

CHAPTER XXII -The circus boys in dixie

Land

In the closing days of the circus season, Phil Forrest cements his place as a star trapeze artist in Texas, despite the chill of approaching winter nights stirring impatience among the performers. As they head to Tucker, Texas, a joke among the performers about the town's name foreboding trouble sets a light-hearted tone, despite Phil's decision to forego his dangerous triple somersault act, heeding Mr. Sparling's warnings of the inherent risks.

Tucker welcomes the circus with no apparent signs of the predicted trouble, but unease grows as the evening performance begins under dark, oppressive skies. The animals' restlessness and the hyenas' unnerving laughter hint at a brewing storm, which circus folklore suggests could spell disaster. Despite this ominous atmosphere, the show begins with Phil and the other performers determined to entertain, even as the show's pace quickens in anticipation of the storm.

The predicted trouble arrives full force with a threatening gale, causing fear among the performers and the audience. Phil's leadership shines as he coordinates efforts to maintain calm, even as the tent starts to succumb to the storm's fury. In a dramatic turn, a lion named Wallace escapes amid the chaos, transforming the storm's threat into an immediate danger. Phil's bravery and quick thinking prevent a panic, and he confronts Wallace, managing to guide him away from the terrified spectators.

The chapter climaxes with the tent collapsing under the storm's might, but Phil's heroic efforts prevent a catastrophe, demonstrating his capacity for leadership and courage under immense pressure. Despite the perilous end to the evening, the circus community's resilience and solidarity emerge unshaken, ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead in their nomadic life. This chapter encapsulates the excitement,

danger, and camaraderie that define the circus, marking another memorable episode in the lives of the Circus Boys in Dixie Land.

