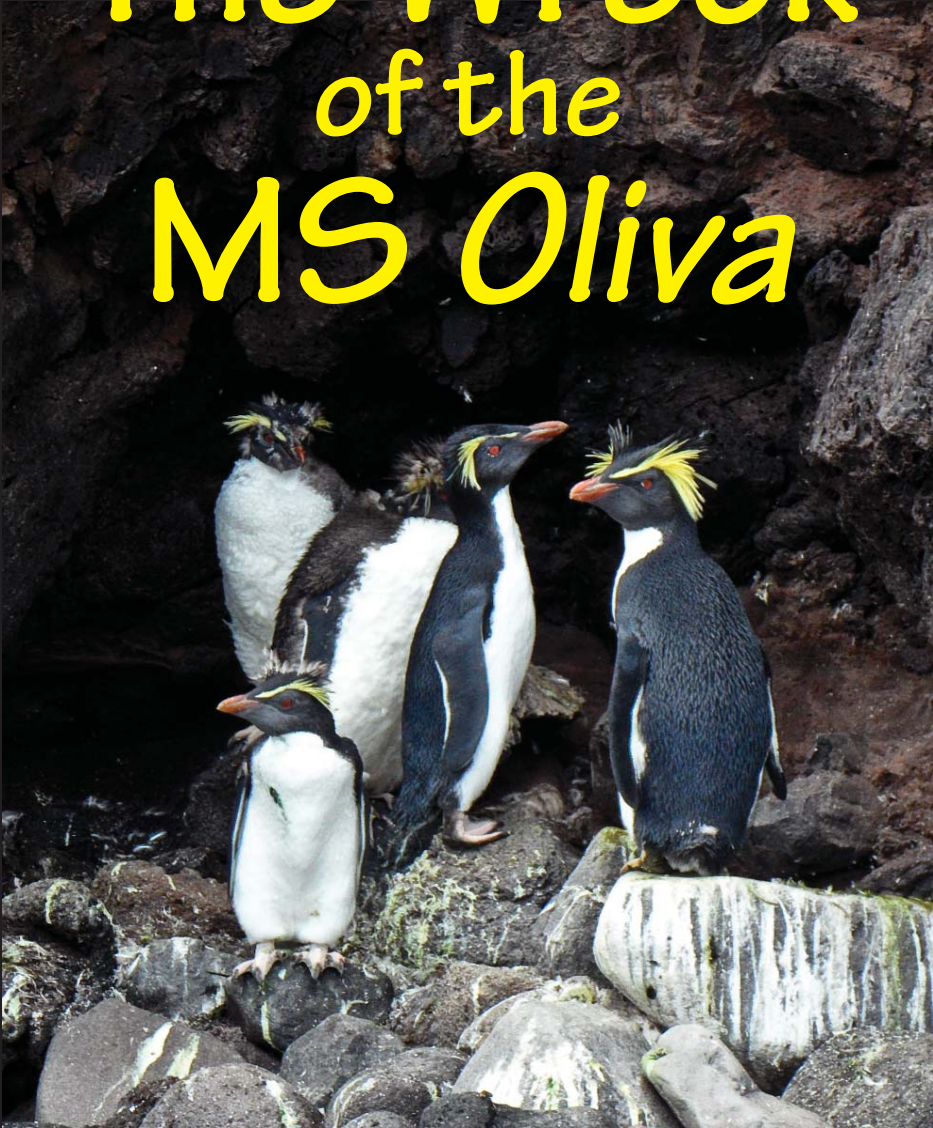


The Wreck of the MS *Oliva*



Written and illustrated by: Jade Repetto, Rhyanna Swain,
Kaitlyn Hagan, Randal Repetto and Janice Green

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THE WRECK OF THE MS OLIVA

Background

Before daybreak on 16 March 2011, the Maltese-registered MS *Oliva* cargo carrier ran aground on Nightingale Island, the neighbour island to Tristan da Cunha; both are volcanic islands in the South Atlantic. The ship contained 1,500 metric tons of crude oil and a cargo of 60,000 metric tons of soya beans. The oil spill spread around Nightingale with the result that as many as 200,000 penguins were threatened.

Wreck of the MS Oliva



Chapter 1

“I am sorry Julian. It’s too risky; you’re too young and it’s too dangerous”, explained Trevor. Trevor was Head of Tristan da Cunha’s Conservation Department and head of the diving team. He was also head of the Darwin Initiative, a conservation project for the approximately 260 islanders. Kirsty was the clerk of the department and Julian and George worked under him.



Poor Julian walked away along the long, grey and cemented road. It stretched for approximately 30 meters or so ahead of him. When he got home, Julian sat on his bunk and buried his head in his hands. He was very disappointed that he could not go diving.

All of a sudden he remembered what Captain Lazaros of the MS *Oliva* had said on the radio. Everyone's help was needed to save the tufted Rock Hopper penguins

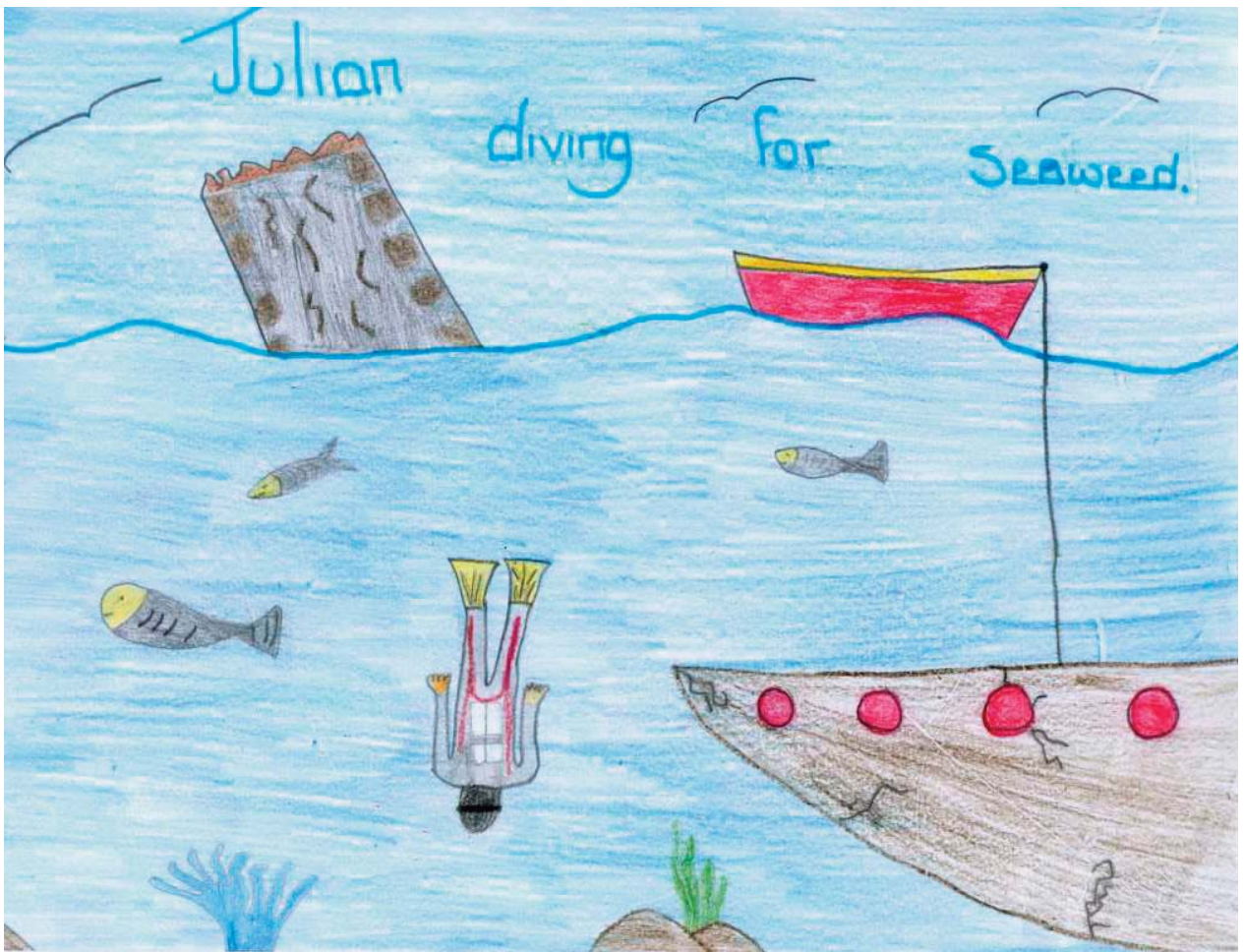


He looked over the tips of his fingers out of the window at the sea and found his resolve. Julian set out to do what he needed to do to save the penguins that had become covered with the oil from the wreck of the MS *Oliva*.



He found his swim suit and goggles in the closet in his room and went to the Conservation Office and into Trevor's room. Julian knew he could get in a lot of trouble, but, he did it anyway.

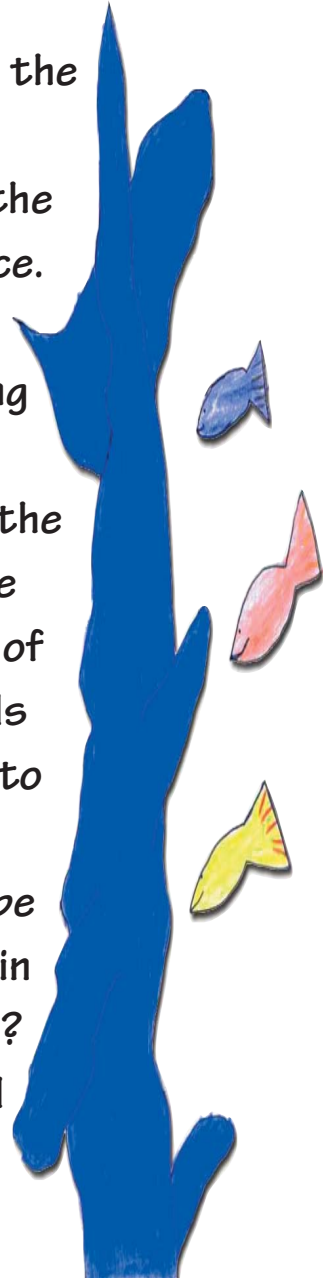
He quickly picked up an air tank and left. He went down the road, turned left and went to the garage, where the conservation's outboards were kept, looking for an outboard motor for the dinghy. He grabbed the keys for the boat house belonging to Conservation and got some extra petrol. With everything he needed in place, Julian got in the boat and started the outboard. It was easy. He'd done it many times before; only this time it was without supervision.



Julian set out to do what he'd wanted to do in the first place—before Trevor said no. After a voyage that took him along most of the rocky and treacherous coastline, which did have gentler grass land above, he finally saw the area of the wreck in the distance. Nightingale Island floated out of the mists. Was he up to his task?

Chapter 2

Julian jumped out of the boat and into the water. The water was a clear sparkling blue. He could just make out parts of the wreck under the surface in the distance. It looked like an old rusty truck covered in seaweed. Julian used a diving tank and took off his trousers and t-shirt and started swimming towards the image of what he'd seen. Before long he noticed in the depths below him some of the weirdest seaweed floating upwards from the bottom of the ocean. He had to have a better look. When he dove down Julian noticed the seaweed looked to be a glowing blue. How was that possible in the blue depths of the South Atlantic? Yet, there it was standing out from all the other seaweeds around it.



Julian had to understand the magic of the glowing blue sea weed. He picked a lot of it and took it back to the office to do experiments. He had only just begun to crush it up and pour it into the tester. It wasn't long into his experiments that Julian saw Trevor arrive back. He quickly hid what he'd found and made himself useful by cleaning Trevor's desk.

Trevor wasn't fooled. He saw that Julian was being sly and thought something suspicious was going on. He sat down by his desk staring at Julian.

“What's going on?”

“Nothing”, answered Julian almost in a whisper.

But was it nothing, Julian thought to himself, afraid that his hands might be glowing blue?



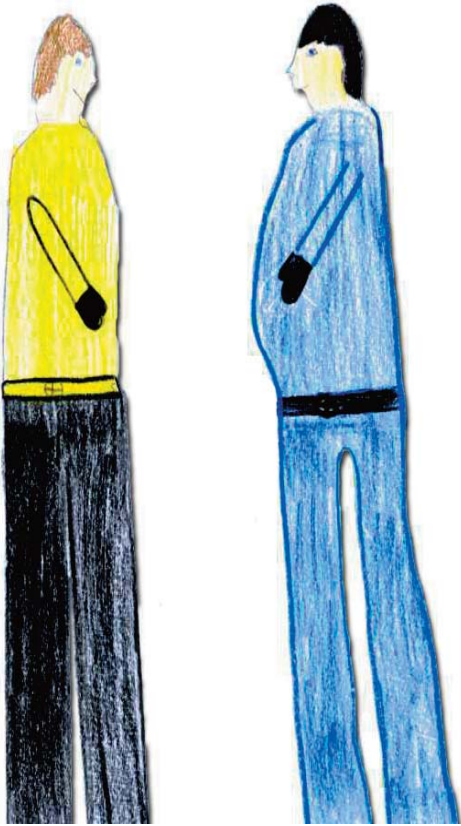
Chapter 3

Julian woke up early thinking of a theory about the seaweed because, when he had tested it before, it had eaten itself up. He ran to the office. The blue seaweed in his experimental test tubes had “eaten up” the oil. He got out all the experiments he’d set up and the



black oils were dissolved in all of them. He had to get out the boat again to the sea bed with the blue seaweed. Maybe more of the magic blue seaweed could save the sick and oiled-covered penguins.

When he had enough seaweed, it was time to test his theory. Julian found some sad looking Rock Hoppers from Nightingale in an enclosure on Tristan. They were usually on Nightingale but had been brought to Tristan



by boat to see what could be done for them.

Some of their tufts were long and some short but they were normally always yellow. Since the oil spill, they were all black. Julian held their heads and poured on the mixture. He gave them the experimental seaweed and waited. When he saw them improve, he gave them some more.

Julian was watching the penguins when he heard a boat being pulled up on the beach. He ran away as fast as he could and fell in the gutter. He stopped for breath. Just as Julian thought Trevor would grab him by the scruff of his neck, he saw that Trevor was pleased. He was smiling because the

magic blue seaweed had saved the penguins. It seemed to have all the nutrition the penguins needed.

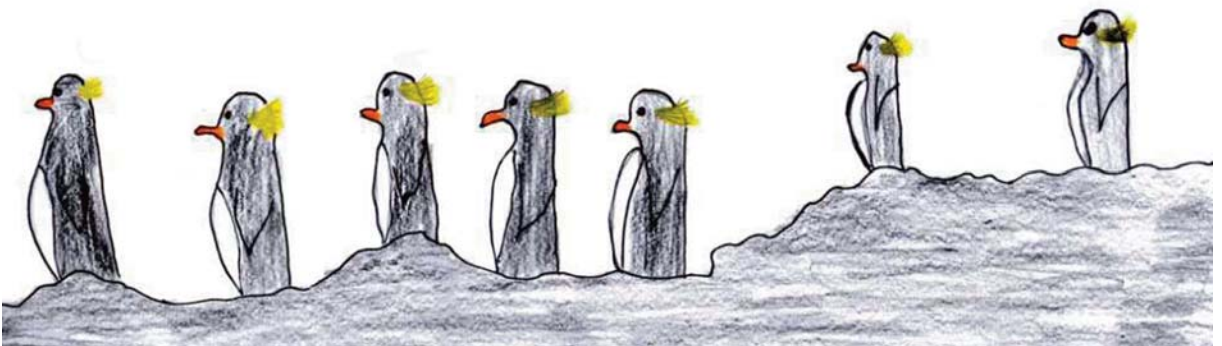
Re-assured, Julian told Trevor what he'd done.

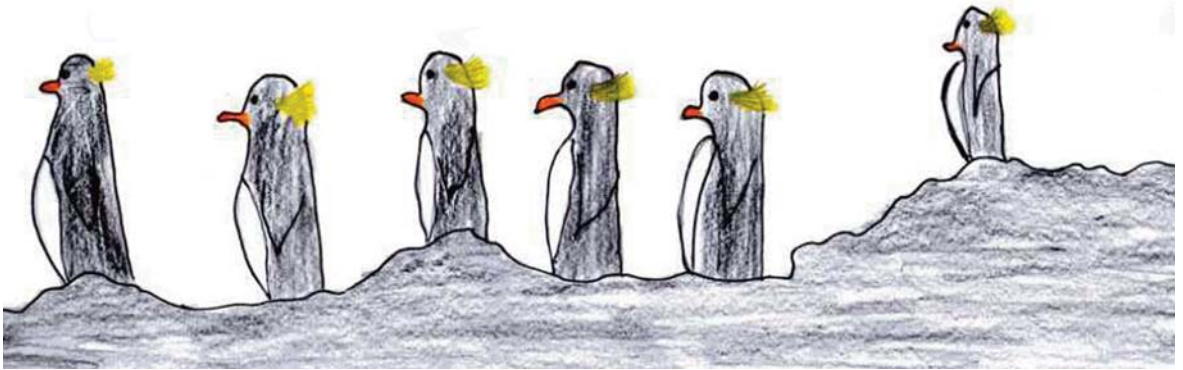
“I went to Nightingale ... I know I shouldn't have, but ... I wanted to help ... I found this strange blue seaweed ... You'll never guess what it does ... I tested it ... ”
Julian was rambling on nervously.

He then showed Trevor the glowing blue, special seaweed.

“I gave it to all the penguins I could and none of the ones who ate it died.”

“Well, maybe you should save the rest of them then”,





Trevor said gruffly as they headed to the office to look at Julian's experiments.

It turned out that Julian's discovery saved all the penguins. Only four of nearly 3200 on Tristan da Cunha died.

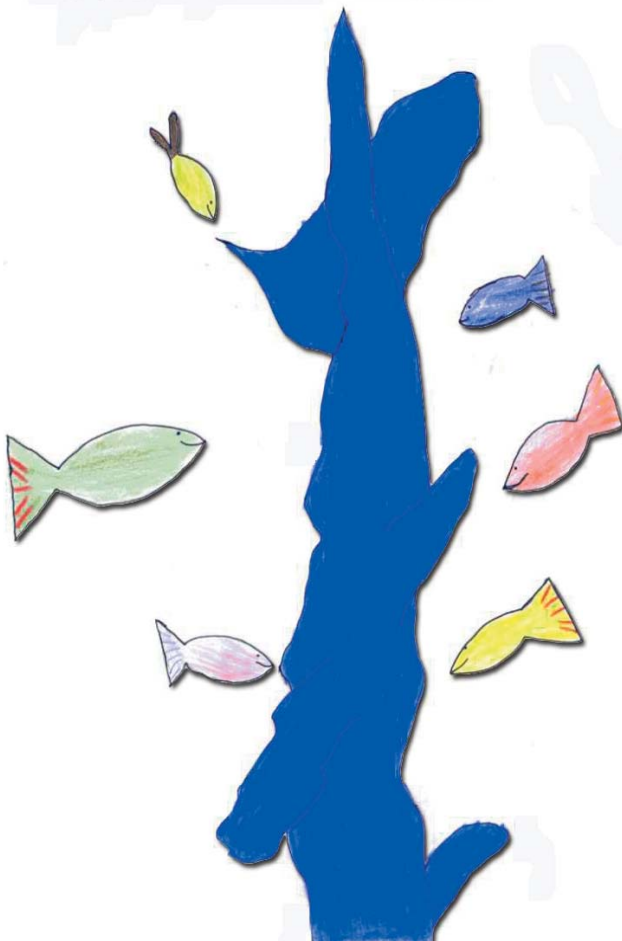
Julian became famous on Tristan da Cunha as the boy who found the magic seaweed.

...

"Today's radio report comes from Administrator Sean Burns: There is an awful scene around Nightingale Island with oil from the stricken MS *Oliva* eight miles offshore and more or less around the whole

island. The slick ranges from thin films of oil, small balls and larger clumps of tar with the smell of diesel everywhere. The Tristan Conservation team led by Trevor Glass is busy doing what they can to clean up Northern Rock Hopper Penguins presently coming

ashore smothered in oil”



Julian turned off the radio and ran to get ready for school. He'd head to the Conservation Department later to see how he could help save the penguins. Blue seaweed? Huh! Had he been dreaming?

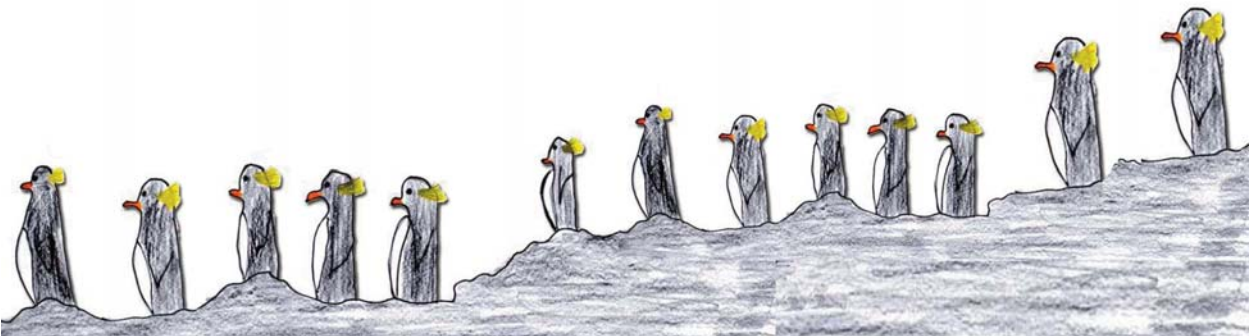
Acknowledgements

Following in the wake of my 2010 adventure helping give birth to the wonderful story *Elisapee of the Arctic: Mallikjuak Adventure*, I decided to try to work with the young people of Tristan da Cunha. The small volcanic island set remotely in the South Atlantic has only about 260 inhabitants of whom approximately 50 attend St. Mary's School. Education Officer Jim Kerr, who I met on board the MS *Edinburgh* on our eight days of stormy seas, organized the visits with the Level 3 and 4 students. The Level 3 students were 10 and 11-years-of-age and the Level 4 students were 11 and 13-years-of-age. I had studied up on Tristan da Cunha's colourful history and was prepared to jump-start the brainstorming process, but, the young authors quickly came up with healthy lists of their own ideas. They collaboratively agreed upon two books. I had copies of *Elisapee* and we quickly went over the process that the Inuit children used to start the book in workshop and then edit and complete it via email. The young people were on fire during the three days I worked with them. I was delighted how they took to using the plot graph and quickly integrated dialogue. After my departure, their teachers Marlene and Sharon worked with them on the editing process and Jim continued to shepherd communications.

I would like to thank Dawn Repetto, Head of Tourism, for her support of this project. I am thankful as well to have had Iris and Martin Green, as hosts on Tristan; they showed me its beauty and its hospitality.

As with Elisapee, graphic designer Mary Cook volunteered her incredible talents. And in spite of my editing, Mary always turns a careful eye to make sure that our texts are flawless. Thank you.

To the tourists visiting Tristan, or on-line, we hope that you take this small memento as a gift for young people in your lives. Mary and I have now worked with youth in the far north, Nunavut, and in the far south, Tristan da Cunha. It gives great pleasure to see them tell stories that originate in their lives. We hope that this story will inspire your young people.





Jade Repetto – Age 11. I like reading and writing stories. If you have an argument today or if you are in trouble tomorrow people will help. We are like one big family.



Rhyanna Swain – Age 11. I like reading and writing. I also enjoy sports and riding my bike. The thing I like most about life on Tristan is there is a lot of freedom.



Kaitlyn Hagan – Age 10. I like reading and riding my bike. I like “Ratting Day” the most. We hunt rats that day.



Randall Repetto – Age 10. My hobbies are sports and art. I really like Sheep Shearing Day.



Janice Green – Age 11. I like sports and art. The best thing about Tristan is that you’re free to go anywhere you want.