

Mead and Stu go to SeaWorld

A 10-minute play

by Rom Watson

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Cast

STU, male, age open, Mead's friend since childhood

MEAD, male, age open, slightly smarter than Stu

The location: SeaWorld.

The time: the present.

The lights rise on two chairs and a garbage receptacle at SeaWorld. MEAD and STU enter, cross to the chairs and sit, resting between exhibits. Stu takes a brochure from his pocket and reads. Suddenly, Stu grabs Mead's arm.

STU

Mead!

MEAD

What?

STU

I finally figured out why I have psoriasis.

MEAD

I thought that was genetic.

STU

It is. But listen to this.

(He reads from the brochure.)

“Just like human skin, dolphin skin constantly flakes and peels as new skin cells replace old skin cells. However, this continual sloughing off of skin happens at a rate *nine times faster* than in humans. In fact, a bottlenose dolphin's outermost skin layer may be replaced every two hours.”

(He folds the brochure and puts it in his pocket.)

Mead, when people have psoriasis, their skin makes too many new skin cells, and the old skin cells are constantly flaking off.

MEAD

So?

STU

Don't you realize what this means?

(Silence.)

I'm part dolphin.

Silence.

MEAD

Stu, it's not possible for a human to be part dolphin.

STU

Well I am.

MEAD

So you think that everyone who has psoriasis, is part dolphin.

STU

Of course. Now do you realize the full implications of my discovery?

MEAD

Reading something in a brochure is not “making a discovery.”

STU

But I made the connection.

(He taps his temple with his forefinger.)

I put it together. The cause of psoriasis was unknown until *I* processed this information.

(He thinks.)

This will send shock waves through the medical profession when I publish my findings.

MEAD

You are not going to publish.

STU

Why not?

MEAD

Because I’m not going to let you make a fool of yourself in front of the entire medical community.

Silence.

STU

Are you jealous?

MEAD

What??

STU

You are. You’re jealous because I’ve found my tribe.

(He shakes his head.)

I can’t believe it; I’ve discovered the cause of a disease that has plagued mankind for centuries, and you’re jealous. You should be happy for me that I’m part dolphin.

MEAD

Stu, you are not part dolphin!

STU

Stop trying to crush my spirit!

MEAD

I am not trying to crush your spirit, but a human/dolphin hybrid is impossible.

STU

No. No it's not. Mermaids are impossible, because nothing can be half mammal and half fish. But dolphins are mammals. Just like humans are mammals.

MEAD

(He looks closely at Stu, then shakes his head.)

I don't see the resemblance.

STU

(Exasperated.)

What part of "a continual sloughing off of skin" do you not understand?

MEAD

It is an interesting theory I grant you that, but before you publish your theory in some . . . dermatological journal, you're going to need proof.

STU

Proof?

MEAD

Yes, proof.

Silence.

STU

How do I get proof?

MEAD

Well . . . dolphins have the ability to project sound waves that detect objects. They have sonar. Do you have sonar?

STU

(His eyes get big as he ponders this idea.)

I don't know!

MEAD

Lemme see that brochure.

(Stu hands the brochure to Mead.)

Where did you get this?

STU

At Guest Services, near the entrance. They have all kinds of visitor information.

MEAD

(Reading)

“The rounded region of a dolphin’s head is called the melon. The melon contains fat.”

(He looks at Stu.)

You’ve got that.

STU

What else does it say?

MEAD

“The melon plays an important role in echolocation. Dolphins echolocate by producing clicking sounds and then listening for the resulting echo.”

(He looks at Stu.)

Can you make clicking sounds?

STU

[Clicking Sounds]

MEAD

Not bad.

(Reading.)

“The clicking sounds pass through the melon. The melon focuses these sounds into a beam of high-frequency sound waves and projects them forward.”

(To Stu.)

Can you project your clicking through your melon?

STU

How hard can it be?

Stu closes his eyes and makes clicking sounds, which he tries to project through his forehead.

MEAD

(Reading.)

“The sound waves bounce off objects and return to the dolphin in the form of an echo. They interpret the echo, and this enables them to locate the objects.”

[Clicking Sounds] STU

Do you hear any echoes? MEAD

I'm not sure. STU

Hmmm. The best way to test your sonar abilities is to blindfold you. MEAD

Mead puts the brochure in his pocket and takes a bandana out of another pocket.

Why? STU

Because if you are part dolphin, you'll be able to detect objects in front of you and you won't bump into anything. MEAD

How come you're so smart? STU

I know how to *use* MY smarts. MEAD
(Mead ties the bandana around Stu's head, covering his eyes.)

Can you see anything?

Just my eyelids. STU

Good. Now; take a few deep breaths, and clear your mind. MEAD

Stu inhales and exhales. Mead places the chairs and the garbage receptacle in staggered positions in front of Stu, and then stands at the far end of this makeshift obstacle course

Alright, now place your concentration in your melon, and begin to produce clicking sounds. MEAD (CONT'D)

STU

[Clicking Sounds]

MEAD

Now, very slowly, begin to walk toward me.

STU cautiously begins to walk forward while continuously producing a clicking sound. He bumps into one of the chairs.

STU

I wasn't ready.

MEAD

Okay, start again. Wait. Lemme get you into position.

Mead crosses to Stu, turns him around three times and places him in position. Then he places the chair in a slightly different position. He crosses back to the far end of the obstacle course.

STU

Okay?

MEAD

Ready when you are.

Stu starts making clicking sounds, but this time he pauses after each one to listen for an echo. He walks forward, but slower than before. He again bumps into the first chair. He recoils slightly, takes a couple of steps away, and bumps into the other chair. Flustered, he loses his bearings and stumbles toward the garbage receptacle. He bumps into it, knocks it over, loses his balance, and falls to the ground. He stops making clicking sounds and sits up, dejected. Mead returns the chairs and the garbage receptacle to their original positions. Mead sits next to Stu.

MEAD

You wanna take off the blindfold?

STU

No.

MEAD

Why not?

STU

I don't wanna see people laughing at me because I fell down.

MEAD

(Looking around.)

Nobody's laughing at you. Nobody's even looking at you.

Stu pulls the blindfold down just enough to expose one eye. He looks around. Since no one is looking at him, he takes the blindfold off his head and gives it back to Mead.

STU

You tried to tell me. But I wouldn't listen.

MEAD

Realizing you're not a freak of nature: that's somethin' you gotta to learn for yourself.

STU

Thanks for bein' my friend anyway.

MEAD

If I were friends with only people who were part dolphin, I'd be pretty lonely.

STU

I just . . . wanted to be part dolphin so bad.

MEAD

Why?

STU

I want to be like the people I read about in comic books.

(Perhaps on the verge of tears.)

Life is hard when you don't have a superpower.

MEAD

I know. We all know.

(Silence.)

But maybe you do have one. It's not sonar, I think we've established that, but maybe you have . . . some other superpower.

STU

When am I going to figure out what it is?

MEAD

(Shrugs.)

I guess you need to keep tryin' stuff.

(Mead stands.)

Don't you wanna stand up?

STU

No.

MEAD

Come on, getting up again is the best part of falling down.

Silence.

STU

(Reluctantly.)

Okay.

Stu stands.

MEAD

See?

STU

(Reluctantly.)

Yeah. What do I do now?

MEAD

Keep usin' the ointment.

Mead gives the brochure back to Stu. Stu glances at it and is about to toss it in the garbage, when he gets an idea.

STU

Mead . . . I know why it didn't work!

MEAD

What?

STU

I wasn't under water!

MEAD

Stu . . .

STU

Why didn't I think of that before? Dolphins don't echolocate on land, they echolocate under water.

MEAD

Yes, but . . .

STU

I need to buy a mask and a snorkel.

MEAD

And then what?

STU

Practice.

MEAD sighs.

MEAD

Well, if nothing else, you're . . .optimistic.

STU

Is that a superpower?

MEAD
(Considering this.)

You know . . .I think it might be.

Having discovered his superpower, Stu smiles.
The lights fade to black. End of play.