

2: LARRY THE LYRE BIRD...OR IS IT EVER OK TO LIE?

BY WILL FORD

- LARRY Oh, this is so exciting! Wait till they hear about my show. This is going to be big. Very big. Bigger than that time I taught that humpback whale to ride a skateboard.
- NARRATOR This is Larry. Larry is a LyreBird. The greatest liar in the whole rainforest.
- LARRY Bigger than the time I went sword-fighting with a swordfish covered in sawdust.
- NARRATOR In fact, even his very first word was a lie.
- MIDWIFE Here he comes. Just one more push.
- MUM Yes, come on, my son. One more push and you'll be out of your egg and into the world.
- MIDWIFE You've done it! Congratulations! A beautiful baby bird.
- MUM I'll call him Larry. Hello Larry. I've waited so long to hear your voice. Let's hear you chirp.
- LARRY Moo!
- NARRATOR Since then, Larry had learned how to copy any sound he heard. He could pretend to be anything. And his friends loved it, especially Sammy Skunk...
- SAMMY Go on, do a snake!
- SAMMY Do a lion!
- SAMMY Do a rabbit!
- LARRY Erm, rabbits don't really make a noise, Sammy.





- SAMMY SKUNK Okay. How about a turtle?
- NARRATOR Larry was so good at pretending to be someone he wasn't, that he became a great actor.
- LARRY 2B or not 2B. That is the pencil.
- NARRATOR But pretty soon, his pretending got out of control. Almost everything he ever said was a lie. Like the time he told Gary the Gorilla he could fly.
- LARRY Okay, Gary, now just let go of the branch and soar like an eagle.
- NARRATOR Or the time he told Gary the Gorilla he could ride a motorbike.
- LARRY Okay, Gary, now gently accelerate.
- NARRATOR Or the time he told Gary the Gorilla he could fly while riding a motorbike... Gary really should stop hanging out with Larry. Anyway, he's a big fibber. You get the point. And just in time. Here's Larry now. He's come to the animal village to tell his rainforest friends all about the big show he's planning. A showcase for his own talents, of course. Although he might not tell them that...
- LARRY G'day people! G'day, g'day, g'day! Come out, come out, wherever you are! I'm here today to tell you the most splendoriffic news this rainforest has ever heard. I am bringing to you the greatest, the most fantasuperb, the most amazeillant talent show that's ever been seen. And you want to know the best bit? The stars of the show, will be you! Hang on hang on. Where is everyone?! There's nobody here. Hey, guys! You don't know what you're missing! Wait, I hear something. By that tree.
- KANGA (Sobs)
- LARRY Hey! Hey there, little Kanga. Don't be upset. You okay?
- KANGA (sobbing) I'll be okay.
- LARRY Here, wipe your eyes. Hey, you know what happens if you cry too much?

KANGA No.



- LARRY Well, eventually, all those tears will flood the whole forest floor. All the insects have to start swimming lessons. The millipedes have it the worst. Think of all the armbands they have to buy!
- KANGA (giggles)
- LARRY There you go. Now what's got you so upset? Where is everybody?
- KANGA They're all too scared to come out to play.
- LARRY Scared? Scared of what?
- KANGA Chris the crocodile. The forest bully. Everyone's heard he's on his way here. They're staying hidden so he can't pick on them.
- LARRY Well this won't do. No, no, no.
- KANGA Where are you going?
- LARRY To find Chris Croc. No-one stands in the way of showbusiness.

- NARRATOR So Larry the Lyrebird went to find Chris Croc, the forest bully. He settled himself down in a bush and waited...and waited...until...
- CHRIS I'm telling you the truth, Carol. Nothing.
- LARRY There he is! Chris Croc... Hmmm, with a lady crocodile.
- CAROL Oh come on, Chris. There must be something you're frightened of.
- CHRIS I'm the king of this rainforest. I'm the top of the food chain. It's just nature. There's nothing in here that could possibly scare me. Agh! What was that?!
- LARRY Ahaa! Bingo! There is something Chris Croc is scared of. If I can find out what it is, I can make the sound of it and scare him off.
- CHRIS CROC Agh! Carol! There it was again!
- CAROL Relax, Chris. It's probably just a rabbit.





- CHRIS Aaargh! Rabbits!
- LARRY Great. How do I make the sound of a rabbit?
- CAROL So you are afraid of something, Chris.
- CHRIS Who's not afraid of rabbits? They're terrifying! The only thing that scares me more is humans.
- CAROL Oh, come on, Chris. When do you ever see humans?
- CHRIS I hear them! With their chainsaws. Chopping down the forest and anything in their way.
- LARRY That's it!
- CAROL Well I don't think you need to worry about seeing any humans where we're going. Just a lot of frightened animals who... Chainsaws!
- CHRIS Humans! Quick, we have to go back!
- CAROL I thought we were going to the animal village?
- CHRIS And go past that?! No chance. Come on.
- NARRATOR As we heard before, Larry could imitate the sound of anything... even chainsaws! And as Chris Croc scampered back to the swamp, Larry rushed back to his rainforest friends to tell them the good news. Though, as usual, his version of the story had a few alterations.
- LARRY And I said to him, unless you want to be turned into a pair of dancing shoes, you, you'd better get out of my face.
- KANGA You said that?
- LARRY I did.
- KANGA And what did Chris Croc do?

LARRY Well, he reared up and showed me his teeth. Hundreds of them. Like razorblades. But sharper.

KANGA Weren't you scared?



- LARRY What me? Of that great lump? Nah. I said if he wanted to get to you guys, he'd have to go through me. So he legged it. He won't be bothering you in a hurry. So. Now we can do the show. Let's start the auditions. Get in line everyone. You know, I'm only doing this for you guys. This is your big chance people. So, who have we got first? Name?
- SALLY Sally the slug.
- LARRY And what's your act?
- SALLY Breakdancing.
- LARRY A breakdancing slug. This should be interesting. Can I see a bit?
- SALLY I'm doing it now. Can't you see?
- LARRY You are? I mean, you are! Yes, of course I could see that. It's just a little slower than any breakdancing I've seen before. A little slower than anything I've seen before.
- SALLY Oh. Sorry. I knew was rubbish.
- LARRY Er, no. No. It was unique. You know, that was so beautiful, (fake tears) it brought a little tear to my eye.
- NARRATOR And in this way, Larry lied his way through the auditions. Telling his friends they had talent where they did not...all so that the show would go on. The show of which Larry the Lyre bird would be the star!
- LARRY Sally the slug, you're in!
- SALLY Yes! Thanks Larry!
- LARRY No problem. You're on stage in five hours. You'd better set off now. Next. Name?
- STEVIE Stevie the snake.
- LARRY And what's your act?
- STEVIE Juggling.
- LARRY Erm. Isn't that going to be a problem?



- STEVIE In what way?
- LARRY Well, you have nothing to catch or throw with.
- STEVIE I really don't see what -
- LARRY No. Fair enough. Let's see your act. Here. Try juggling these plates.
- STEVIE Oh, no. Guttled.
- LARRY Don't worry. That's just a bit of stage fright. Did you need a hand with your luggage?
- STEVIE I don't have any luggage?
- LARRY Really? Well I see bags of potential! You're the best juggler I've ever seen.
- STEVIE Great! Thanks Larry.
- LARRY Just don't practice with anything sharp. Or on fire. Next. Name?
- LENNY Lenny the lion.
- LARRY And your act?
- LENNY Lion tamer.
- LARRY So you'll be a lion taming another lion?
- LENNY No. Are you crazy?! That's way too dangerous. I'll be taming myself.
- LARRY I see. I'm not sure that'll work. Can you do anything else?
- LENNY I can sing the national anthem while eating a lyrebird in one bite?
- LARRY Erm, Lenny the self-taming Lion it is. What a fantastic act. It will bring the house down.
- LENNY Great! Thanks.



- LARRY Ho, ho! Well, I haven't had chance to practise my self, but who cares! My act's going to be better than this lot whatever I do!

- NARRATOR It was the night of the big show. Without the fear of Chris Croc looming over them, it seemed like the whole rainforest had come out to see Larry, complete with top hat and cane, commanding centre stage with lies that thrilled the thrushes and dazzled the dung-beetles.
- LARRY 1, 2, 1, 2...Good evening ladies and gentlemen. And snails, which are both. Welcome to the Rainforest Circus. An event so huge, it's being broadcast live into space to the four corners of our solar system.
- LARRY Places like Jupiter, Saturn and my beautiful holiday home on Pluto. Before we start, we need to ensure that all communication devices are switched off. So please close your mouths, fold in your brightly coloured wings and Sammy the Skunk - try to hold it in. Right. On with the show!
- NARRATOR And so the Grand Rainforest Circus began. Stevie the Snake juggled bowling pins with his tail. For about two seconds.
- NARRATOR Lenny the Lion told himself to sit down.
- LENNY Sit.
- NARRATOR And he did what he was told.
- NARRATOR And to this day, Sally the slug is still making her way to the stage. Larry had done all his rainforest animal impressions and sung all the songs he knew. Now the show needed a climax. And Larry was ready. He summoned all his acting and storytelling skills, all his mastery of mimicry to tell the tale of how he'd scared off Chris Croc. Or, at least, his own special version of that story...
- LARRY So I said to him: 'Now look here you overgrown lizard.' I said: 'These animals are my friends. You're going to stop bullying them, or I'm going to give you a black eye.' And then Chris Croc was like: 'Oh Larry, please don't hurt me. You're so strong and brave. You scare me.' 'Well,' I said. 'You *should* be scared. Because when my friends are in trouble, I'll stop at nothing to save them. Even if that means getting into a little fisticuffs with a vicious killer like you.' But there was no need. He was already beaten. He said: 'Oh no, please. I'm so scared. I promise I'll never go near your friends again.'
- CHRIS Bravo. Bravo indeed. Though that's not quite how I remember the conversation.





- LARRY Chris! How, erm, how good of you to turn up.
- CHRIS Don't give me that nonsense. Your lies don't wash with me.
- SAMMY Or with me. Liar.
- LARRY You're a skunk, Sammy. You don't wash at all.
- SAMMY I mean, we're all getting a bit sick of your lies, Larry. You said he'd never come here again. And now the show's ruined. Nobody's going to stick around when Chris the killer crocodile's about!
- CHRIS Eh? Killer? I'm not dangerous. I just look scary! And because of it, I get pushed aside...That Larry has even staged a talent show with out inviting me. And I love talent shows...
- LARRY But I, erm. Chris...I...I saved you top billing!
- CHRIS What?
- LARRY Yes, that's it. I knew you'd come tonight so I saved you a place in the show. You're our surprise headline act.
- CHRIS You mean, I get to sing?
- LARRY It's what the crowd wants. Get up here on stage, big fella. Music please. Hey, little Kanga.
- KANGA I can't believe you lied to us, Larry. We believed you were a good guy and you lied to us.
- LARRY Woah, I am a good guy, Kanga. Honest.
- CHRIS (Sings)
- LARRY He's not a good singer, though. Ouch. Look, I know I stretch the truth a bit but I'm not a bad guy. And my feelings aren't lies. When I say, I'm your friend. I really am.
- KANGA But how do I know? You lie about everything.

LARRY I know. I know. And I'm sorry. It kinda got out of control. I see tonight the damage it can do. I need to stop. I promise you, Kanga, I'm done with lying. Larry the lyrebird will never lie again. Ever.



- CHRIS That was great! I loved it. Thanks, Larry.
- LARRY Not a problem, Chris. Glad you had fun.
- CHRIS Was I good though? I really felt like I nailed it. What did you think? Be honest.
- LARRY Erm...Well...
- KANGA Larry!

THE END

