

A Day at the Circus

A picture book for young children
by
Martha Jeffers

One sunshiny morning in May
I saw a surprising display—
 A bright yellow tent
 For a special event:
“CIRCUS PERFORMANCE TODAY”

A tall ticket taker looked proud
As he grinned and then graciously bowed.
 So I found fifty cents,
 Strolled inside the fence,
And found a good seat in the crowd.

First, a man in a splendid high hat
And a lovely star-spangled cravat
 Took a stick in his hand,
 Said, “STRIKE UP THE BAND!”
And six drummers rapped rat-a-tat-tat.

Soon the air filled with many good smells—
Like warm crunchy peanuts in shells,
 Hot dogs with mustard,
 Icy-cold custard,
And pink cotton candy as well.

Then in rushed white ponies with spangles,
Upon them five ladies in bangles,
 With sequins and leathers
 And soft fluffy feathers
And big silver bracelets that jangled.

After that, ten giraffes with long necks,
Four monkeys in oversized specs,
 Lions on leashes,
 Jugglers with dishes,
And strong men with muscles that flex.

Seals balanced red balls on their noses
While tigers struck statuesque poses.
 Seven camels with humps,

Three pigs with huge rumps,
And a poodle with blue painted toes!

A magnificent magician named Ming
Performed tricks in the large sawdust ring
 With rabbits, silk scarves,
 Nine jumbo-sized cards,
And eight parrots with colorful wings.

There were dozens of clowns, short and tall,
And some who were round as a ball.
 Would you laugh if I said
 One stood on his head?
I think I liked him best of all!

Some wore flowers, some checks, even stripes,
With a few on their oversized bikes.
 Two I might mention
 Had quite an invention
That shot oodles of noodles from pipes.

One clown in a polka-dot dress
Found herself in a bit of a mess.
 A pig grabbed a ruffle
 That started a tussle,
And what happened next you might guess!

A sword swallower with a pet goat
Wore a purple and orange plaid coat.
 “When I swallow a sickle,
 I feel a slight tickle,
And sometimes I get a sore throat.”

Upside down on the flying trapeze
An acrobat hung by her knees.
 As she flew through the air
 With the wind in her hair,
She suddenly started to sneeze!

She sneezed once and then twice and then more.
It was something no one could ignore.
 As the crowd watched in awe,
 She went on without flaw,
And the people all stood with a roar.

Then in charged a fuzzy brown bear!
At first it gave me quite a scare
 Till I heard lots of snickers
 At her lacy pink knickers
And she danced pirouettes on a chair.

I had fun at the circus, did you?
So much so the time really flew!
 The next time I think,
 I said with a wink,
I'll probably visit the zoo!