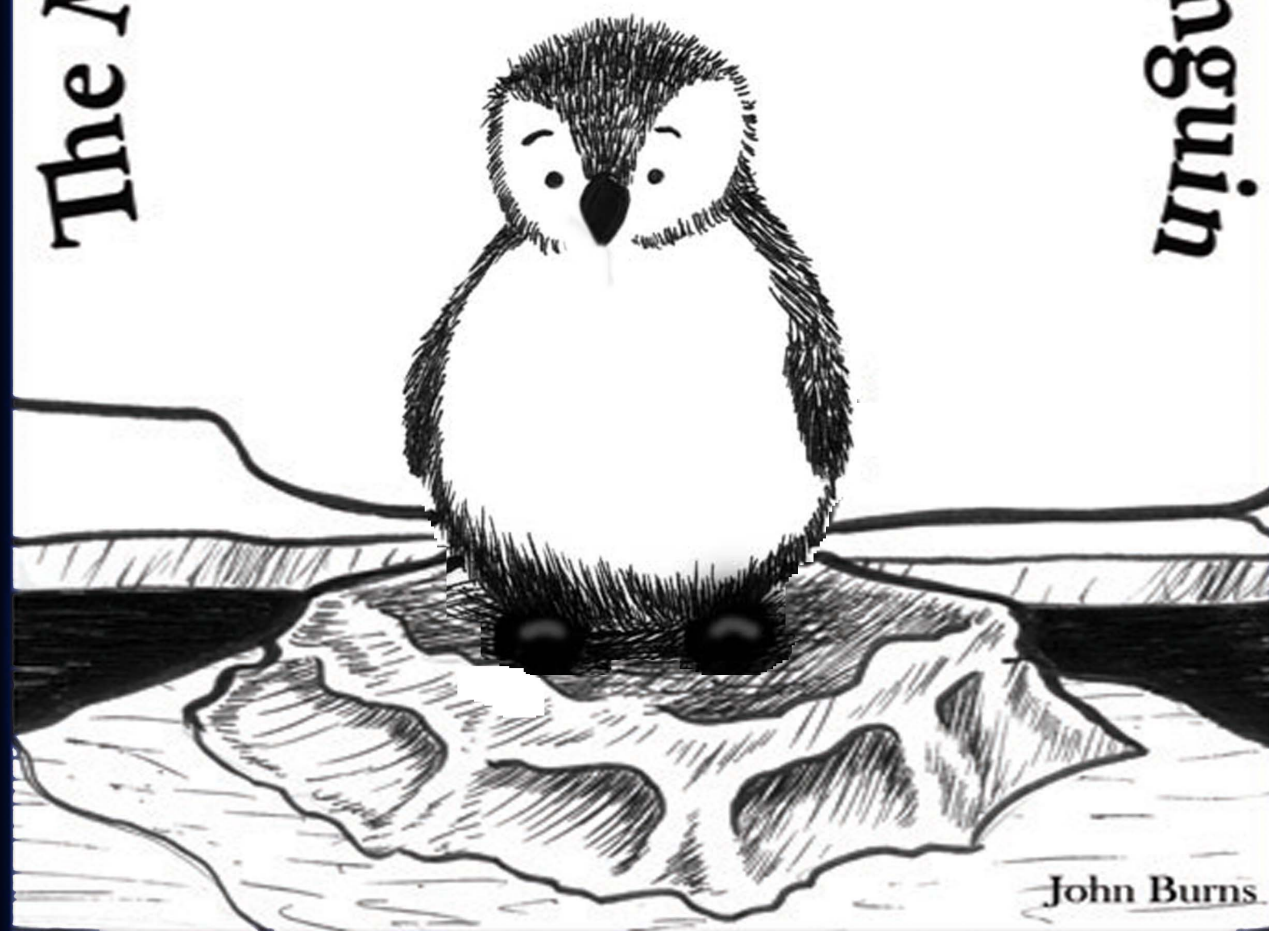


The Many Adventures of Pengey Penguin



John Burns

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A Note From The Author

The following excerpts were taken from the very first Novel in my Pengey Penguin series. The chapter features three of the principal characters in the ensemble cast.

These three are the unlikely personalities who possess enough quirks to meet all the requirements for a not-so-hasty pudding, resulting in a tall tale of inseparable friends but who nonetheless, one day, will have to say good-bye.

I chose this chapter because it illustrates the concrete personalities of the characters and a straight forward sampling of the stories personality as well.

I think you'll find the following pages entertaining, by means of the smile they'll bring to your face and the chuckle from your funny bone.

This chapter might well open that prying light of inquisitiveness in your brain to wonder, what other curiosities lay in the chapters before and after, in this 197 page surprise.

-John Burns

Preface

Somewhere in the Land of Legends, a magical place situated between the stardust memories of the Milky Way and the emerald lands at the end of the rainbow, there lives a very small, very curious, and very clever emperor penguin.

Even though he was abandoned under the most unusual circumstances, he grew to be an adventurous spirit undaunted by his troubles and driven by unwavering devotion to his principles and his search across the globe for Wendy, the friendly human who saved him from starvation.

His name is Pengey Penguin.

Now it should be thoroughly understood that Pengey is not very tall, and he's certainly not very strong, but he's very quick, extremely smart, exceedingly polite, and very well mannered.

This is his story or, at least, how it all began.

He already likes you, and it's his greatest wish that you'll like him, all his friends, and his bedtime story, too.

Chapter 21

FREE AT LAST

While the castle and evil laboratory were being consumed by the enormous fire, and the mad scientist, the circus master, and the animal trainer ran for their lives, Lionel and Rufus laid Pengey onto the safety of the castles' flat roof. They stayed hidden behind a granite parapet, and they tried to wake Pengey up again.

Pengey moaned and groaned. "Wow! What a headache, I have."

Lionel said, "It's from all the smoke you were breathing."

Pengey held his head with his flippers and coughed. "What smoke?"

Lionel looked at Rufus and said, "Must be the knock out pills they gave him. He doesn't remember a thing."

Rufus nodded understandingly but didn't say anything. Pengey continued to hold his head and cough.

"I'll explain later, Pengey." Lionel added with urgency in his voice, "Look, kid, we're not out of the woods yet."

Pengey looked around and said, "I don't see any woods."

Rufus rolled his eyes, shook his head, and said, "What Lionel's trying to say is we're not out of danger yet."

Pengey looked over the edge of the roof and was immediately in a state of shock. "How did I get up here?" He gulped.

"It was Lionel. He flew up here with you on his back."

“How are we going to get down?” Pengey gulped again.

“The same way we got up here, kid,” Lionel said confidently. “How ya’ feelin’?”

Pengey stood up but he was very wobbly on his feet. He sat back down and held his head then he looked at Lionel and said, “I’m not up to snuff, but I’m willing to try anything if it gets me away from this black castle and back to Wendy.”

Lionel said, “That’s the spirit.”

Rufus put Pengey’s backpack down beside him and said, “You’d better put this on. We’ve got a long ways to go.”

Pengey stood up, slid his backpack over his flippers, and wrapped Wendy’s red ribbon around Lionel beak then tied the leather straps around Lionel’s chest and gave them a good yank.

With Wendy’s red ribbon and the leather straps secure, Pengey walked around and climbed up onto Lionel’s back. He felt wobbly as he tucked his feet into the leather straps, but there he sat, ready for takeoff.

It was almost sunset, the time that most birds go to sleep, but the brave little threesome decided it would be best to get as far away from the evil black castle as they could before nightfall. The fire consuming the castle was so strong it was about to engulf the roof where they sat.

With Rufus by his side and Pengey riding on his back, Lionel spread his wings and headed due north, the direction of New York City. When they had flown about a mile, the evil black castle exploded into three billion, seven hundred and

fifty-six million, two hundred and twenty-two thousand, one hundred and eleven pieces.

The concussion from the blast ruffled their feathers, but they flew unharmed toward the protection of the high trees deep in the rain forest.

Pengey was more or less jolted awake now, not only from the noise and flash of the explosion, but also because he was flying along on Lionel's back at over forty miles per hour. He felt a little unsteady about flying at first, but he quickly got the hang of it. He liked it, and the fresh air did him and Lionel and Rufus a lot of good.

Holding on to that red ribbon was more like holding on to the reins of a horse than just a plain ribbon. The leather straps kept Pengey's feet snug against Lionel's back. He felt safe and secure, even though he was flying two hundred feet in the air.

About twenty miles from the castle, Lionel began to look for a place to touch down for the night. It was rapidly becoming too dark to fly. It was then that Lionel spotted a huge Brazil nut tree. He called out to Rufus, "Over there, we'll be safe for the night."

Rufus nodded and yelled back, "It's okay with me, but what are we going to eat? I'm starving."

It was too late for a conversation because Lionel was at the Brazil nut tree, landing on an extremely thick branch near the top. Rufus landed next to him and Pengey.

Pengey was too scared to get off of Lionel's back, but Lionel kept walking around, and that was even bumpier than flying. So Pengey slowly dismounted from Lionel's back and

held onto a thick branch with his flippers. He stammered, “Would you please tell me what we are doing so high up in this tree?”

Rufus laughed while Lionel rolled his eyes and pointed at the base of the huge tree. He said in a very dry manner, “Look, kid, the ground down there is crawling with all sorts of animals: animals that wouldn’t think twice about making a dinner out of you—or me or Rufus, for that matter. Think of it as a safety thing.”

Pengey said, “I would never have thought of that.”

Rufus said, “Hey, you guys, I saw a fish stand about three miles back. It’s probably closed for the night, but there might be some scraps lying around. I’ll try to bring something back for you, Pengey.”

“Thank you, Rufus. I appreciate it very much.” Pengey bowed, and Rufus took wing and was gone.

Lionel paraded around and gathered leaves and small branches and placed them in the crotch of the very large branch of the very large tree. In a few minutes, he had built up a sizable cushion of material.

Pengey asked very politely, “May I ask what you’re doing, Lionel?”

“Makin’ a nest for us to sleep in.”

Pengey said, “A nest? But I’ve never slept in a nest before.”

Lionel said, as he industriously packed more leaves into the nest, “Correct me if I’m wrong, but ain’t you a bird?”

“Well, I am a bird,” Pengey said. “But we emperor penguins, while we adhere to all sorts of bird mannerisms,

don't make nests. We sleep on the ice or the ground but not in trees."

Lionel said, "Well, you're gonna sleep in this nest tonight. See."

"But I don't know how to sleep in a nest," Pengey protested.

Lionel said, "You don't know how to fly either, kid. So do me a favor—sleep in the nest. I don't want to wake up in the morning and see you in pieces at the bottom of the tree."

About two minutes later, Rufus flew back into the tree. He was out of breath and acting very strangely, and some of his feathers seemed to be missing or ruffled.

Pengey noticed the damage and was shocked.

Rufus dropped six little fish from his beak onto Pengey's nest and winced, "These are good. Save a couple for me."

Lionel said, "What happened?"

"Remember the animals we were talking about? Well, I forgot that cats like fish, too. They were all over me as soon as I landed. I was lucky to get away with these."

Pengey asked in his most concerned voice, "Are you hurt?"

Rufus said, "One of them did scratch me, but I don't think there's any real harm done."

Lionel said, "Yeah? You can't be too careful with a cat scratch. In the morning, we'd better fly to the ocean and wash your wound in salt water."

Rufus nodded agreement, and Pengey looked at the fish. It was a fish he'd never seen before, but since puffins are

experts on fish, Pengey took his word that they would taste good. They sat down on the nest that Lionel had built and started to eat a very meager meal.

Lionel said, “You sure those cats didn’t see where you landed?”

Rufus said, “It’s a long way off for a cat. Besides it’s almost dark, so how could they follow me?”

“That’s a cinch. You’re a black bird with a white chest, pretty easy to spot at sunset.”

“It’s a chance we’ll have to take.”

Lionel said, “I’ll think about that after I find something to eat. There’s got to be some ripe nuts on this tree.” And he walked off through the maze of branches.

Pengey ate one of the fish, and it tasted good. Rufus gobbled down another. Pengey asked, as he chewed away on his second fish, “How did you manage to get to Brazil?”

Rufus said, “It was a total calamity. The animal relocations team was supposed to send my wife and me to the state of Maine, somewhere along the coast where they are trying to bring back the puffins that used to live there. I got put on the wrong boat and ended up in Rio. I’ve been here for almost three months.” He picked up another fish, swallowed it whole, and sighed, “I’d just like to get back to my wife and our baby puffin. I’m sure she’s in school by now.”

Lionel walked back to the nest and sat down, his beak filled with Brazil nuts. He tossed them onto the nest and said, “At least there’s lot’s to eat.” Then he frowned and said, “I

think we should take turns sleeping. Whoever's up watches for the cats and anything else that moves . . . Agreed?"

Pengey nodded and Rufus said, "I'll take the first watch."

And so our valiant band of heroes camped in the highest branches of the Brazil nut tree. They finished their skimpy meals, and one-by-one they fell asleep.

Rufus took the first watch. He looked across the vast expanse of the now-darkened rain forest to the hazy and distant outline of the Atlantic Ocean. But he watched the forest below closely. He watched for anything that moved because, after all, cats can climb trees and are they are exceedingly quiet and extremely good hunters.

The scratch on Rufus's wing was beginning to hurt. He didn't want to complain. He hoped he would be able to fly in the morning.

Lionel took the second watch. Hour after weary hour they kept their vigil, and the long, dark night passed without any sign of the cats.

Pengey, completely exhausted from his ordeal, slept the night away with his head tucked underneath his little flipper. As unfamiliar as it was, he was able to sleep in the nest after all.