

# CHAPTER VI - The Circus Boys on the Mississippi

During a lively circus performance under the bright glow of gasoline lamps in the grand tent, an unexpected event stirred both performers and audience. Teddy Tucker, a diminutive clown, interrupted the show with an announcement that set the stage for a unique spectacle. He proclaimed that the circus's ostrich had laid an egg, presenting it as a novel attraction amidst the high-flying acts and daring performances. The ringmaster, initially disgruntled, quickly turned the situation into an opportunity, declaring the ostrich egg as a marvel and teasing the audience with Teddy's humorous intention to eat it.

As Teddy, with egg in hand, marched off amidst laughter and applause, the circus continued its array of entertainments, sailing from acts of skill to the promise of thundering Roman chariot races. However, the circus's atmosphere of joy was soon overshadowed by the ominous rumblings of an approaching storm. Despite the performers' attempts to carry on, and the ringmaster's reassurances, the storm's onset became undeniable. Lightning illuminated the tent, followed closely by thunder that shook the ground, unsettling both performers and spectators alike.

Teddy, unfazed and ever the jester, engaged the audience with his antics, offering levity even as the storm intensified. However, the weather's fury culminated in a bolt of lightning that struck the center pole of the tent, sending a ball of fire cascading down towards where Teddy stood. Miraculously unharmed, Teddy's quick reaction prevented disaster, showcasing his courageous spirit. Yet, this marked a turning point for the circus that evening, as the structural damage threatened the safety of all within the tent. Amid this chaos, Teddy's quick-thinking and Phil Forrest's composed actions underscored their unwavering bravery and dedication to each other and the circus.

family, embodying the spirit of adventure and resilience at the heart of their journey along the Mississippi.

