



The Mystery in  
Icy  
Antarctica

The Frozen Continent

by Carole Marsh

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First Edition

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# 30 Years Ago . . .

As a mother and an author, one of the fondest periods of my life was when I decided to write mystery books for children. At this time (1979), kids were pretty much glued to the TV, something parents and teachers complained about the same way they do about web surfing and video games today.

I decided to set each mystery in a real place—a place kids could go and visit for themselves after reading the book. And I also used real children as characters. Usually a couple of my own children served as characters, and I had no trouble recruiting kids from the book's location to also be characters.

Also, I wanted all the kids—boys and girls of all ages—to participate in solving the mystery. And, I wanted kids to learn something as they read. Something about the history of the location. And, I wanted the stories to be funny. That formula of real+scary+smart+fun served me well.

I love getting letters from teachers and parents who say they read the book with their class or child, then visited the historic site and saw all the places in the mystery for themselves. What's so great about that? What's great is that you and your children have an experience that bonds you together forever. Something you shared. Something you both cared about at the time. Something that crossed all age levels—a good story, a good scare, a good laugh!

30 years later,

*Carole Marsh*



Hey, kids! As you see—here we are ready to embark on another of our exciting Carole Marsh Mystery adventures! You know, in “real life,” I keep very close tabs on Christina, Grant, and their friends when we travel. However, in the mystery books, they always seem to slip away from Papa and me so that they can try to solve the mystery on their own!

I hope you will go to [www.carolemarshmysteries.com](http://www.carolemarshmysteries.com) and apply to be a character in a future mystery book! Well, the *Mystery Girl* is all tuned up and ready for “take-off!”

Gotta go...Papa says so! Wonder what I've forgotten this time?

Happy “Armchair Travel” Reading,

Mimi

# About the Characters



**Christina**, age 10: Mysterious things really do happen to her! Hobbies: soccer, Girl Scouts, anything crafty, hanging out with Mimi, and going on new adventures.



**Grant**, age 7: Always manages to fall off boats, back into cactuses, and find strange clues—even in real life! Hobbies: camping, baseball, computer games, math, and hanging out with Papa.



**Mimi** is Carole Marsh, children's book author and creator of Carole Marsh Mysteries, Around the World in 80 Mysteries, Three Amigos Mysteries, Baby's First Mysteries, and many others.



**Papa** is Bob Longmeyer, the author's real-life husband, who really does wear a tuxedo, cowboy boots and hat, fly an airplane, captain a boat, speak in a booming voice, and laugh a lot!

Travel around the world with Christina and Grant as they visit famous places in 80 countries, and experience the mysterious happenings that always seem to follow them!



# Books in This Series

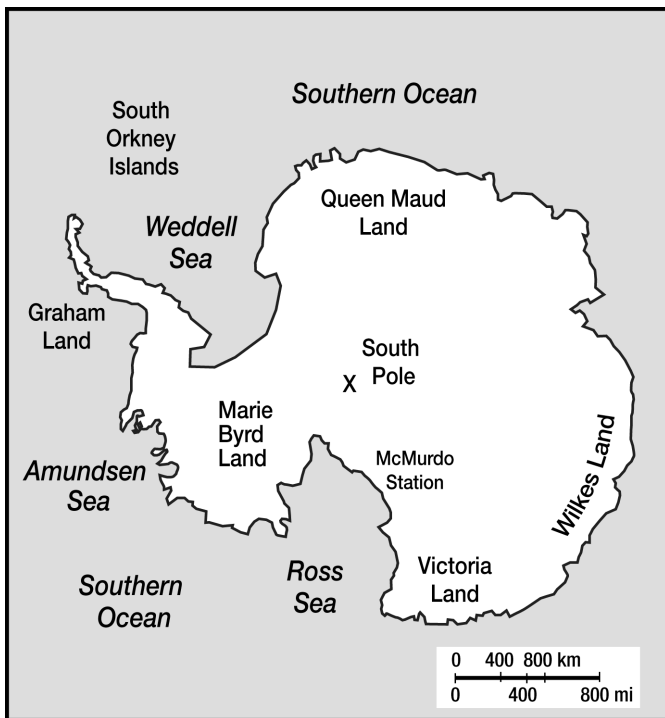
- #1 The Mystery at Big Ben  
(London, England)**
- #2 The Mystery at the Eiffel Tower  
(Paris, France)**
- #3 The Mystery at the Roman Colosseum  
(Rome, Italy)**
- #4 The Mystery of the Ancient Pyramid  
(Cairo, Egypt)**
- #5 The Mystery on the Great Wall of China  
(Beijing, China)**
- #6 The Mystery on the Great Barrier Reef  
(Australia)**
- #7 The Mystery at Mt. Fuji  
(Tokyo, Japan)**
- #8 The Mystery in the Amazon Rainforest  
(South America)**
- #9 The Mystery at Dracula's Castle  
(South America)**
- #10 The Curse of the Acropolis  
(Athens, Greece)**
- #11 The Mystery of the Crystal Castle  
(Bavaria, Germany)**
- #12 The Mystery in Icy Antarctica  
(Antarctica)**

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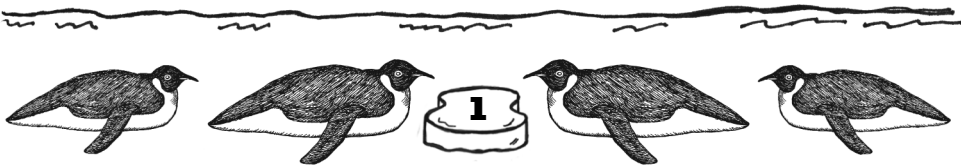
**Antarctica**



# Coming in on a Prayer and an Ice Floe

“Penguins! I can see penguins!” Grant shouted. His grandfather, Papa, banked their little red-and-white plane, the *Mystery Girl*, into position for landing. They were headed for the sea-ice landing field near McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

Christina, Grant’s sister, stared at the bleak landscape below. “Nothing but miles and miles of ice and snow in every possible shade of blue and white!” she cried. She couldn’t believe they were flying above the South Pole, and the coldest continent on earth! She and Grant often traveled with their grandparents. Their



## *The Mystery in Icy Antarctica*

grandmother, Mimi, wrote mystery books for kids, and traveled around the world to do research. This is definitely the “coolest” location we’ve been to, Christina thought.

Looking to the right, she saw the first signs of human life. “That must be McMurdo Station!” she said. “From here it looks so tiny and sad! Just drab tan buildings! And those spooky, black hills behind the station give me the shivers.”

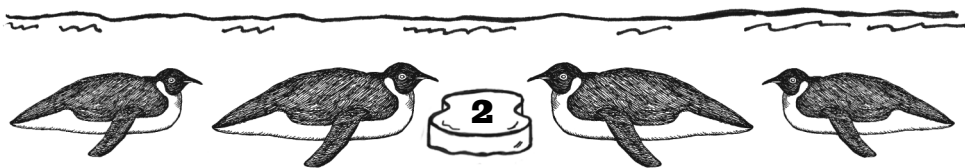
Mimi stared at the outside temperature gage. “Five degrees Fahrenheit! THAT gives me the SHIVERS,” she moaned.

Papa was checking off descent procedures when a radio call interrupted him.

“*Mystery Girl,*” the voice said, “McMurdo Station calling. You can’t land now! Penguins are on the landing strip. We will notify you when the airfield is bird-free.”

“Roger that,” Papa replied.

The voice over the radio added, “For now, land on the ice floe on your left. It will take a while to remove the penguins. No use burning expensive fuel circling around.”



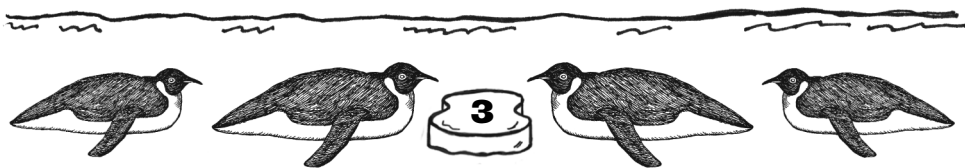
## *Coming in on a Prayer and an Ice Floe*

Papa eyed the massive, free-floating ice floe that was now to be his runway. “Here goes a first,” he said, grinning. “Tighten your seatbelts and hang on!”

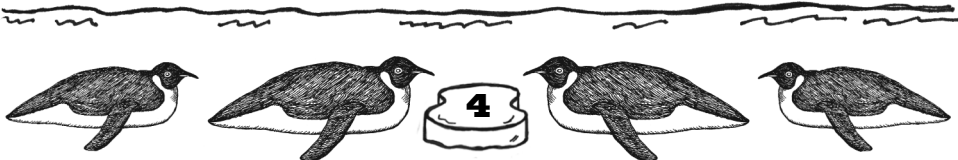
“They certainly go to great lengths to protect the penguins,” Mimi commented. “And it’s hard to say who’s chasing who,” she added, looking down at a bundled-up figure below awkwardly chasing the birds off the field. The penguins seemed to have minds of their own. They scampered and slid on their bellies in all directions despite futile attempts to herd them in one direction.

“Three, six, nine, twelve, fifteen...,” Grant counted hurriedly by threes to find out how many penguins were on the field before the plane flew too far away. “I think they’re emperor penguins,” he cried, noting their black and white coloring and large, pudgy bodies. “I want to see them up close! I read they’re almost as tall as I am!”

Soon the *Mystery Girl* touched down on the nearby ice floe, crunching and skidding on the smooth ice. It took all of Papa’s efforts at the



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*Coming in on a Prayer and an Ice Floe*

controls to keep the plane from sliding this way and that. As the aircraft sputtered to an unsteady halt, Mimi said, “Does it feel to you like the plane’s rocking?”

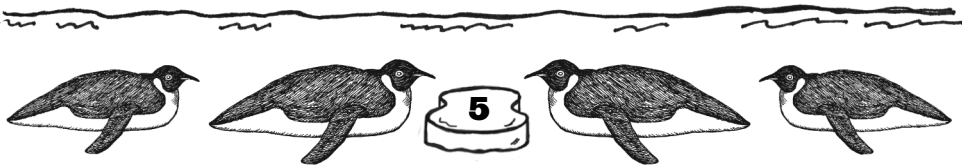
Papa replied, “Well, we ARE on a big floating ice cube.”

GRAACK!

Everyone jumped at the loud splitting sound. “What was THAT?” Christina asked.

“I wonder if this ice floe is strong enough to hold the plane,” Mimi said as she peeked out the window with one eye open and one eye closed, looking for any cracks in the ice.

“They wouldn’t have asked us to land here if it wasn’t,” Papa concluded. As if to verify Papa’s words, another plane landed further down the ice floe. “But I didn’t expect to share an ice floe with



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another plane,” he added. “I guess lots more people are coming here as scientists come up with better ways to deal with the cold.”

Everyone sat silently, listening to the mournful cracking and moaning of the huge block of ice below them. Christina imagined the plane slipping off the floe—or falling through the ice into the water! Grant joined his hands together and said a quick prayer that everyone would be safe.

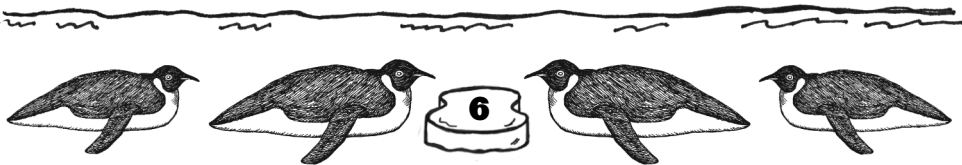
“Good idea, Grant,” Christina said. “I sure hope we can get off this thing soon!”

Trying to keep his mind off the crunching ice, Grant picked up a pair of binoculars and counted the penguins again. They were now safely on one side of the landing strip.

“Hey, there’s one missing!” Grant said to Christina, a bit concerned. “There were 21 penguins, and now I only count 20.”

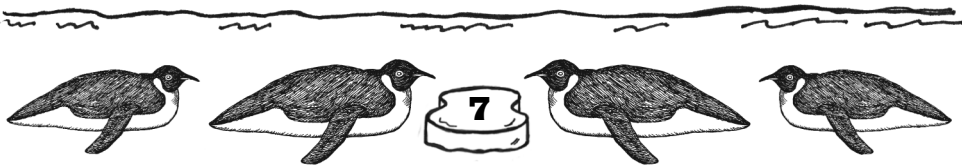
“Are you positive?” Christina said, taking a count herself. “Maybe you missed one.”

“No, I didn’t!” Grant retorted. “I am good at counting and math!” Christina knew he was good with numbers. *Something about the possible missing penguin made Christina uneasy but*



*Coming in on a Prayer and an Ice Floe*

*she couldn't say what. Little did she know  
one missing penguin would snowball into one  
big mystery!*



# Cold Feet and Hot Cocoa

“We’ve been in this plane for hours,” Grant complained.

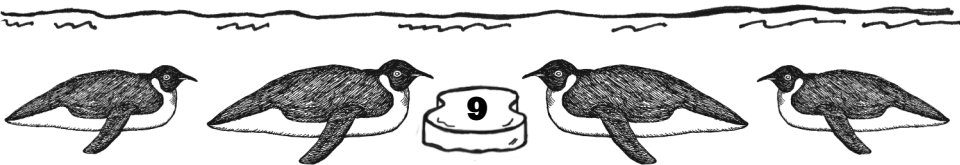
“It is late in the day but the sun doesn’t seem to be going anywhere fast,” Mimi commented.

“It’s November, start of the long austral summer with six months of daylight!” Papa remarked.

“Mimi, it looks like the plane won’t fall through the ice,” Grant asked. “Can we get out?”

“No, we stay inside,” Mimi ordered. “It’s way too cold out there!”

Papa said, “The ice floe’s rocking too much. It could be dangerous.” He then opened a window to give the kids a clearer view of the floe. A blast of frigid air slapped Grant in the face, taking his breath away.



## *The Mystery in Icy Antarctica*

“Papa! Close it!” Grant screamed. “It feels like razors scraping my face!”

“*Ohhhhhh*,” Mimi said, wrapping her red scarf around her face and short blond hair. “And you want to go out there? Now do you see how cold it is?”

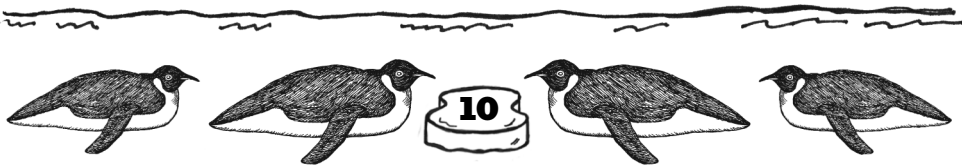
Grant nodded, cupping his fist around his cold, red nose.

At last, a message blared on the plane’s radio saying the *Mystery Girl* could now land at the real sea-ice landing. The penguins had been cleared.

As the *Mystery Girl* descended a second time, Grant got a good view of the penguins on the side of the landing strip. There were indeed just twenty. “I know I saw one more, Christina,” Grant insisted.

“Maybe it dove into the water at the edge of the ice floe,” Christina suggested.

The kids scanned the horizon for the missing penguin and could only see an eerie, desolate landscape with just a shed, two red trucks, and McMurdo Station in the distance. On arrival, the airport attendant, wrapped from head to boots in red, warmly greeted them.



## *Cold Feet and Hot Cocoa*

“Welcome to the ice! I’m Al,” he stammered, a cloud of steam shooting from his mouth, and specs of ice flying from his mustache. “I guess I don’t need to tell you to walk quickly to the shed. You’re not dressed for this weather!” He glanced at Papa’s cowboy boots. “You’ll need some warmer boots here, pardner!”

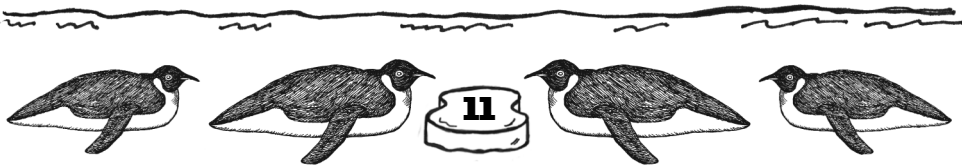
Papa grinned through his shivers. “Whatever you say!” he said.

The attendant then told Papa that his host, Dr. Orlav, would be here shortly to take them to McMurdo Station. They hustled to the shed to wait. “It’s s-s-sooo c-c-c-cold!” Christina stuttered between chattering teeth.

Excited about being in Antarctica, Grant peppered the attendant with questions. “Why is everything red?” he asked. “Your clothes are red, and the trucks outside are red.”

“That’s so we can easily be seen in case there’s a blizzard—when everything’s white!” the airport worker replied.

“Mimi will love it here then,” Christina said. “She loves red!”



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“Were you the one who cleared the field of penguins?” Grant asked.

“No, that was the other guy, Brett,” he answered.

“What a cool job,” Grant said, totally in awe of the man.

“It’s not a cool job. It’s a COLD job,” the attendant complained.

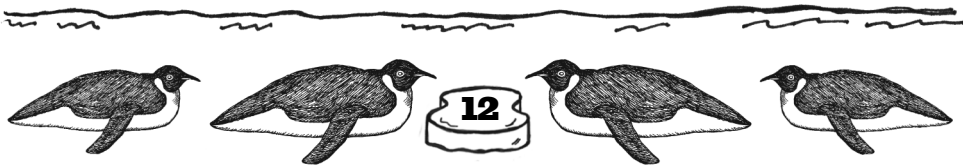
“Did you know that one of the penguins is missing?” Grant asked. “You didn’t get them all.”

“Why do you say that?” the attendant asked, raising his eyebrow.

“I counted the birds before you cleared the field and then again after you cleared it,” Grant replied, as he sniffed his stuffy nose. He was **adamant**, and he stuck out his chin to show confidence. “There’s one missing.”

“I’m sure Brett got them all,” the attendant stated firmly. “You must’ve seen a mirage,” he continued. “Antarctica is so dry it’s considered a desert. Like in a desert, people see mirages here. So...maybe you saw a phantom penguin!”

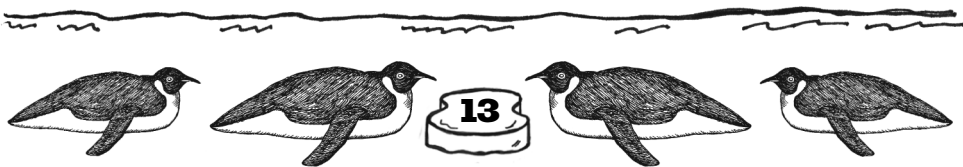
“Okay, Grant,” Mimi said as she tousled Grant’s blond, curly hair. “I’ve heard enough



## *Cold Feet and Hot Cocoa*

about missing penguins.” She touched Grant’s forehead. It was a little warm, despite the frigid air. Mimi said to Papa, “Grant’s a little cranky, and doesn’t look his usual perky self. I think he’s coming down with a cold.”

The attendant poured some hot coffee for Mimi and Papa. He offered some hot cocoa to Grant. He shook his head and sat with his arms crossed. Christina gladly took a cup of cocoa and leaned back against the shed wall to sip the delicious, steamy brew. She heard a strange, muffled, squealing sound and footfalls. *She turned her ear to the wall. Was she hearing things? Surely that was no mirage!*



# Another Mirage in the Icy Desert?

An odd-looking vehicle resembling a red box on treads crunched along the ice to the airport. Its driver was Dr. Magnus Orlav, a friend of Papa's and a scientist at McMurdo Station. He had invited Papa and the family to Antarctica so Mimi could do research for her next book. Dr. Orlav expertly parked the vehicle and strode over the ice. It was clear that the tall, burly Russian with the ice-covered, handlebar mustache was used to Antarctica.

"Magnus, it's great to see you!" Papa said, slapping Dr. Orlav on the back. "You remember



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my wife, Carole.” Mimi stood on her tiptoes to hug the massive man.

Dr. Orlav turned and smiled at the kids. “So, Bob, are these the grandkids you bragged about in your letter?” he asked.

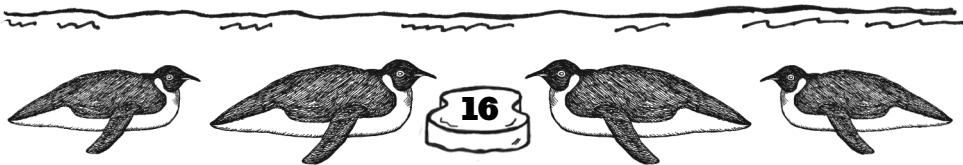
“Yep,” Papa said as he put an arm around Christina. “This is my granddaughter, Christina. And this fellow,” Papa added, pointing to Grant, who was still in a huff with his arms crossed, “is Grant, my grandson.”

“It looks like you’ve got something on your mind, young man,” Dr. Orlav said, twirling the end of his mustache, making snowflakes flutter to the floor.

“I do,” Grant muttered, still looking down.

Mimi explained, “Grant’s moping today. He counted some penguins as we landed and thinks one is missing. He’s upset because he thinks no one’s taking him seriously.”

“I think you may be right, Grant,” Dr. Orlav observed, “because something tells me you’re good at counting. It’s hard to count penguins,” he added. “I do it all the time and I sometimes miscount, so I would know.”



## *Another Mirage in the Icy Desert?*

“You do?” Grant asked, not believing his ears. Here was someone who understood!

“Let’s get aboard the Hagglund,” Dr. Orlav said, yanking open the huge side door of the vehicle. “We can talk about penguins later.”

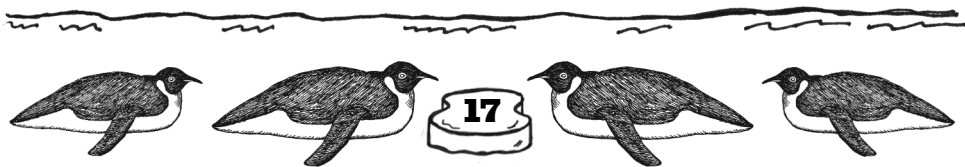
The airport attendant and his helper, Brett, came out to help load the baggage. After everyone settled into their seats, Dr. Orlav started the engine and the vehicle jumped to life. Soon, they were crunching along over the ice.

Grant, excited at riding in this “totally awesome” vehicle, soon forgot about the missing penguin. “What is this called again—a Bag Land?”

“No,” Dr. Orlav replied with a laugh, “it’s a Hagglund, built in Sweden. We use it to transport up to six people.”

“Riding on these treads instead of wheels feels funny,” Grant said. He looked at Christina and giggled. “My teeth are jiggling!”

“It’s a little bumpy,” Dr. Orlav agreed. “But it’s a safe way for traveling over thin ice and ice floes—like right now. If the Hagglund were to break through ice to the water underneath, it’ll still float.”



## *The Mystery in Icy Antarctica*

“That’s comforting to know,” Mimi said. “But how do you get the vehicle back on the ice once you’ve gone through it?”

Dr. Orlav laughed. “Just another problem—one of many we face constantly at the South Pole. Everyday living can be very difficult at times.”

Papa explained, “Dr. Orlav is here at the South Pole to study penguins.”

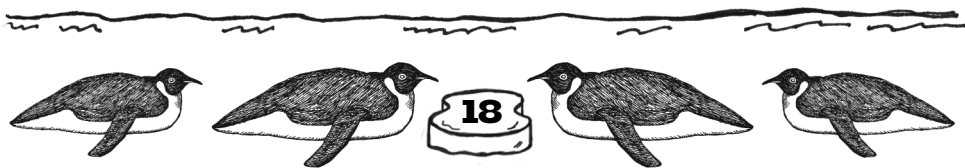
“REALLY?” Grant asked, leaning forward to hear the conversation above the roar of the vehicle. “Is THAT why you said you counted penguins?”

“I actually run a ranch where we study penguins,” Dr. Orlav replied. “Instead of cattle, we have penguins!”

“COOOL!” Grant cried, thoroughly impressed. He couldn’t imagine a more fun job than running a penguin ranch.

Christina asked, “What are you researching?”

“Many things,” Dr. Orlav answered, “such as penguin diving and eating habits, and how they take care of their young. Scientists really don’t know that much about the birds.”



### *Another Mirage in the Icy Desert?*

“It must be an interesting job,” Christina commented.

“Having a job down here, even a boring one, is better than having nothing to do,” Dr. Orlav said. “There’s very little entertainment and few places to go. During the winter, everyone has to stay indoors. Antarctica actually doubles in size in the winter because so much ice forms around the coastline. So, work keeps us out of trouble!”

“Where’s your ranch?” Grant asked, leaning even farther forward, nearly touching the front seat.

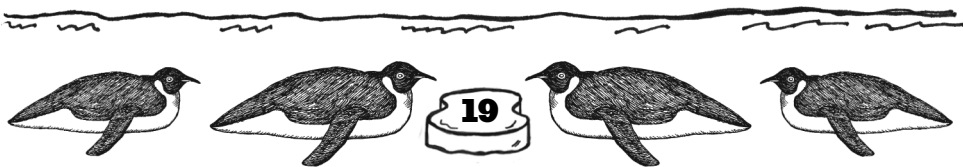
“It’s on the outskirts of Camp McMurdo, not so far away,” Dr. Orlav answered.

“Could I visit it?” Grant asked. “I would LOVE to see the penguins! But I know it’s forbidden to get close to them.”

“Oh, you can see them. Or better yet,” Dr. Orlav answered. “How would you like to work at the ranch?”

“NO KIDDING? FOR REAL?” Grant asked, totally amazed.

“For real,” Dr. Orlav said. “Like I said, it’s best that everybody has something to do. You and



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Christina can count penguins. It would be great if Mimi helped out with our weekly newspaper and your Papa helped fly supplies to a nearby station.”

Everyone looked at each other. “That’s a deal!” Mimi and Papa said together.

“When do we begin, Magnus?” Papa asked.

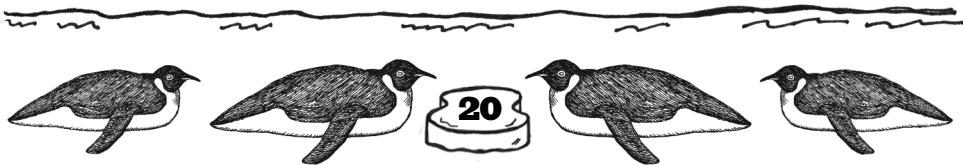
“As soon as I get you settled and rested,” Dr. Orlav replied.

Christina gazed out the window. It was going to be so much fun to work with penguins, she thought. She then noticed one of the four-wheel-drive trucks parked at the airport suddenly passing them by. A big red and blue canvas bag lay in the back of the truck. But it was moving—something inside the bag was alive and squirming around!

“Grant, look!” Christina cried. “Something’s moving in that bag!”

“My missing penguin?” Grant whispered.

Dr. Orlav parked the Hagglund in front of a dormitory he called Hotel California. He helped his guests unload their luggage. As Grant grabbed his backpack, a piece of paper flew out.



*Another Mirage in the Icy Desert?*

Stay away from  
the penguins!  
They are off limits!

Grant showed the note to Christina. “Is someone upset I noticed a missing penguin?” he asked, concern in his big blue eyes.

“We’ll see,” Christina replied.

