

Shivering from the cold, Harrison stood naked, waiting in a frigid chamber to transform. Though Harrison knew he would be suited for the climate in a matter of minutes, it didn't make the feeling of the cold any more tolerable at the present time. It was a bit jarring to be standing in a chamber inside an arctic research station, the only point of entry for those wishing to partake in nanite transformation towards arctic species. A rarely used waystation, but something that saw use here and there, particularly for polar bear changes.

His wife, Katherine, was already changed and out in the arctic, as much as Harrison was aware. It was a simple logistical issue that prevented one of the pivotal moments of their lives not to occur together, something that was not preferable. Though for ill or poor, she was already out there, an emperor penguin now, and he would join and find her soon enough. And, though it would be his wedded wife, Harrison did find some modicum of receive knowing he would experience certain aspects of the change on his own and not to worry about his love's teases!

The nanites, already in his system, were to work their magic rather quickly, thankfully. The first thing was that his mouth instantly felt numb, lips thickening and the skin underneath pushing them away to leave his lips to dissolve into nothing. Seeing the orange skin in front of his face was a little jarring, but he figured it would be something he'd have to get used to. Besides, in his mind, having a break was far better than lips!

Being penguins, even for a short time, was not a usual option even for those seeking nanite technology to transform. Yet, it was something Harrison and his wife wanted, a bizarre choice, but something they couldn't deny being the only option for them. A love of birds, the outdoors, and a lack of being able to have kids as humans were all factors. It was a faithful meeting at the zoo one afternoon, in front of the emperor penguin exhibit, that really made it perfect for the two in celebration of their union.

"Can't beeeeeerrve I'm groooooeering a reeeekkk!" Harrison tried to say for the last time with human words. He honestly wasn't expecting to lose his voice so soon into the transformation, but that seemed to be the case, and he would still be able to understand himself once the changes had taken his voice from him entirely.

<Testing, Testing...Damn, this is different!> Harrison declared, clicking his beak open and playing with the changed vocal cords he now seemed to possess. But there was something to be said for hearing the same chirps and clicks that a penguin could make, only for his brain to be converting them into human speech. The nanite technology was amazing, indeed!

Reaching up to touch it while he still had fingers, Harrison was surprised at the smooth texture, having never felt anything similar before. It was then the tingling started to play over his hands, and Harrison was made aware that his digits were the next things to go, elongating and

stiffening and losing their outer surface for a layer of fuzz. Cracks resonated through his arms, and Harrison was compelled to lower them down to his sides in preparation for the changes to come. First, the fingers melted together like wax, Harrison unable to move them one last time no matter how much he might have preferred to. Then, the skin started to thicken, short black feathers itching the surface as they poked their way through. Light pops and cracks resonated through what were formerly arms and were now on their way to becoming flippers, flattened to his sides as Harrison smacked them in frustration at their lack of mobility. One of the more frustrating aspects of being a penguin, indeed!

Next came a dizzying sensation of shrinking, one that he knew was coming but not one he was prepared to experience firsthand. Though he was on the larger end for bird species, he needed to shrink down somewhere between 43-47 cm in height, not an easy feat to endure. Still, his body managed it, much of the size lost in his legs as he tried his best to stand steady. Not that penguins needed much help to get up after falling over, but it wouldn't do Harrison any good to fall flat on his beak mid-change!

Harrison was quickly distracted from the disorientation by his skin prickling rapidly, preparing for its penguin plumage. Of course, Harrison lacked the ability to scratch, though it was a moot point since there was really nothing he could do to stop the formation of oily feathers over his form. They were a much-needed adaptation for his new life, though being covered from belly to head in them was a little uncomfortable against still-human skin. The damn things were so oily! They needed to be, for sure, but it was a little disconcerting to have them laying so tightly on his skin.

Next, the tingling of nanite activity found it fit to change his legs, the cracking and popping of bone and tendons resonating painlessly through his body. Harrison was thankful for such, not wanting the process to be painful as he was literally about to lose his legs. It felt as though they were steadily being robbed from him, the tissue comprising them literally being digested by the nanites to form the stubby appendages of an emperor penguin. Though they were a little longer than he might have expected on sight, they were soon hard to see from the ankle up, given the spreading of thickened feathers. Several layers of covering filled up his skin, making it impossible for cold air to seep in. Though, even from his perspective, it was hard to tell, given how stuck together they seemed to be. All part of a penguin's plumage, designed to keep them warm in the coldest of weather. They really were insane birds, it seemed! Though perhaps it was Harrison and Katherine who were the insane ones...

One change he was looking forward to started in his belly as a swelling of his gut, the fat seeming to decrease in mass but rather becoming more compact like blubber. Always on the larger side, especially in recent years, Harrison was happy for the loss of his human fat for penguin blubber, something that was not only welcome but expected. He needed it to survive in

the arctic, and there was no way his wife could tease him about his beer belly when the blubber was par for the course of being a penguin!

At this point, the only remnants of his former humanity were his head and feet, though they were soon to be robbed of him. Harrison was hardly in a place to mind, rather elated by the prospects of change and all they were to bring him. He wanted nothing more at the moment than to feel his toes lengthen, thick skin forming between them, and claws clicking against the steel of the floor as the flattened appendages adequately supported his still-decreasing weight. His head compacted, becoming sleek and streamlined into the beak that had thus far absorbed his mouth and nose. Ears, too, were taken from him, though the minute holes left largely seemed to detect auditory stimuli as much as he was already used to. His skull was now much smaller, though intelligence was kept intact even with a penguin-sized brain. It was one boon of the process to experience such a form from a human perspective, the whole reason they would ever think to partake in the experience, to begin with.

Harrison took a few moments after the nanite activity died down to really feel what would be his new body for the next several months. His center of balance was low enough that he found standing rather comfortable. It would have to be if he was to be doing so while sleeping! It was walking that left him particularly unsure, not wanting to try it if it would mean him falling over. Given his compact stature and minute leg length, Harrison found he was only able to waddle rather embarrassingly forward, though fought through it to try to save face.

Form complete, Harrison was prompted to wobble out of the facility once the door was open for him. The cold no longer bothered him as he worried it might, but rather felt comfortable. His compact feathers, short stubby legs, and overall structure really kept the cold out. Above all, he was eager to get into the water, something that his species excelled in living, especially as he soon found traveling on land to be rather arduous. It took a lot of energy to make it across the frozen ground, far slower than the human him would have managed. What he wouldn't give for human legs! Well, save the fact that they would have frozen by this point, but still...

After walking for what felt like an exceptionally long time, Harrison's rather acute eyesight spotted something in the distance that caught his fancy. It was a tall, thick blubbery shape, much like himself. That had to be his wife, right? Wouldn't she have stayed relatively close in order for Harrison to find her?

<Hey honey! What's a sexy bird like you doing in a place like this?> Harrison said, thinking that his wife would get a chuckle from the cheesy line. She always did, after all. Yet, to his dismay, there was no response, making him a little confused. It was rather windy, though, so perhaps she just hadn't heard him?

<Hey, chickie, going my way? How's about you come back to my place and make sweet sweet awkward egg making?> Harrison tried again, moving closer to his wife, though the bird only then turned to him and made a deep clicking that translated to his brain as <Hello! Hello!>

<Why did you waddle all the way out here? You could have met me at the compound!> Harrison called out with a series of squeaks, ones that attracted the attention of his love. Her voice, as best as he could tell, was female, though it sounded nothing like what he would have anticipated it to be. But it had to be her. There were no other penguins this close to the base. Right?

Not giving it another thought, Harrison came up to his wife, trying his best to wrap one flipper around her in a very human gesture of love. <We can go down to the bay, have some fish, make a little love, what do you say, toots?> Harrison said, treating his wife in the joking manner that she was used to. Though Katherine moaned when he treated her that way, he knew she liked it deep down, understanding her husband was a big goofball at the end of the day.

With that, Harrison carried on rubbing against his wife, who seemed a little taken aback by the actions. She wasn't turning away, not really. But her response was a little out of the ordinary, as though she hadn't quite gotten used to being a bird yet. Did the nanites maybe mess up with her change? Harrison felt a bit of fear over the implication.

Yet, before he could reflect on it further, a more familiar-sounding voice squawked out in defiance. Though the voice itself did not register, the tone certainly struck home, and there was no denying who it was yelling at him. <What are you doing with that hussy?> Katherine called out, and the moment he realized that he was flirting with a real bird, Harrison pulled back, falling over his feet and struggling with some effort to get up. He was quite the spectacle, though his only audience seemed not in the mood for his awkward antics. Even with his face in the snow, Harrison had the ability to see her waddling towards him, looking as mad as a penguin possibly could. She did not look as awkward as Harrison felt, as though she had already mastered the way to waddle menacingly. And it was taking Harrison everything he had just to stand back up!

<It's not what it looks like! I thought she was you! I didn't think there would be another penguin out here!> Harrison tried to defend himself. There was little to be done for it, given what she had caught him doing. How stupid was he to not realize that his wife would have responded!? Surely, Katherine thought the same thing. What a way to start off on the wrong flipper with their new lives!

<Honey, you've been talking to a real penguin for the last twenty minutes! What the hell do you mean you couldn't tell the difference!?!> Katherine demanded, and Harrison was hit with a wave of shame. Not his best moment, to be sure.

Eventually able to get back up on his feet, Harrison waddled back in her direction, trying his best to wrap a fin around his wife and call upon his trademarked humor. <Uhhh...I thought it was you! I didn't see any other lovely penguins...until I saw you waddle so adorably toward me!> He said, hoping his usual sappiness would have the desired effect.

With those words, Kathrine stopped dead, a questioning look on her penguin features. <Don't...you mean it?>

Harrison, feeling ashamed of his mistake, wished to try and recover as best as he could.<YES! You are beautiful girl! Oh, my lovely poochie smoochy! You look perfect!>

<You really think so?> Katherine questioned, seeming to squawk her appeasement.

Seeing his opening, Harrison moved in to preen and began smooching her body. <Hmmm! More than perfect! Now bend over my love, let me show you how good it will be!>

Waddling up to him and standing face to face, extending her head and neck upward, Katherine prompted Harrison to mirror it in instinctual penguin fashion <Mmmm! like this?>

<Oh yeah! now let me...GAH!> Harrison called out, feeling something pecking the back of his neck as he turned around to the first penguin, who was still interested in the pair.

<Hey you! This is a private zone! Scram!> He called out, despite his earlier advances towards the penguin who he thought was his love.

<Let's just get out of here, babe> Katherine clucked, and the two turned to leave.

Still, it seemed as though the other penguin would have none of this. Her calls of <FRIEND! FISH!> persisted well in their ears even as the pair went to waddle away.

It took some time for them to get far enough away, and, eventually, there were no other penguins in eyesight, as best as the pair they could tell. <Alright! All this walking got me more in the mood!> Harrison said, not bothering to hold back his desire in front of his love and the future mother of his chicks. After all, for them, it was part of the appeal of being penguins in the first place. Animals did what they when did they wanted to, no work, no worries, just sex, and fun!

<Same here, babe! Come on!> Katherine replied, getting up to him and raising her neck once more, what she was understanding was a penguin's intention of courtship.

Harrison was eager to reply by making the same gesture, mirroring his love as his instincts seemed to dictate. <Aaaand now...GAH! fuck!> He called out, staring into the eyes of another penguin they had apparently missed, one who was staring back while preening its own feathers.

<These guys really need to learn privacy. Is it not in their vocabulary!?!> Harrison called out frustrated, sexually and otherwise.

<Come on babe, it's just a penguin. It's not like they don't all fuck in the colonies they live in,> Katherine said, frustrated in her own right.

<Hun, you wouldn't even let the dog into our bed when we made love. GO! Scram!> Harrison yelled out, though it seemed the larger bird was having none of it.

With that, the pair waddled away, Katherine huffing her frustration all the while. To their delight, mostly Harrison's, the penguin didn't follow, allowing them the privacy they so desperately wanted.

Taking a stance for the third time, neither newly changed penguin noticed the hole in the ice until a new penguin popped out with a hole, a mouthful of fish in his wake.

<Oh, come on!> Harrison called out, and the pair was prompted to walk away once more.

It seemed, in all of their wanderings, there would not be a place they could get away from their new brethren. Harrison finally decided to relent his stubbornness, accepting the fact there was no place for them to make love without being spotted. Katherine was at the end of her rope with him, though was thankful when he finally decided to allow them to make love for the first time as penguins. Of course, Harrison figured in hindsight that he should have allowed himself to have sex in front of the first penguin, not on a beach with hundreds all waddling around. It was mating season, after all, their choice of time to change keeping that in mind, wanting to start their family as soon as possible. And, with all of the other penguins engaged in courtship behaviors, it was hardly out of the norm for the pair of them to make love on the beach, having already found their perfect mates.

Yet, before their lifted heads had mirrored each other, the sound of a loud <MATE?!> hit their ears, followed by a dropped pebble beside her. Such was a gesture of penguin courtship, and Harrison immediately felt the blood rush to his head.

<Hey hey hey! Back off! She's *mine!*> Harrison yelled, inflating his chest and angrily waddling towards the suitor to try to drive him off.

Yet, Katherine's reaction was not to feel anger, but rather boisterous laughter at Harrison's outburst. <What? He was trying to get with you! You wouldn't let a dumb bird->

<Well, he *did* offer me a pebble! Where's your pebble, dear?> Katherine laughed, rocking back and forth in a decidedly un-penguin-like way.

<Fine, geez, I'll get you a fucking pebble. I'll get the best damn pebble of the whole fucking beach...> Harrison muttered, waddling off to do just that. At least he had the instincts to try and find a large, smooth one, as much as he didn't need to do so to win his wife's affections. Still, it was par for the course for their new lives, and they realistically had all the time in the world to have sex, safe on the penguin-dominated beach as they were.

Finding what he figured was the perfect pebble, Harrison waddled over towards Katherine, only to see that she was being surrounded by several more males, all yelling <MATE? MATE?> in that same obnoxious tone. Feeling annoyed at this point, Harrison waddled toward his would-be-rivals with new levels of expertise. Harrison managed to reach up and slap them, receiving angry cries of outrage from the males before they eventually moved back, taking the hint from a male that, while not necessarily larger, was healthier and more aggressive towards this female than they ever would be.

What he was not expecting to happen was for Katherine to slap him back, hitting him square in the center of his beak and making Harrison squawk in his surprise. <Stop that! You're being rude! You can't slap every penguin on the beach away just cause they are flirting with me! What, do you think I'm going to fuck them or something?!> Katherine yelled at him, enraged.

<What!? They started it!> Harrison called out, trying to reach up and rub his beak, though unable to with his flippers.

<Yeah? And you finished it!> Katherine declared, though there was no need to maintain her ire. After all, her husband's jealousy had the appreciated impact of clearing their little corner of the beach just in time for the pair to consummate their new lives as penguins. *Finally*, they could get down to the business at hand, the thing they had most waited for weeks before the actual change.

Once more, the pair assumed penguin mating position, their lust for each other at its apex. Feeling the instinct to bend over, Katherine looked back, expecting look on penguin features.
<Alright my love, put it in me!>

<Of course my love, let me just...WHERE THE FUCK IS IT!?!> Harrison squawked out, looking down at his body with some alarm. He was aroused as hell, but there was nothing happening, no penis entering his wife's folds even as he pushed forward with his body in its current state.

<What?> Katherine asked, not at all alarmed by the development.

<My best friend from down there! My magnificent rod! My pride and joy maker! My dick! My penis!> Harrison said, running through the gambit of names he could think of for his maleness.

<Oh yeah, you have a cloaca now,> Katherine said, like it was the most normal thing in the world.

<Oh no, I'm a girl?! They fucked it up!> Harrison yelled, obviously oblivious to the reality of his new penguin anatomy.

Lost in his terror over the perceived slight, he was not expecting his penguin wife to get up, nor the feeling of her flipper hitting the side of his head. <Would you stop! You don't have a dick anymore! We rub them together! Didn't you do *ANY* research!>

<You don't have to deal with losing your favorite body part...> Harrison replied, feeling dejected.

<What are you on about?! I had to lose my BREASTS!>

<OH...oh...yeah...>

Shortly afterward, the pair found themselves in the throes of passion, rubbing their cloacas together in what felt like perfect harmony. Harrison was happily humping away, oblivious to the world around him as Katherine edged him on.

<Oh yeah, baby, fuck me like an *animal*,> She managed to moan, though was huffing in an incoherent series of caws as Harrison rubbed against her with passion. Though it had taken a little while to find his rhythm, as it were, once he had, the pleasure was more than he was expecting, even surpassing the lack of an actual phallus. He was still a little unsure he was a proper male, though his coloration soon removed those concerns from his being. And, given that the nanites within their systems made them horny as hell, mostly for reproductive purposes, the sex seemed better than anything he could recall in his entire life!

<Oh yeah, I'm your animal...I'm your penguin...so close...gonna put an egg in you...oh fuck!> Harrison called out, nearing the end of reaching his first avian orgasm.

Yet, even in his lust-fueled haze, Harrison wasn't able to fully block out the sounds of other penguins on the beach, squawking at the top of their lungs. To Harrison, it sounded like they were shouting something akin to <DANGER!> <RUN AWAY!> <BAD! BAD!> though it was often hard to translate penguin squawks to human speech. Still, the tone of their words was not lost, and Katherine, on the other side, was able to see the water and the danger coming towards them. It was a massive sea lion, one of only two predators of their new species.

At that, Katherine tried to crawl away, her position awkward and her fear real as one of the last penguins on the beach to react to the hungry predator. Though the nanites in their veins would recover some damage if they were attacked, they could not bring them back from the dead if the sea lion was inclined to deliver a killing blow. It would not do to be killed on the first day of their new lives!

Yet, it seemed as though her sense of survival was not shared <Babe! Babe! Run!> She tried to call out, but Harrison was having none of it, still humping away and leaving her stuck and trying to get up as best she could. Either he was oblivious to the danger, or he really was insane to allow a predator to come so close to them!

<Fuck, I'm about to Climaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhh!> Harrison called out, and Katherine could feel the rush of semen getting onto her leg as she struggled to get up and waddle away. The predator was close now, with most of the other penguins having scattered and making the pair its obvious target. Though they were scrambling for their lives, and the beast wasn't much more agile on land than they were, it was gaining, moving past the beach and onto the ice that Harrison and Katherine had waddled across to get there. They couldn't turn around, though it felt like the beast's breath was on their necks. Any misstep would surely leave them in the jaws of the beast. It was as though their very short lives as penguins were flashing before their eyes before they even got to live them.

And then...

A loud *crack* echoed in their ears as a startled cry rang out, followed by a splash. Deciding it was worth the risk, the pair looked back in unison to see the surprising sight of their pursuer having fallen through the ice, an area that was particularly thin enough that the weight of the animal did it in. Yet, instead of being pulled under the water, it seemed as though the sea lion was stuck, the ice around him not as brittle. Even that would have been sufficient to save them, but the turn of events, in their adrenaline-fueled rush, could only make them feel like...

<HAHAHAHAHA! SUCK IT! SUCK MY NON-EXISTENT DICK!> Harrison yelled out, waddling up to the sea lion as it barked and yelled. The nanites didn't see it fit to translate the cries of other species, though he was sure it was yelling expletives. Regardless, the animal was stuck, helpless, a fitting punishment for the crime of daring to endanger their lives.

Figuring it was too funny an opportunity to pass up, Harrison waddled all the way up to the creature, looking it in its angry eye before lifting a fin and starting to slap the beast silly, much to Katherine's fright. <What the hell are you doing?! Get away from that thing!> She called out, torn between aiding her husband and getting away herself. But as the moments passed and the beast continued its angry cries, it didn't seem as though Harrison was in any immediate danger, even as he slapped the sea lion silly.

It seemed as though the other penguins thought the same, given their response to their cohort's reaction. Rather than escape, they all started to squawk and run up to the sea lion, laughing and slapping him over and over as the sea lion tried desperately to break free. For better or for worse, Harrison was being seen as some sort of leader over the animals, one that they were eager to mimic.

It seemed, danger or no, that their lives as penguins would be interesting, indeed...

Some months later, Harrison was sitting on the beach where they'd first made love, egg carefully underfoot. It had been two months since his wife had returned to the sea, about the average time it took penguin females to recuperate after laying an egg. It seemed a little unfair in Harrison's eyes to have to wait and babysit the egg while his wife got to be out in the world exploring life as a penguin. However, the two of them had agreed to live their lives as instincts dictated. And, as Katherine had put it, <You didn't have an egg the size of a basketball coming out your cloaca! Considered yourself lucky!> She was exaggerating about the size, of course, though in relation to her form, it might as well have been.

The transfer of the egg from mother to father itself had been a harrowing experience. Oftentimes, first-time penguin parents failed to successfully get off the egg and have the male get on, the egg easily able to roll away to be dropped or crack and break, killing the chick within. Though thankfully, human intellect and animal instincts prevailed, and they were able to keep their egg safe in the transfer. Once Harrison had it in his specifically designed brood pouch, Katherine was off to feed with the other females in the colony, promising to be back as soon as her instincts dictated. And one of the facts Harrison *had* bothered to read was that the incubation period could be as long as two months!

And so, Harrison was left on the beach with all the other males, huddling together and not leaving their eggs for anything. Harrison was bored as hell for the first little while, wanting to explore ocean life with his wife as they had in their first few weeks. The elements weren't too bad for the most part, though the last angry blasts of winter did strike them on more than one occasion. They were, at least, able to huddle together with the eggs. Instincts aside, no force on earth could prompt Harrison to leave his egg, having both penguin instinct and human desire to have this first child at the behest of his wife. Not being able to eat, too, was inconvenient, and hunger struck him to no end. The urge to sit on his egg and keep it warm surpassed all necessities to go out and get food. That, and the nanites in his system prevented him from losing too much weight, as male penguins could lose much of their reserves during the incubation process. Still, there was no denying that it sucked to be the male in this situation.

Finally, it happened. One day, warmer than most in recent memory, the sensation of the egg moving under him prompted Harrison to grow in excitement. He wanted desperately to get off the egg, though instinct and human common sense told him that would kill his progeny. So, with that in mind, he was prompted to wait the two-three days it would take for his egg to hatch. He kept it underneath him for its own dear life, not wanting anything to happen to his chick. Even as the eggshell cracked, Harrison was careful not to move away, not wanting to expose his chick to the cold lest it die from exposure. Their first offspring would stay under his belly fat until it was time for it to take its first steps.

Yet, sometime after he presumed the chick had fully hatched, the pride he felt at his chick's movement was soon put into question as the sensation of something sucking on a growth in his pouch made him confused. An alien feeling of fluid draining from the protrusion made him shiver, as what had to be a tiny beak started to suck down on it. His chick was feeding like on a nipple but...one on his body? Wasn't he a bird? And, more to the point...

<Oh shit, I AM a chick! Wait, HA!> Harrison called out, the pun not lost to him. It seemed as though his audience, the other penguins, didn't share the same sentiment, lacking a human sense of humor.

It took a few moments for Harrison to come to terms with what his body was doing. Of course, he had to be able to feed his chick without its mother around and without moving away himself. Did he actually have some milk-producing nipple under his belly pouch to keep his chick fed? Surely, that was the case, but...<Damn, I really *do* have to do everything!>

Five days after the birth of their chick, Harrison found himself getting worried. After all, Katherine was supposed to be back at any time. Some of the other mothers had returned already, leaving Harrison nervous that something might have happened to her. Every time one of the mothers returned, Harrison looked at them, hoping it was Katherine, but the calls were never articulate enough to be his wife. There were infinite dangers in the ocean, after all. Even if she had the advantage of nanite repair, it would not fix being eaten by an orca. What if...what if...

It was then the familiar call of his wife hit his ears, and Harrison felt himself burn with elation. <Honey? I'm back! Where are you?> she called out, the articulation of her words leaving no doubt as to who it was.

<Smoochy Poochie! Over here!> Harrison called out, staring eagerly at the waddling form of his love. She looked at him with love in her eyes, and as she approached, her beak moved in for what looked like a kiss. Just as he was opening his beak, however, Katherine opened hers, dropping a pile of pre-chewed fish into his mouth, almost making Harrison gag. Yet, soon understanding what she was doing, Harrison took the disgusting taste and texture of the fish and stepped back, looking down at the bundle of fluff they had made together. It was crying out with its mouth open and obviously waiting for food, which Harrison was evidently supposed to provide. Doing his best not to vomit anything further, Harrison dumped the load into his chick's mouth, who swallowed greedily with the hunger of an animal that had literally never eaten anything in its life thus far.

<Urp! Urp! Gah...ok...ok done! Argh! Ew! Ew! Ew! Done!> He managed, disgusted by the act.

<Hey, I was the one who went fishing, do you know how hard that is?! Not to mention having to hold it in for over an hour before I got here. So no complaining! YOU just had to hatch it, I pushed it out! Do you know how painful it was? Very,> Katherine said, as though what she had done was not disgusting in the slightest.

<Excuse ME, princess, but do you know how hard it is to hatch an egg and keeping it warm?! Not to mention not being able to move for two months...damn, the life of a penguin is not an easy one...not as worth it as we thought, huh...> Harrison mused, obviously no longer a huge fan of the idea. He hadn't wanted it to be the first thing he broached upon seeing his wife again. But there was no denying how he felt...

It seemed that Katherine was of one mind. <Maybe we could go back early? I know we wanted to raise the chick together but...penguins do it all the time, right? Another pair could come take over and->

<Poppa! Food!> Came a cheep just then, from down below.

<.Kate? W-was that you...?> Harrison mused, knowing the answer but finding it impossible besides.

<No...> Katherine said, shocked at the implication.

It was then both penguins looked down, the still-hungry chick staring up at them.

<Poppa!>

<He's...SO CUTE!> Both parents called out, moving in to hug in a human-like gesture as they brought their child into the embrace. With that, there was no denying that they would stay to raise the chick, excited to see how much he would grow up with the pair until it was time for him to start a life of his own.

<What do you say to having another one? I know we only agreed to raise one, and that we would become human again. But this one is so cute...and it wasn't so bad incubating the first one, right?>

It had been its own kind of hell, Harrison wanted to reply. Staring out over a frozen wasteland, enduring cold and fear of predation and hundreds of other squawking fathers...and yet...they had wanted children of their own for so long...

<...We can have another one after this, and that's final!> Harrison relented, wanting to experience this bliss for a second time. But, really, it was he who would have to incubate the thing, so he thought it should be his decision whether or not they had another one. Right?

<Agreed,> Katherine said, and Harrison was thankful she wasn't being her usual stubborn self. Besides, the sex had been amazing, right? He could certainly go for more of that, even if the interim sucked. But only once more...it had nearly been the death of him, after all!

<Momma!> Came a tiny peeping voice with no way to articulate such words. Yet, looking down, there was no doubt as to the source of the voice...

<Awww! Three more!> Katherine called out, her excitement to be a mother at its apex. She had wanted many kids, after all, but only if Harrison agreed, he the one to do the heavy lifting. Still, she was sure with a little convincing he would extend their tenure as penguins...

<No. One more, and that's final!>

A loud sigh echoed over the tundra, audible even over the sounds of the other birds. It was one that Harrison had waited a long interval to illicit. It had become a game of sorts to figure out how long he could go without saying anything. His own calls would often be drowned in the cacophony of other bird calls, and he was determined to win at all costs, to be the loudest. Because...what else was there to do to occupy his time? Other than staring out into the void of cold at the other fathers waiting the two months for their egg to incubate. Even after naming each male, memorizing their bodies, and calling to them all each day, he was bored. The egg did not stir below him, but the former human was not expecting it to for quite some time. After all, he had some experience with being a father at this point and could count the long days till he expected it to hatch and to be a father again.

His 5th such egg...