STRANDED

by

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Commissioned by Plan-B Theatre for Play at Home
CHARACTERS

Popi - A stubborn pirate
Poppy - A bubbly, encouraging friend
Poppie - A no-nonsense, tough-love friend
**Stranded**

(*A tiny, tiny, sunbaked, deserted tropical island. POPI the pirate naps restlessly underneath a tall coconut tree.*)

POPI

(*Mumbling sleepily*) Nay… I swear… I didn’t cheat… It was him! I’m an honest pirate! … AH!!

(*POPI jumps awake.*)

POPI

Blimey, ’twas nothing but a dream. What a relief! I’m still stranded on this island!

*Beat.*

POPI

(*Crying.*) I’m still stranded on this island!! Mutinied by my own crew! What a lonely end to a glorious pirate career… Oh, I’d give up all the doubloons in the sea to have a soul or two to parley with again! There must be someone else here. Aye, that’s what I’ll do! A bit of exploring might reveal a bit of good company! Not to mention, stretch me aching legs.

(*POPI walks around the entire island. It takes about seven seconds.*)

POPI

That didn’t take long. Why, there’s nothing on this island save for this coconut tree -- and hardly good conversation that would be! But, whose footprints be these in the sand, then? Surely not mine? Unless I already explored the island and completely forgot… Cor blimey! I must be going mad. How long have I been stranded here?

(*POPPY appears out of thin air, and looks just like POPI.*)

POPPY

Must be about seven days, now!

POPI

Seven days? What makes ye so sure?

POPPY

Hm. I don’t know!
(POPI turns and sees POPPY.)

POPI
AH!! Who -- what -- where did you come from??

POPPY
Hm. I don’t know!

POPI
… Why do you look just like me?

POPPY
Hmm…

POPI
You don’t know.

POPPY
I don’t know!

POPI
Is there anything you do know?

POPPY
Well, I know that if I look just like you, as ye say, then I must be you!

POPI
What do you mean, you must be me?

POPPY
What other explanation could there be? If I came by ship, where did I drop anchor? If I shipwrecked and drifted here, why be my garments dry as the white sand? By Neptune, this is fun. I’ve never had a conversation before!

POPI
Surely ye can’t be some sort of imaginary friend that I’ve suddenly dreamed up?

POPPY
Ohh, is that what I be? An imaginary friend? Why, that sounds absolutely enchanting! The stuff of adventures! Alive for two minutes and I’m already someone’s friend!
POPI
I’ve gone mad. This morning sun has cooked me out of me right mind.

POPPY
’Tis late afternoon.

POPI
Shut it! If you are me, then prove it! What be my deepest, darkest, most regrettable secret?

POPPY
Ooh, a fantastic, foolproof idea. I’ll have to dig deep into our chest of memories for that one… let’s see… Aha! We cheated on our final pirate exam in pirate school!

POPI
Uh-oh.

POPPY
Aye, and there be something else… something worse… blimey! We framed our best matey, Josey, and let him take the fall! We got to graduate pirate school and live the pirate’s life, but Josey had to get a boring landlubber job selling parrot insurance!

POPI
What -- ? No one knows that but me!

POPPY
And me! … And probably Josey!

POPI
No, no, that doesn’t count. I had a nasty dream about that earlier, talking in my sleep, you were likely just eavesdropping!

POPPY
Aye, then, how about a different memory? Ooh, there’s one where we ate a rancid sea bass and heaved it up on our mother’s favorite peg-leg, then blamed it on our wee brother. The poor lad was made to swab the floors for a week with nothing but a dishrag.

POPI
Alright, I’ve heard enough.
POPPY
How about another one… Oh blimey, this one is quite the doozy: We only just found out, after years of professional pirating, that port means left and starboard means right. Why, that one is unforgivable, simply embarrassing. I suppose that’s what happens when we cheat in pirate school, though…

POPI
I said I’ve heard enough! Neptune, when I said I wanted company, this be not what I had in mind. I’ve wasted far too much energy gabbing with you and now I’ve got a throbbing headache! I’m going back to sleep on this side of the island, and if you don’t want me to un-imagine you out of existence, you’ll do well to stay on that side of the island and not open yer mouth a peep!

POPPY
But --

POPI
Not!

POPPY
You’re --

POPI
A!

POPPY
My --

POPI
Peep!

(POPI stomps to the napping spot and lies down. POPPY goes to the other side of the island and sits alone.)

POPPY
Alive for three minutes and I’ve already lost my only friend. But I suppose that’s life! Y’arr, souls move in and out of our lives, each searching for their own port on the horizon. And Davey Jones comes for us all --
POPI

Shut it!

*(POPPY quiets down for a moment and looks around.)*

POPPY

Popi is right. It is quite lonely on this island. Well, Popi might not want to parley, but there must be someone on this island who does! Aye, that’s what I’ll do! A bit of exploring might reveal a bit of good company.

*(POPPY walks around the island. POPI pretends to sleep, but is extremely annoyed at the footsteps. POPPY looks off into the distance.)*

POPPY

That didn’t take long! … Yes, but I suppose I wanted to see for me-self. … Aye, but that coconut tree would have hardly made for good conversation! Ha! … Oh, there on the other side of the island. Taking a nap. … Asleep? Nay, I don’t believe so. … Oh, about five minutes! Aye, it’s been a fine life. I made a friend, lost a friend, and it appears I’ve made a friend again! … Y’arr, Popi was my first friend. But we got to digging up our deepest, most shameful memories and Popi grew a wee bit uncomfortable. Aye, introspection can be difficult.

POPI

WHO THE DEVIL ARE YOU TALKING TO??

POPPY

Poppie!

POPI

Decidedly not! It takes two to parley and I have been ignoring you with extreme prejudice!

POPPY

Ohh, no, not you Popi. *This* Poppie!

*(POPPIE appears out of thin air, and yes, looks exactly like POPI and POPPY.)*

POPPIE

Ahoy there!
POPI
Oh, Neptune…

POPPY
Aye, I became so lonely after losing you as a friend, that I decided to dream up my own imaginary friend!

POPI
Wonderful. Now I’ve the impossible task of drowning out two unbearable voices. If I wasn’t certain before, I know it now: The sea be mighty angry with me.

POPPIE
Blimey, this one’s a miserable sot!

POPPY
We mustn’t cast judgement. Popi is dealing with many inner demons. As I always say, one can only suppress one’s guilt and shame for so long!

POPI
What do you mean, “as you always say?” You’ve been alive for not but five minutes!

POPPY
Aye? And?

POPI
And I’ve heard every single word you’ve uttered!

POPPY
Surely I’ve said many things by now, that very well could have been one of them. Is five minutes not a long time? I honestly don’t know.

POPI
All you’ve done is mutter behind my back about my own personal, private memories!

POPPIE
Aye, they be some shameful memories as well. Poppy here told me everything. You’ve a life full of betrayal and deceit! It’s no wonder you’re stranded here. Were you my captain, I too would have mutinied the first night we set sail, and cast you overboard for the sea to swallow. Cheating on the final pirate exam… P’tooey!
POPPY
(Stage-whispered to Poppie) Come now, ease up on the lass. Popi is a victim; a childhood of unattainable parental expectations coupled with a deep, crippling fear of failure that manifested in a general and manic succeed-at-all-costs anxiety. What can be expected?

POPPIE
(Stage-whispered) I suppose ye be correct. Popi deserves our pity and our help. No one is born a dirty conscienceless cheater who cares only about themselves. Introspection can be scary! Only Popi can decide to make a change.

POPI
I know what ye be whispering about me!

POPPIE
Of course you do, we’re you! You’re saying this to yerself! Maybe we wouldn’t be whispering if only you were a bit more responsible and a bit kinder to your crew! Aye, you certainly wouldn’t be stranded with no hope of rescue if that were so.

POPI
Oh, shut it!

POPPY
You can’t just say “shut it” anytime anyone says something that makes you uncomfortable! Poppie utters harsh words but they be true.

POPI
I’m an adult! A professional, fearsome pirate! I don’t have to listen to criticism if I don’t want to!

POPPIE
What sort of professional, fearsome pirate is thrown overboard by their own crew their first night at sea? Surely it was something you did.

POPI
Impossible.

POPPY
Popi… come now, lass, it’s time to take a wee bit of responsibility.
(POPI pouts, arms folded.)

POPIE
We’ve got all the time in the world.

POPPY
Aye, we’ll wait ‘til Davey Jones’ arrival itself if we must.

POPIE
How long do ye suppose that’d take?

POPPY
Well, the last meal we ate was about a week ago, so…

POPI
Fine! Fine! I admit it… I shouted at my crew and called them names. I was angry, because I was embarrassed, because they politely corrected me, because I didn’t know port from starboard, because I cheated in pirate school! There! I’m a terrible pirate and a terrible captain! And yes, I did vomit on my mother’s favorite peg-leg! I’m sorry!

(POPI breathes a deep sigh of relief.)

POPPY
Sweet music to our ears. Was that not a great weight off your shoulders?

POPIE
We’re proud of you! … Of us!

POPI
I must return to my ship… to my crew! And apologize! But how? There’s nothing here but a coconut tree. Cor blimey, the only way I could fell it is if I had the strength of three pairs of hands…

POPPY
Ah, but technically you do!

POPI
Aye? Is that how this works?

(POPPY and POPPIE shrug.)
POPIE
Let’s have a crack at it and see!

(The three pirates dig up the coconut tree and tip it over.)

POPPY
We done it!

POPPIE
Y’arr!

POPI
Mateys, I couldn’t have done it without ye. And I’m not just speaking of felling this tree. Now let’s be off -- I’ve got a crew to apologize to!

POPPY
And a parrot insurance agent to make amends and possibly switch careers with!

POPI
Ah, hm, one thing at a time, eh?

(They push the coconut tree into the sea and hop aboard.)

THE END