

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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Mr. Popper's Penguins

Book and Lyrics by
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From the story by
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Music by
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Mr. Popper's Penguins was originally produced by Northern Stage in 2010.

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CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

THE CITIZENS OF STILLWATER**

MR. POPPER

MRS. POPPER

JANIE POPPER

BILLY POPPER

ADMIRAL DRAKE**

PAPERBOY**

SALESLADY**

MAILMAN**

DELIVERMAN**

CAPTAIN COOK

POLICEMAN**

DOC HARPER**

GRETA

STAGE MANAGER**

MR. GREENBAUM**

FOLKS IN VARIOUS CITIES**

MALE INGENUE**

FEMALE INGENUE**

WOMAN THEATRE OWNER**

POLICE OFFICER**

CREW OF ADMIRAL DRAKE'S SHIP**

**NOTE – These roles may be doubled utilizing members of the chorus and/or children who also play the young penguins. The show has been conceived for a cast of 23 – 5 adult males, 3 adult females, 15 children/teens. I would suggest doubling as follows:

- Deliveryman/ Clerk/ Admiral Drake
- Doc Harper/ Clerk/ Mr. Greenbaum
- Mailman/ Policeman/ Clerk/ Male Ingenue (Could also be a teenager)
- Clerk/ Stage Manager/ Police Officer

SETTING

Time: 1937

Place: Stillwater, USA and various cities in the U.S.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

ACT ONE

Scene One: Late afternoon on a Fall day on a street in Stillwater, USA

Scene Two: Early evening, that same day, the Popper living room/kitchen

Scene Three: The next day, the Popper living room/kitchen and a street in Stillwater, USA

Scene Four: The same day, the Popper living room/kitchen

Scene Five: Several weeks later, the Popper living room/kitchen

Scene Six: Several days later, the Popper living room/kitchen

ACT TWO

Scene One: Several weeks later, the basement of the Popper's home

Scene Two: One week later, backstage and on-stage at the Palace Theatre in Stillwater, USA

Scene Three: Seven weeks later, a train platform

Scene Four: The next day, backstage and on-stage at the Regal Theatre in Boston, USA

Scene Five: The same day and then 5 days later, a cell in a Boston jail

Scene Six: The next day, a dock in New York City

Act One Musical Numbers:

1. Stillwater
- 1A. Change of Scene
2. What Could It Be?
- 2A. Transition
3. Underscore
4. Parading
- 4A. Change Of Scene
5. Good Morning, City Hall
- 5A. Change Of Scene
6. Lonely Love Song
- 6A. Transition
- 6B. Lonely Love Song (First Reprise)

Act Two Musical Numbers:

7. Entr'acte
8. Ups And Downs
9. Crossover Underscore
10. Mr. Popper's Penguins
- 10A. Fanfare
- 10B. Stardom Montage
11. Land Of Ice And Snow
- 11A. Change Of Scene
12. True Love Is A Little Lovebird
- 12A. Off To Jail/Change Of Scene
13. Lonely Love Song (Second Reprise)
14. Land Of Ice And Snow (Reprise)
- 14A. Change Of Scene
15. Mr. Popper's Penguins (Reprise)/Finale

Bows: (We recommend repeating #15: Finale)

Exit Music: (We recommend repeating #6: Lonely Love Song)

ACT 1

(The curtain opens. We see a street scene of a quiet, small town tree-lined street painted on flats or periaktoi. There are sheets hanging on a clothesline. A little girl is skipping rope in a steady rhythm (1,2,1,2). A boy crosses the stage on a soapbox scooter (push, push glide; push, push glide). A girl and her mother enter and start to take the sheets off the line. They take the ends and snap it before each fold (snap, snap, fold, fold; snap, snap, fold, fold. A man comes in sweeping the street with a broom (sweeep, sweep; sweeep sweep). Three boys enter passing a basketball (bounce, pass; bounce, pass). The postman enters, whistling, hitting his hand with the stack of mail he is about to deliver. The milkman enters with a container of empty bottles that rattle as he carries them. All the sounds build on each other rhythmically and then they all begin to sing...)

1. STILLWATER

ALL

Stillwater
A sleepy little town
Just a place to raise a family,
Just a place to settle down.

Stillwater...
As peaceful as its name.
Where the thing you can rely on
Is that things will stay the same.

Where the guy who is your neighbor
Also is your friend.
Where the buddies of your childhood
Are with you till the end.

Stillwater...
Nowhere special, nothing grand
But you'll search the world and one thing's clear
From the north to southern hemisphere
There's not a place on Earth that's nowhere's near
This great town we've got right here

Stillwater...
Stillwater...
Stillwater...

(The adults exit and the children gather together in the street. They greet Mr. Popper enthusiastically when they see him.)

(Mr. Popper enters while they are singing. He is a slight middle aged man with a walrus-like mustache and disheveled hair. A house painter, he carries the tools of his trade ie buckets, ladder, drop clothe, brushes and his clothes and hat are paint-spattered. He stops, putting down his tools, wiping his face with paint spattered handkerchief. He sighs and begins to sing...)

MR. POPPER

Stillwater...
A right fine town and yet...
Though I've lived here all my lifetime
I've got one great big regret.

(To the children)
I long to go exploring
To a place I've never been
Travel North Pole to South Pole
To see things no man has seen

I'd like to cross an ice floe
Ski down glaciers in a whoosh
I'd love to drive a dog sled
Yelling "Mush, you huskies. Mush"!

To sit down, brrr, in my boots and fur
By a campfire blazing bright
Then to rest my head on a tundra bed
'Neath the twinkling northern lights.

If only for an hour
I could do the things I dream...
To demonstrate ability
And bravely face adversity
Away from all normality
Known to all posterity

CHILDREN

He longs to go exploring
To a place he's never been
Travel North Pole to South Pole
To see things no man has seen

He'd like to cross an ice floe
Ski down glaciers in a whoosh
He'd love to drive a dog sled
Yelling "Mush, you huskies. Mush"!

To sit down, brrr, in his boots and fur
By a campfire blazing bright
Then to rest his head on a tundra bed
'Neath the twinkling northern lights.

(Musical interlude.)

(The children take Mr. Popper's equipment and begin to act out his "dreams". The buckets turned upside down become "ice floes" for him to cross the river (his white drop cloth which the children make ripple like water). He could fall in the "river" and be "swept away" ie the children can pull him away in the drop cloth. The ladder can become the dog sled with 3 children in the rungs and Mr. Popper sitting on the bottom as they pull him around. The ladder opened and covered in the drop cloth could become the glacier for Mr. Popper to "ski" down". Director and actors can use their imagination and see how the found objects can become part of Mr. Popper's daydreams.)

(At the height of this, Mr. Popper stops, realizing where he is and what he should be doing. He sings...)

MR. POPPER

If only for an hour
I could do the things I dream...
But I've a wife and family
And all of them depend on me
I can't explore the Bering Sea.
Time to face reality....

(The children help him gather his things as he exits. They wave to him and sing quietly...)

CHILDREN

(Exiting. They remove the flats of the street to reveal furniture. The flats reverse and become the upstage walls of the Popper home. A front door unit rolls in stage right while a backdoor unit rolls on stage left pushed in by Mrs. Popper.)

Stillwater...
Stillwater...
Stillwater...

1A. Change of Scene

(Scene 2 – The living room and kitchen of the Popper home. It is a simple but tidy middle American home circa 1938. In the living room there is a sofa, a desk, two comfortable chairs, a goldfish bowl, knick knacks, a round braided rug. While the furnishings are plain, the walls are liberally decorate with pages cut from the National Geographic and framed, and travel posters from the North and South Poles. There's an opening upstage between the walls that leads to the rest of the house. In the kitchen, there's a refrigerator, kitchen table and chairs, etc.

(Janie, a girl of about 10 and Bill, a boy of around 12 are lying on the floor by the large radio, surrounded by books. They are supposed to be doing their homework but are clearly wrapped up in their radio program. Mrs. Popper is straightening things up in the kitchen as Mr. Popper enters. He carries just his lunch pail which he puts on the table. He comes up behind Mrs. Popper and hugs her. She turns and kisses him.)

MR. POPPER

Well my love, the decorating season is officially over. I've painted all the kitchens in Stillwater. Every house in need of a fresh coat of paint is tidy and trim from roof to floorboards. And today, I wallpapered the very last wall of the very last room of the very last of the apartments in the building on Elm Street. So, there'll be no more work for me to do until spring when I'll start it all up again. My ladder, buckets, paints and brushes are stored away till then.

MRS. POPPER

(Sighing)

I sometimes wish you had the kind of work that lasted all year and not just springtime to fall. It will be nice to have you home every day for vacation of course. But, it is a little hard to clean with a man sitting around the house all day, his nose buried in the National Geographic.

MR. POPPER

(Looking around the kitchen)

I suppose I could redecorate the house for you...

MRS. POPPER

(Quickly)

No indeed! Last year you painted the bathroom four different times because you'd nothing else to do. I think that's quite enough of that. But what worries me the most, of course, is the money. I've saved a little of course, hopefully enough to last until you start work again in the spring. But as always, we'll need to be cautious with our spending...no roast beef, no ice cream... We'll manage but I'll be counting every penny...

MR. POPPER

And every bean! There's not a thriftier homemaker in all of Stillwater. Or a better cook! The sandwich and soup you made me for lunch were delicious and kept me going straight through the day.

MRS. POPPER

Does that mean you won't be wanting supper? I've kept a plate warmed for you of my chicken fricassee.

MR. POPPER

Hmmm...maybe there's a little space left for that. No one does a bird like you Mrs. Popper!

MRS. POPPER

Well, I was lucky to save any of it for you. Between Janie and Bill they nearly stripped the carcass bare! Growing children certainly means growing appetites.

MR. POPPER

We should be happy to have healthy children even if it means healthy appetites. Are they doing their homework?

MRS. POPPER

They are, by the radio in the parlor though. So I can't say how much schoolwork is getting done and how much time is being spent decoding the latest message from Little Orphan Annie! I swear when those children get to listening to the radio they lose track of everything else. (*She starts to get his plate out of the oven*). By the way, I wanted to remind you that you'll need to be here tomorrow when the children come home from school. It's the last Thursday in September, the 30th and I'll be at my regular meeting of the Ladies Aid Society...

MR. POPPER

(Looking up excitedly)

Wait! You don't mean that tonight is Wednesday September 29th, do you?

MRS. POPPER

Yes, I suppose it is but what of it?

MR. POPPER

(Rushing to the living room. We now hear the Little Orphan Annie program playing. He hurriedly goes to the dial of the radio, in the process stepping over the children who are sprawled out in front of it.

He frantically starts to tune in a new program.)

What of it? What of it! Why this is the night that the Drake Antarctic Expedition is going to start broadcasting!

MRS. POPPER

It'll be just a lot of men at the bottom of the world saying, "Hello Momma. Hello Papa". Seems to me it would get pretty boring down there with all that ice and snow.

MR. POPPER

(As he's dialing the radio to the new station over the protestations of the children)

You wouldn't have thought it dull if you'd gone with me last year to the Bijou to see the newsreel movies of Drake's polar expeditions.

MRS. POPPER

Well I didn't...and with our budget as tight as it is, it's just as well I didn't waste our money on such things. And with your nose buried in those arctic travel books, planted next to your globe for the next 5 months, I don't suppose I'll be getting out to see many movies this year either!

MR. POPPER

Oh, but if you had gone you'd have seen how beautiful the Antarctic is. And it wasn't boring at all. There were penguins everywhere, the cutest little birds. And the men had such fun playing with them...It's the strangest thing though. All the polar bears live at the North Pole and all the penguins live at the South Pole. Personally, I think that the penguins would probably like the North Pole too if they only knew how to get there...Shhhh! I think this is it!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

(His voice comes over the radio as the family listens attentively)

Hello. This is Admiral Drake speaking. Hello Momma. Hello Papa...

MRS. POPPER

(To Mr. Popper with a satisfied smile)

Ah-ha!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

...Hello Mr. Popper

MR. POPPER

(Sputtering)

What?!

MRS. POPPER

Goodness gracious! Did he just say "Papa" or "Popper"?!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Hello Mr. Popper up there in Stillwater. Thank you so much for your nice letter about the movies from our last expedition. Watch for an answer...but not by letter, Mr. Popper. Watch for a surprise! Signing off. Signing off. *(The radio signal turns to static and then orchestra music from the 1930's comes on. The family looks at each other in shock at what they've just heard.)*

MRS. POPPER

(In amazement)

You wrote to Admiral Drake...!

MR. POPPER

I did. I wrote and told him how funny I thought those little penguins were.

MRS. POPPER

Well I never....

MR. POPPER

(Excitedly going to his globe and taking it over to the children to show them)
And to think he just spoke to me from there... *(He points to the South Pole.)*...From the very bottom of the world. And he even mentioned my name! *(He sits back on his heels in amazement and whistles quietly at the thought, then)*. What do you suppose he means by “a surprise”?

2. What Could It Be

JANIE

(Spoken)

Maybe it’s one of those furry coats like the Eskimo people wear! You know made from artic lynx or fox! *(She sings)*

What could it be?

I think a fur.

Snuggly and soft as cashmere.

Dressed up to the nines.

Just like Lamour

Stepping out of her car at a

Glamorous

Movie

Premiere. *(She sighs dreamily, Spoken)*.

At least that’s what I hope it will be...

BILLY

(Spoken)

No. No. Maybe it’s a hunting knife with a handle carved from real walrus tusks! Or a whalebone fishing spear. Boy, I’d love to show that off to the guys on the playground. *(He sings)*

What can it be?

I think a spear.

Something a warrior might need.

For battling a wolf

Duel to the death

Struggling to live till the beast’s

Howling last

Breath. *(He exclaims excitedly, Spoken)*.

Wouldn’t that just be aces...?

BILLY/JANIE

To get a gift so unexpected
From a place so far away
Is like a long lost Christmas present
Turning up on Labor Day!

MRS. POPPER

(To the children, ever the voice of practicality)

It's great fun to dream,
Wonder and guess
Hoping for things it might be
The only thing sure
Take it from me
We'll all have to try and be patient.
I know that it's hard to be patient

But this time you'll have to be patient
And wait till tomorrow to see...

MRS. POPPER

So I'm off to bed. Janie, Billy the sooner you're to bed, the sooner it will be tomorrow and this great mystery will be solved. So hurry upstairs and brush your teeth. We'll tuck you in shortly.

JANIE

(Getting up and kissing her mother. Then to her father)

If it is a fur coat, can I at least try it on, please?

MR. POPPER

We'll see...

JANIE

And that probably means no...

BILLY

If it's a knife do you think I might be able to...?

MRS. POPPER

(Quickly and sharply, stopping the idea in its tracks)

No!

BILLY

And that definitely means no!

(Janie and Billy exit offstage going to their bedrooms).

MR. POPPER

Don't you wonder at all my dear...?

MRS. POPPER

I wonder about a lot of things...How we are going to get through the winter with two very hungry children and no money coming in. I wonder how far a dollar can be stretched. I wonder if by springtime our diets will consist of beans and more beans. I suppose I could hope for a freezer full of whale blubber but then I don't know how one goes about cooking whale. I wonder if you can fricassee it...*(Mr. Popper looks disappointed at her failure to imagine with him but Mrs. Popper continues but in a gentler tone.)* But I never wonder about how much I love you and I never wonder about what a good man you are. *(She kisses him softly).* Are you coming to bed Papa?

MR. POPPER

(Sitting back down by his globe)

In a moment. I just want to see something in one of my books. *(Mrs. Popper exits. Mr. Popper sits spinning the little globe.)* Imagine, Admiral Drake spoke to me from the South Pole. Just as though I was there with him. *(Lights go down)*

(Scene 3 – The living room and kitchen of the Popper home the next day. Mrs. Popper is staring into the hallway mirror putting on her hat and gloves. Mr. Popper paces anxiously.)

MRS. POPPER

My Ladies Aid meeting shouldn't take too long unless Ruby Wentworth is there. Ruby certainly likes to talk. Why she can talk her way so far around a topic that she ends up arguing with herself.

MR. POPPER

Shouldn't the postman be here by now?

MRS. POPPER

He'll get here when he always gets here which is when he gets here. Relax Papa. There's no way of knowing if this surprise from Admiral Drake is even going to arrive today.

MR. POPPER

I suppose.... *(He sits in his chair and picks up the paper but his foot keeps tapping anxiously)*

MRS. POPPER

Now I have a casserole all made. Please put it in the oven at around 4:30 on 320?

MR. POPPER

(Distractedly)

Yes, 3:20 at 430...

MRS. POPPER

(Gathering her things, she crosses, kisses Mr. Popper on the head and starts for the door)

Have a pleasant day and please remember I don't care how bored you get, you are not to repaint any of our rooms! Last year I swear you painted our front hallway so often, I'd get home and have to check the door number to be sure I was in my own house!

MRS. POPPER

Yes my love. *(Mr. Popper waits until she is out the door and then hops up and begins pacing again. He speaks to himself.)* Wouldn't it be amazing if he sent me one of his maps? An actual map that he had with him in the arctic? I could have it framed and hang it in a place of honor right...*(He searches the room for the perfect spot, removing, twisting and generally upsetting most of the pictures in the room. He finds what he feels is a perfect spot and removes what is hanging there. He is standing with the picture in his hands when the doorbell rings. He rushes to it and swings the door open excitedly. A small boy of around 10 is standing there.)*

PAPERBOY

Afternoon Mr. Popper. I'm here to collect for the newspaper. That'll be 25 cents.

MR. POPPER

(Disappointed as he fishes the coins from his pocket)

Yes, of course. Here you go. And I've noticed how much better your arm is getting. The paper almost always reaches the porch now.

PAPERBOY

I know! I'm hoping to go out for the baseball team this spring.

MR. POPPER

Well, good luck with that... *(He returns to his chair, puts the picture down on the floor next to him. He again picks up the paper but his foot continues tapping. He leaps up with a new thought.)* Maybe Mrs. Popper is right. Not about the whale blubber but suppose he's sending us some exotic food from the North Pole. Wouldn't that be something? I've never tasted seal or walrus but I suppose it'd taste sort of like chicken. If so I'd wager Mrs. Popper would soon be winning the seal cook-off at the county fair! I'd better make room in the icebox for that. Wouldn't want the meat to spoil... *(He hurries to the kitchen and starts pulling things from the icebox and putting them on the floor. The doorbell rings and he rushes to it. A lady stands there with a sample case of cosmetics).*

SALESLADY

Good day sir. Is the lady of the house at home? If so, I'd like to tell her about a once in a lifetime offer. *(She liberally squirts a perfume atomizer at him.)* A bottle of our exclusive Au Des Colognes Evening in the Casbah can be hers for just one dollar!

MR. POPPER

(Wrinkling his nose in distaste at the smell)

Ma'am I don't mean to be rude but that stuff smells like an evening near McHenry's dairy farm and I hope inhaling that nasty stuff is only a once in a lifetime experience! *(As he closes the door)* Thank you kindly but I like the way Mrs. Popper smells just fine, sort'a like vanilla extract and lavender soap. *(One more time he returns to his chair, though still agitated. He again picks up the paper but this time he barely glances at it. He's had another thought.)*

MR. POPPER

Of course! I bet it's a kayak. Wouldn't that be something? I could take it out on the lake, maybe use it for fishing. Where can I put it though....? *(He looks around)*. Well, I'd think something that rare would have to be put somewhere very safe where folks could really study and appreciate it. It could probably go in a museum but Stillwater hasn't got a museum so.... *(He starts to frantically rearrange the furniture in the living room)* The Popper front parlor can be the beginning of the new Stillwater Museum of Natural History! *(The doorbell rings again and he rushes to it. It's the postman!)*

POSTMAN

(Lazily, in no great hurry)

Afternoon Mr. Popper. Nice to see you home. I've got something special for you today. *(He fishes in his letter bag. Mr. Popper waits anxiously)*. Sure wasn't expectin' to see one of these, no sir. Let's see.... Where did I put it? Ah, here you go.... *(He pulls out a fat catalogue)* The new Sears and Roebuck catalogue! Don't usually see these for another month or so.

MR. POPPER

(Disappointedly)

Is that all?

POSTMAN

(Slapping his head)

Why no it isn't. Thank you for reminding me! *(He again reaches into his bag and pulls out a stack of bills)* Got these bills as well. You have a nice day. *(He leaves as Popper shuts the door)*

MR. POPPER

(He crosses back to his chair crabily, tossing the bills and the catalogue on to a table. He picks up his pipe and fusses with it. NOTE – He will not smoke it! He will simply hold it in his mouth. He mutters to himself in a bad humor) Silliest thing I ever heard...Sears and Roebuck...What's so special about a catalogue. You can see a catalogue any day of the week. *(The doorbell rings. Mr. Popper stays firmly in his chair. He picks up the paper pointedly and ignores it. It rings a second time and Mr. Popper calls at the door.)* Go away!

VOICE AT THE DOOR

Is this the Popper residence?

MR. POPPER

It is but no one's home!

VOICE AT THE DOOR

But I got...

MR. POPPER

Just leave it!

VOICE AT THE DOOR

Listen Mister, I got papers...

MR. POPPER

Good for you. And I've got my paper and I plan on reading it. *(He pops his paper pointedly)*

VOICE AT THE DOOR

(Impatiently)

Hey, it's no skin off my nose mister. But if you don't sign the papers then this here box goes back to your Auntie-Artica *(Pronounced Anti – Artica)*. She's going to be mighty unhappy to have this big box come back.

MR. POPPER

I don't have an Auntie Artica. I have an Auntie Julia but she's... Auntie Artica?! Antarctica! It's the package from Drake! *(He rushes to the door and flings it open. A deliveryman stands there with a large crate on a dolly. The crate is marked "This End Up", "Open at Once", "Keep Cool" and there are large air holes in the crate.)*

DELIVERMAN

Okay then, sign here, *(He hands him a clipboard with papers)*, here, here and initial here and here. *(He rolls the dolly into the living room)*. Glad you decided not to break your poor Auntie's heart! *(He exits, shutting the door behind him)*.

3. Underscore

(Popper rushes to the kitchen and gets a hammer. He opens up the crate. The front of the crate drops and through a fog of dry ice, out pops a penguin { NOTE – Penguins should be played smaller children so their proportion is no more than ideally chest high on the actor playing Popper. They should not be taller than the actors playing Janie and Billy} Popper and the bird examine each other, curiously sizing the other up. Popper touches the bird. The bird touches Popper. The bird chortles.)

CAPTAIN COOK

Gook. Gook. Ork. Gook. Gook.

MR. POPPER

(Scratches his head in wonder)

Well I'll be. Aren't you just the cutest little thing.

(Janie and Billy coming running through the door. They stop in their tracks when they see the penguin who eyes them curiously and continues to explore during their discussion, all the while chortling "Gook", "Quork", "Ork", "Gawk", "Gork".)

JANIE

Wow!

BILLY

Like Orphan Annie says..."Leapin' Lizards!"

MR. POPPER

Isn't he wonderful?!

JANIE

What is he?

MR. POPPER

He's a penguin from the South Pole sent to me by Admiral Drake.

BILLY

And Jimmy Evers thinks he's so special because he has a bulldog. Wait until the guys see this!

JANIE

What's his name?

MR. POPPER

(Checking the paperwork by the crate)

It doesn't say....I guess we should name him something appropriate.

CAPTAIN COOK

Gook. Gook. Gook.

MR. POPPER

Cook! We'll name him after the great explorer and world traveler, Captain Cook. *(To the penguin)* What about it? How does that sound?

CAPTAIN COOK

(Flapping his wings happily)

Gook! Ork! Gawk. Quork.

MRS. POPPER

(Entering through the front door, she does not see Captain Cook as she removes her hat and gloves)

Call who Captain Cook

JANIE

Him!

(She gestures at Captain Cook who waddles over to examine Mrs. Popper, startling her in the process.)

MRS. POPPER

Heavens! I assume then that this is our surprise from Admiral Drake?

MR. POPPER

(Desperate to please his wife and excite her with this new arrival.)

Surprised?!

MRS. POPPER

Yes I can certainly say I am. *(Looking around at the mess in the living room, aghast)* Did he do all this?

MR. POPPER

(Sheepishly)

No. I did...

MRS. POPPER

And this? *(Pointing at all the pictures tilting on the walls)*

MR. POPPER

(Sheepishly)

Me again...

MRS. POPPER

(As she heads into the kitchen and sees all the food on the floor.)

(During this conversation, Janie, Billy and Captain Cook remain in the living room with Captain Cook exploring and examining things. By the end of the scene with Mr. and Mrs. Popper he should have gotten to the goldfish bowl and eaten the goldfish.)

Don't tell me...!

MR. POPPER

(Sheepishly)

I was making room for the walrus...

MRS. POPPER

There's a walrus too!

MR. POPPER

(Reassuring her quickly)

No! No! I just thought maybe the Admiral had sent us a walrus steak and I wanted to be sure it didn't spoil... I'm sorry.

MRS. POPPER

(Looking at the items on the floor)

Well, it looks like tonight we're having roast with lemon sauce, tuna casserole, cottage cheese and prune whip.

MR. POPPER

(Nervously)

Well, Momma, can we keep him?

MRS. POPPER

(With mock gruffness)

Absolutely. We're keeping the penguin and I'm shipping you back to Admiral Drake! He's clearly far less messy. *(Softening)* Of course he can stay. I can see he makes you happy which makes me happy. We'll find a way to make this work. Now, what do you suppose a penguin eats?

JANIE

(Running in)

Goldfish. Penguins eat goldfish and Captain Cook just had a snack!

CAPTAIN COOK

(Waddling into the kitchen to see what all the excitement is about)

Quork. Gawk. Ork. Ork. Gook. Grok. *(He sees the emptied refrigerator and hops right in. He trills happily)* O-r-r-r-r-h. O-r-r-r-r-h. O-r-r-r-r-h.

MR. POPPER

That's a penguin's way of saying how pleased he is. I read about it in one of my Antarctica books. I think that's about the right temperature for him. We could let him sleep there at night. After all...It is an Admiral!

MRS. POPPER

And where will I put our food! I don't want some bird nesting in my Jell-O mold.

MR. POPPER

I suppose we could get a second refrigerator. And make some adjustments to this one - air holes so he'll be able to breathe and maybe a handle on the inside of the door.

MRS. POPPER

(With a sigh)

I suppose I can call and have the icebox service man deliver a good used refrigerator and while he's here he can see to drilling some holes and putting a handle on the inside. But you'll need to teach the Captain how to use the handles. I won't spend my days playing doorman for a bird. *(Starting to bustle around the kitchen, she shoos Mr. Popper out)* Why don't you take Captain Cook out for a stroll or a waddle or whatever it is penguins do. Let him stretch those tiny little legs. He must feel terrible having been all cramped up in that little box for such a long time. Give me time to take care of things here.

MR. POPPER

That's a wonderful idea! Let him get to know the neighborhood. I'll need a leash and collar though....

JANIE

How about your ties? They would be soft and wouldn't hurt his neck.

MR. POPPER

A tie around his neck would work well and add to his dapper look. But I don't have enough of them to make a leash, even if I include the very ugly one I got from Auntie Julia two Christmases ago. I need something long and strong...

BILLY

What about the clothesline?

MR. POPPER

Good thinking! And mother doesn't need it until Friday. Captain Cook and I will stroll over to the hardware store and pick up another length of rope. Why don't you two go get me what I need and then you can help your mother...straighten up.

(Janie and Billy run off to go get their supplies)

MRS. POPPER

Are you sure about heading downtown Papa? Maybe you should try a short trip around the neighborhood first?

MR. POPPER

Nonsense! I think Captain Cook would love to get a look at downtown Stillwater and won't Stillwater be excited to get a look at him.

(Janie and Billy return with a necktie and a long length of rope. Mr. Popper goes to Captain Cook and puts the bowtie on him and then attaches the clothesline to it. He puts on his coat and hat. The two now look very much alike. {See Illustration} He faces Mrs. Popper.)

MRS. POPPER

Don't the two of you look fine, all ready to parade right down Main Street.

MR. POPPER

Exactly! That's exactly what I plan to do. *(He sings)*

4. Parading

When you're feeling grand,
In something new to wear
Ya don't want to stay inside

Ya just got to move,
Get out and breathe some air
Hit the floor
Open the door
And take a step outside
and
go

(He steps outside and begins to walk. Captain Cook follows waaaay behind on the length of rope. The rope should be long enough that Mr. Popper and Captain Cook are not on stage at the same time. As Mr. Popper walks, he meets people along the way...a little girl and her doll, a

matronly woman carrying groceries, a boy with a scooter, a teenager with some schoolbooks, a milkman, a girl with a jump rope. He nods and acknowledges each of them as they pass him. As they near the offstage side where Captain Cook would be, we see them react and then disappear offstage. Mr. Popper does not notice this, he is so wrapped up in his giddy excitement. We do not see Captain Cook at the end of the rope through all this.)

Parading

Stepping out for everybody to see

Parading,

Side by side, my penguin and me.

Anyone would have to note a pair that's this unique.

My new friend's turning heads...wearing tails... and a beak.

Parading

Walking on, our heads held way up high.

Parading,

Smiling at the world passing by

We don't even mind if other people stop to stare

It's hard not to admire such savoir fare.

I'll even grant to some we seem a trifle weird.

But life is more exciting since this fellow first appeared.

Parading

See them gawking as we saunter past

Parading,

With a style that's just unsurpassed.

I know I may sound boastful and I don't like to crow.

I know I'm just a painter, a regular working Joe.

But

Right now I feel finer than anyone I know.

Parading down the street

A feeling oh so sweet

Parading down Main Street

And feeling swell!

(During the last Captain Cook waddles in. Wrapped up/tangled in the clothesline is everyone Mr. Popper passed including a policeman, his ticket book out who asks angrily...)

POLICEMAN

You got a license for this thing?!

(Scene 4 – The living room and kitchen of the Popper home the next day. Mrs. Popper is dusting. Captain Cook is staring at his reflection in the hall mirror. Mister Popper is holding the ticket trying again to explain things to Mrs. Popper)

MRS. POPPER

(With a sigh)

I don't understand. The policeman gave you a ticket for not having a license for a penguin!

MR. POPPER

The problem was he wasn't sure if there was even any kind of municipal ordinance about penguins on public streets off leash or on. But he wasn't taking any chances he said because the way I was walking this penguin was clearly a public nuisance. He said I needed to call City Hall and check out what the ruling about penguins is.

MRS. POPPER

(Exiting into the house)

Well it would probably be best to get him a license. He's bigger than most dogs, that's for sure. Will you keep an eye on Captain Cook while I make the beds? He keeps trying to eat the buttons on the mattresses.

MR. POPPER

Certainly.

(On hearing his name, Captain Cook wanders over to Mr. Popper as he goes to get the phone. Captain Cook attempts to eat the cord thinking it's some kind of curly green worm, as Mr. Popper dials The lights fade and Mr. Popper is isolated in a spotlight.)

MR. POPPER

(Into the phone)

Hello? Hello?

(The clerks "dance" in seated in rolling office chairs and each holding a telephone receiver. They roll to a stop at various points around the stage, downstage of the Popper house, to be hit by a spotlight when they speak.)

5. GOOD MORNING CITY HALL

CITY HALL CLERKS

Good morning, City Hall.
We thank you for your call.
We'll happily answer anything you ask.
'Cause here at City Hall.
We try to do it all.
Professionally handling any tiny task!

MR. POPPER

(Spoken, pleasantly)

Well hi there! I've got a new pet and I'm not sure if I need one but I'd like to get a license for it....

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Very good sir. I'll connect you with our Animal Control department...

CITY HALL CLERKS

(Slightly faster than first time)

Good morning, City Hall.

We thank you for your call.

We'll happily answer anything you ask.

'Cause here at City Hall.

We try to do it all.

Professionally handling any tiny task!

MR. POPPER

(Spoken, still pleasant)

Okay, I guess this is the right place. I'd like to get a license for my bird...

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Oh, I'm sorry. You need the Department of Fish and Wildlife for a bird hunting license. But I'm afraid bird season doesn't start until November. Happy hunting!...

CITY HALL CLERKS

(Slightly faster the time before)

Good morning, City Hall.

We thank you for your call.

We'll happily answer anything you ask.

'Cause here at City Hall.

We try to do it all.

Professionally handling any tiny task!

MR. POPPER

(Starting to get testy)

Listen, I think there's been a mistake. I wanted to get a license for Captain Cook, my pen...

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

I see. Is he an army captain, naval captain or police captain?

MR. POPPER

(Sputtering in frustration)

He is not...He's a penguin

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Would you repeat that please?

MR. POPPER

(Irate)

Penguin – P.E.N...

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Oh, you mean Captain Cook's first name is Benjamin. Really sir, if I might suggest, you should try to speak more clearly. Anyway, Mr. Topper, I'm going to connect you with our Veteran's Affairs department. They should be able to help Captain Cook. Thank You!...

CITY HALL CLERKS

(Dizzily fast)

Good morning, City Hall.
We thank you for your call.
We'll happily answer anything you ask.
'Cause here at City Hall.
We try to do it all.
Professionally handling any tiny task!

MR. POPPER

(Totally frustrated by the bureaucracy)

Okay, listen, all I need a license for my penguin Captain Cook and you folks are driving me crazy!

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Oh sir, I'm so sorry you've gotten such a run-around. Let me connect you at once to the correct department. Have a nice day!...

CITY HALL CLERKS

(Ridiculously fast!)

Good morning, City Hall.
We thank you for your call.
We'll happily answer anything you ask.
'Cause here at City Hall.
We try to do it all.
Professionally handling any tiny task!

OPERATOR

(Efficiently)

Good morning, Department of Motor Vehicles. I understand that Captain Benjamin Cook needs a driver's license. Does he have the same car as last year and if so may I please have the license number?

MR. POPPER

(Apoplectic, raging at the phone)

Fine then! If you dang fools at City Hall don't even know what a penguin is, I guess you don't have any rule saying they need to be licensed! Good day!

OPERATOR

(Pleasantly)

And you have a great day too sir!

CITY HALL CLERKS

(To each other, pleased with themselves)

So here at City Hall.

We have ourselves a ball.

Confusing folks with every call we take

'Cause here at City Hall.

We do nothing at all.

Until its time to take our coffee break....

(They all stand, in unison, hang out signs on their chairs and speak)

Out to Lunch!

(They roll chairs off and exit. Lights out)

(Scene 5 – The living room and kitchen of the Popper home several weeks later. The family is sitting by the radio. A radio show is playing. Mrs. Popper is knitting. The children are doing homework. Mr. Popper is reading, his pipe [unlit] is in his mouth. Throughout this scene Captain Cook will cross behind the family picking up things and putting them in the fridge. They should not notice this behavior until the unraveled knitting.)

MRS. POPPER

I just can't get over the change in the children.

MR. POPPER

Change my dear?

MRS. POPPER

Indeed. Since that bird has arrived. Why I've never seen the house so tidy. I used to spend hours picking up their things...baseball cards, bits of old kite string and pieces from Billy's erector set, Janie's tiny little teacups for her dolls, her jacks and her hair ribbons, pieces from their checkers game, or jigsaw puzzles or all those marbles.

MR. POPPER

There you have it! Owning a pet has helped them mature, taught them responsibility!

MRS. POPPER

Yes, I suppose it's been a healthy change for the better.

MR. POPPER

Speaking of healthy, I am a bit concerned about Captain Cook. His appetite has been off and his feathers don't have the shine they once did. He seems less chipper than he was when he arrived.

MRS. POPPER

Well, it can't be the quality of the food. He eats better than we do most nights with the canned shrimp and fresh fish.

MR. POPPER

Still, I am worried. I even sent a letter off to Dr. Smith. He's the curator at the big aquarium in Mammoth City. If anyone would know what to do for an ailing penguin, he would. He's an international penguin expert. In the meantime I've asked Doc Harper, the vet to stop by and take a look, see if he can find anything.

MRS. POPPER

Really Mr. Popper... I could be down with the influenza, near death's door before you'd summon a doctor for me but.... *(She stops and watches in amazement as the scarf she is knitting slowly unravels. Mr. Popper notices she has stopped and looks up as well, taking in the strange site. She spies the yarn leading into the kitchen and she and Mr. Popper track it to the refrigerator where it disappears into one of the airholes. She opens the door and an assortment of "stuff" [See book for ideas] piles out. Captain Cook sits inside on a pile of more stuff.)*

CAPTAIN COOK

(Looking very sad and forlorn, near death's door)

Ork. Ork.

MRS. POPPER

I declare this penguin has been a great help in cleaning up this house. But now that you mention it Papa, he does look a little down

CAPTAIN COOK

Greeb. Ork. Gawk. Gook. Gook.

MR. POPPER

Maybe he needs more exercise?

CAPTAIN COOK

Grek. Quorg. Kreeg.

MRS. POPPER

I suppose we could get fresh shrimp instead of canned?

CAPTAIN COOK

Ork. Greeb. Gook. Ork.

MR. POPPER

Maybe some shiny beads? He certainly loves to play with shiny things.

(The lights change to a fantasy feel. MR. and Mrs. Popper freeze as do the children. A spotlight hits Captain Cook and he begins to sing plaintively in English)

6. LONELY LOVE SONG

CAPTAIN COOK

I'm just a lonely one miserably looking for a two.
Is it any wonder that I'm sad and blue?
These creatures seem quite friendly but nowhere do I see
A single female penguin to keep me company.

Lonely
Hear my lonely love song.
I'm pouring out my heart, does no one hear!
Lonely,
Answer please my love song.
This loneliness I feel's too much to bear.

Lonely
Sing a lonely love song.
My heart is aching for a someone sweet.

Lonely,
Could you share my love song.
Without a mate how can I be complete?

I've left my home, my family
And all my friends behind.
If there was someone I could love
I don't think I'd mind...the sadness.

Lonely
One more lonely love song.
Can no one sense the longing in my cry?
Lonely,
It's my final love song.
If I must live alone...
(How sad to live alone!)
If I must live alone – I'd rather die.

(He returns to the refrigerator and the lights return to normal.)

CAPTAIN COOK

Greeb. Gork. Ork. Gook. Gook.

MR. POPPER

I just don't understand it but this penguin doesn't look like himself

DOC HARPER

(Calling from the front door)

Hello? Mr. Popper?

MR. POPPER

(Calling back)

We're in the kitchen Doc. Come on back.

DOC HARPER

(Entering)

Evening folks. Hope this isn't too late. I was out delivering a calf at the Millers.

MR. POPPER

Not at all Doc. Here's the patient himself.

DOC HARPER

So I can see. Can't say I've had any experience with penguins. Chickens, turkeys, even a few geese but this...*(He examines him briefly)* this is one sick bird. I'll leave you some pills. Try

giving him one every hour, feeding him sherbet, wrapping him in ice packs. Beyond that, I'm afraid I can't offer you much hope. This kind of bird was never made for this climate. I can see you've taken good care of him but an Antarctic penguin can't thrive in Stillwater.

MRS. POPPER

(Clearly upset by this news)

Are you saying he may...die?

DOC HARPER

I'm truly sorry but this is one very sick bird. *(He exits. The lights fade).*

(Scene 6 – The living room and kitchen of the Popper home several days later. The family is in the kitchen. Mr. Popper paces nervously, thumbing through his penguin book. Mrs. Popper puts a cold rag on Captain Cook who looks near death's door. The children try to tempt him with fish but nothing rouses him. He has given up.)

MRS. POPPER

His temperature has gone up to one hundred and four degrees!

MRS. POPPER

That seems high. I don't know what to do. The books don't give any ideas on medical treatment for penguins.

JANIE

Is Captain Cook going to be okay?

MRS. POPPER

We all hope so sweetheart.

(The doorbell rings and the postman calls through the open door.)

POSTMAN

Mr. Popper! Mr. Popper! I got a very special delivery here for you. From Mammoth City!

MR. POPPER

(Hurrying to the door, he grabs the letter from the postman.)

The letter from Dr. Smith! I hope it's not too late! *(He reads)* Dear Mr. Popper. Unfortunately it is not easy to cure a sick penguin. Perhaps you know that we too have, in our aquarium at Mammoth City, a penguin from Antarctica. It is failing rapidly, in spite of everything we have done for it. I have wondered lately whether it might not be suffering from loneliness. Perhaps that is what ails your Captain Cook...

(During this next section, Greta waddles in unnoticed by Mr. Popper but not by Captain Cook who senses her arrival from the kitchen. He rises up and waddles in to meet her followed by Mrs. Popper and the children. The bird's eyes meet across the room and it is true love. They waddle towards each other.)

MR. POPPER

I am, therefore, shipping you our penguin by U.S. Postal Service. You may keep her. Her name is Greta. There is just a chance that the birds may get on better together. *(He looks up to see Captain Cook and Greta greeting each other affectionately in penguin talk. The lights change back to fantasy, the family freezes and the birds sing as they waddle back to the refrigerator).*

7. LONELY LOVE SONG (First Reprise)

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA

Lonely
No more lonely love song.
I've found a love that makes my whole life grand.
Lonely?
No, you heard my love song.
I found someone I know will understand.

To live here in this strange new world
Is hard when it's just you.
But I can manage anywhere

CAPTAIN COOK

Since I've a love that's true!
true!

GRETA

He's a love that's

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA

Lonely
Final lonely love song.
I sing this song from deep within my soul.
Lonely,
No, it's just a love song.

CAPTAIN COOK

I'll never be alone...

GRETA

You'll never be alone!

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA

No more to be apart... We now are whole.

(The two birds enter the refrigerator and close door. The lights fade as Lonely Love song underscores. A sign drops that says "1 month later". The family rushes in. The refrigerator door opens. Greta and Captain Cook stand their proudly flanking a nest with baby penguins {puppets})

CURTAIN

End Act I

Act 2

(Scene 1- Lights up, the Popper's basement. It has been converted to a penguin paradise – snow covered hills with slides, large blocks of ice, a skating rink...It looks like a tiny piece of the arctic set down in a Midwest basement.)

MRS. POPPER

(Enters carrying a handful of bills and reviewing them as she thumbs through the pile. She sits on the basements stairs and sighs, then speaks.)

Stillwater Power and Light - Fifty dollars. McSweeney's Ice House - One hundred and ten dollars. Hack and Stack's Refrigeration – Three hundred Forty-two dollars and eighteen cents. Berkenkamps Fresh Fish and Seafood – Four hundred seventy three dollars. Oh my goodness! *(She puts the papers in her lap and sighs again deeply.)*

MR. POPPER

(Enters at the top of the stairs.)

There you are, I've been looking for you.

MRS. POPPER

(Holding up the stack of papers to him.)

Have you any idea what these are? They're bills Mr. Popper. Bills for all of this and more, this penguin paradise you've created here in the basement for Captain Cook, Greta and the chicks. *(She pats the step next to her).* Papa, I must talk with you. Come and sit down.

MR. POPPER

(Sits next to her on the step)

Yes my love. What's on your mind?

MRS. POPPER
(Hesitant to complain)

I'm glad to see you having such a nice vacation. And it's certainly easier to keep the place spic and span with you and the children down here in the basement so much visiting with the penguins. But Papa, what are we to do for money?

MR. POPPER

Money? What's the trouble?

8. UPS AND DOWNS

MRS. POPPER

Oh my, where to start... *(She sings)*

First there's the fish, fresh every day.
Do you know how many fish these penguins put away?
Then there's the ice, five tons and more.
We've got a bigger freezer than the local general store.
Not to mention all the other things we've had to buy...

(She sighs again heavily and then speaks)

No matter what I do our bank account grows... *(MR. POPPER looks at her expectantly. She shakes her head in despair and sings...)*

Smaller every day. The wolf is at our door.
Putting every penny by.
And even so each week I watch our bank account run dry.

Down,
Rushing headlong down to the dumps.
I don't see a single shred of hope.
Down, the direction's down and we're sunk
Our budget's sliding down a slippery slope.

When you have more money
Going out than coming in,
It doesn't take too long before
Your wallet's mighty thin!

Down,
Plunging quickly down and I fear
Our situation's looking grim at best

Down, I am looking down in the mouth
I'm overwrought and worried and depressed.

Papa, listen! It's no joke!
If we keep this up, we'll soon be broke!

MR. POPPER
(Singing)

Up,
Things are looking up and I know
I'm happier than I ever hoped to be.
Up, see me grinning. Up, it's like
I'm a floatin' iceberg on the bright blue sea.

I've lived my life feeling
Simple, dull and plain.
But ever since these birds arrived,
Life hasn't been the same.

Up,
Don't know how but we're heading up.
Great things are gonna happen, I can tell
Up, like a rocket, up climbing high.
My world's just great and I'm feelin' swell.

You just have no idea what the penguins mean to me.
I couldn't feel better if I won the lottery.

Mama, look at me and see my smile.
Things will all be better in a while!

(The penguins enter and start climbing up and sliding down the ice blocks. They are followed by Janie and Billy, dressed for winter, who join the penguins in their games. As they do they repeat "Up. Up. Up" or "Down, Down, Down" as appropriate. This becomes a march-like, very precise dance break where we can see the penguins like to create formations and patterns.)

MRS. POPPER

Down,
Rushing headlong down to the dumps.
I don't see a single shred of hope.
Down, the direction's down and we're sunk
like
Our family's sliding down a slippery slope.
blue sea.

MR. POPPER

Up,
Things are looking up and I know
I'm happier than I ever hoped to be.
Up, see me grinning. Up, it's just
I'm a floatin' iceberg on the bright

When you have more money
Going out than coming in,
It doesn't take too long before
Your wallet's mighty thin!

Down,
Plunging quickly down and I fear
up.
Our situation's looking grim at best
tell.
Down, I am looking down in the mouth
I'm overwrought and worried and depressed
feelin' swell.

I've lived my life feeling
Simple, dull and plain.
But ever since these birds arrived
Life hasn't been the same.

Up
Don't know how but we're heading
Great things are gonna happen I can
tell.
Up, like a rocket, up climbing high.
My world's just great and I am

MR. POPPER/MRS. POPPER

(They stop and look at each other. They take each other hands and hold them. They smile and hug.)

I can't say if we're really heading
On your path or mine.
But as long as we're together
Things are bound to turn out fine.

MRS. POPPER

(Smiling, Resigned.)

Very well Mr. Popper. You win this one.

MR. POPPER

(Suddenly serious)

Is all our money gone?

MRS. POPPER

Practically all. Of course, when it's all gone we could always eat the penguins for a while.

MR. POPPER

(Nervously)

Oh no Momma! You don't really mean that, do you?

MRS. POPPER

(Laughing at him)

Well I really don't suppose that I would enjoy eating them, especially Greta and Captain Cook.

MR. POPPER

And it would certainly break the children's hearts too.

MRS. POPPER

And mine as well if truth be told. (*Reluctantly*) Maybe we could sell them to somebody and then we'll at least have a little money to live on...

MR. POPPER

(*Watching the penguins marching in formations*)

I suppose that would be the most practical....(*He pauses, a thought coming to him*) Or, no, I have a better idea, one that will allow us to keep the penguins and keep food on the table. Momma, you've heard of trained seals performing in the theatre

MRS. POPPER

Of course I have. I even saw one once. He balanced balls and things on the very tip of his. Quite a smart little fellow.

MR. POPPER

Well, if there can be trained seals and trained dogs, why not trained penguins! Why I read in the paper just this morning that the great Mr. Nelson Greenbaum, owner of the Palace Theatres is going to be visiting Stillwater in a few weeks. We could work up an act with the penguins and show it to him. If he liked it he could book us into his string of theatres. I've read that some of his acts earn as much as \$5,000 a week!

MRS. POPPER

But what would we train them to do?

MR. POPPER

(*Gesturing to the penguins marching in formations*)

It would be easiest to train them to do things they already like to do. They like to march. We could find a way to put that in the act.

MRS. POPPER

And music! I can play the piano. We have that old upright that's been sitting in the shed. We can move it down here and I could play it. I think I might remember a few of the pieces I learned when I was younger.

MR. POPPER

Won't it be too cold down here for you to play?

MRS. POPPER

(Thinking)

I can wear my gloves.

(During the last exchange, Janie and Billy have come up to listen. They become excited hearing the plans)

JANIE

We can help too. I've started sewing and I could help you make our costumes...

MR. POPPER

Our costumes?

JANIE

Billy and I would want to help out anyway we can. I have taken three years of dance classes at Miss Debbie's Delightful Dance Studios.

BILLY

And you've insisted I sing in the church choir forever. If I can sing on Sunday, I could certainly sing the rest of the week!

MRS. POPPER

We could make up some sparkly costumes and props and things. Make the whole act look more professional. Professionals earn more money than amateurs!

MR. POPPER

(Pleased)

If we're all agreed then, I say we get started right away. No time to waste. We want to wow Mr. Greenbaum when he gets here. *(He goes to the penguins)* Alright then...March! You know like this...*(He mimics their previous movements. The birds, amused start to copy him.)*

(The family starts to bustle around. The penguins, waddle into a ragged formation and start to rehearse some of what we saw them doing earlier. Lights fade)

9. Crossover Underscore

(Several weeks later. Underscored with Parading. As the lights come up we see the family proudly walking to the Palace Theatre. First Mr. Popper, followed by Captain Cook and Greta walking side by side, then Mrs. Popper in her finest apparel, followed by 4 more penguins marching in pairs, then Janie and Billy. Finally bringing up the rear, the last 4 penguins, the ones on the end carrying little flags in their beaks. The whole procession should have the feel of a purposeful if whimsical parade. The smallest penguin, who should be last should get distracted by something on the street, a shiny pebble perhaps and lose it's place in line and have to waddle

quickly to catch up with the others. This crossover is designed to facilitate the scene change into the Palace Theatre set from the Popper's basement. Musical playoff and we are...)

(Scene 2 - Lights up, backstage at the Palace theatre. The Popper group wanders in awe of all that they see, stage hands, acrobats, people in fancy costumes, a pair of tap dancers rehearsing their act. The Poppers and the penguins huddle together in the middle of all the confusion, uncertain of how to proceed. The penguins though are fascinated by the tap dancers, watching them intently and curiously, perhaps one or two tentatively trying to emulate the sounds with their flippers. Finally, Mr. Popper stops a stagehand and asks...)

MR. POPPER

Excuse me son but could tell me where I might find Mr. Greenbaum?

STAGE MANAGER

Sure. He's over there. *(He gestures at a well dressed man wearing a well cut coat with brass buttons standing in the corner talking with one of the acts).*

MR. POPPER

(Crossing with Mrs. Popper to Greenbaum and nervously removing his hat.)

Pardon me, Mr. Greenbaum sir. I'm Mr. Popper and this is Mrs. Popper. We live here in Stillwater and we have an act...

GREENBAUM

(Dismissively, not looking at Popper)

Sorry. I'm not auditioning any new acts. You can call my secretary in New York City and make an appointment for later next year...

MRS. POPPER

Next year! Oh dear...

MR. POPPER

(Trying again)

Well I'd be happy to do that sir but I have the birds right here...

GREENBAUM

(Still not looking at Popper)

We aren't booking any bird acts this season. I've had enough with those squawking macaws! Dang things always raising such a ruckus...

(A performer crosses in a particularly sparkly costume crosses to talk with Mr. Greenbaum. The smallest penguin follows the shiny costume over to where Mr. Greenbaum is standing. She

sidles between Mr. Popper and Greenbaum and notices Greenbaum's shiny brass buttons. She starts to peck at them with interest.

GREENBAUM

(Noticing the penguin for the first time, surprised)

What the...! Why it's a penguin!

MR. POPPER

A penguin from Antarctica to be precise.

GREENBAUM

(Finally looking at Popper and then at the other birds milling around.)

Gracious man, is this your bird act?

MR. POPPER

(Signaling the birds who form up quickly into two straight lines)

Yes sir. Popper's Performing Penguins. First time on any stage. Direct from the South Pole.

GREENBAUM

(Walking the line, inspecting the birds, who in turn examine him. Thoughtfully)

They certainly look like an act...

MRS. POPPER

(Enthusiastically)

There's music to it too. I play the piano...

GREENBAUM

(Thinking)

Sounds interesting...I want to see this act. If it's any good, you people have come to the right place. I've got theatres from coast to coast. I'll arrange for an audition later tomorrow between shows. I'll just have a word with my...

STAGE MANAGER

(Rushes in, interrupting)

Sorry to interrupt Mr. Greenbaum but we've got a real problem. The Marvelous Marcos who close the show haven't shown up yet. The audience is demanding their money back!

GREENBAUM

(Upset)

And we'll have to give it to them too. Here it is Saturday, the biggest night of the week. I hate to think of losing all those ticket sales...

MR. POPPER

(An idea coming to him)

Maybe you don't have to lose the money. We could go on in their place. It would give you a chance to see the act, how much folks will like it....

STAGE MANAGER

We've got nothing to lose. If their act stinks we'll just end up giving the money back anyway.

GREENBAUM

(To Stage Manager)

Alright then, take them back to the Marcos' dressing room and let them get ready. Then make the announcement to the audience. Alright Popper, let's see what these penguins of yours can do.
(He turns and exits)

STAGE MANAGER

(As he hurries the family and the penguins offstage)

You folks can put your coats and hats and gloves in the dressing room...

MRS. POPPER

Not my gloves. I've gotten so used to wearing them while I play piano in the cold of our freezing basement, I don't know if my fingers will work if they're not on!

STAGE MANAGER

(Pointing the family and penguins offstage as he picks up a microphone to make an announcement. They exit and he begins to speak as the lights go down. The audience hears the announcement in a blackout through a drum roll and waving spotlights)

Ladies and gentleman, with your kind indulgence, we are going to try out a little novelty act tonight. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Marvelous Marcos will not be appearing this evening. In their place we offer you, for the very first time on any stage, all the way here from the frozen arctic, Popper's Performing Penguins!

10. Mr. Popper's Penguins

BILLY

(A musical introduction and then, entering from Stage Left. He sings peppy and syncopated)

Hey there, gals and guys
You won't believe your eyes
When you see what you're about to see

JANIE

(Entering from Stage Right. She sings.)

Folks, there just aren't words
To tell you about these birds
They're just stupendous, take it from me

BOTH

We know they will astound you
They're sure to be the rage
We're gonna bring them to you
Right now on this stage....

(Big drum roll. The children walk the curtain open revealing the penguins, Mr. Popper and Mrs. Popper. The penguins are standing in a clump, staring inquisitively at the audience. Mrs. Popper is seated at the piano, her hand, still in her gloves, poised above the keyboard of the piano. Mr. Popper stands dressed in a bright costume that looks like a circus ringmaster or classic circus animal trainer. His arms are raised above his head. Both Mr. and Mrs. Popper are frozen, looking a great deal like deer caught in the headlight, suddenly aware of being in front of a real audience. There is a downbeat from the orchestra, then a second. Finally Mrs. Popper comes out of her stupor and begins to play the piano slowly. Mr. Popper begins to sing, tentatively at first but gradually gaining confidence.)

MR. POPPER

They're penguins, Mr. Popper's Penguins, they're showstoppers
From halfway round the world right here to you.
These penguins, yep, performing penguins, so rare
You won't believe the things that they can do.

They're penguins, Mr. Popper's Penguins, they're showstoppers
From halfway round the world right here to you.
These penguins, yep, performing penguins, oh my goodness
You won't believe the things that they can do.

Not parrots. Who needs squawking parrots? Bright and gaudy,
So Polly wants a cracker? That's passé!
Or pigeons? Flocks of flutterin' pigeons? They're so common.
That you could see a pigeon any day!

Why would a guy spend hard earned dough to
Watch some plain 'ole ducks?
When we've brought you fantastic fowl
All dressed in up tux!

MR. POPPER/MRS. POPPER/JANIE/BILLY

So hang on to your seats now, hold on, you'll soon shout "Wow!"
Marveling at this most amazing sight.
Hang on to your honey, 'cause I promise sonny,
You'll always reminisce about this night.

(A fanfare retard, a big build up and then Mr. Popper speak/signs the big penguin intro)

MR. POPPER

They've traveled miles and miles to get here
From a frozen far-off land.
To entertain you gracious folks
As soon as I command...

(He raises his hand tentatively and orders/pleads in a quiet, trembling voice)

March?!

As the music underscores, the birds look at him quizzically and at each other in confusion. Then Captain Cook begins to waddle in the beginning of the military formation. Greta joins in as do one or two of the others. But one of the younger ones starts to tap like the dancers they saw earlier. He is joined by several others of the younger penguins who start to tap their way through the military march we've seen them do earlier. They are soon joined by all the others including Captain Cook and Greta. Soon they are embellishing on their military march and breaking into new tap combinations and tricks. Mr. Popper and the family are surprised but not knowing what do go along with it as though it was part of the act to begin with.

MR. POPPER/JANIE/BILLY/MRS. POPPER

They can't soar like an eagle and I've
Never heard them tweet.
But tell me have you ever viewed
Such flashin' tappin' feet!

MR. POPPER/JANIE/BILLY/MRS. POPPER

We told you all the truth. Your cheering is the proof.
You've seen something today you'll not forget.
Tell everyone you know to come and see our show.
We're only here for just one week,
And as you've seen our act's unique.
'Cause when we've gone, you know they're bound to say...
"I took my children and the wife."
"Best show I've seen in my whole life!"
"Sakes alive, how smart was I to go,
To see the Popper penguin dancin' show!"

GREENBAUM

(Rushing on stage, applauding enthusiastically)

What an act! What an act! Ladies and gentleman, I ask you have you ever seen such talent? This evening you've seen variety entertainment history in the making. From now on Popper's Performing Penguins will be headlining at Greenbaum theatres across the country and you folks

can say you saw them first. *(To Mr. Popper)* After you catch your breath, you come right back to my office where I'll have the contracts waiting all filled out and ready for our signatures. You'll head out this by train this weekend and by next week, you are going to be stars performing and traveling from coast to coast with weekly runs at each of my theatres. Take another bow, ladies and gentleman let's hear it for Poppers Performing Penguins! *(The family bows, the birds waddle around, Greenbaum smiles broadly patting Mr. Popper on the back as the lights fade.)*

10A. Fanfare

10B. Stardom Montage

(Spotlights will pick up different groups as they speak or move about the stage. This sequence is to help convey passage of time and locations visited by the Poppers and their penguins.)

MAN

(Reading a newspaper aloud)

January 24th...But the highlight of the new show at the El Capitan Theatre in San Francisco is Popper's Performing Penguins. These nimble little visitors from South Pole impressed this reviewer with their fabulous fancy footwork and adorable appearance. Catch them while you can. They're only here through Saturday. *(He puts down the paper and exclaims)* I'm going to have to go see that for myself! *(He exits as a mother and child enter)*

MOTHER

(Hurrying along)

I've already told you. The penguins won't be here until after your birthday on February 18th but I promise I'll take you to see them for your present.

CHILD

Can you make my birthday cake with sardines?

MOTHER

Sardines!

CHILD

Uh-hunh! That way I can bring a piece to share with Mr. Popper's penguins. *(They hurry out as a group of boys enter and sit on the ground, one boy standing in the front)*

BOY 1

(Hitting a gavel on the floor)

I hereby call this March 30th meeting of the Dallas Texas branch of the Junior G-Man Society to order. Today we're going to decide how to spend the club treasury of....

BOY 2

(Holding up a piggy bank and rattling it)

Two dollars and twenty-six cents.

BOY 3

(Raising his hand)

I say we buy a genuine microscope.

BOY 4

(Raising his hand)

We could each get an official magnifying glass.

BOY 2

(Tentatively)

We could all go see the matinee show today at the Rialto theatre. Mr. Popper's Performing Penguins are going to be there all the way from the South Pole. Then we could all go out for ice cream sundaes.

EVERYONE

(Raising his hand)

Yeah! Wow! Let's do it! I'll say!

BOY 1

(Hitting a gavel on piggy bank)

Motioned carried! Let's go! *(The boys exit and a young couple enters. The young man gets down on one knee and holds out a ring to the girl.)*

YOUNG MAN

(Nervously)

Would you, Miss Amanda Mae Sykes of Roanoke Virginia, do me the great honor of becoming my wife?

YOUNG WOMAN

(Clapping her hands in excitement)

Oh yes Luthor! Yes! Yes! Yes! I can't wait to become your bride.

YOUNG MAN

(Getting to his feet in excitement and taking her hand, starting off)

Let's go see Reverend Willis right now and set the date then. How about April 25th?

YOUNG WOMAN

(Pulling away, hands on hips)

Are you crazy boy?! That's the day that Popper's Performing Penguins are opening at the Palace theatre! *(She storms off, muttering and he follows, calling her name.)* Dang fool! What was I thinking? The man hasn't an ounce of sense! *(Lights fade out)*

(Scene 3 - Lights up, a train station platform, several weeks later. Mrs. Popper, Janie and Billy stand with suitcases. Mr. Popper sits on a large trunk, surrounded by the penguins.)

MRS. POPPER

(Concerned)

Are you sure you'll be alright sleeping in the baggage car with the birds? I don't understand why they won't let them into the sleeper car with us. After all, they are trained performing animals.

MR. POPPER

(Smiling at her)

Maybe it's the uproar they caused on our last trip. I knew the ladders in the sleeper car would eventually offer too much of a temptation.

BILLY

You should have seen that old ladies face when Isabella hopped in and began pecking on her curlers!

JANIE

And the man in the lower berth when Ferdinand and Columbus began to snuggle in next to him. I didn't know that ministers even knew such language.

MRS. POPPER

Still, it was only a momentary lapse of good manners.

MR. POPPER

No Momma, I think the birds are getting tired. We've been traveling now for what, ten weeks or more without a break. We've gone from Seattle to Savannah and everywhere in between. I scarcely know what town we're in anymore let alone what theatre. They've all start to look the same. I never thought I'd say it, but I rather miss Stillwater. Do we have enough money yet to support the birds and the family?

MRS. POPPER

Well, I'd love to say we do, Mr. Greenbaum being so generous with our contract and all but honestly, traveling with a troupe of penguins is expensive. Why I could prepare a week of meals for all of us in my tiny kitchen in Stillwater for what one lunch bill costs at the fancy restaurants we've had to eat in. And of course, all the fresh fish the birds eat.

MR. POPPER

True, but at least all the canned shrimp is free now that we've done the testimonial advertisement stating that, "Popper's Performing Penguins Thrive on Owen's Oceanic Shrimp!"

MRS. POPPER

Yes, the photo of Captain Cook and Greta on the label is striking. Still, this traveling life has proven more expensive than I'd thought. I've managed to save enough that we'll be comfortable, but certainly not rich.

MR. POPPER

(Rising to hug her)

My love, we are rich in so many other things that money scarcely matters. Now go get yourselves tucked in tight and get some sleep. The baggage car will be loading shortly and I'll try to catch some shut-eye once we're settled in. Tomorrow, when we arrive in town, you take the children to the hotel and get us registered. I'll take the birds to the theatre and set up the dressing room.

MRS. POPPER

(Starting off with the children)

Good idea. Very well then, I'll see you tomorrow, at noon at the Royal Theatre in Boston.

MR. POPPER

(Distracted, already starting to gather up the penguins, he scarcely hears her)

Right, see you then... *(All the birds are now clustered around Mr. Popper as he sits back down. He talks to the penguins)*. I know it's getting warmer and you fellows are getting tired of the

traveling life but I promise as soon as we are done with these performances at the... *(He can't quite recall)*... Something about kings,,,

Majestic? No... Imperial? No... It began with an "R"... Regal! That's it. The Regal Theatre in Boston, I'm going to speak to Mr. Greenbaum about heading home. The performing life is exciting and all, but it's going to be house-painting season soon and that's what I suppose I really belong doing. Just like I suppose you belong swimming in cold arctic waters and playing on ice floes. *(To Captain Cook and Greta)*

MR. POPPER

(Sings to the penguins who listen raptly)

11. Land of Ice and Snow

Dream with me. Close your eyes, imagine, somewhere....

There's a place where your heart can freely go

Wisps of dreams, long forgotten, distant memory.

You'll be home in the land of ice and snow.

The icy air is sweet and clear

The oceans filled with fishes

Majestic mountains carve the sky

A landscape to fill all your wishes

Antarctica's a paradise

An Eden, though it's frozen

This dull gray world we've offered you

Is not the world that you'd have chosen.

Keep that dream. Though the memory's fading, seize it.
You'll be safe, in the land of ice and snow.

(Scene 4- Lights up, backstage at the Regal Theatre in Boston. There is the usual assortment of backstage personnel and performers warming up. Mr. Popper hurries in followed by the penguins, no longer marching in their orderly line but waddling, clearly distracted in a clump.)

MR. POPPER

(To the penguins)

We are awfully late. I can't believe the train pulled in almost three hours behind schedule and after being stuck on that siding beside that factory all night long. I barely slept a wink all night. *(Looking around and listening)* The show has started. I need to find someone who can tell me where our dressing room is. I'm sure Mrs. Popper and the children will be along any moment. *(To the penguins)* You wait here, understand? Stay right here out of the way and I'll be back in a few moments. *(He rushes offstage. The penguins stand in place for a few moments and then begin to filter off stage in groups of two and three. The lights go down. There is an announcement over the microphone.)*

VOICE OVER MICROPHONE

And now ladies and gentleman, the Regal Theatre of Boston is pleased to present the act that you've all been waiting for, the headliners of this evening's performance, those two young heartthrobs, the incomparable song stylings of Wanda and Eugene!

(A spotlight catches a dashing young man in a black tail coat, his hair glistening with pomade. He enters from the audience singing. He sings sappy and overly romantic. As he gets to the stage, the lights come up revealing four chorus girls dressed as Busby Berkley style flowers with elaborate headdresses. NOTE – This number should be played as hokey and over-the-top as possible. Think bad 1930's musical!)

12. True Love Is A Little Lovebird

MALE INGENUE

Some say that love is a butterfly...

CHORUS GIRLS

(Echoing)

Butterfly...

MALE INGENUE

That flits from flower to flower.

CHORUS GIRLS

(Echoing)

Flower to flower...

MALE INGENUE

But I think not and here is why.
Love has a special power.

CHORUS GIRLS

(Encircling the MALE INGENUE, beseeching)

Oh, please sir tell us why!
Oh please sir tell us why!
Why do you think sweet gentle love
Is not a butterfly?

MALE INGENUE

True love's like a little lovebird.
True from the day it's hatched.
Yes true love's like a little lovebird.
It never flies from its perfect match.

If you spy a besotted lovebird.
Nesting with his lady true.
You know he'll be in that nest a lifetime.
For that's just what true lovebirds do.

Though love birds have a tiny heart.
No larger than a flea.
There's none on earth.
Near half the worth
Of his fidelity.

So darling, be my little lovebird.
Fly on the winds of life.
Darling, be my little lovebird.
Say you'll be my beloved wife.

(A FEMALE INGENUE enters from the wings dressed in a lovely dress. She wears a cape of feathers which she moves as though she has wings. She calls to the MALE INGENUE.)

FEMALE INGENUE

Too-Wee!

MALE INGENUE

Too-Wee! Oh say you'll marry me!

FEMALE INGENUE

(Drawing closer)

Woo-hoo!

MALE INGENUE

(Drawing closer)

Woo-hoo!

FEMALE INGENUE

(Rushing into the arms of the MALE INGENUE)

Woo-hoo. Woo-hoo. I'd love to marry you!

CHORUS GIRLS

(Surrounding the happy couple, joyfully)

Woo-hoo. Woo-hoo. She'd love to marry you!

MALE INGENUE

(Dropping to one knee, he begins to serenade the FEMALE INGENUE who has perched lightly on his knee. He is backed up by the CHORUS GIRLS)

If you were my little darling lovebird.
Here's how my true love I'd affirm.
Though I'd fly off every single morning.
I'd come back bringing you a worm.

(In the midst of all this, the penguins filter on. They are confused by what is happening, although curious about what is going on. They inspect the chorus girls, peck at the scenery, pull the feathers off and finally remove the FEMALE INGENUE'S cape. In short, they wreck the act, the more comically the better. At first the cast of "Little Lovebird" tries to ignore them but soon they can't. Perhaps one chorus girl is frightened by the birds and tries to escape by climbing the scenery. Maybe another tries to tame them like a lion tamer. Perhaps the MALE INGENUE becomes indignant at the interruption and tries to steal the stage from the chaos the penguins are causing, making it clear to his partner that he is stealing the stage. Perhaps she responds. Maybe one of the penguins ends up wearing one of the CHORUS GIRL'S headdresses...The chaos caused by the appearance of the penguins into this very hokey act should be extreme, slapstick and very comic. Though the music continues the MALE INGENUE, FEMALE INGENUE and CHORUS GIRLS may or may not sing as blocking and the situation develop. Eventually Mr. Popper joins the confusion trying to both round up the birds and remain unobtrusive. He fails at both!)

CHORUS GIRLS/MALE INGENUE/FEMALE INGENUE

(As desired)

If you'd say that you'd be my lovebird.

From your side I would never stray.
I'd love you all the lovebird evening.
And hold you all the lovebird day.

MALE INGENUE/FEMALE INGENUE

You need to know I love your toes,
Your lovely lovebird legs.
And when they're here,
I promise dear.
To love our lovebird eggs.

CHORUS GIRLS/MALE INGENUE/FEMALE INGENUE

So come sweet, we can be like lovebirds
Sharing the joys life brings.
For lovebirds know what is important
They know love's the loveliest of things.

(A furious woman rushes onstage with a police officer)

WOMAN

(Pointing at Popper)

There he is! Arrest that man and his crazy birds. They ruined my show! He broke into my theatre and has thrown the whole place into a panic. You sir are a disturber of the peace!

MR. POPPER

(Confused)

But I'm Mr. Popper and these are my famous performing penguins!

WOMAN

I don't care if you're Will Rogers and these flat-footed woodpeckers do rope tricks, you haven't any business in this theatre!

MR. POPPER

(Becoming irate, somewhat pompously)

My good woman, are you aware that Mr. Greenbaum is going to pay us five thousand dollars for our appearance at the Regal Theatre!

WOMAN

Mr. Greenbaum's theatre is the Royal not the Regal. You're in the wrong theatre. Now, Officer, arrest this man!

(The policeman starts to shoo Popper and the penguins towards the exit.)

MR. POPPER

(Sputtering)

But...But...But (*Lights fade out*)

(Scene 5- Lights up, a jail cell in Boston. The police officer escorts Popper and the penguins to a cell and opens the door.)

POLICE OFFICER

Okay, here's your new home unless you can raise bail. The theatre manager was pretty mad at the way you ruined her show and busted up her theatre. Bail has been set at five hundred dollars for you and a hundred dollars for each of the birds. Plus, the theatre manager is demanding nearly six hundred dollars in damages. Have you got that kind of money?

MR. POPPER

I honestly don't know. Mrs. Popper always handles our budget.

POLICE OFFICER

I think I saw her out at the front desk. I'll send her back when I get out there. I hope you can find the money. A hot stuffy jail cell is no place for a penguin.

MR. POPPER

I know. (*He looks at the birds despondently*). I bet you'd love to back home in the basement in Stillwater sliding up and down the ice blocks. I'm so sorry...

MRS. POPPER

(Hurries in, pocketbook clutched tightly. She speaks to him through the locked doors of the cell)
Oh Papa, how could this have happened? Are you all right? Are the birds all right?

MR. POPPER

What a muddle I've made of things.

MRS. POPPER

I've tried to reach Mr. Greenbaum but he's in Hollywood in California and no one seems to know a telephone number for him. I've sent a telegram to his office in hope that someone there can get to him but... (*She sighs hopelessly*). The trouble is my love I just don't have the cash on hand to sort things out.

MR. POPPER

Well, then we'll just wait here patiently and hope to hear from Mr. Greenbaum soon.

(Mrs. Popper reaches through the bars to touch his hands and then turns distraught and leaves. The lights fade and we hear a clock ticking indicating passage of time. Each time the lights come back up, Mr. Popper and the penguins should be in different positions and gradually declining appearance and energy. By the final time they should look as pathetic as the illustration.)

POLICE OFFICER

(Bringing in a tray of food)

Here's your breakfast. The fish for the birds will be delivered a little later. Hmm, five days. I sure didn't think we'd have you with us that long. Thought someone would have sprung you by now.

MR. POPPER

I'd hoped so too...

POLICE OFFICER

(Exiting)

Well, see you again at lunch time.

MR. POPPER

(Starts to pick up the fork to eat but he just can't. He is a broken man. To Captain Cook and Greta)

Oh my....What have I done...to my family...to your family. This is no place for a man, let alone a wild bird. I'm just so very sorry... *(He begins to cry softly. The lights change and the penguins begin to sing softly to him. Their gestures should appear supportive and nurturing. This is their thank you to him)*

13. LONELY LOVE SONG (Second Reprise)

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA

Lonely?
Hear us sing a love song.
We want to thank you for the things you've done

CAPTAIN COOK

Lonely?
Listen to our love song.

GRETA

You've given us our daughters and our sons.

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA/ BABY PENGUINS

For everything you've done for us
For all the ways you care.

We feel right now you're suffering
But please know that we are here.

Lonely
Understand our love song.
We hope you know what we are trying to say.
Lonely,
Recognize our love song.
You'll never be alone...

CAPTAIN COOK

(Spoken)

Please know you're not alone!

CAPTAIN COOK/GRETA/ BABY PENGUINS

We're here for you and we won't go away.

(When the lights return to normal, the penguins are all huddled around Mr. Popper, resting their heads and beaks on his shoulders, his lap, anywhere a human would touch a friend in loving support. Mr. Popper stops crying, realizing their support and hugs/pats them all.)

POLICE OFFICER

(Hurries in, the cell keys out and jangling)

Mr. Popper! Mr. Popper, you're free. There's a friend of yours here, paid your bail and the birds and all of the damages.

MR. POPPER

(Getting up, dusting himself off, he is busy straightening himself and the penguins so he doesn't see the man who enters. The man is tall, regal and wearing a very distinguished naval uniform.)
Oh Mr. Greenbaum, thank goodness you're here! You're barely in time...!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

(Bemused)

In time for what, Mr. Popper?

MR. POPPER

(Popper turns and his jaw drops. He is speechless and stutters)

Ad...Ad...Ad...Ad...

ADMIRAL DRAKE

(Extending his hand)

Mr. Popper, I'm Admiral Drake

MR. POPPER

(Popper grabs the outstretched hand and pumps it enthusiastically)

Admiral Drake! Not back from the South Pole?!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Yes, the Drake Antarctic Expedition ship docked in New York yesterday. You should have seen the reception New York gave us. Dinner with the Mayor. Keys to the city. You can read all about it in today's paper. But when I read about the trouble you were having over the penguins, I rushed right up here on the very next train. So here I am and I need to speak with you about an important matter.

MR. POPPER

Important matter? Me?!

ADMIRAL DRAKE

(Settling on to the cell cot)

It takes a very long time for news to reach us at the bottom of the world and I often wondered how you and the penguin were getting on. Last evening, at the Mayor's dinner I heard about you and the wonderful trained penguin act you'd been putting on all around the country. But Mr. Popper...how did you get so many penguins.

MR. POPPER

I got a female penguin from the Mammoth City aquarium and then...*(He shrugs his shoulders)* nature.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Nature indeed! *(He chuckles, then grows serious)*. Now, as to my point... Popper, you know I've explored the North Pole as well as the South Pole.

MR. POPPER

Oh yes, I've read every book and article ever written about your Arctic and Antarctic expeditions.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Then maybe you know why we explorers prefer the South Pole?

MR. POPPER

Could it be on account of the penguins?

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Yes. Those long polar nights get pretty dull when you have no pets to play with. Of course there are polar bears there but a polar bear doesn't really make a pet you'd want to play with. For a long time the United States Government has been wanting me to lead an expedition up there for the purpose of establishing a breed of North Pole penguins. You've had such remarkable success with your trained, educated penguins, why not let me take them to the North Pole and start a race of penguins there?

(Mrs. Popper, Janie, Billy and Mr. Greenbaum come hurrying in, excitedly. Greenbaum holds a thick stack of legal papers.)

MR. GREENBAUM

Popper, I am so sorry about the mix-up at the theatres but never mind that. I've just come back from Hollywood where I negotiated with Mr. Klein who owns the Colossal Film Company. He wants to sign you and the penguins to contracts. The five thousand dollars a week you've been making is pin money compared to what he's offering. He already has his story department working on a whole series of movies featuring the penguins. Why you and the missus will be able to live on Easy Street the rest of your lives...heck, the rest of your children's lives!

MR. POPPER

Oh my...! But...Momma, this is Admiral Drake, the..."Hello Momma", Hello Poppa" Admiral Drake himself! He's come here specially to ask if he could take the penguins with him to the North Pole. It's for the government! But...Mr. Greenbaum...easy street!? Well then, Momma, what do you say?

MRS. POPPER

Papa, I don't want to live on Easy Street. I like our little home in Stillwater. But I feel the penguins have been your responsibility and the decision is yours. I'll be happy with any choice you make.

MR. POPPER

(To Admiral Drake)

You say those men at the North Pole get very lonely because there are no penguins?

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Very lonely.

MR. POPPER

But if there were penguins, mightn't the polar bears eat them?

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Perhaps ordinary penguins, yes but not highly educated birds like yours. They could easily outwit any hungry polar bear.

MR. GREENBAUM

In every moving picture house in America, little children would have the great pleasure of seeing stories acted by the Popper Performing Penguins.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Of course, if we succeeded in establishing the breed at the North Pole, the name might have to be changed a little. I would imagine hundreds of years from now scientists would be calling them the Popper Arctic Penguins.

MR. POPPER

Everyone...could I have a moment please to make my decision?

EVERYONE BUT POPPER

(They exit the cell and wait by the far corner of the stage)

Of course. Take all the time you need. Sure daddy. I'm here if you need me my love.

MR. POPPER

(Gathering the penguins around him)

What about you? What will be best for you my little friends?

14. Land of Ice and Snow (Reprise)

....Antarctica's a paradise
An Eden, though it's frozen
This bleak gray world you're living in
Is not the world you would have chosen...

MR. POPPER

(Spoken on break in music)

I've made my decision, Mr. Greenbaum.

MR. POPPER

(Calling to the others)

Mr. Greenbaum, I want you to know how very much I appreciate all you have done us and I appreciate your offer to put them in the movies. But I'm afraid I have to refuse. From what I know of Hollywood, I don't believe the life would be good for penguins. Admiral Drake, I am going to give the birds to you. The birds have done so much for me that I have to do what's best for them. After all, this isn't their world. And I feel sorry for the men at the North Pole. I have my family to keep me company and this past week has shown me how very hard loneliness can be.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Your government will thank you Mr. Popper

GREENBAUM

(Thinking)

Congratulations Admiral. And Mr. Popper, judging what I've seen of the movie stars in Hollywood, you're right and it's probably no place for a respectable penguin. But listen. Let me just get one film made, a short one, showing the penguins in New York and leaving with the Admiral. I could pay you for it. Not a lot. Less than what I would have gotten you for a series of films. Say twenty-five thousand dollars?

MRS. POPPER

That would be very helpful Mr. Greenbaum. We could use it.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Very well then. We'll see you tomorrow in New York. We sail at noon.

(Lights fade as the Popper family hugs, surrounded by the penguins)

(Scene 6- Lights up, the dock in New York. There is a great deal of hustle and bustle and activity as items are brought up the long gangplank to the ship. Mr. and Mrs. Popper, the children and the penguins arrive followed by a camera person who films all they do. The family is quiet and somber but the penguins are enthused by the activity and excited by all they see.)

MRS. POPPER

That certainly is a mighty big ship. The birds can get in to all sorts of mischief on the voyage I bet.

MR. POPPER

It's the ship the Admiral always sails on for his expeditions. I've seen it in the newsreels.

(A whistle blows on the ship. It's clearly time to board)

MRS. POPPER

(To the penguins)

Now, you take care. And if you see a large white, furry mound coming at you, that is a polar bear and you get yourself far away! *(She pats and hugs the birds and then moves off to the side)*

JANIE

I'm going to miss all of you. But I'll write letters and ask the men to read them to you. *(She says her good-byes and joins her mother).*

BILLY

It's going to be mighty quiet around the house without you...and a lot less fun. *(He also says goodbyes and joins his mother and sister, leaving only Mr. Popper alone with the birds.)*

MR. POPPER

(First to the little penguins, then Greta and finally Captain Cook)

Well, I guess this is good-bye. You're going to a wonderful new place where you are going to be happier than you've ever been before. I can't say I won't miss you. I'm missing you already. But

you have to believe me when I tell you this is for the best. Now, up the gangplank with you. (*As they go, to the littlest penguin*) And you take care that you leave Admiral Drake's shiny gold buttons right on his uniform where they belong. (*The younger penguins waddle up the gangplank*). And Greta, how can I thank you. You saved Captain Cook's life with your love and you brought such beautiful babies into our home. (*Greta nuzzles him and waddles up the gangplank. Popper gets down on his knee to say goodbye to Captain Cook*). And you sir, the fellow that started it all. You've made my life a whole lot more interesting than it ever was before. I'm going to miss you like blazes. Now go ahead, away you go. It's time to sail. (*The penguin doesn't move as Popper tries to shoo him away. He clearly doesn't want to leave. Finally, Popper gives him a gentle nudge and the bird waddles hesitantly up the gangplank, stopping halfway up to turn and call to Popper.*)

CAPTAIN COOK

Gook. Gook.

(*He turns and exits. Mr. Popper stands and wipes the tears from his eyes discreetly. Mrs. Popper comes and puts her arms around him as do the children. They watch for a moment and then turn to leave. As they do Admiral Drake comes running down the gangplank.*)

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Popper! Mr. Popper.

MR. POPPER

(*Turning back, apologetically*)

Oh admiral. I'm sorry. I didn't say goodbye.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Goodbye. Goodbye? What are you talking about? Aren't you coming with us?

MR. POPPER

(*Shocked*)

Me. Go with you to the North Pole?

ADMIRAL DRAKE

Why of course Mr. Popper.

MR. POPPER

But how can I go with you? I'm not an explorer or scientist. I'm just a house painter.

ADMIRAL DRAKE

You're the keeper of the penguins! Man alive, aren't those penguins the whole reason for this expedition?! Who is going to see that they're well and happy if you're not along? Now go put on one of those furry suits like the rest of us. We're pulling anchor in a minute.

MR. POPPER

Momma, what do you think? Admiral Drake says he needs me. Do you mind if I don't come home for a year or two?

MRS. POPPER

(Smiling at her husband, joking)

Oh, as to that. Of course I'll miss you very much, my dear. But we have money enough to live on for a few years. And in winter it will be much easier without you underfoot, messing up my tidy little house all day long. But you can say "Hello" to me on the radio and I'll know when you say "Hello Momma" you're talking to me!

JANIE

I'll miss you too daddy but I'm glad the birds will have you there to keep them safe.

BILLY

And Jimmy Evers thinks he's so great because his dad is a fireman. Wait until he hears about this.

(Admiral Drake hustles Popper offstage as the family and the crew begins to sing a reprise of Mr. Popper's Penguins.)

ALL BUT POPPER

15. Mr. Popper's Penguins (Reprise)

(The penguins come out on the gangplank and begin to dance)

They can't soar like an eagle
And we've never heard them tweet
But tell us have you ever seen
Such flashin' tappin' feet!
They're sailing with the tide. It's time to say goodbye.
The story's near the end that much is clear

ALL

(Popper rushes back on stage dressed in a furry parka.)

Remember to believe. Who knows what you'll achieve!

MR. POPPER/ALL

The birds and I are shipping out
And I can say without a doubt
I'm awful glad I acted on my dreams

ALL

So when adventure calls to you
And you have doubts 'bout what to do
Remember all you've learned from Popper's tale
And watch out for a penguin in the mail.

Popper stands amidst the penguins waving lit by a spotlight as the lights fade and the spotlight gets smaller and smaller until it winks out to black.)

CURTAIN

THE END