

# Whistles



Chapter 1

## Three Ring Spartacus

By Andrew Hussie

ONCE, IN MORE INNOCENT TIMES, THE WANDERING STARLIGHT CALLIOPE CIRCUS WAS THE MOST BELOVED SHOW ON EARTH. MINSTRELS BLEW LIVELY MELODIES THROUGH THEIR SOUZMONIUMS AND HARMONOPHONES, LIONS ALL BUT TAMED THEMSELVES, THEN USED NIMBLE PAWS TO FREE THEMSELVES FROM STRAITJACKETS UNDER WATER, WHILE GREAT BIG KETTLES OVERFLOWED WITH WARM, SWELLED CORN, WITH WHICH CHILDREN FILLED THEIR EAGER MOUTHS. ALL FOR BUT 3 PENNIES.

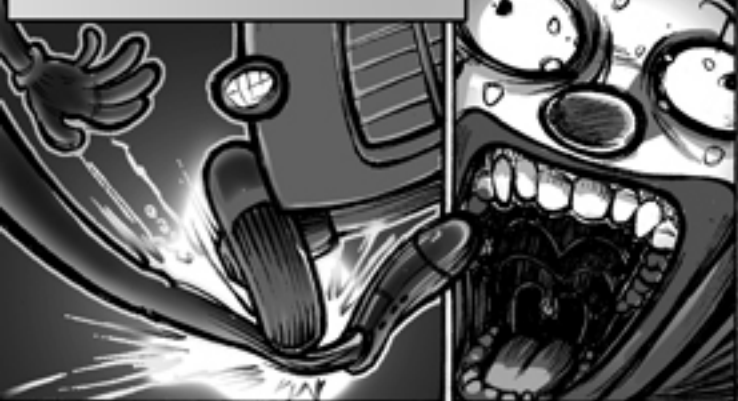
BUT THE SINGLE ATTRACTION MOST DEAR TO THE PEOPLE WAS THIS CLOWN. NOT ANY CLOWN, MIND YOU. A SLENDER, LITHE CLOWN WITH A HIGH-PITCHED VOICE, NAMED WHISTLES. HE HAD NOT ANY UNUSUAL TALENT, HIS JOKES NOT FUNNIER THAN THE NEXT CLOWN'S, HIS PRATFALLS NOT MORE DARING. BUT HE HAD A HUGE HEART. THE CROWD ADORED HIM AS IF HE WERE FAMILY. AND IN TRUTH, HE WAS.

HIS MASTER, THE MOST RENOWNED MAN IN SHOW BUSINESS, WAS PHINNEAS PENDLECOAT. A GRIZZLY BEAR OF A MAN WITH A GRIZZLY-SIZED HEART, HE KNEW HE HAD A VERY BRIGHT STAR IN WHISTLES. HE BECAME LIKE A FATHER TO THE CLOWN AND LOOKED AFTER HIM AT ALL TIMES, AND IN RETURN, WHISTLES WAS AS DEVOTED TO HIS MASTER AS ONE COULD BE. INDEED AS ALL THE PERFORMERS AND FANS KNEW, PENDLECOAT LOVED WHISTLES, AND WHISTLES LOVED PENDLECOAT.

FOR YEARS THEY PUT ON A SHOW FOR EUPHORIC SPECTATORS, UNTIL THAT ONE TRAGIC DAY THAT FOREVER CHANGED THE STARLIGHT CALLIOPE.



WHISTLES WAS EMPTYING THE BETTER PART OF A SODA BOTTLE INTO HIS FACE WHILE MERRILY CAPERING. IT WAS AN EVENING TO BEHOLD, HIS PERFORMANCE ONE FOR THE BOOKS, WHEN THE SODA BOTTLE EXPLODED. THIS STARTLED THE CLOWN DRIVING THE TINY FIRE ENGINE, CAUSING HIM TO VEER SUDDENLY OVER WHISTLES' ANKLE, CRUSHING IT.



THE SCREAM WAS THE FIRST IN WHISTLES' LIFE NOT ATTRIBUTED TO JOY. PENDLECOAT'S SOLEMN PUBLIC DUTY THEN FOLLOWED BEFORE A HUSHED, MOURNING CROWD.

MASTER, I'M SCARED.

SHH... LIE STILL, BRAVE LAD.

WILL... WILL I SEE YOU IN CLOWNHALLA?



TSK, TSK. MY LAD, YOU KNOW THE MOMENT I PASS TO THE NEXT WORLD, I WILL HOP THE FIRST BOXCAR TO CLOWNHALLA, AND WE SHALL HAVE THE BIGGEST, MOST FANCIFUL SHOW IN EITHER WORLD!

NOW LIE STILL FOR THIS PINCH. THE NEXT ONE YOU FEEL WILL BE THAT OF AN ANGEL.

I CAN'T WAIT!

I WANTED TO TELL MY MASTER. IT'S NOT AS IF I WOULD EVER LIE TO HIM. I JUST FORGOT IT WAS THERE, WITH ALL THE COMMOTION.

IT WAS MY FAKE ARM I USE FOR STUNTS. THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T FEEL THE NEEDLE PINCH. I USE IT FOR HILARIOUS ANTICS.

NOT THAT I'LL EVER BE DOING STUNTS AGAIN WITH THIS LEG. OH, MASTER, WHY COULDN'T I HAVE TOLD YOU!

THAT SMELL...

SNIFF...

SMELLS LIKE THE MESS TENT. IS IT SUPPER TIME?

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

# Whistles

BY ANDREW HUSSIE



EXCUSE ME, CHUM, I'M A LITTLE LOST, AND MY MASTER NEEDS TO GIVE ME AN INJECTION. COULD YOU PLEASE DIRECT ME TO THE EXIT?

AH, GOOD THINKING. THIS WILL BE FASTER, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU MISSED. WHY DON'T WE TRY AGAIN?



HEY WHISTLES. COME WITH ME. YOU HAVE TO SEE SOMETHING.

THAT SMELL... THESE ARE ALL... CLOWNS. LIKE ME?

YES, WHISTLES, LIKE YOU. ALL CLOWNS OF EXPIRED STATUS COME HERE. THEY ARE PROCESSED AND FED TO THE PERFORMERS AND SPECTATORS.



DELICIOUS.

ER...

DO YOU HAVE A PLATE?

UH... YEAH.

WHISTLES! \*COUGH!!\* IT'S ME, JINGLEPUSS... I WAS YOUR STAND-IN A FEW SHOWS AGO.

OH. HI, JINGLEPUSS!



I'M STILL ALIVE, BARELY. I \*COUGH\* DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. WHISTLES... LOOK AT THIS. \*COUGH\*COUGH\* WE NEED YOU! THIS HAS TO STOP! ARE YOU LISTENING?

OH... YEAH. I'LL BE THERE IN ONE SECOND. THIS FLANK IS JUST SO TENDER!

WHISTLES! PLEASE LISTEN! DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING? THIS CIRCUS... \*HACK!\* IT'S AN ILLUSION... A FARCE! IT IS BUILT ON OUR BONES AND SINEW! RIVERS OF OUR BLOOD FLOW JUST BENEATH THE BLINDING LIGHTS OF THE BIG TOP! OUR RACE IS UNDER SIEGE! \*COUGH!\*

OUR RACE... HUMANS?

NO... I MEAN, WELL, OUR CLASS. \*COUGH COUGH!\* CLOWNS!

YES, WHISTLES. WE ARE ALL DOOMED. THE CLEAVER IS HELD TO OUR THROAT BY THE BUTCHER HIMSELF...  
**RING MASTER PENDLECOAT!**

OH, BUT THAT'S SILLY! MASTER PENDLECOAT HAS ALL OUR BEST INTERESTS IN MIND. HE LOVES US ALL!

HIS BLOODLUST KNOWS NO BOUNDS! HE WILL DINE ON OUR FLESH AND LAUGH UNTIL...

SORRY, WHISTLES, JUST DOING MY JOB. HE WAS MARKED FOR A SLOW-COOKED CLOWN BRISKET. GOTTA START COOKING.

**GRRK  
GRRK  
GRRK  
GRRK!**

I UNDERSTAND. I WILL MISS HIM.

AS WILL I, WHISTLES. IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO. OUTSIDE, INTO THE WORLD.

WHAT? GO?  
OH, NO NO NO, I'VE NEVER BEEN OUTSIDE THE CIRCUS. WHERE WOULD I GO? I MUST RETURN TO MASTER!

HE HAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS WITH ME, AND I CANNOT DISAPPOINT!

CAN I AT LEAST HAVE SOME OF THAT TENDERLOIN FOR THE ROAD?







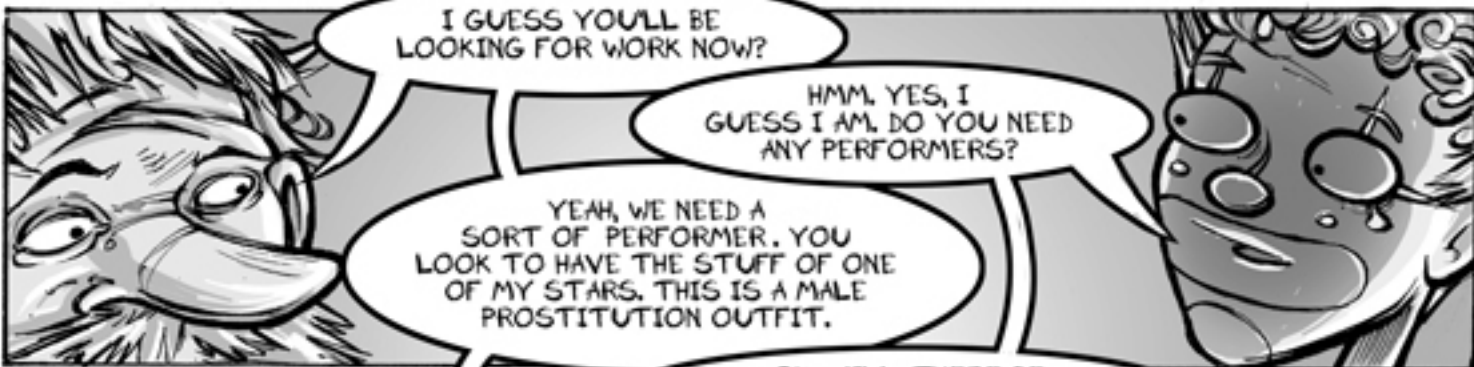
HELLO, IS THIS A CIRCUS? IF SO, I BELIEVE YOU COULD USE SOME WORK. LIGHTS WOULD HELP. AND A TENT.

WELL I'LL BE A BREAK DANCING FETUS. WHISTLES THE CLOWN.

YES, SIR.

I'D HEARD YOU RETIRED. SOME KINDA ACCIDENT. BOY, YOU WERE GREAT, KID.

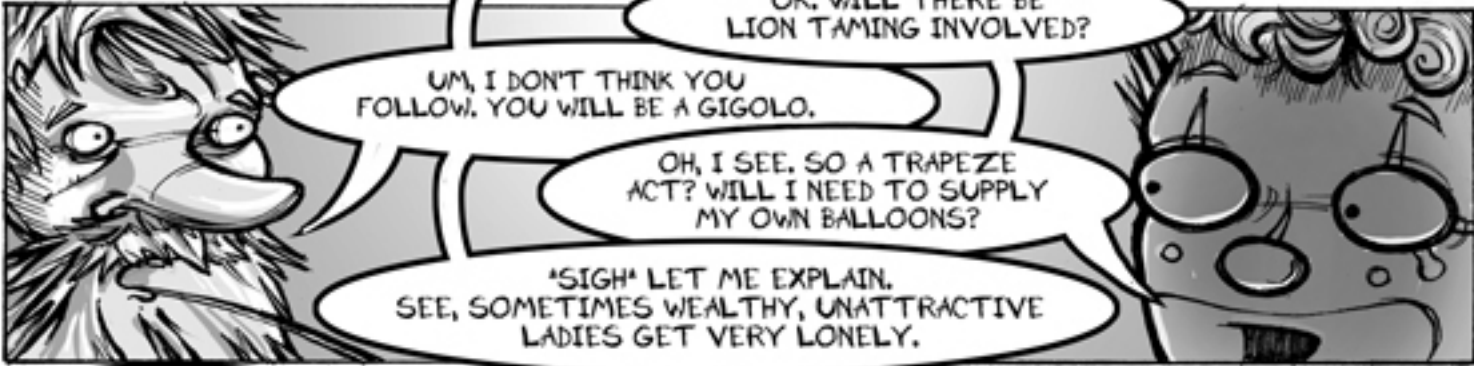
I WAS?? THANK YOU!



I GUESS YOU'LL BE LOOKING FOR WORK NOW?

HMM, YES, I GUESS I AM. DO YOU NEED ANY PERFORMERS?

YEAH, WE NEED A SORT OF PERFORMER. YOU LOOK TO HAVE THE STUFF OF ONE OF MY STARS. THIS IS A MALE PROSTITUTION OUTFIT.



OK, WILL THERE BE LION TAMING INVOLVED?

UM, I DON'T THINK YOU FOLLOW. YOU WILL BE A GIGOLO.

OH, I SEE. SO A TRAPEZE ACT? WILL I NEED TO SUPPLY MY OWN BALLOONS?

'SIGH' LET ME EXPLAIN. SEE, SOMETIMES WEALTHY, UNATTRACTIVE LADIES GET VERY LONELY.



I DON'T FOLLOW.

ALRIGHT. TAKE THIS WATER BOTTLE HERE AND SAY THIS PIE HERE REPRESENTS A WOMAN'S INTIMATE REGION.

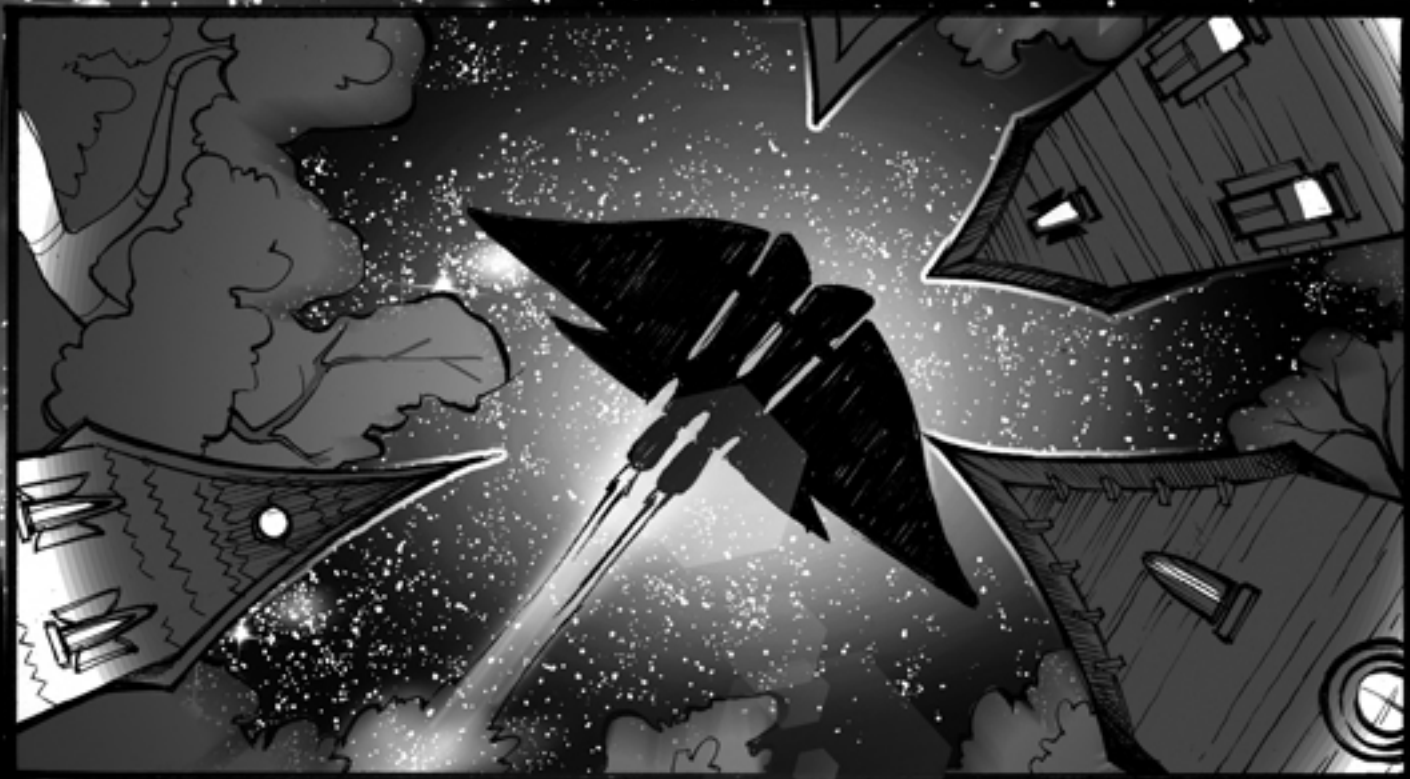
OK, WHAT DO I DO WITH THE PIE?



THIS IS YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT. REMEMBER, YOU WORK ON TIPS, SO SHOW HER SOME OF THAT STARLIGHT CALLIOPE SPIRIT.

HOORAY!







CLOSE THE DOOR  
BEHIND YOU.



WOW, HE SAID YOU  
WOULD BE UNATTRACTIVE!  
YOU'RE ONLY MODERATELY  
UNATTRACTIVE.



SO AM I PAYING YOU TO  
JUST STAND THERE?

OH!



NOW, NOW, I KNOW  
JASPER'S BOYS WORK ON TIPS,  
SO SAVE YOUR SWEET TALK. YOU'LL  
EARN IT WHEN I SEE YOU IN ACTION. A BIT  
SCRAWNY FOR MY TASTE, BUT A FINE  
PEDIGREE I UNDERSTAND.



HONK!  
HONK!

CLICK

AND SO IT WAS, WHISTLES IN HIS SECOND LIFE BUILT A SECOND REPUTATION AMONG CERTAIN CIRCLES. NOT AS WHISTLES THE CLOWN, BUT AS THROTTLES THE JACKHAMMER. HIS CLIENTELE LIST EXPANDED LIKE A PRE-TWISTED BALLOON ANIMAL, WHICH WAS INCIDENTALLY THE NAME OF ONE OF HIS SPECIALTIES. WHILE HE EXCELLED AT THE ENTERTAINMENT OF OTHERS, AS HE ALWAYS HAD, THERE REMAINED A HOLLOW PLACE. A NEW LIFE, A NEW WORLD, YES... BUT WAS HE HAPPY?



...EXTRAORDINARILY SLENDER, SOFT HANDS, BUT SURPRISINGLY STRONG AND NERVE. I'M SURE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT. I'LL MAKE A SPECIAL CASE FOR AN OLD CUSTOMER LIKE YOU.

THROTTLES!

HEH HEH, I'M NOT SURE WHY THE SCAMP HAS TAKEN TO LIVING IN THIS BOX. HE SEEMS TO LIKE IT.

ACTUALLY, IT'S PRETTY UNCOMFORTABLE. WASN'T IT YOUR IDEA?

THROTTLES, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET YOUR NEW CLIENT.



I DON'T THINK HE HAS A PIE.



SO, THROTTLES, I HEAR YOU'RE RATHER FLEXIBLE. I HOPE SO, BECAUSE I'M TIRED OF HAVING THEIR SPINES SNAPPING LIKE SO MUCH BRITTLE...

OH WOW!!

ST. LOUIS  
COPPER  
CITY

A  
NEW  
STAR  
GUMBLIN THE  
CLOWN

A NEW STAR...

OOPS!  
OK, THIS ONE  
WILL BE HALF  
PRICE!



A NEW STAR OF THE CIRCUS? I GUESS I CAN'T BLAME MASTER. LIKE HE SAYS, "THE PRODUCTION MUST PROCEED!" THE PEOPLE DESERVE THAT MUCH.

BUT EVEN SO, I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL I SHOULD BE A PART OF IT. IT'S WHO I AM! I MEAN, I'VE BEEN WORKING FOR TWO MONTHS STRAIGHT ON A BROKEN ANKLE. I COULD CERTAINLY HANDLE THE OLD ACT AGAIN. IT'S ONLY HEALING ON A SLIGHT ANGLE FROM MY LEG!



I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE JINGLEPUSS WAS RIGHT, AND I SHOULD BE WORRIED... UH, OH, JUST THINKING ABOUT HIM MADE ME HUNGRY.



NO! I DON'T CARE WHAT HE SAID! I HAVE TO GO BACK! MASTER, HERE I COME!

LET'S GO! STARLIGHT CALLOPPE, NEXT STOP!

YOU HAVE TO ACTUALLY GET ON THE BUS.

OF COURSE!

NEXT STOP  
STARLIGHT  
CALLOPPE

MEANWHILE, BACKSTAGE AT THE STARLIGHT CALLIOPE...

GUMBLIN, SIR, YOUR 3RD PAIR OF BACKUP SHOES IS READY.

AH, FLIPPY, YOU ARE A KING AMONG CRAFTSMEN. I NEVER CEASE TO MARVEL AT THE PRECISION OF YOUR WORK.

SUBLIME. TAG THESE AND FREEZE THEM IN LOCKER C.

UM, YES, SIR.

GUMBLIN, YOUR USUAL PRE-SHOW BUBBLEGUM SPRITZER.

BUT IT SEEMS AN ERRANT BIT OF SCRAP HAS CLUNG TO THE MOISTURE OF THE GLASS BOTTOM. PLEASE DISCARD IT KINDLY.

IT'S NO SCRAP, GUMBLIN. READ IT! WE'RE MOBILIZING, AND WE NEED YOU MORE THAN ANYONE!

SPLENDID, DOODLEBEAN. MY GRATITUDE.

THEN THIS IS A SEDITIONARY LEAFLET. YOUR INTENT IS MUTINOUS? I AND ALL CIVIL PERFORMERS FROWN MOST GRIEVOUSLY ON SUCH GESTURES. I'LL NOT HAVE IT UNDER THIS TENT.

ALL MAY BE DISCUSSED IN GOOD TIME. FOR NOW, THE SHOW IS IMMINENT AND WE MUST PREPARE. LATER, WE WILL ENGAGE THE ISSUE AGAIN WITH OUR RATIONAL MINDS. NOW LEAVE ME, AS I MUST PERFORM MY CLEANSING PRANAYAM.

**NOOO!**

GUMBLIN, PLEASE! IT'S ALL TRUE, ALL OF IT! PENDLECOAT IS A MONSTER! NO CLOWN IS LONG FOR THIS WORLD HERE. WE ARE ALL MARKED, EVEN YOU. I SAW THEM TURN MY GRANDMOTHER INTO HAMBURGER! THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH HER! SHE WASN'T EVEN SICK!

HMM...

IT'S... I'M AFRAID IT'S ALL TRUE, SIR.

**SQUEAK!**



I'VE NEVER SEEN THE CIRCUS  
AS A SPECTATOR.

ALL THESE PEOPLE  
ARE SO EXCITED.  
I GUESS THEY ALL  
WANT TO SEE THE  
NEW STAR.



I'M SURE THEY HAVE  
GOOD REASON. HE'S  
PROBABLY AMAZING!

I USUALLY ENJOY THE PRE-ENTERTAINMENT SIDE SHOWS A LOT, BUT NOW I'M JUST ANXIOUS FOR THE SHOW TO START. I'M A LITTLE NERVOUS.



BUT WHY SHOULD I BE? I'M HOME AGAIN...



... EVEN IF THINGS AREN'T THE SAME.



GET YOUR GRISTLE-LOAF!  
PIPING, JUICY GRISTLE-LOAF!  
A PENNY TO THE LOAF!

DAD, THERE'S A CLOWN NOSE IN MY LOAF.

THEY'RE AN ACQUIRED TASTE, SON.  
BITTER, BUT FULL OF FLAVOR.



BACKSTAGE...

I SENSE A FOG DESCENDING ON THE STARLIGHT CALLIOPE. MAY THE LIGHT OF MY MIND'S INNER SILENCE SHOW ME THE TRUTH.

FLIPPY, MY TRUST HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOURS. IS THERE REALLY MERIT TO YOUR CLAIMS?

WHISTLES... THE FORMER STAR OF THE CIRCUS. YOUR DEPARTURE, UNTIMELY, YES... BUT WHY DO YOU HAUNT MY VISION NOW?

DOODLEBEAN, EARNEST YOUTH. FROM YOU I SENSE PURE INTENTIONS AS WELL. BUT ARE YOU A MERE MESSENGER, OR IS THERE MORE TO EXPECT FROM YOUR ROLE?

AND MASTER PENDLECOAT... TO YOU MY LOYALTY IS SWORN. I SENSE FROM YOU...

I CAN BARELY FOCUS. THE QUESTION MARK IS FIXED NOT ON YOU, BUT ON EVERYTHING.

THERE IS DARKNESS, JUST BEHIND YOU. IT IS AN INDISTINCT PESTILENCE, UNDER THE FLOORS, WOVEN INTO THE VERY FABRIC OF THE BIG TOP.

THE SHADOWS ARE... OMINOUS...

BLAST MY DISTRACTIONS.

TIME FOR THE SHOW.

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
PREPARE TO BUCKLE IN THE  
**ABDO-MINIAL** REGION IN  
ASTONISHMENT! I PRESENT  
TO YOU OUR NEWEST  
ADDITION, AND BOLDEST  
STAR YET...



**GUUUMBLIIIIIIIN**  
THE  
**CLOOOWWWWWWN!!!**



TUMBLE

SWOOP

CAVORT

UNBELIEVABLE  
ANTICS!

SURELY THE BEST  
CLOWN YET!

I HEAR HE HAS ONLY  
0.01% BODY FAT!


I CAN'T  
BREATHE!

HEART-STOPPING,  
YET HILARIOUS!

YES, BUT I DO  
MISS WHISTLES SO...

I THINK THIS MAN  
IS CHOKING ON HIS  
GRISTLE-LOW.


MASTER...




I HAVE TO GET  
JUST A LITTLE CLOSER...  
MAYBE MASTER WILL  
NOTICE ME.



PENDLECOAT'S SOLEMN PUBLIC DUTY THEN  
FOLLOWED BEFORE A HUSHED, MOURNING CROWD.



SO MUCH PROMISE. BUT YOU'RE  
A STAR TOO BRIGHT FOR THIS  
WORLD, LAD! CLEARLY  
CLOWNHALLA HAS CLAIMED  
YOU EARLY FOR ITS  
THRONE.



THAT SHOULD  
BE ME!

I SEE NOW THE WORST HAS BEEN CONFIRMED. SIR, YOU ARE FOUND TO BE A HEARTLESS PROFITEER. A BARBARIAN, AS A GENTLEMAN YOU MASQUERADE!

POPPYWADDLE, MY BOY! I DO WHAT MUST BE DONE! YOUR CRUEL INJURY ALONE HAS ROBBED YOU OF YOUR BIRTHRIGHT AS STAR PERFORMER. THE DUTY TO RELIEVE YOU FROM THIS INDIGNITY FALLS ON MY SHOULDERS. PAIN ME THOUGH IT DOES, I AM TRUE TO MY RESPONSIBILITY, AS WE ALL MUST BE.

MY ARM IS NOT EVEN BROKEN, SIR. IT'S FINE, SEE?

NOW LIE STILL, LAD. THE Surer THE BULLET'S PATH, THE MORE BRIEF WILL BE THE DISCOMFORT.

CLICK

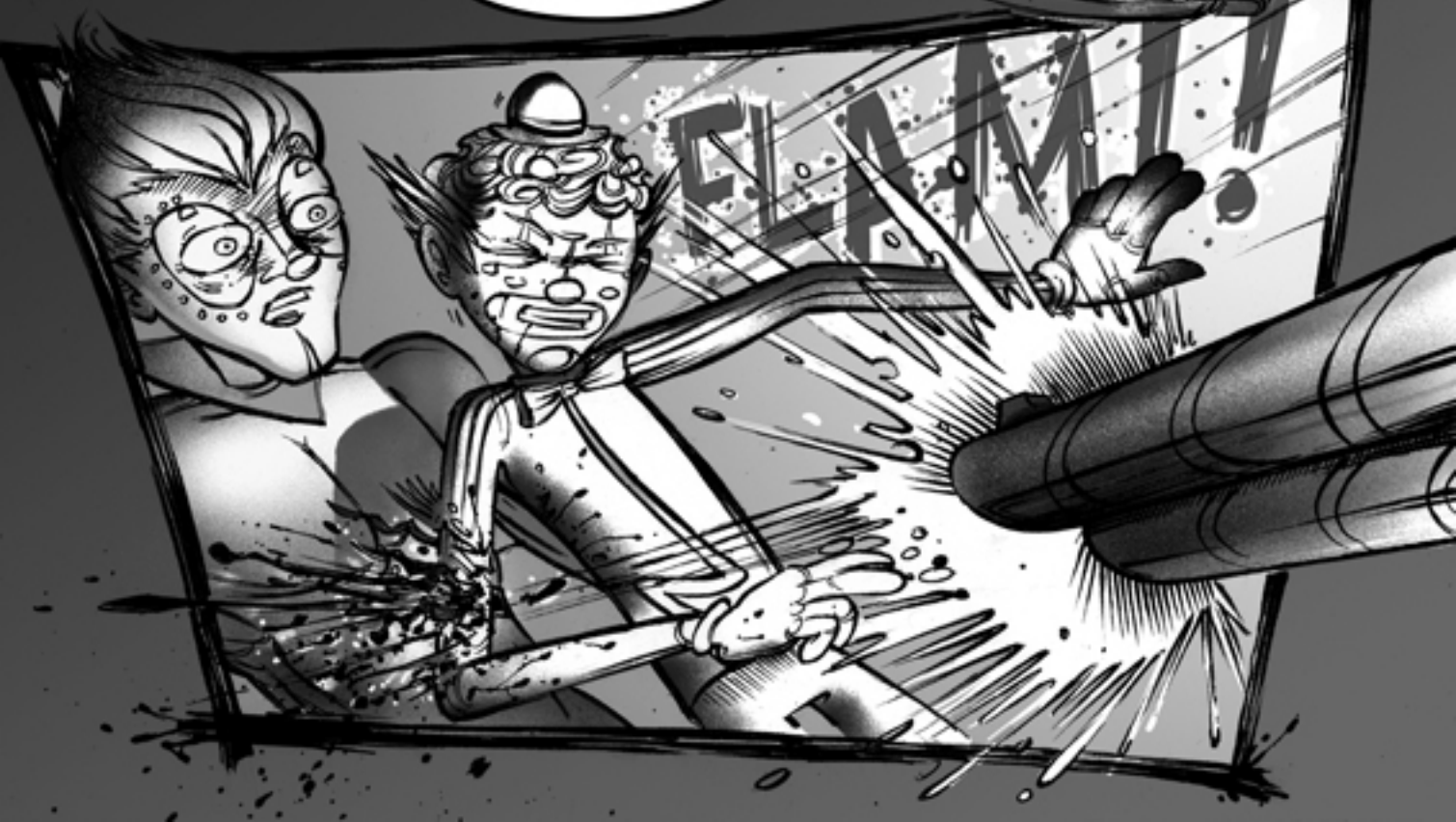
DAMNED FOOL!

NOOOOOO!  
MASTER, I SHOULD  
BE YOUR STAR!  
SHOOT ME!

GASPI!

IT'S WHISTLES!  
HE'S BACK!

WHISTLES THE  
CLOWN IS BACK!





SWAT!

MASTER PENDLECOAT, THE ONLY THING YOU'VE MASTERY OVER IS CHARLATANRY. THE SOONER THIS INSIDIOUS POX IS LIFTED FROM THE CIRCUS, THE MORE SWIFTLY THE HONOR OF ALL PERFORMERS AND FANS SHALL BE RESTORED.



UH... CAREFUL THERE, LAD. WHEN HEATED TEMPERERS GET THE BEST OF US, REGRET IS SURELY AROUND THE CORNER...

AND WHERE IS YOUR REGRET, SIR? YOUR SORROW FOR THE BLOOD SPILLED? WAS DOODLE-BEAN RIGHT? HOW MANY INNOCENT, NOBLE PERFORMERS HAVE FALLEN?

HARUMPH... ER... BOY, I SAY, I CAN HARDLY KEEP TRACK OF EACH TRIFLING AFFAIR IN THIS...



AND YOUR LEGENDARY STAR, WHISTLES THE CLOWN. I IMAGINE HE TOO WAS STRUCK DOWN NEEDLESSLY. WAS IT NOT ENOUGH HAVING DONE IT ONCE ALREADY? THROUGH GRIT AND SPIRIT HE SURVIVES, REAPPEARS WITH THIS ACT OF GALLANTRY, ONLY TO BE VICTIMIZED AGAIN BY YOUR BLOODLUST!



WHISTLES TRIED TO SAVE HIM!



GUMBLIN IS RIGHT, PENDLECOAT IS A MONSTER!

HOW COULD HE DO THAT TO OUR BELOVED WHISTLES?



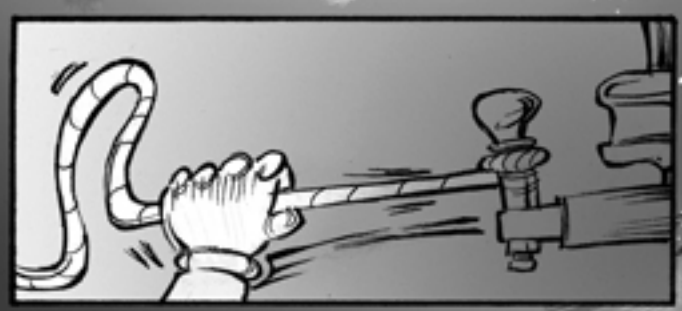
HIS REIGN OF BRUTALITY ENDS TONIGHT!

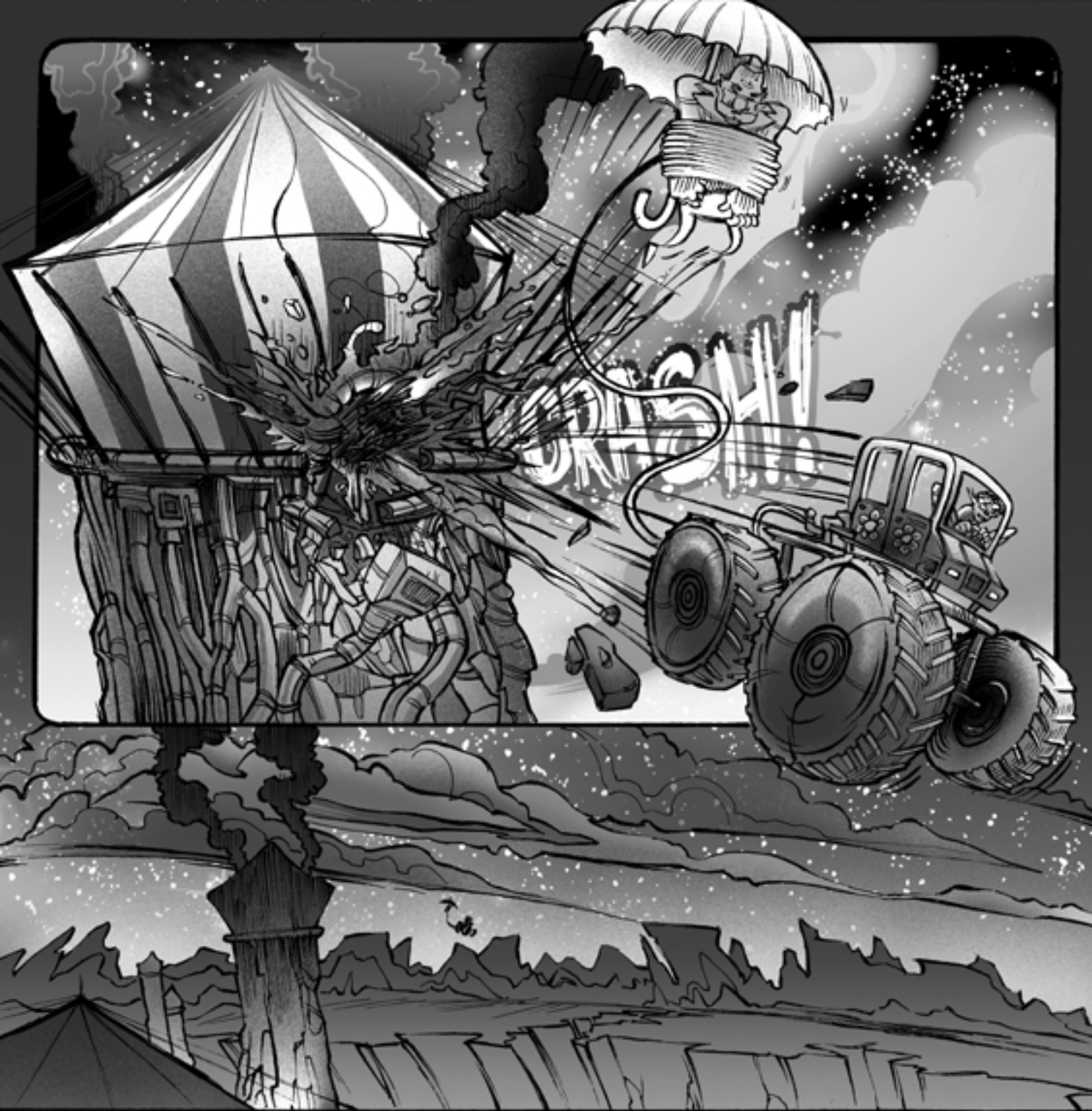


YOU...









Next Chapter:

a Clown flies  
With the Clown-fes



FOR DESKTOP WALLPAPER, GO TO:

[WWW.TEAMSPECIALOLYMPICS.COM/DESKTOPS.PHP](http://WWW.TEAMSPECIALOLYMPICS.COM/DESKTOPS.PHP)

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