKLING WHITE!

(Bridge music/tap break then Bob solo
tap break)

BOB

(At the end of each tap phrase)

PARTY!

LOUISE

MUNCHING ON THE SNOW, BUT NOT YELLOW SNOW, AND WATCHING
SNOWMEN WHO GROW
WE SKI, WE SKATE, WE SLIDE
'CAUSE EVERYTHING'S SPARKLING WHITE!

ALL

MAKING ANGELS, ALWAYS A MUST!
"HAPPY FEET"'S GOT NOTHING ON US!
STARTING EACH DAY RIGHT,
'CAUSE EVERYTHING'S SPARKLING WHITE!

ALL (MAYBE INCLUDING THE BAND...)

(whispered)

Party.

(Bob is running in loops as the song
ends. He is really into extreme winter
sports)

LOUISE

I just love winter. The sense of hygge is my favorite
part. Spending quality time with friends and family,
avoid multi-tasking, remove stressors, get home at a
reasonable time, bring the great outdoors indoors with

plants-

MORTIMER

What plants?

LOUISE

-drink tea and knit among handcrafted teak sideboards, splayed-leg tables and never-let-you-go lounge chairs. Soften and simplify the home with hygge decor.

MORTIMER

What did you just say?

LOUISE

I said I just love winter. Spending quality time with friends-

MORTIMER

No. The word at the end.

LOUISE

Decor?

MORTIMER

The one before that.

LOUISE

Hygge?

MORTIMER

Hey. Watch out or you're going to have to put a quarter in the swear jar.

LOUISE

Oh hygge is not a swear word Mortimer.

MORTIMER

It isn't?

LOUISE

Far from it. Hygge is a lifestyle trend inspired by a Danish term for coziness. Hygge.

MORTIMER

Huhhh-g.

LOUISE

No. Hygge. Tell him Bob.

BOB

(Hy-gge) Par-ty.

MORTIMER

(dry)

Oh I get it now.

(falls over again melodramatically)

LOUISE

What now?

MORTIMER

It's just that the sun is too bright.

LOUISE

Pretty soon we will be plunged into six straight months of darkness in which the sun will reach a maximum height of six degrees over the horizon and the temperature will plunge to lows of around negative 40 degrees celsius.

(beat)

I can't wait.

MORTIMER

That doesn't make me feel any better.

LOUISE

Come on Mortimer. We have to savor the sunlight while we can. And then in a few days we get to savor the spirit-destroying all encompassing darkness of Antarctic winter.

MORTIMER

But the sun is hurting my eyes.

(Some snow geese fly overhead)

MORTIMER

I wish I could fly like that. To a different place.

SONG: If I Could Fly

MORTIMER

THERE'S NOTHING MORE I'D RATHER DO THAN TO FLY IN THE SKY LIKE A
COCKATOO

BUT MY FEET HAVE NEVER LEFT THE GROUND

I SUPPOSE THAT MY BELLY'S TOO BIG AND ROUND

BUT WHAT AN AMAZING PENGUIN I WOULD BE IF MY WINGS COULD TAKE ME
BEYOND THESE FROZEN SEAS

I'D SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE, FEELING FREE

JUST THINK OF THE PLACES I COULD SEE

IT WOULD RAISE MY HOPES UP HIGH IF I COULD FLY

I'D START OUT EASY AND MAKE MY WAY TO A SOUTHWEST TOWN LIKE
SANTA FE

AND WOULDN'T IT EVEN BE A HOOT TO FLY INTO DALLAS IN COWBOY
BOOTS

THEY'D TAKE ME OUT TWO-STEPPIN' EVERY DAY

"HE'S LOOKIN' MIGHTY FINE" IS WHAT THEY'D SAY

EATING TEX MEX AND FEELING BIG

NOW THAT'S THE LIFE I'D REALLY DIG

IT WOULD RAISE MY HOPES UP HIGH IF I COULD FLY

WOULDN'T I BE QUITE A HERO IF I DANCED ALL NIGHT ON THE BEACHES
OF RIO

THEN I'D FLY TO SPAIN WHERE THE BULLFIGHTS ENTERTAIN

WOULDN'T IT BE FUN IF WITHIN AN HOUR I'D BE FLOATING OVER THE
EIFFEL TOWER

LIFE WOULD BE SO GRAND, BUT I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND

HOW A BIRD WITH WINGS HAS TO WALK THE STREETS AND THE FRIENDLY
SKIES ARE BEYOND MY REACH

IT'S A STRANGE DILEMMA, A PUZZLE TO ALL, I WANNA LIVE LARGE BUT
I'M LIVING SMALL

AND THIS GREAT WORLD IS STILL A GREAT UNKNOWN

ONLY ONE SQUARE MILE I CAN CALL MY OWN

SO I'M STUCK WITH MY BELLY AND SILLY WINGS

EXOTIC PLACES JUST IN MY DREAMS

IT WOULD RAISE MY HOPES UP HIGH IF I COULD FLY

(Bob whispers in Louise's ear)

LOUISE

Good idea Bob.

Mortimer, What do we do when the sun comes up?

MORTIMER

Put on sunscreen?

LOUISE

No. Try again. What do we do when the sun comes up?

MORTIMER

Go back to sleep?

LOUISE

Come on. What do we do when the sun comes up Mortimer?

MORTIMER

I'm sure the answer will dawn on me eventually.

LOUISE

What do we do?

LOUISE

BOB

We eat breakfast! (*We eat breakfast!*) Party, party!

MORTIMER

I'm into that idea.

LOUISE

Great.

MORTIMER

I could really use a breakfast brrr-ito.

BOB

(Lifting Mortimer up, but the seesaw problem Louise and Mortimer had happens to Bob and Mortimer)

(*Then let's go.*) Party.

MORTIMER

No. I got this.

(he gets up)

LOUISE

Race you to the water!

BOB

(*You got it.*) Party.

LOUISE

Last one there is a rockhopper egg!

BOB

(*Let's go!*) Party!

(They run off. Mortimer waddles quite a bit slower than them.)

MORTIMER

Wait up.

(He waddles. The setting shifts to the water's edge.)

Louise?...Bob...party?

(waddling to the edge)

I'm hungry.

I'd like a fish.

Where are all the fish?

(calling down to them)

Hey!

Fish!

Get out here!

(sweetly)

I've got a treat...I've got a...whatever it is you like to eat...

(getting up the courage to jump in)

Oh it looks colder than a lawyer's heart in there.

But my tummy is grumble-y.

One-two-three.

(Mortimer jumps in)
Ugh the ocean smells too salty today. My doc says I'm supposed to be watching my intake.

(sinking in a little bit more)
I'm not buoyant enough.
I sink like a rock.

(He sinks under water and it goes dark as he slides underneath an ice shelf.)
It is WAY too dark down here.

(trying not to be scared)
I'm not scared. I'm not scared. See? Hello Darkness, my old friend.

(Mortimer feels a tentacle reach around his shoulder)

MORTIMER

What's that?!

OCTOPUS

Don't worry little one. I'm not a squidnapper.

MORTIMER

Oh thank god.

OCTOPUS

Just an octopus here to help you navigate uncharted waters.

MORTIMER

Oh thank goodness.
I'd shake your hand but...I'm not sure which one to shake.

OCTOPUS

Don't worry about it. Down here, there isn't time for pleasantries. Down here, you have to be fierce.

SONG:Fierce

OCTOPUS

LIVIN' IN THE DARK AND DEEP, YOU'RE LOOKIN' OUT FOR
NUMBER ONE
YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU WILL MEET AND THEY'RE LOOKIN' TO
SPOIL YOUR FUN
BUT I HAVE GOT SOME SWEET ADVICE FOR ANYONE WHO
VENTURES HERE
IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING KIND AND NICE, SO LET ME MAKE IT
PERFECTLY CLEAR

OCTOPUS CHORUS

YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, IF YOU REALLY WANNA GET ALONG DOWN
HERE
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, LIKE A DIVA IN THE SHOW OF THE
YEAR
SHOW THEM ALL WHO'S REALLY BOSS, DAZZLE THEM WITH STYLE
AND GLOSS
LIKE A HOT AND SPICY SAUCE, YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!

OCTOPUS

NEVER LET THE FOOD CHAIN HERE INTIMIDATE YOUR EVERY
MOVE
LOTS OF FRIENDS HAVE COME AND GONE AND IT'S ALL ABOUT
YOUR ATTITUDE
CONFIDENCE MUST LEAD THE WAY AND IT'S GOTTA BE BIG AND
BOLD
BUILD IT UP WITH EVERY DAY BEFORE YOU START TO GET TOO
OLD

OCTOPUS CHORUS

YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, IF YOU REALLY WANNA GET ALONG DOWN
HERE
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, LIKE A DIVA IN THE SHOW OF THE
YEAR
SHOW THEM ALL WHO'S REALLY BOSS, DAZZLE THEM WITH YOUR
STYLE AND GLOSS
LIKE A HOT AND SPICY SAUCE, YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!

(dance break, with the Octopus getting
Mortimer involved)

MORTIMER AND OCTOPUS

YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, IF YOU REALLY WANNA GET ALONG DOWN
HERE
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE, LIKE A DIVA IN THE SHOW OF THE
YEAR
SHOW THEM ALL WHO'S REALLY BOSS, DAZZLE THEM WITH STYLE
AND GLOSS
LIKE A HOT AND SPICY SAUCE, YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!
YOU GOTTA BE FIERCE!

MORTIMER

(singing to himself:)

"You gotta be fierce...dah de dah de dah de dah...You
gotta be FIERCE"

Wow. Thanks for the advice. I thought singing octopuses
were only in choral reefs.

(realizing the Octopus has receded into the darkness)

MORTIMER

Hello?
Octopus?
Where did you go?
Ok...I can do this. I can swim down here.
I'm fierce. I'm fierce...I'm fears...I'm fears. Fears.
Fears...FEARS?!

SONG: an underwater ballet begins as Mortimer searches for fish amidst the darkness.

(Mortimer swims. Suddenly, a leopard
seal is upon him. Music stops. The
leopard stage action freezes as Mortimer
addresses us.)

MORTIMER

Oh great. A leopard seal.
Conservation status: least concern. Latin name hydrurga
leptonyx. Sounds like a Star Wars villain, I know. You

thought the leopards on land were dangerous? Try adding a more powerful jaw, flippers, a tail that lets them swim up to 25 miles per hour, length of up to 11 feet, and weight of up to 840 POUNDS! And you get the idea.

MORTIMER

THIS NIGHTMARE-FUEL SPECIES LIVES A SOLITARY LIFE
THEY FEED ON SQUID, AND FISH, AND OTHER SEALS JUST TO
SURVIVE
AND WHAT ELSE DO THEY EAT, YOU ASK, I'M PETRIFIED TO
SAY
THEY HIDE BENEATH THE ICE TO WAIT FOR PEN-GUINS-AS-
THEIR-PREY

LEOPARD SEALS

WE HIDE BENEATH THE ICE TO WAIT FOR PENGUINS AS OUR
PREY
PENGUINS AS OUR PREY, YOU SAY? YES, PEN-GUINS -AS -OUR-
PREY

MORTIMER

IN 4 TO 7 MINUTES I'D BE MEAT INSIDE THEIR TUMMY
THAT'S FASTER THAN MY FRIENDS AND I CAN PLAY A ROUND OF
RUMMY
LIKE ORDERING SOME FRUIT AT LISA'S RADIAL CAFE

MORTIMER

THEN THEY'RE READY FOR THE ENTREE AND MORE PENGUINS AS
THEIR PREY

LEOPARD SEALS

WE'RE READY FOR THE ENTREE AND MORE PENGUINS AS OUR
PREY
PENGUINS AS OUR PREY, YOU SAY? YES, PEN-GUINS- AS -OUR
-PREY

MORTIMER

In the parlance of our time, I'm outta here!

(The music snaps to as Mortimer flees the leopard seal, dodging this way and that. Just when Mortimer thinks he might have the upper fin, a shark appears.

Another time out in the music:)

MORTIMER

Oh great. A shark.

Now I understand sharks get a bad name.

"Jaws" led to an unreasonable amount of fear of going in the water. You are more likely to win the lottery 32 times than you are to die by shark bite. So there's nothing to fear, right? Just let these guys babysit your kids, yeah?

WRONG. I'm a penguin remember? I'm like a juicy mozzarella stick to a shark. Those serrated, blade-like teeth will chew through me and not even need tomato sauce to swallow it down.

Go big or go home, they say.

MORTIMER

THE LATIN NAME FOR SHARK IS CHARCHARODON CARCHARIAS AND OF THE VARIEGATED TYPES OF PENGUINS, THEY'RE NOT BIASED

IMAGINE HALF A SCHOOL BUS SWIMMING 15 MILES PER HOUR 300 TEETH, A GIANT JAW, JUST WAIT-ING-TO-DE-VOUR

SHARKS

300 TEETH, A GIANT JAW, JUST WAITING TO DEVOUR WAITING TO DEVOUR SWIMMING FIF-TEEN -MILES -PER- HOUR

MORTIMER

AND EVEN IF I BATHE ALL DAY ASSUMING THEY WON'T SMELL ME

ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS EMITTED "SHOW AND TELL" ME THEIR ORGANS SIMPLY SENSE IT LIKE AN AQUA JEDI KNIGHT THERE'S NOT A SOUL TO SAVE ME FROM THIS HOR-RI-FY-ING PLIGHT

SHARKS

NO NOT A SOUL TO SAVE HIM FROM THIS HORRIFYING PLIGHT A HORRIFYING PLIGHT DUE TO AN A-QUA -JE-DI -KNIGHT

MORTIMER

In the parlance of our time, bye-bye!

(Music resumes as Mortimer dance-swims away from both the leopard seal and the shark. Just when he has them both confused and tries to make his escape, an Orca shows up. Music stops:)

MORTIMER

Oh great. An Orca.

Conservation status threatened due to habitat loss, pollution and prey depletion. Thanks humans. Latin name Orcinus orca. Commonly known as the killer whale. Look folks, it's got killer in the name. You've never heard the adjective "killer" appended to any other species have you? Don't know any killer squirrels, do you? No. I thought not.

MORTIMER

THE ORCAS LIVE IN FAMILY GROUPS OF UP TO 40 STRONG
LIKE ONE ENTIRE SCHOOL BUS, EACH ONE MEASURES JUST THAT
LONG
THEY SLAP THE WATER SO THAT THEY PRODUCE THESE MASSIVE
WAVES
THAT SWEEP US OFF THE ICE FLOATS AS THEY'RE WAIT-ING
FOR-THEIR-PREY

ORCAS

WITH OPEN MOUTHS WE PATIENTLY AWAIT OUR MEAL EACH DAY

PENGUINS AS OUR PREY, YOU SAY? YES, PEN-GUINS -AS -OUR-
PREY

MORTIMER

EVEN THOUGH THEIR TEETH ARE UP TO 4 INCHES APIECE
THEY OFTEN SWALLOW WHOLE THEIR MEALS AND THAT'S AN
INSTANT FEAST
SO WHILE I TAKE THIS MOMENT, AS I BID YOU ALL FAREWELL
COULD SOMEONE CALL AN UBER? PLEASE JUST SNEAK-IT-ON
YOUR-CELL

ORCAS

COULD SOMEONE CALL AN UBER? YOU CAN SNEAK IT ON YOUR
CELL
JUST SNEAK IT ON YOUR CELL SO HE CAN BID-YOU-ALL FARE-
WELL

MORTIMER

In the parlance of our time, HELP.

(Music resumes as Mortimer barely evades these three predators. They chomp down on each other in order, largest to smallest, which allows Mortimer to escape. Mortimer pops out of the water onto an ice sheet. He is not quick to get up. Breathing hard. He tries to stand up, but his legs and flippers just won't work. They are too fatigued. This goes on for awhile, with Mortimer slowly regaining use of his limbs, one by one. But he is still out of breath. Louise and Bob enter with a veritable feast of Swedish Fish in their flippers, eating.)

LOUISE

(in between bites)

Oh Mortimer. There you are! We've been looking all over for you.

BOB

(*That's not exactly true*) Party, party, party.

LOUISE

Where have you been?

(Mortimer waves his flippers. Throughout the following, Mortimer attempts to tell them the story of his unwanted adventure, but since he is out of breath, it is done almost as a game of charades with Louise and Bob being very poor guessers)

I get it. This is a guessing game.

BOB

(One word! What category?) Party! Party?

LOUISE

(As Mortimer mimes swimming)

You were kicking a soccerball...no, slapping a clown!
Water tank of doom?!

BOB

(No. You have to name a category first!) Party. Party,
party, party, party!

LOUISE

(As Mortimer mimes the singing octopus)

Singing in the rain? 8 songs in the rain? Octopus in
the rain! That makes no sense...

LOUISE

*(As Mortimer mimes being chomped on by a
leopard seal)*

You met a monster moose. No? No. A jungle cat! The
jungle cat made you a sandwich?

BOB

(Category first!) Party!

LOUISE

*(As Mortimer communicates the shark and
orcas)*

Big...big alligator? Big mouth? Big outbreak? Whale?

(Mortimer encourages this.)

Big whale shark!

LOUISE

*(As Mortimer mimes that they wanted to
eat him)*

You made a...a dead...a something, escape. A dead
superhero. Dead goblin.

BOB

(You're terrible at this game) Party, party.

MORTIMER

Made...death...defying...escape. You left...me behind...

LOUISE

Oh yeah. We thought you were going to stay back by the penguin colony all day.

MORTIMER

I...just...went in the water and...seal...shark...whale. Chomp-chomp. Death.

BOB

(*THAT'S what you were miming?*) PARTY, party?

LOUISE

That's not a very funny joke.

MORTIMER

No...joke...

LOUISE

Mortimer. That's terrible. I'm so glad you're ok.

MORTIMER

Me too. I...don't like being hunted.

BOB

(*Duh.*) Party.

LOUISE

It's better to learn that at our age than later in life. Or...I guess if you didn't learn that at our age you wouldn't make it to later in life...

MORTIMER

My flippers ache.

LOUISE

Oh like in a "I just flew in from Omaha and boy are my flippers tired" kind of way?

MORTIMER

No. From the death defying Michael Phelps act I had to

pull down there to escape those predators.

LOUISE

Understandable.

MORTIMER

I'm still hungry.

LOUISE

By all means, have a fish. Bob?

(Bob guiltily burps. He has finished the final fish in his pile. Louise has none either.)

LOUISE

Sorry buddy. Stay here. We will go get you more.

MORTIMER

It's OK. I'm just realizing it's too dangerous out here for young penguins like us.

LOUISE

Well it is part of the deal. We're penguins. We have to eat. We jump in the water to catch fish and we sometimes get eaten by bigger animals.

Song: Penguin Problems Reprise

ENSEMBLE

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM

HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

PENGUIN 1

IT'S ANOTHER ROUGH DAY HERE
LITTLE GUY WAS FACIN' HIS BIG FEAR
THOUGHT HE'D DO A LITTLE FISHIN'
TURNED INTO A SCARY MISSION

PENGUIN 2

EVEN PROBLEMS WITH THE SMALL THINGS
AND THE DAY TO DAY THAT HIS LIFE BRINGS
' AIN'T NOBODY HERE TO CHANGE THAT
IT'S A SORRY STATE WHERE HE IS AT

PENGUIN 3

CAN'T SEEM TO CATCH A BREAK
NOW HE'S DEALING WITH A FLIPPER ACHE
NEVER EVEN GOT A MEAL

ALL 3

INTERFERENCE BY A LEOPARD SEAL

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
NO ONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

MORTIMER

There has to be another way to avoid predators.

LOUISE

Yeah, it's called a zoo, and no thanks.

MORTIMER

I know what we need.

BOB

(*Razor sharp teeth to defend ourselves?*) Party?

MORTIMER

We need some supervision.

LOUISE

I already have 20/20 vision.

MORTIMER

No. *Supervision*. Someone to help watch over us. Protect us, provide for us, guide our activities and use shame to control our behavior. What we need is *parental* supervision.

LOUISE

I don't know. I kinda like not having a curfew.

BOB

(*Me too*) Party.

MORTIMER

Think about it you two. Someone to help us get fish. Someone to make sure we don't get eaten by predators. Someone to clean up our messes. Parents would be great!

LOUISE

There's just one problem.

MORTIMER

Only one? The show is called Penguin Problems plural.

LOUISE

Well, technically two problems. Plural.

MORTIMER

What?

LOUISE

Well, we look remarkably alike.

MORTIMER

So?

LOUISE

Our parents would be kind of hard to find at this point.

MORTIMER

Won't our parents recognize us?

BOB

(Or us them) Party.

LOUISE

Bob's right Mortimer. We are adolescent penguins now. We look just like all the others. It's biology's fun way of saying "you're on your own now".

MORTIMER

We have to find them.

LOUISE

How? It's not like we can go back to the colony asking who else shares our last name.

MORTIMER

You don't have a last name?

LOUISE

Nope. I'm just Louise.

MORTIMER

You too Bob?

BOB

(Right.) Party.

LOUISE

Yeah he just has a rich collection of first names. Robert Rupert Steven Thelonius Timothy Skipper Pingo Sparky Squak Michael. The third.

BOB

(Bob.) Party.

LOUISE

Bob, for short.

MORTIMER

Fine. I'll just go penguin to penguin. I've got to figure this out you all. I've just got to.

(As he leaves:)

I'll see you back at the colony!

BOB

(*Oh! Try 23 and Me!*) Party! Party!

(Mortimer goes "door to door" as the other actors make a menagerie of characters for Mortimer to meet. This section can be improvised to finalize choices. They line up and turn around to address him:)

MORTIMER

Hello?

PENGUIN 1

(As a librarian)

Shhh.

MORTIMER

Are you my mother?

PENGUIN 1

(As a librarian)

May I help you find something? Fiction or non-fiction?

MORTIMER

Are You My Mother?

PENGUIN 1

(As a librarian)

I've never heard of that book.

MORTIMER

Ah shucks. You're a librarian!

(Mortimer moves on.)

PENGUIN 2

(As a firefighter)

Engine 2 coming your way.

MORTIMER

Oh you're not my mother.

PENGUIN 2

(As a firefighter)

Stop, drop and roll!

MORTIMER

You're a firefighter.

(On to the next penguin)

MORTIMER

Excuse me?

PENGUIN 3

(As an athletic trainer)

High knees! High knees!

MORTIMER

Are you my mother?

PENGUIN 3

(As an athletic trainer)

Now jumping jacks!

MORTIMER

No, you're an athletic trainer.

PENGUIN 3

(As an athletic trainer)

No more weak little flippers in this gym!

(On to the next penguin)

SONG: Are You My Mother?

MORTIMER

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?
OR JUST A FRIEND?
IF YOU'RE MY FATHER
MY SEARCH WILL END!

I HAVE GOT A LIST OF TRAITS THAT ISN'T VERY LONG
MAYBE IF I SHARE THEM YOU WILL KNOW THAT I BELONG TO
YOU

MORTIMER

Hello!

PENGUIN 2
(As trash collector)

What's up?

MORTIMER

Dad?

PENGUIN 2
(As trash collector)

I don't have any kids. I only have nieces.

MORTIMER

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?
YOU KNOW MY VOICE?
YOU'D RECOGNIZE MY FACE
IF I'M YOUR BOY

GOT AN AWFUL BIRTHMARK UNDERNEATH MY DOUBLE CHIN
NOTICE THAT MY BILL IS QUITE EMBARRASSINGLY LONG AND
THIN

PENGUINS IN THIS GREAT SOMEWHERE
RAISED ME AS THEIR SON
WILL THEY KNOW THAT I'M THEIR OWN
BEFORE THE DAY IS DONE?

MORTIMER

Knock, knock!

PENGUIN 1

(As a curmudgeon)

This had better be a good knock knock joke. Who's there?

MORTIMER

Um. Nevermind.

PENGUIN 1

Never mind who?

MORTIMER

Nevermind me.

PENGUIN 1

(As a curmudgeon)

Then get off my lawn buddy!

MORTIMER

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?
YOUR HEART WILL TELL
IF YOU'RE MY FATHER
IT WOULD BE SWELL!

LOOKING AT MY FLIPPERS, THEY ARE AWKWARD, ONE IS LONGER
AND COMPARED TO OTHER GUYS MY LEGS ARE LESS THAN
STRONGER

YOU RECALL MY ALLERGIES TO CERTAIN TYPES OF SQUID
WHEN YOU HEAR MY CALL THEN YOU WILL SURELY KNOW THAT
I'M YOUR KID

(Mortimer squawks in an embarrassing way)

MORTIMER

Are you my mother?

PENGUIN 3

(As therapist)
Tell me more about that.

MORTIMER
I'm looking for my mother or father.

PENGUIN 3
(As therapist)
And how does that make you feel?

MORTIMER
Oh I don't need therapy at the moment. I need my
parents!

MORTIMER
ARE YOU MY MOTHER?
OR JUST A FRIEND?
IF YOU'RE MY FATHER
MY SEARCH WILL END!

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

(Spoken)
Are you my mother? Are you my father?

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

MORTIMER
Everybody looks the same as me. Everyone has the same
haircut. There isn't even a signature family cowlick.
Or a- or a signature family waddle. I just waddle too
much. All I can do is waddle. And I even look silly
when I waddle. Just like every other penguin.

(He waddles a little.)
Why do all penguins look the same?

(Louise and Bob enter)

LOUISE
Mortimer.

MORTIMER

Oh. Hey.

LOUISE

No luck?

MORTIMER

Nope.

LOUISE

I'm sorry.

BOB

(*Sorry.*) Party.

MORTIMER

Don't you wish you could be something you're...I don't know. Not? Don't you wish you could be something you're not?

LOUISE

It's Ok Mortimer. You've got that Deep snow depression. But it won't last. And they say exercise helps.

MORTIMER

I'm not even talking about that. You like doing nothing but waddling around all day? And swimming? And eating fish? Repeat.

LOUISE

Kind of. Yeah.

BOB

(*I love waddling and sliding across the ice*) Party party party party.

(Bob slides across the ice.)

LOUISE

I mean, Bob can even do different kinds of waddles. Oh! Bob, do the thing where you waddle like you've got a bunch of rocks in your pants.

BOB

(Can do.) Party.

(He does. They laugh.)

LOUISE

Now do the waddle like you're walking on hot coals!

(He does. They laugh.)

LOUISE

Now...oh, I know! Do the one where you're waddling like a baby with a diaper!

(He does. These all look the same. They laugh.)

LOUISE

He can even waddle while he dances. It's charming and funny.

Song: I Look Silly When I Waddle

MORTIMER

(discouraged) (While all the other penguins are doing the tango around him, and enjoying it)

I LOOK SILLY WHEN I WADDLE
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MY FEET?
I LOOK SILLY WHEN I WADDLE
TIRED OF LOOKING LESS THAN CHIC
WHY CAN'T I WALK WITH SWAG SO I CAN BRAG
OR STRIDE LIKE THE CHEETAHS DO?
THERE IS NO ONE 'BOUT TO TANGO OR TO TRIP THE LIGHT
FANDANGO
WITH A PENGUIN THAT IS ODDLE WHEN HE'S MOVING AT FULL
THROTTLE
YES, IT'S SAD, BUT IT'S TRUE
I LOOK SILLY WHEN I WADDLE

LOUISE AND BOB

(having fun with all penguins
except Mortimer. Bob only
sings the word "Party" but
this is what he means)

I LOOK SILLY WHEN I WADDLE
I GOT RHYTHM IN MY FEET
I LOOK SILLY WHEN I WADDLE
AND MY STYLE IS OBSOLETE
I'D LIKE TO DANCE WITH FLAIR LIKE FRED ASTAIRE
OR DONALD O'CONNOR TOO

MORTIMER

(spoken)

Who is Donald O'Connor?

MORTIMER

NO ONE WANTS TO DO THE FOXTROT IN A DANCE FRAME AT A
HOT SPOT
WITH A PENGUIN THAT IS ODDLE WHEN HE'S MOVING AT FULL
THROTTLE

ALL 3

IT'S NOT BAD, BUT IT'S TRUE
WE LOOK SILLY WHEN WE WADDLE

ALL PENGUINS:

WE HAVE THE MOVES FOR BALLET GROOVES
BORN IN FIRST POSITION

MORTIMER

BUT AS WE DANCE WE CRY THE BLUES
'CAUSE WE WADDLE THROUGH TRANSITIONS

ALL PENGUINS

I GUESS ALL OF US BLOKES
TRULY SHARE THE SAME BOATS
SO WE'LL WADDLE ALTOGETHER
SINCE WE'RE BIRDS OF THE SAME FEATHER

PENGUINS 1, 2, 3
WE CAN SASHAY, WE CAN TANGO,

LOUISE AND MORTIMER
WE CAN TRIP THE LIGHT FANDANGO

PENGUINS 1, 2, 3
AS WE'RE MOVING AT FULL THROTTLE

LOUISE AND MORTIMER
WE ACCEPT THAT WE ARE ODDLE

MORTIMER
YES IT'S SAD BUT IT'S TRUE

LOUISE
IT'S NOT BAD, BUT IT'S TRUE

BOB
PARTY, PARTY, PARUE

ALL
WE LOOK SILLY WHEN WE WADDLE

MORTIMER
I...I still don't feel cut out for this.

(He walks a few steps.)

LOUISE
See?! Oh Mortimer you're hilarious. Look at that
waddle. It's like you are a flightless bird!

MORTIMER
...

LOUISE
I'm sorry. That was-

MORTIMER
I've got so many problems. And nobody cares.

(A sound in the distance.)

What was that?

(The sound getting closer.)

PENGUINS

Walrus! Run for it! Save yourselves! Ahh!

(They all waddle off in a panic. Except
Mortimer. As the walrus approaches:)

WALRUS

Excuse me sir.

MORTIMER

What!

WALRUS

Do you know who I am?

MORTIMER

Morgan Freeman?

WALRUS

I am the walrus.

(whispers the prompt to Mortimer:)

Goo goo g'joob.

(A beat.)

WALRUS

Usually people like to do that part. The second part,
the goo goo-

MORTIMER

Are you going to eat me or what?

WALRUS

Oh heavens no. I eat mollusks.

MORTIMER

Then what do you want?

WALRUS

I sense that today has been difficult.

MORTIMER

An understatement.

WALRUS

But lo!

MORTIMER

What did you just say to me?

WALRUS

Look around you Penguin. Have you noticed the way the mountains are reflected in the ocean like a painting? Have you gazed upon the blue of that cloudless, winter sky, my friend? Have you felt the sun as it gently warms your back? Have you simply stood with your penguin brothers and sisters and elders, who adore you?

MORTIMER

...they all fled...

WALRUS

Yes, some things are challenging out here. Yes, we all have difficult moments, from the walruses to the polar bears, from the whales to the penguins. But hear me now, my new friend: I wouldn't trade my life for any other, and I am quite sure you wouldn't, either. I am certain that when you think about it, you'll realize you are exactly where you need to be.

MORTIMER

...

SONG: Where You Need To Be

WALRUS

EVERYBODY HAS DIFFICULT DAYS
EVERYONE HAS CHALLENGES IN THEIR WAY
BUT IF YOU JUST TAKE A MOMENT, PICK YOUR CHIN UP OFF
THE GROUND

LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK AROUND
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SUCH A CLOUDLESS SKY
IT'S A BLUE SO TRUE, THAT IT MAKES YOU COME ALIVE
AND IF YOU NOTICE HOW THE MOUNTAINS ARE PAINTED IN THE
SEA
YOU'LL REALIZE THAT JUST LIKE ME
YOU'RE WHERE YOU NEED TO BE
HAVE YOU EVER GAZED AT THE STARRY SKY
THERE'S A PEACE AND QUIET THAT WILL BLESS YOUR SOUL
INSIDE
AND WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE SURROUNDED
WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED
YOU'RE REALIZE THAT JUST LIKE ME,
YOU'RE WHERE YOU NEED TO BE.
AND I WOULDN'T TRADE MY LIFE FOR ANY OTHER SOUL
CAUSE WHAT I'VE BEEN GIVEN IS FAR GREATER THAN GOLD
A PLACE TO CALL HOME AND THE RICHNESS OF FRIENDS
AND THAT'S WHAT REALLY MATTERS WHEN THE DAY COMES TO AN
END
IF THE CUP SEEMS HALF EMPTY, WHY NOT SAY IT'S HALF FULL
IF YOU'RE HEADING THROUGH A TUNNEL, FIND THE LIGHT TO
PULL YOU THROUGH
LET THE SUN WARM YOUR BACK AND LET YOUR FRIENDS WARM
YOUR SOUL
AND YOU'LL REALIZE THAT JUST LIKE ME
YOU'RE WHERE YOU NEED TO BE
YES YOU'LL REALIZE THAT JUST LIKE ME
YOU'RE EXACTLY WHERE YOU NEED TO BE

WALRUS

All you need to do is take a deep breath and remember
the good things in your life. Please think about what
I've said, Penguin. Goodbye for now.

(As the Walrus leaves humming the
Beatles tune "I Am The Walrus", the
other penguins slowly emerge. Mortimer
has not seen them.)

MORTIMER

Who the heck was that guy?! Why do strangers always

talk to me? Walruses don't understand *penguin problems!*
Deep breath?

(Mortimer takes a deep breath)

MORTIMER

The air is so cold it hurts my lungs. Why do I live
where the air hurts my lungs?! I'm still upset!
Maybe it doesn't work the first time.

(Mortimer takes a deep breath)

Ok, ok. Maybe that walrus has a point.
After all, I *do* love the mountains.
And the ocean. Salty though it is.
And the sky. I do love the sky. Even when it's dark,
there are stars.

(turns to see the other penguins of his
community)

And I have friends.

(to the ensemble)

...and a kind of family.
This is my only home, and this is my only life.

BOB

(Party?) Party?

MORTIMER

Absolutely.

SONG: Party version of Penguin Problems. As it concludes, Mortimer is left alone temporarily.

ALL

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

BOB

*(My friend has been through a lot today)*PARTY, PARTY,
PARTY, PARTY
*(I did my best to cheer him up)*PARTY, PARTY, PARTY,
PARTY
*(It took our friend, Walrus, to really make a
Difference)*PARTY, PARTY, PARTY, PARTY
*(Now my buddy is good!)*PARTY, PARTY, PARTY, PARTY

LOUISE

JOININ' US FOR LATTES
HIT THE GYM FOR KARATE
EVERYONE ALREADY LOVES HIM
LET'S GET THE PARTY TO BEGIN

MORTIMER

I'VE GOT A FAMILY
GONNA WADDLE FULL AND FREE
TALK ABOUT A LITTLE MOOD SWING
IT'S SO MARVELOUS IT MAKES ME SING

ALL

EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
AND THERE'S SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS
EVERYBODY'S GOT PROBLEMS
THEY GOT PROBLEMS
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

AND THERE'S SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
SOMEONE TO SOLVE 'EM
HE GOT PENGUIN PROBLEMS

(Mortimer is left alone onstage. It
starts to snow again)

MORTIMER

My beak is cold.

(the sun goes down, like a light switch
being flipped)

MORTIMER

It gets dark way too early.

LOUISE (Offstage)

Deep breath!

BOB (Offstage)

(*Deep breath!*) Party!

(Mortimer takes a deep breath)

MORTIMER

Nope. Still way too early to be dark out.
But I can be OK with that.

V.O

After their long ordeal, the penguins are exhausted,
but they are also wiser because of their trials and
tribulations. And with that, the penguin colony retires
for the cold, cold night.

BOB

(*Quiet!*) Party!

MORTIMER

Hey Morgan Freeman. Can we get some quiet? We're trying
to sleep here!

V.O.

(whispering)

And the penguins lived happily ever after.

(Blackout. End of show)