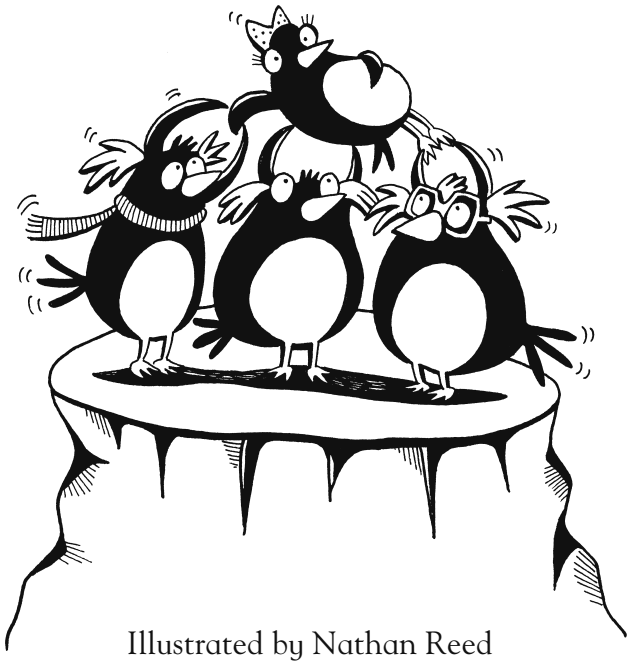
# Penguin Pandemonium

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J.W. xx

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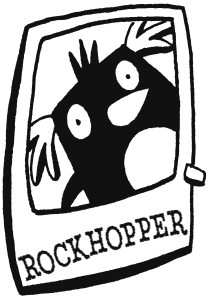
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# Meet the Penguins!




## Rory, Eddie & Clive

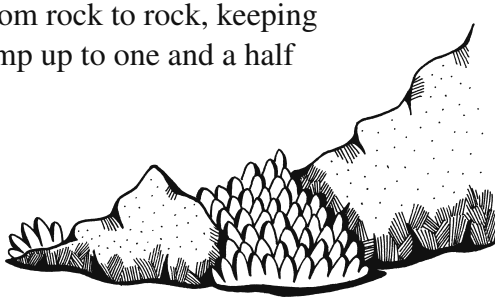
**Looks:** Rockhoppers have spiky yellow and black feathers on their heads that look like long eyebrows.

**How big?** 45 to 58 cm – about half the size of adult Emperor Penguins.

**Favourite food:** Shrimps.

**Penguin party trick:** Rockhopper Penguins love to burst from the water and land on the rocks with a belly flop.

**Flipper fact:** They hop from rock to rock, keeping both feet together and can jump up to one and a half meters.






## Little Blue, Muriel, Hatty & Brenda

**Looks:** Fairy Penguins have blue feathers on their heads and backs but have white bellies.

**How big?** 30 to 33 cm – the world's smallest penguin.

**Favourite food:** Sardines and anchovies.

**Penguin party trick:** In the wild, Fairy Penguins are nocturnal so they only go on land at night (well past the Rockhoppers' bedtime).

**Flipper fact:** The world's smallest penguin – they are also known as the Little Penguin, or the Little Blue Penguin.




## Paulie, Alaskadabra, Oo-Chi & Ku-Chi (chicks)

**Looks:** Emperor Penguins have black backs, white tummies and bright splashes of yellow and orange on their front and their ears. The chicks are fluffy and grey and their faces are white, not black.

**How big?!** Up to one meter tall – the world's tallest and heaviest penguin (over three times as tall as Little Blue!).

**Favourite food:** Squid.

**Penguin party trick:** When an egg is laid, the male stands with the egg on his feet to keep it warm until it hatches (this can take up to nine weeks).

**Flipper fact:** Emperor Penguins can stay under water for nearly twenty minutes!




## Waldo, Warren and Wesley

**Looks:** Chinstrap Penguins get their name from the small black band that runs under their chin.

**How big?** Up to 68 cm (twice as tall as Fairy Penguins).

**Favourite food:** Little shrimps called krill.

**Penguin party trick:** Chinstraps are also known as Stonecracker Penguins because their call is so harsh it sounds like it could break stones.

**Flipper fact:** Chinstraps are the most common type of penguin – there are about thirteen million of them in the world.




## Flighty Almighty

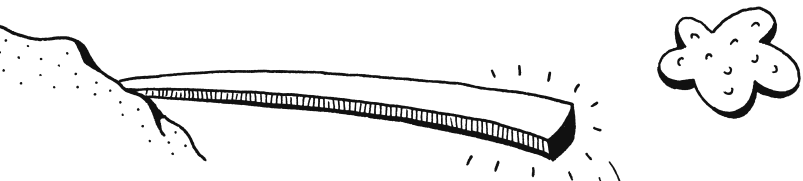
… Ahem, he's a GOOSE!



CHAPTER ONE

# Where is Everybody?

There was a time when the greatest day out a kid could ever have was a trip to City Zoo. In the school holidays, the queue used to stretch from the ticket kiosk all the way down Royal Road as people flocked to see the pandas, the pythons and most of all,



the penguins.

But times had changed and nobody felt this more than Rory the rockhopper penguin.

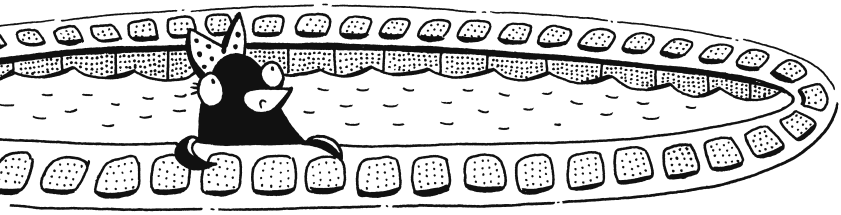




Since the day he hatched in the penguin enclosure he'd been the star attraction. Even as a chick, there was nothing he liked more than showing off his moves to the visitors.



Not so long ago, when Rory hopped on



to the diving board and did his famous back flip with a triple somersault into the pool, the crowd went wild. They would cheer so loudly, you could hear them by the lion enclosure on the other side of the zoo. Today, there was silence.

"Where is everybody, Little Blue?" sighed Rory. "It was never this quiet when we were growing up, was it?"

His friend, the fairy penguin, tweaked his beak.

"That's because you were the one making all the noise, Rory... 'Let's have a cheeping competition, Blue. Let's throw our feeding dishes off the top diving board, Blue. Let's creep up on the bears and shout **"BOO!"** Blue!'"

Rory threw back his head and hooted.

"Fun, wasn't it?"

"The best," admitted Blue, grabbing hold of his tail. "Remember how I used to spin you round and round like this till you got dizzy and fell. The visitors loved that, didn't they?"

Suddenly she let go and Rory tottered across the ice, fell on his back and kicked his chubby legs in the air like a clown. But there was nobody there to laugh. Blue held out a flipper and helped him up.

"Why is no one coming to see us?" he wailed. "Is there a new baby panda stealing the show or something?"

"Maybe it's twin baby pandas," said Blue.

"Or maybe people have just gone off me," said Rory, hunching down next to her.

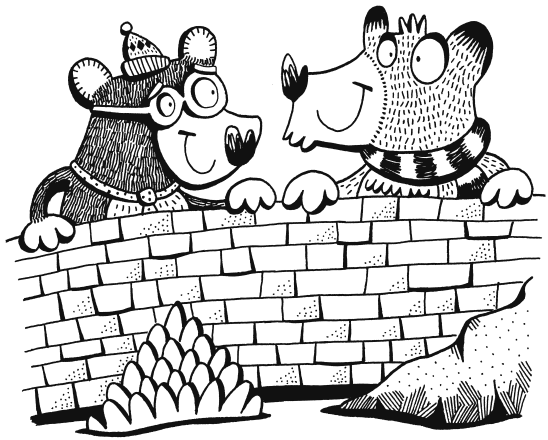
"Maybe my stunts suck and everyone's

gone to watch the oh-so-hilarious meerkats instead. What have meerkats got that I haven't got?"

Blue rolled her eyes.

"Let me think… Fur? A waistline? A sense of humour? Rory, get over yourself. It's early, loads of visitors will turn up at feeding time."

The two brown bears who lived in the paddock overlooking the penguin pool had been listening in to their conversation and interrupted.



"I wouldn't bet on it," said Orson. "The world of entertainment has moved on. No one wants to watch a bunch of birds eating fish heads any more."

"You're not even in colour. You're black and white," added Ursie.

It seemed that the bears were right. When Feeding Time arrived, apart from the zookeeper and his daughter, nobody else came to watch the penguins' antics. As Rory gulped down his ration of squid, he noticed that even Savannah seemed bored.

"Dad, I wanna go home," she said, texting madly on her mobile. "How come I have to hang out with you at the zoo every holiday? None of my friends hang out with their dads. It's soooo embarrassing."

The zookeeper wiped his hands on his overalls.

"I thought you loved the penguins."

Savannah stared at him hard from under her fringe.

"Yeah, like, when I was *two*. Penguins just stand there stinking of squid."

Rory almost choked. True, most of the penguins had fallen asleep on their feet after lunch but did they really stink? He had been Savannah's favourite since she was a toddler. Surely a little thing like how he smelled couldn't ruin their relationship? He tried to catch her eye, but Savannah tossed her hair and looked away.

"She didn't mean it," said Blue brightly. "She's a teenager. She's just trying to act cool."

But Rory wasn't convinced. He breathed heavily into Blue's face.

"Do I smell squiddy to you?"

She drew back and was just about to answer when the zookeeper turned to his daughter and made a sudden, shocking announcement.

"Well, you won't have to come to the zoo for much longer, love," he said. "The way things are going, it will have to shut down by the end of the season."

Shut the zoo? Rory's beak fell open in disbelief. He shook his head and told himself he'd got it wrong but Blue had heard it too. She was standing with her flippers over her ears, trying to block out the terrible news.

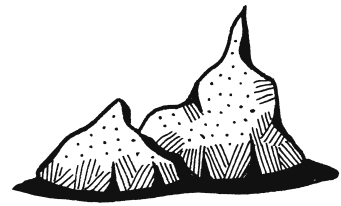
"Dad, you're joking, right?" said Savannah.

But the zookeeper was deadly serious.

"There aren't enough visitors. There isn't enough money coming in through the gates. Unless things pick up soon, we'll have to find new homes for all the animals, including my penguins."

Rory and Blue exchanged worried glances – if the zoo had to close, where would they live? City Zoo was the only home they had ever known. Savannah frowned and stopped texting.

"But Dad, they can't just close the zoo! They can't get rid of the penguins. I love them really. Rory is, like, my favourite person. Tell your boss he has to keep the penguins or I'll cry forever. If that doesn't work, tell him you need your job to pay for the new mobile you said I could have – the K135 is awesome."



The zookeeper picked up his empty fish bucket and sighed.

"It's not all about you, honey. Face facts, it costs a fortune to look after all the animals. If there isn't enough money, the penguins will have to go and I'll be out of work."

"But you have to do something!" wailed Savannah, running after him.

As soon as they'd gone, Rory and Blue began to panic.

"What if we end up in a zoo we hate?" wailed Rory. "What if they send us to another country? What if they send us to a wildlife reserve where things that eat penguins run wild?"

Blue held out her flippers in despair. "What if they split us up?"

Rory hadn't thought of that. Despite all

the teasing and tail-pulling, life without Blue was unthinkable and it seemed that she felt exactly the same about him. They waddled towards each other and went into a huddle, just like they used to when they were chicks.

"Are you scared?" whispered Blue.

"No," he mumbled, but she could feel his knees knocking.

"Are you lying, Rory?"

"I'm dancing."

Blue smiled sadly to herself and stood on his feet to keep them still. They clung to each other for comfort, then Rory broke away and punched the air.

**"Penguin Power!"** he shouted. "I'm not going without a fight, Blue. I have to think of a way to save this zoo!"

