Inky's Great Escape

by Alice Cary
illustrated by Peter Bull
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Something is very wrong at the aquarium. Inky the octopus is missing from his tank. The friendly octopus has lived at the aquarium for two years. But this morning Inky isn’t in his tank. Workers at the aquarium want to find the missing octopus.
The workers know that Inky is a smart octopus. They have watched Inky take the lid off a jar. But was Inky smart enough to escape?
A worker named Kerry looks closely at the tank. He can see that the top of the tank is open a little bit. Kerry is very worried about what happened. Did Inky climb out of his tank?
Kerry looks around the room, but he can’t find Inky.
Then Kerry sees wet spots on the floor.
These wet spots must be Inky’s tracks. Could Inky have crawled out of his tank and across the floor?
Kerry knows that an octopus can live out of the water for about 30 minutes.
Kerry follows the tracks to a small pipe in the floor. The opening to the pipe is about the size of a grapefruit, and Inky is about the size of a soccer ball. A soccer ball could NOT fit into the pipe. But an octopus does not have bones, so its soft body can squeeze into very small spaces. Kerry thinks that Inky could have fit into this small pipe.
Kerry knows that the long pipe goes outside and into the ocean. Kerry and another worker go out to look inside the pipe, but Inky isn’t there. Inky must have slid down the pipe and splashed into the ocean. Now he is back home where he belongs.
Visitors to the aquarium will miss the friendly octopus. They hope he has a good life back in the ocean.

Kerry and the other workers don’t think that Inky escaped because he was unhappy. Inky must have been curious to find out more about the world. So he made his great escape.
Octopus Facts

✱ An octopus has eight arms called tentacles. It uses its tentacles to crawl across the ocean floor.

✱ Octopuses like to move around and hunt for food at night.

✱ Octopuses are very smart. They can solve puzzles, open locks, and go through mazes.

✱ Octopuses come in all sizes. The biggest octopus is longer than most cars. The smallest octopus is about the size of a penny.

This octopus is holding a ball.
How Inky Got His Name

One day a fisherman found an octopus trapped in a pot he used to catch lobsters. The fisherman brought the octopus to the National Aquarium of New Zealand. The octopus had been attacked, probably by a big fish. Some of his tentacles looked as if they had been bitten off. Veterinarians at the aquarium helped the injured octopus get better.

The aquarium held a contest to name its new octopus. Zoo workers liked one name best: Inky. That’s because octopuses squirt a dark ink when they are upset or scared.

We would like to thank Rob Yarrall at the National Aquarium of New Zealand for his help with this book.
Where Is Inky?

Inky the octopus has escaped from his tank! Workers at the aquarium look everywhere for the missing octopus. Where could he be?