

SHARPE

LAMDA ACTING PROGRAMME 2020

GRADE SIX – CONTEMPORARY PIECE 1 (BOYS)

Chatroom by Enda Walsh

JIM: Right, well I'm six years old and my three brothers are going away with my mother for the weekend, a treat for something or other. My dad's staying behind and my mother says that he's to look after me. That it would be a chance for us to bond.

So they've gone, and me and my dad are sat at the kitchen table looking at each other. Like we're looking at each other for the first time, you know. He asks me what I want to do and straight away I say I want to go and see the penguins in the zoo. When I was six I was going through some mad penguin obsession. I used to dress up as a penguin at dinner times and always ask for fish fingers, stuff like that. If it wasn't penguins it was cowboys. Cowboys were cool. A penguin costumed as a cowboy was always a step too far, funnily enough.

So we go to the zoo and I wear my cowboy outfit, get my gun and holster, my hat and all that. We get the bus and it's sort of funny to see my dad on a bus and away from the house. We start to have this chat about when I was born and what a really fat baby I was, but how after a week or so I stopped eating any food and everyone was very worried. That he was very worried. That he was so happy when I got better and they could take me home.

We're in the zoo and I go straight to the penguins. Standing in my cowboy gear... looking at the penguins... having such a great chat to my dad on the bus... it was a perfect childhood day. He lets go of my hand and says he'll be back with my choc-ice. And he goes. He's gone. I'm happy looking at the penguins but it's an hour since he's left and I go to look for him. I'm walking about the zoo and I'm not worried yet. And I don't talk to anyone.

I leave the zoo and I go to the bus stop we got off at earlier. I get on the bus. I tell the driver my address. He asks where my parents are and I say they're at home waiting for me. I stay on the bus in the seat nearest the driver. After a while we end up at the end of our street and the driver says, 'So long, cowboy.' He was nice.

I get the key from under the mat and open the door and go inside the house. And I'm alone there. I take off my cowboy clothes and hang up my hat and holster. It being Saturday night I have a bath and get into my

pyjamas because my dad would have liked that. I have a glass of milk and some biscuits and watch Stars in Their Eyes 'cause that was his favourite programme on the telly. It's getting dark outside and I start to worry. The house is feeling too big so I get my quilt and take it into the bathroom and lock the bathroom door and it feels safer with the door locked so I stay in there.

And he's not coming back. He's never coming back. I stay there for two days.