

The Penguin's Secret Friend



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On a wide white world of ice, where the wind hums soft and low, lived a small round penguin named Percy. He wore a snug red scarf with white stripes, wrapped twice around his neck. Every evening, when the sun slid away, Percy waddled to his favorite spot and looked up. He loved the night sky more than anything. "So many stars," he whispered, "and all of them twinkling just for us."



Percy's little orange feet pattered over the frozen ground. His black back was sleek, his belly white as snow, and his amber eyes were round and bright. He knew every crack and bump of the ice by heart. Some cracks were thin as a hair. Some were wide and dark and deep. But Percy never felt lonely out here. The sky above him always felt like a friend.



One clear night, Percy noticed something new. Under a thin patch of ice, a soft turquoise light was glowing. It shimmered and pulsed, like a tiny heartbeat in the dark. Percy pressed his beak to the ice and peeked down. Something small and silvery darted away. "Hello?" Percy called gently. "Don't be scared. I'm only a penguin." The glow flickered, then hid behind a frozen ridge.



The next night, Percy came back with a gentle plan. He sat still and quiet by the thin ice, hardly moving a feather. He waited and waited. Then, slowly, a little fish swam close. Her body was silvery-blue and see-through, with shimmering scales and fins that glowed like tiny lamps. Her eyes were big and violet, and her mouth turned down in a shy frown.



"My name is Lumi," said the fish in a whispery voice. "I hide here because the ice feels safe." Percy smiled his warmest smile. "I'm Percy. Why do you hide?" Lumi's glow dimmed a little. "The world up there is so big," she said. "I have never seen it. I have only ever seen the dark water and the ice above me." Percy's heart gave a soft tug.



"Have you ever seen the night sky?" Percy asked. Lumi shook her shimmering fins. "Never," she said. "I hear the other fish talk about stars, but I am too scared to look. What if it is too bright? What if it is too far?" Percy thought for a moment. "The stars are bright," he said. "But they are friendly bright. They twinkle like little lanterns."



Lumi swam in a slow, nervous circle. Her tiny glowing freckles sparkled along her cheeks. "I want to see them," she whispered. "But the ice is thick, and I cannot jump. And I am afraid of what is up there." Percy looked at the smooth white ceiling above her. Then he looked at his own small orange feet. An idea began to wiggle in his mind, like a fish in a pond.



Percy waddled across the ice, searching carefully. He needed just the right spot. Near a tall snow mound, he found a small round hole where the ice was thin and clear. It was no bigger than a dinner plate. "This could work," he said to himself. "A little window for a little fish." He hurried back to Lumi, waddling as fast as his feet would go.



"Lumi!" Percy called. "I found a safe way for you to peek at the sky!" Lumi's violet eyes grew wide. "A safe way?" she asked. "How?" Percy explained the small hole in the ice, clear and round and close to the surface. "You can swim right up and look through it. You won't have to leave the water at all." Lumi's glow brightened just a little.



Lumi followed Percy through the dark water, staying close to his shadow on the ice above. Her soft turquoise glow lit the way like a tiny lantern. When they reached the hole, she stopped and floated still. "What if I don't like it?" she whispered. "What if it is too much?" Percy crouched beside the hole. "Then we will come right back," he said. "I will stay with you the whole time."



Lumi took a deep, watery breath. Slowly, slowly, she swam up to the round hole and lifted her round violet eyes. At first, she saw only black. Then, one by one, the stars blinked into view. They sparkled and twinkled across the whole wide sky. Lumi's glow flared bright turquoise, then brighter still. "Oh!" she gasped. "Oh, Percy, they are beautiful!"



Percy laughed out loud and clapped his flippers. "You did it!" he cheered. "You were brave!" Lumi spun a happy little circle under the ice. Her glowing spots sparkled like tiny stars of their own. "I was scared," she said, "but you stayed with me. That made me brave." They watched the sky together, one small penguin and one small fish, sharing the same secret window.



Night after night, Percy and Lumi met at the little hole. Percy named the brightest star, and Lumi named the softest one. Sometimes they counted until they lost track. Lumi's glow grew steady and sure, no longer hiding but shining with joy. "I am glad I peeked," she said. "The sky is big, but it is not scary. Not with a friend."



The other penguins noticed Percy's happy waddle and his extra-bright eyes. "What is your secret?" they asked. Percy just smiled and tapped his beak. "A secret friend," he said, "who is braver than she thinks." Under the ice, Lumi glowed warm and turquoise, listening. She had never felt so brave, and she had never felt so glad to be seen, even just a little.



So if you ever visit the wide white ice and see a small round penguin in a red striped scarf, look for a soft turquoise glow beneath him. Percy and Lumi still watch the night sky together. They learned that friendship can make a big world feel small and kind. Being brave does not mean you are not scared. It means you peek at the stars anyway, with a friend beside you.



And when the wind hums soft and low, and the stars begin to twinkle, Percy wraps his scarf a little tighter. Beside him, Lumi's glow dances on the ice like a tiny smiling moon. "Same time tomorrow?" Percy asks. "Same time tomorrow," Lumi whispers. And the night sky, wide and wonderful, twinkles down on two friends who found each other, and were brave together.