

MEAD AND STU TALK ABOUT PENGUINS

A 10-minute play
by Rom Watson

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Cast of Characters

MEAD: Male, 30's to 50's, slightly smarter than Stu.

STU: Male, 30's to 50's, Mead's friend since childhood.

CASEY: Male, Stu's nephew.

Place

Los Angeles, CA

Time

The present

At Rise: STU enters, focused on his phone. MEAD enters from the opposite direction.

MEAD

Hey Stu.

STU

Hey. I need your advice. My sister wants me to talk to my nephew about sex.

MEAD

Why you?

STU

Because he's got no father and because I've known the kid his whole life.

MEAD

Good luck. Those conversations are always awkward.

STU

Especially since I don't know what to tell him.

MEAD

Why not? You get lucky sometimes.

STU

Yeah, but just because I've had sex doesn't mean I know how to talk about it. Besides, I've never had gay sex.

MEAD

This kid is gay?

STU

Yeah, I think so. I mean, I don't know for sure because he's never talked about it, but ever since he was five years old I just had a feeling he would grow up to be gay.

MEAD

Get Manny to talk to him. Or Victor.

STU

No, my sister said it has to be a relative.

MEAD

What about your grandfather?

STU

She said he's too pervy.

MEAD

I've met your grandfather. I think she's right. So what are you gonna tell him?

STU

I bought a book and downloaded it to my phone. I thought I'd read it to Casey, and then answer his questions.

(He shows MEAD his phone.)

What do you think?

MEAD

(Squinting at the screen.)

Oh, I've heard about this book. No, you don't wanna read him this one.

STU

Why not? It's got pictures. Pretty pictures. And penguins. Everybody likes penguins.

MEAD

Yeah, but this book doesn't tell the whole story. I read about these penguins. The real ones.

STU

You mean it's based on a true story?

MEAD

Oh yeah. You can't make this stuff up.

STU

So what happened?

MEAD

Well, the book tells how these two male penguins fell in love, and did all the mating rituals with each other, but since neither of them could lay an egg, they tried to hatch an egg-shaped rock.

STU

I had no idea penguins were so stupid.

MEAD

They're as dumb as the rock they tried to hatch.

STU

What happened then?

MEAD

The people at the zoo where they lived, gave them an egg to hatch.

STU

Where did they get it from?

MEAD

From . . .another penguin couple who gave it up for adoption.

STU

Ohhh.

MEAD

So then they hatched it, and a baby penguin came out and they raised it.

STU

(A slight pause as the story sinks in.)

That's a good story.

MEAD

But the book doesn't tell what happened AFTER that. See, the next year, they lost their nest.

STU

How?

MEAD

Uh . . .gentrification. And when they lost their nest they drifted apart. So then, one of them hooked up with a female penguin and they made an egg of their own. When that egg hatched, they had a daughter, and when she grew up, guess what.

STU

What?

MEAD

She hooked up with a female penguin.

STU

(Gasps.)

Wait. A homosexual penguin and a bisexual penguin and a Lesbian penguin in the same family?

MEAD

It happens.

STU

Wow. Why isn't that in the book?

MEAD

Because society thinks everything is either black or white, gay or straight, male or female. They don't want people to know the truth.

STU

What truth?

MEAD

That everything is on a spectrum.

(STU ponders if he should ask the meaning of the word "spectrum." He decides to look it up.)

STU

(As he types on his phone.)

S, p, e, c, t, r . . .

MEAD

(Not listening to STU.)

Gender is on a spectrum, sexuality is on a spectrum, race . . . politics . . . pain.

STU

(Reading his phone.)

"A continuum of color." Oh, a rainbow.

MEAD

Yeah, like a rainbow.

STU

Mead, you gotta talk to Casey with me.

MEAD

I've never had gay sex either.

STU

I know, but I need help.

MEAD

You're on your own this time pal. I don't know how to talk to kids about sex.

STU

You don't have to. I'll tell him about sex. But you gotta tell him about the spectrum.

MEAD

Why can't you tell him?

STU

I won't remember.

MEAD

I can believe that.

STU

I can't do this alone. Promise me you will help.

MEAD

If I do this you will owe me.

STU

I will owe you big time.

MEAD

Okay. I promise.

STU

Thank you.

(Slight pause.)

MEAD

So how old is this kid?

STU

Twenty-three.

MEAD

What!?!

STU

(Speaking louder.)

I said, he's twenty-three.

MEAD

Stu, I heard you. But if he's twenty-three he's already had sex.

STU

You don't know that. Maybe he's a late bloomer.

MEAD

Well, he is related to you.

STU

What's that supposed to mean?

MEAD

Forget it. So when do we talk to this guy?

STU

He should be here any minute.

MEAD

What?! Now?

STU

Yeah, that's why I asked you to meet me here.

MEAD

So you tricked me into helping you.

STU

(Smiling and nodding.)

Uh huh. Here he comes now.

(STU looks offstage and waves. CASEY enters.)

STU (CONT'D)

Hi Casey.

CASEY

Hi Uncle Stu.

STU

This is my friend Mead.

CASEY

Hi.

MEAD

Hey.

Thanks for meeting me. STU

What's up? CASEY

I . . . WE need to talk to you. STU

About what? CASEY

Important stuff. Stuff about . . . STU

(He looks at MEAD for help, but MEAD is silent.)

Yeah? CASEY

About . . . how a penguin falls in love with another penguin. And how they do mating rituals. STU

You can do mating rituals with anyone you want. As long as they consent. MEAD

Right. And sometimes two penguins can make an egg, but sometimes they can't make an egg. STU

But that's okay. Because you can always adopt an egg. MEAD

Just make sure it's not a rock. STU

And you gotta hatch it together. But you won't know if it's a Lesbian until it grows up. MEAD

Well, sometimes you know. And when it hatches, you have to love it. Even if it's as dumb as a rock. STU

And if you lose your nest, don't drift apart. MEAD

STU

Yeah, don't let gentrification make you bisexual. Not if you don't want to be.

MEAD

Because sexuality is on a spectrum.

STU

"A continuum of color."

MEAD

So you can be what you already are.

STU

You can be any kind of penguin you want to be. Even though society doesn't want to know the truth.

MEAD

Love is like a rainbow.

STU

And pain is like a rainbow.

MEAD

And we're all on a spectrum.

STU

A spectrum of love and pain and sex.

(A pause as CASEY tries to figure out what they're talking about.)

CASEY

Is this about me being gay?

STU

No. I'm teaching you about sex.

CASEY

You? Teaching ME about sex?

(CASEY laughs, for an extended period of time.)

STU

It's not that funny.

MEAD

He has had sex, you know.

CASEY

I've seen the women he's dated. Each and every one, a skank.

STU

They had good personalities.

CASEY

Hah! And how come I've never seen you with the same woman more than once?

STU

I . . .specialize in one-night stands.

CASEY

Specialize? You mean none of them want to sleep with you a second time.

STU

You don't have to say it like that.

MEAD

In Stu's defense, he has to wear a sleep apnea machine at night. So he looks like Bane and sounds like Darth Vader.

STU

Even women who like sci-fi don't want to wake up next to Darth Vader.

CASEY

What made you guys think you could teach me anything about sex?

MEAD

Hey! It wasn't our idea.

CASEY

What? Oh no, my MOM put you up to this?

STU

She's worried about you. She knows you're old enough to be sexually active, and she wants to make sure you use protection.

CASEY

I do. You can tell her not to worry.

MEAD

I told you he's already had sex.

CASEY

I've probably had more sex than the two of you combined.

MEAD

You don't have to rub it in. Geez. You are harsh.

CASEY

I am not harsh, I am . . . (Perhaps he strikes a pose.) . . .fierce.

STU

Being fierce doesn't mean you get to be rude.

CASEY

I'm sorry. Uncle Stu, Mead, . . .I appreciate your attempt at sex education.

STU

Thank you.

MEAD

Apology accepted.

STU

Casey, do you have any tips for us on how to be more popular with women?

CASEY

Well, you could both use a makeover.

STU

Yes! Will you give us makeovers?

CASEY

Hmm . . .it won't be easy, but . . .yeah, okay. I love a good challenge.

STU

Thank you!

MEAD

Can you make us look sexy?

CASEY

I . . .can get you somewhere on the spectrum of sexiness.

STU

That's all we ask. You hear that, Mead? We're gonna be on the spectrum!

(Blackout. End of play.)