



MR. PENGUIN

AND

THE CATASTROPHIC CRUISE



ALEX T. SMITH

CHAPTER ONE

ALL ABOARD THE SAUCY SANDRA!



There was a sudden, loud, and VERY hearty PAAAAAAAAAAAAARPPPP!

Edith Hedge stood with Gordon, her pigeon, on her head and her hands on her belt bag. She took a great big sniff.

“Smell that, Mr. Penguin?” she cried, her eyes watering slightly. “Isn’t it wonderful!”

Now, before I get into trouble, the PARP wasn't THAT sort of PARP, you dirty scoundrels. Edith was actually taking a sniff of the fresh, blustery sea smell sweeping in briskly across the docks and shimmying up her nostrils. This PARP had actually come from one of the ships lined up on the Cityville shoreline. The PARP meant: "HURRY UP, WE HAVE TO GO!"

Edith looked around. (Her pigeon, Gordon, didn't. He was busy looking at his feet, wondering what they were.)

"Mr. Penguin?" said Edith. "Where are you?"

Then she spotted him.

He was waddling very slowly through the crowds of excited onlookers gathered to wave the shiny ship off. His Adventurer's satchel



was slung across his body as always, but he was also lugging a great traveling trunk behind him that was at least three times his size and about eighteen times as heavy.

Mr. Penguin was wearing armbands on his flippers, a large inner tube around his belly, and a very worried expression on his face.

“I am not sure about ANY of this,” he grumbled.

Edith rolled her eyes and refastened her belt bag firmly under her bosom.

“Now, Mr. Penguin, we’ve been through this,” she said in a kindly, but also a no-nonsense sort of a voice. “I *know* you don’t like water and I *know* you can’t swim, and I *know* you like being nice and warm and dry, but you can’t ALWAYS stay at home in your igloo. You have to go out and SEE things with your eyeholes. And besides,” Edith paused to fuss with the collar of her parka, “we all need a nice holiday—it’s been nonstop adventures for some time now.”

And, oh boy, had it!

There had been the Museum Adventure, the Mountain Adventure, and just the other day there had been the short but thrilling Mr. Penguin Getting His Head Stuck Inside a Wellington Boot Adventure, which had rapidly turned into the Fire Brigade Being Called Adventure, but I'll tell you all about that another time.

“And,” continued Edith, “we are here to support Colin.”

At the mention of his name, Colin—
Mr. Penguin's right-hand spider—skittered his way wild-eyed through the crowds, past his friends, wagging a glitzy invitation in one hand and his trusty notepad in the other.

