

Circus Man  
By Armav Adi

John sighed as he scrubbed the multicolored powder and dirt from the wrinkly skin of the elephant. He works from nine A.M to twelve A.M at the Richmond circus in Virginia. “Why do I have to be the one cleaning the animals instead of the one watching the animals perform?”. This has always been a thought residing in the back of John’s head but he was more furious about the idea today due to the particularly strong odor of manure in the cleaning room. The only thing worse than this job was his boss. He was quite a rotund man as his friends said jokingly. Of course, they didn’t have this terrible job of cleaning animals at a circus. They had no idea.

“I wish I could just be a CEO or tycoon who, instead of working for other people, can have other people work for them.” he said to himself. He knew he was alone because he was always the last person to leave every day because of his job. All of his friends told him “why don’t you just quit?”. This ignorance angered him very much. They didn’t understand that he didn’t have a choice. It was either this or homelessness.

“Hey!” he exclaimed as the elephant tried to give him a good kick. This was a recurring problem that of course, the circus master didn’t bother to provide help with. Soon his attention hindered and he wandered away. He sauntered throughout the massive circus tent which was propped up on giant metal poles. All of the other rooms of the tent had high ceilings that used the whole of the tent’s height, however his room was only a quarter of the height.

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One room that caught his attention was a room that was completely empty. This may seem paradoxical but, there was something that drew his attention. He didn't know exactly what it was but he was strangely pulled towards it. He sort of stumbled inside of the room and once inside he saw three doors. They stood on their own in the middle of the dark empty room. Every footstep echoed through the high ceiling. He looked back but the exit had disappeared, instead, John looked in horror at a man standing in front of him. He was wearing a tuxedo. He had a short grey beard and his head was balding. He was, as most would say, rotund. The circus master!

“You shouldn't be here” he growled and without words, he started slowly walking towards John. Instinctively, John backed away into one of the doors and fell through. That was a day that he'd never forget.

He was falling. He couldn't stop. He felt his stomach rise in his abdomen. He was falling and he couldn't help it. He couldn't help but think about the fact that he was going to die if he ever did have contact with the ground. All of a sudden he felt a sudden, horrible lurch in his stomach. He was still falling but it was dramatically slowed. It felt like he was falling through water but it wasn't wet and he could breathe. It felt weird. An odd sense of calm fell over him. It all suddenly ended when he hit the ground. His eyes were closed. He was too scared to open them. He was afraid of what he might see. Finally, he opened his eyes and he was in the circus. Except he wasn't in the cleaning room where he used to be most of the time. He was in the stands. Another thing that he noticed was that he was in the front seats.

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The most expensive seats. He knew that his job's salary would never permit him to even get seats to this circus.

This made him very suspicious. He looked around. Everything was the same. He quickly stood up and ran outside. It was raining and it was then that he realized that he was wearing a tuxedo. He had never had a tuxedo before either.

All of this was happening too quickly. John went to the nearest diner. He needed something to drink. As soon as he entered the building the waiter's jaw dropped. "John Morrison sir, have a seat." John, as confused as he was, didn't answer him.

"W-what can I get you s-sir?"

"Just a Pepsi please," said John.

"Of c-course sir", the waiter said and ran off. He came back about thirty seconds later with an overflowing glass of Pepsi.

"So Mr. Morrison, how does it feel to be one of the richest people in America?" said the waiter tentatively.

"Excuse me?" said John.

The waiter showed him a newspaper. It said, "*John Morrison recently admitted as number five on the Forbes top 100 wealth list. Profession: CEO of the Virginia Circus Corp. .*" and showed a picture of John in a blue tuxedo. John gasped at the picture.

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“This has to be a mistake!” said John.

“Oh nonsense”, the waiter replied. “As a matter of fact, that Pepsi is on the house”. And with that John walked right outside. As soon as he left he called a cab. About five minutes later, the car showed up. When he entered the taxi, the same conversation started again, except that the driver was also named John.

“8474 Alkins St.” the driver said. When John opened up his wallet to tip the driver, he gasped again. Instead of having measly coins and maybe a couple of dollars, the wallet was jam-packed with cards and bills. He tipped the driver ten dollars and walked out. Only a few feet in and he walked right into a gate.

He slowly looked up and gazed upon a giant estate. He looked in his pocket and pulled out a key. He unlocked the gate and continued on. When he finally reached the porch, he opened the door, which was already unlocked. He marveled at the glorious interior which was supposedly his. This was the exact same location as his old house except his old house was small and dingy. It was about three times shorter than just the first floor of this house. This house had a giant spiral staircase in the middle of the house. It also had a big chandelier next to the stairs. The walls of the house were painted white. He was too lazy to explore the house so he just walked into a guest room and plopped onto the bed. In a matter of seconds, he was out like a stone.

He opened his eyes to a large flat-screen T.V. and sunlight pouring through a large window.

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For the first time, he actually felt glad that he wasn't dreaming. He decided to get ready and take an early morning as he normally did on the few free days that he used to have. After he had a shower in the extremely large bathroom, he opened the gargantuan, heavy doors and strutted along the driveway.

As soon as he opened the gate, about fifty people swarmed him asking him about some theft. Of course, John was confused by all of this so he asked and one reporter told him that John's company had scammed hundreds of people out of their money. Eventually, he finally managed to plow through all of the people. Now instead of going on a walk, he was going to go to the circus. He didn't bother to go by taxi as he would be noticed more easily and have to deal with more criticism. As he looked around he saw multiple billboards defaming him and calling him a cheat. He was often recognized and shouted at. There was even one case where somebody threw an apple at him, which gave him a bruise that would last. He didn't want to live this life like this.

When he got to the tent he started searching frantically for the room with three doors. Finally, after forty-five minutes, he found it and bolted towards the one in the middle. He then experienced the same lurching feeling in his stomach and fell to the floor. He fell in the animal room which solidified the fact that he was back. As soon as he righted himself, he ran as fast as he could, all the way to his normal home.

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He was thinking of what had just happened. He still wondered what those three doors were. They seemed like gateways to an alternate universe. That was what he decided to go with. He wanted to go home, back to the home where he could finally be safe.

