

FLARE AND FALTER

Michael Conley

"Conley walks the difficult tightrope between darkness and humour; he is an exciting up-and-coming talent whose work deserves serious praise."

Claire Askew
author of *This Changes Things*



This story is an excerpt from
Flare and Falter
by Michael Conley,
published by Splice.

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and to purchase the book,
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Krill Rations

DAY 1

Using a series of hops, clicks, and honks, the penguins have communicated their desire to be free. We have increased their krill rations. Do not approach the enclosure.

DAY 4

We are aware that the penguins' keening has escalated. Those exposed report uncontrollable sobbing as they are reminded of all their unspoken childhood sadnesses. Earplugs and tissues will be issued to all homes within a two-mile radius.

DAY 7

We have treated the bars of their cages with invisible paint. You are reminded it is a capital offence to advocate on behalf of the penguins. Remain in your homes until further notice.

DAY 12

All children must be taken to the zoo to see the penguins. Demonstrate how easy it is to come and go freely. Do not be alarmed if the penguins fling themselves at your family: the invisible bars are electrified.

DAY 16

The penguins have realised that the concept of freedom is more complicated than they thought and have indicated that they no

longer blame us. Administration will be handed back to the surviving zookeepers. Please rinse and return your earplugs.

DAY 28

The penguins are completely silent. They lounge like tuxedoed lions and are no longer approaching the place where the invisible bars had been installed. We have recently been able to remove the bars and sell them off as scrap. The revenue we have generated will be returned to you in the form of a small tax rebate.