**Exploring South Island**

﻿﻿**1** Ari picked up his camera from his desk. He turned on the power switch and checked the battery. *All set*, he determined. Then he carefully put the camera back in its bag. Ari’s family had just moved to the South Island of New Zealand. Dad worked as a ship captain, so they moved often. Whenever Ari’s family moved to a new place, they always spent a few days exploring.

**2** “You ready to go, Ari?” Mom called. She and Dad were making sandwiches and hot chocolate for dinner. “We want to get to the harbor before sunset,” Mom said.

**3** “Yes! I’m ready!” Ari said as he walked into the kitchen. “I can’t wait to take pictures of the penguins!”

**4** Ari and his parents were going to the beach to watch little blue penguins come to shore. These small penguins had beautiful, blue-gray feathers. Ari had seen pictures of these cute birds but had never seen one for himself. He was so excited to see them up close!

**5** The road to the harbor had many twists and turns. Everywhere Ari looked, there were rolling hills covered in thick, green grass. Flocks of sheep grazed in the fields.

**6** “They look like cotton-ball clouds with legs!” Ari exclaimed, pointing to the sheep.

**7** “They sure do,” Mom agreed with a smile.

**8** Finally they arrived at the harbor. They parked the car and walked toward the people who were standing near the rocks.

**9** “Are they here yet?” Dad asked a man with binoculars.

**10** “Nope, not yet,” the man said. He continued peering through his lenses out to sea.

**11** “Well, good,” Mom said. “We can eat dinner while we wait.”

**12** Mom handed Dad and Ari their sandwiches. Dad poured three cups of hot chocolate. Ari took a bite of his sandwich and washed it down with a sip of hot chocolate.

**13** “I’m so glad we live close to the ocean,” Ari said. “And I’m especially glad that . . .”

**14** “Oh boy! They’re right there!” shouted the man with the binoculars. He pointed toward some rocks on the beach.

**15** Ari quickly pulled out his camera. He tried to turn it on, but the screen was dark and lifeless. Ari felt his stomach sink to his ankles.

**16** “Mom, Dad!” Ari said with a shaking voice. “I left my camera on! The battery is dead!” Ari’s eyes began to fill with pools of tears.

**17** “Don’t worry, son,” Dad said. “Just enjoy the moment. The penguins come every night. We’ll just come back tomorrow to get pictures.”

**18***But it won’t be the same*, Ari thought as he slipped the camera back into the bag. *I can’t enjoy the moment if I can’t take pictures!*

**19** “Look at their shiny, blue feathers!” Mom said, nudging Ari with her elbow, trying to cheer him up.

**20** Ari pushed up on tiptoe so he could see the penguins better. “The feathers are as blue as the ocean and sparkle like fish scales,” Ari said with a half-smile.

**21** Mom laughed. “Your words are even better than a picture, Ari. No picture could show feathers that sparkle like fish scales or sheep that look like clouds with legs!”

**22** Ari had never thought of it that way. He leaned back against the rocks and took another sip of hot chocolate.

**23** “It will be fun to take pictures tomorrow night,” Ari said. “But I think tonight when we get home, I’ll write a poem about our day.”

**24** Dad put his arm on Ari’s shoulder. “I think that’s a perfect idea, son,” Dad said. “Just perfect.”

**An Ocean Farm**

**1** Kelp is a type of seaweed. It is a curly brown plant that grows in oceans around the world. Today more people are discovering how useful kelp can be.

**An Underwater Plant**

**2** Kelp’s slippery leaves smell salty and contain pockets that are full of air. This air causes the heavy leaves to float toward the surface of the water. The leaves gather light from the sun for the kelp to make its food.

**3** The kelp must receive sunlight to live, but it has few other needs. It grows well in cool waters. The water must be clear. This allows the sunlight to reach the kelp as it begins to grow on the ocean floor. Then the kelp grows quickly. In fact, giant kelp can grow about two feet in one day!

**Kelp Farming**

**4** Kelp makes an excellent crop, since it requires little daily care. The country of Japan has farmed kelp in its seas for hundreds of years. Now other countries are beginning to

follow Japan’s example.

**5** Some people grow kelp in a way called the off-bottom method. Farmers find shallow, sandy areas where kelp will grow. They place two posts in the sand several yards away from each other. Next, they tie a rope between the posts. Finally, they tie the kelp seedlings to the rope.

**6** The seedlings begin to grow into large amounts of kelp. These seedlings live without any extra care and will grow throughout the winter. By spring, farmers will gather a full crop to sell.

**Food from Kelp**

**7** Farmers sell kelp to food companies. The companies use the kelp to produce fish food. Sometimes they make food out of the kelp for other plants. Kelp has also been sold to restaurants in different parts of the world. However, kelp is not yet a popular food in most of the United States. Restaurants are encouraging people to taste kelp. Cooks use the leafy plant in soups and salads. Stores sell crunchy kelp snacks too. Some scientists think that eating kelp might help fight off diseases. Farmers hope the desire for this food will grow over time.

**The Ocean’s Friend**

**8** Scientists believe that kelp farms offer a benefit for animal and plant life. The growing kelp keeps the oceans healthy by cleaning the water. It takes harmful gases out of the water and puts helpful gases back in.

**9** The leafy kelp farms also provide sea animals some protection. The animals can find a place to hide when an enemy is chasing them. Fish and snails eat kelp too.

**10** People everywhere can thank kelp farmers for their work in growing such an important and useful plant. For all living things, kelp farming is a great idea!