

Mr. Penguin and the Lost Treasure

Alex T. Smith

Alex T. Smith, Illustrator

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In Alex T. Smith's amusing *Mr. Penguin and the Lost Treasure*, a penguin sets up shop as a professional adventurer and receives his first case—but it is more than he bargained for.

Mr. Penguin has just launched his business when he gets a call from a local museum. They want him to search for hidden treasure. With Colin, his spider assistant, Mr. Penguin sets off for the museum and begins his search. The museum owner has found a clue in the armpit of a stuffed walrus: "X MARKS THE SPOT." Before long, the two quirky leads, accompanied by the museum owner and her brother, are on a surprising, twisting, and dangerous quest.

The plot is full of turns, though the central pursuit for the missing treasure is approached in a straightforward way. The museum basement is a cavernous fantasy land full of the unexpected. The search starts out in a secret stairwell crawling with insects and soon leads to a jungle with a river full of alligators, where a dangerous waterfall covers a hidden cave. The threat of jewel thieves finding the treasure first adds a sense of urgency to the already entertaining story.

Mr. Penguin is delightful. He fancies himself a serious adventurer, but in practice, he would much rather just have peace and quiet to enjoy his lunch. Colin, on the other hand, is a tough little arachnid; more than once, he breaks out his formidable kung fu skills to assist.

Illustrations show the characters engaged in a variety of outlandish activities. They are rendered in black, white, and orange and are whimsical and silly, capturing the energy of the story beautifully.

Mr. Penguin and the Lost Treasure is a fun and funny adventure.

CATHERINE THURESON (March/April 2019)

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