

# The Circus Boys On The Flying Rings

The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings by Edgar B. P. Darlington is an adventurous story of two brothers navigating the thrills and challenges of circus life while pursuing their dreams of becoming star performers.



## CHAPTER I -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Phil Forrest and Teddy Tucker, two inseparable friends with a shared yearning to join the circus, find themselves beneath the vibrant billboards of the Great Sparling Combined Shows. Phil, nearly seventeen, lives a life marked by hardship and loss, his parents having passed away five years prior, leaving him in the care of his miserly uncle. Despite these challenges, Phil's resolve to pursue an education and his dreams of circus stardom remains undimmed. Teddy, a year younger and equally determined, imagines himself as either a commanding ringmaster or a sprightly clown, his life having similarly been touched by loss, though he's been taken in by a kind family in Edmeston.

As they admire the circus poster, showcasing breathtaking stunts they wish to one day emulate, Teddy boasts of his ability to perform aerial cartwheels, only to be gently corrected by Phil that the stunt in question is, in fact, a double somersault. Their banter reveals deep aspirations: Phil dreams of high-flying acts that leave audiences in awe, while Teddy considers the immediate thrill of the circus life, undeterred by the daunting reality of their present circumstances.

Their conversation turns reflective as Phil laments his restricted childhood under his uncle's roof, his voice tinged with the sorrow of lost parental love yet steadied by

respect for his mother's memory. The boys' starkly different backgrounds, marked by tragedy and tough love, bond them with a shared conviction towards brighter futures, ideally under the big top.

A plan to attend the upcoming circus show in Edmeston reveals their innocently divergent views on the ethics of sneaking into the circus, with Teddy pragmatic and Phil principled, unwilling to compromise honesty for adventure. As they walk, their imaginations fueled by vibrant posters and the anticipation of the circus, they discuss the realities of their lives with candidness and youthful optimism. A daring attempt by Teddy to replicate the acrobatic feats advertised, resulting in a humorous yet somewhat perilous tumble into a ditch, encapsulates the fearless, albeit naive, spirit with which they approach their dreams and friendship.

The chapter closes with Phil assisting Teddy, their laughter and resilience shining through the mud-splattered aftermath of Teddy's impromptu stunt. Their unyielding friendship and dreams, set against the backdrop of the austere landscapes of their personal lives, craft a vivid tableau of hope, ambition, and the enchanting allure of the circus.

## CHAPTER II -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter II of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," Phil faces a harsh confrontation with his Uncle Abner Adams. When Phil returns home slightly late from school, his interest in a circus bill becomes the spark for a severe altercation. Phil, who longs to visit the circus, innocently proposes to earn the money himself for the ticket, but this idea is met with disdain by his uncle, who views the circus—and those who attend it—as unworthy. The conversation escalates quickly, revealing deeper discrepancies between Phil's aspirations, respect for his deceased parents, and his uncle's bitter, controlling demeanor.

Despite Phil's calm demeanor and attempts to reason, his uncle vehemently opposes not only the idea of Phil attending the circus but also decries Phil's desire for further education, demanding instead that he immediately join the workforce. This culminates in Uncle Abner's decisive, cold command for Phil to leave the house for good—a shocking turn that throws Phil into a deep emotional turmoil, exacerbated by the disrespectful way his uncle disrupts his belongings and questions his integrity. Despite the confrontation, Phil's resolve solidifies, and with a dignified farewell, he prepares to leave, carrying only his essentials and the cherished picture of his mother, ready to face an uncertain future with a brave heart. This chapter vividly paints the stark contrast between Phil's youthful innocence and eagerness to contribute positively to society, and Uncle Abner's harsh, cynical outlook on life, setting the stage for Phil's determined pursuit of independence and dignity.

## CHAPTER III -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In the twilight of a decision-filled day, Phil Forrest finds himself adrift in the wake of his uncle Abner Adams' harsh dismissal. With no clear direction, his journey begins outside the gate of the only home he's known, propelled not by a plan but a need to escape. Phil's uncertain path leads him to the outskirts of the village, into a hayfield that offers a temporary respite and a bed under the stars. Despite his precarious situation, Phil's resilience shines through as he contemplates his future with a mix of irony and determination, signaling the start of his independence.

The following morning illuminates Phil's new reality brightly and starkly. After a bout of personal care at a nearby trout stream, Phil is consumed by a pragmatic concern: the day's sustenance. His resolve to earn his breakfast draws him back towards the village, circumventing his uncle's house to avoid further conflict. Destiny, in the guise of Mrs. Cahill, interrupts his troubled ruminations. A familiar face and longtime family friend, Mrs. Cahill's timely intervention offers not just a meal but a semblance of warmth and belonging. Through their conversation, Phil recounts his abrupt departure, revealing his current state of homelessness but also his unbroken spirit and eagerness to forge his path.

Phil's commitment to self-reliance is palpable as he insists on contributing chores in exchange for Mrs. Cahill's generosity. The task of chopping wood serves as a physical manifestation of his determination, yet it is their exchange that uncovers a deeper narrative thread—the mystery of Phil's inheritance and Uncle Abner's potential deceit. Mrs. Cahill's suspicions stir curiosity and hint at unresolved injustice, adding layers to Phil's motivation and the trajectory of his journey.

The morning transitions to a busy anticipation of the final day of school and the uncertain, open-ended future beyond. As Phil sets out, buoyed by the goodwill of Mrs. Cahill and the camaraderie of his friend Teddy, the narrative subtly shifts from a story

of unceremonious expulsion to one of potential and youthful defiance. Phil's evolving story is a testament to resilience, the value of community support, and the enduring hope of a young man making his start in the world against the backdrop of early 20th-century rural America.



## CHAPTER IV -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

The Sparling Combined Shows arrived in Edmeston in the early morning, with Teddy and Phil watching eagerly from the Widow Cahill's fence. This circus traveled by road, a rarity in their modern times, boasting twenty-five wagons, including a band wagon, a wild west coach, and a calliope. The sight of elephants, assumed lions and tigers, a camel, and a herd of ponies excited the boys immensely.

As the procession moved toward the circus grounds, Teddy and Phil followed, discussing their willingness to be showmen, despite the hard work, longing to witness the spectacle of the tent-raising and dreaming of being part of it themselves. At the grounds, amidst the hustle of workers locating positions for tents, the boys encountered Rodney Palmer, a young performer on the flying rings, who shared insights into circus life and offered tips on how Phil might earn admission to the show.

The narrative unfolds with the boys and Rodney exploring the grounds, revealing a community buzzing with activity and anticipation. The introduction of the circus owner, James Sparling, during a moment of crisis, showcases the boys' quick thinking and bravery. Phil's instinctive action to prevent a lion cage from tipping leverages his keen observation and resourcefulness, earning him and Teddy admiration and free passes to the show from a grateful Sparling. This chapter captures the magical allure of the circus, friendship, and the value of quick wits and courage.

## CHAPTER V -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter V of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings" titled "When the Bands Played," Phil Forrest embarks on an enthusiastic preparation for the circus, starting by generously providing a ticket to the circus for Widow Cahill. His excitement is palpable as he ensures the widow, who hasn't seen a circus since her youth, will attend right next to him. Following the heartwarming interaction, Phil races to the circus grounds, greeted by the vibrant scene of performers in glittering costumes and decorated horses, all preparing for the parade.

The sight of the bustling circus lot, transformed from its quiet state just hours before, leaves Phil in amazement. Amid this flurry of activity, he is approached by Mr. Sparling's assistant, who, impressed by Phil's bravery during a previous incident involving a lion cage, invites him to participate in the parade as a member of the Kazoo Band. Phil, adorned in clown makeup and costume, is filled with excitement at the prospect of being part of the circus parade, a dream going beyond his expectations.

As the parade commences, with the buoyant sounds of circus music filling the air, Phil experiences the peak of joy. Unrecognized by the onlookers, including people he knows from his village, Phil takes pride in his anonymous contribution to the spectacle. A particularly heartwarming moment occurs when he spots Mrs. Cahill among the spectators, a reminder of his small acts of kindness that knit the narrative's theme of community and joy together.

The chapter concludes with a dramatic turn as trouble arises during the parade—an uncontrollable pony with a rider unable to manage, due to a broken bit, careens towards them. The rider, a circus woman, is thrown and dragged, caught by her foot in the stirrup, prompting urgent cries for help that go unanswered by the spectators. In a

gripping cliffhanger, Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, makes a valiant effort to rescue her, showcasing the bravery and quick action that seem to echo Phil's own qualities.

This chapter captures the essence of circus life—its vibrancy, the camaraderie among its members, and the underlying risks. Through Phil's eyes, readers experience the magic of the circus and the unexpected incidents that test the mettle of its performers and workers.



## CHAPTER VI -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Phil Forrest, a plucky youngster among the circus troupe, demonstrated his valor in a distressing situation that left even the seasoned circus folk in awe. When a pony, agitated and uncontrollable, threatened the life of a woman caught in its stirrup, Phil acted with courage and precision. Ignoring his safety, Phil made a calculated leap towards the rampaging animal, managing to latch onto it despite the dangerous chaos.

His bold move was met with a mixture of admiration and concern, as onlookers feared for his safety amidst the tumult. The pony, taken by surprise by Phil's audacious maneuver, could not evade the boy, who, despite a severe collision that would have daunted many, clung on determinedly. Phil's resolve was evident as he not only aimed to save himself but also the endangered woman, his left arm firmly around the broncho's neck while his right hand sought control by seizing the pony's nostrils. This desperate struggle was not without its dangers, as Phil was tossed and jostled, eliciting audible concern from the spectators and fellow performers, including Miaco, the head clown, who played a crucial role in rescuing the woman from her precarious predicament.

Eventually, Phil's bravery and tenacity paid off. He managed to subdue the pony, albeit ending up in a precarious position that necessitated a swift rescue by Mr. Sparling and the other circus personnel. Despite the ordeal, Phil emerged relatively unscathed, his spirits undiminished, as evidenced by his cheerful interaction with Mr. Sparling and the clowns post-rescue. His heroic act not only saved a life but also earned him the admiration and cheers of the townspeople, further solidifying his place within the circus community.

The aftermath of Phil's daring rescue has broader implications for the circus, too. The buzz generated from the incident promised a packed audience for the afternoon show, hinting at financial success and a jovial atmosphere among the troupe. Phil's heroics

sparked conversations about his potential future in the circus, with many agreeing that his quick thinking and bravery were indicative of a natural showman. As the parade concluded and preparations for the next show began, Phil's adventure left him somewhat a legend among the troupe and the townspeople alike, showcasing the true mettle of a circus hero.



## CHAPTER VII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Chapter VII of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings" captures the adventures of Phil, a young boy whose acts of bravery and kindness towards the circus animals earn him recognition and friendly exchanges. After a valorous act of saving a show woman, Phil races home to change his tattered clothes, hopeful to catch the circus show on time. Supported by Mrs. Cahill, who is proud of his heroic deed, he quickly gets ready and rushes to the circus, his excitement barely contained.

Upon arrival, Phil finds himself an unexpected celebrity among the circus crowd, earning admiring glances and whispers. Despite the unwanted attention, Mr. Sparling's assistant sneaks him in before the show starts, allowing him a quiet moment in the menagerie tent. Here, Phil's natural affinity for animals shines through as he befriends Emperor and Jupiter, two of the circus elephants, by feeding them sugar and peanuts. This act of kindness leads to an engaging conversation with the elephant keeper, who educates Phil on the nuances of animal behavior, especially that of elephants and the "cats" – lions and tigers which are part of the circus's menagerie.

The keeper shares insights on the elephants' memory and how to discern an elephant's mood through physical signs, while also providing a candid view on the unpredictable nature of lions and tigers. Phil, intrigued by the animals and the life of the circus, finds himself drawn into the world of animal training, watching in fascination as the animal trainer puts Wallace, the lion, through his paces. This experience stirs a newfound aspiration in him to perhaps one day become an animal trainer himself, albeit with smaller and less dangerous animals to begin with.

The chapter closes with Phil, feeling a sense of belonging and a newfound curiosity about the circus, deciding to find his seat as the crowd moves into the circus tent for the show. His day at the circus becomes not just an adventure but a learning journey, opening his eyes to the possibility of a life among the performers and animals he's

grown to admire.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER VIII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter VIII of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," an astonishing encounter unfolds as young Phil Forrest experiences a moment of sheer awe and a touch of fear when suddenly encircled and lifted by Emperor, the elephant. This unexpected interaction takes place just as the elephants are heading to join the grand entry, leaving Phil with no time to react to Emperor's sudden affectionate gesture. Recognizing Phil as his **new friend**, Emperor carefully hoists him into the air, demonstrating a scene of gentle camaraderie that captivates Phil's heart and ignites a thrilling adventure.

Phil is whisked away to participate in the performance, sitting atop Emperor, holding onto the head harness for dear life. His unintended debut as a circus performer catches the eye of Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, who sees the spectacle as a potential crowd-puller. The excitement among the spectators, particularly Phil's school friends, is palpable as they witness this unexpected act, merging fear, exhilaration, and a sense of pride in Phil.

The narrative peaks as Emperor, with Phil on him, engages in a waltz, moving in perfect harmony with the music. The trainer's guidance offers Phil a semblance of security, as he prepares for an even more daring feat — standing on Emperor's head. The endeavor is successful, sparking a wave of applause and admiration from the crowd, marking the moment as a stellar highlight of the show.

As the act concludes, Emperor exhibits a moment of reluctance to part with Phil but eventually complies with the trainer's command. The episode concludes with a dramatic flair when Emperor, prompted by an insatiable bond, momentarily breaks free, racing towards Phil. This act, mirroring a blend of wild impulse and deep-seated affection, adds a dramatic ending to Phil's unexpected adventure in the sawdust arena, leaving the audience in awe of the deep connection formed between boy and

elephant.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER IX -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter IX of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," the narrative follows Phil, a courageous and adventurous boy who finds himself in thrilling company at the circus. The chapter begins with Phil's unexpected ride on Emperor, an elephant, that delights and amuses the circus audience. Phil's composure and rapport with the elephant earn him admiration, particularly when he humbly requests the keeper not to punish Emperor for their impromptu escapade. Transitioning from this adventure, Phil then reunites with Mrs. Cahill and searches for his friend, Teddy Tucker. Teddy's own mishaps lead him into trouble with the ringmaster but ultimately, both boys reunite in the stands, turning their attention toward the circus acts.

As they observe, Phil and Teddy's commentary on the performers' skills and the wages they might earn provides insight into their youthful curiosity and aspirations. Phil, in particular, emerges as both a protagonist and a spectator, his reactions forming a bridge between the audience in the circus and the reader. The performance by Mademoiselle Mora, a talented bareback rider, captures the boys' attention, notably with her acknowledgment of Phil, much to Teddy's chagrin and Mrs. Cahill's dry humor.

The narrative humorously intertwines personal heroism with circus spectacle when a clown references Phil's earlier adventure in a song, suggesting his act of bravery was both a feat worth celebrating and a whimsical part of the day's entertainment. The chapter subtly layers themes of bravery, friendship, and the mesmerising allure of the circus. The boys' engagement with the performances, especially the flying rings, underscores their fascination with acrobatics—an interest grounded in their own experiences practicing on schoolyard rings. The spotlight on Rodney Palmer, a performer who acknowledges Phil and Teddy, reflects on the communal spirit of the circus and the boys' admiration for the performers' skills.

This episode encapsulates the essence of circus life through the lens of youth, marked by daring exploits, camaraderie, and a sense of wonder at the feats of circus performers. It ends on a note of anticipation, symbolizing the allure of the circus and its capacity to inspire dreams and foster connections among its varied audience.



## CHAPTER X -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter X titled "Phil Gets a Surprise" of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," Phil Forrest seeks out Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, after being told he wanted to see him. Phil, curious and slightly apprehensive, approaches Sparling's makeshift office, humorously dubbed the "doghouse," reflecting on the possible reasons for the summons. The chapter unfolds as a significant turning point for Phil, morphing from a simple interaction to a life-changing conversation.

Phil's meeting with Mr. Sparling starts with uncertainty but quickly evolves into a pivotal career opportunity. Sparling quizzes Phil on his recent actions around the circus, particularly his intervention with Emperor, the circus's prized animal, hinting at a blend of reprimand and intrigue. Despite Phil's modest dismissal of his deeds, Sparling expresses knowledge of Phil's personal background, revealing an unexpected depth of interest in him.

The conversation takes an exciting turn when Sparling offers Phil a position with the circus, acknowledging his bravery and potential. With a blend of disbelief and excitement, Phil negotiates his first contract, securing a weekly wage and fulfilling his dream of joining the circus. This deal is not just a job offer; it's a gateway to adventure and a new life for Phil, who has long harbored aspirations of circus life.

Phil's thoughts about the salary, combined with the responsibility and recognition, reflect a mix of youthful optimism and a pragmatic outlook toward his future. This marks a significant transition from boyhood curiosity about the circus to becoming an essential part of it.

Mr. Sparling's advice to Phil underscores the chapter's thematic elements of growth, responsibility, and the importance of maintaining integrity and humility. The conversation also subtly challenges stereotypes about circus life, suggesting a

community bound by shared values and respect for professionalism.

As Phil exits, buoyed by his new role, he is tasked with a mission to bring his friend Teddy into the fold, proposing an expansion of his newfound circus family. The chapter closes on a hopeful note, with Phil and Teddy poised on the brink of a new journey, illustrating themes of friendship, ambition, and the pursuit of dreams within the vibrant world of the circus.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER XI -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XI of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," Phil and Teddy arrive at the circus lot, filled with excitement about their new jobs. They have left their village behind, vowing to earn and give back to those who cared for them. Teddy is somewhat skeptical about their future in the circus, joking about their importance, while Phil approaches the situation with a maturity and a sense of business acumen beyond his years.

Upon reaching the circus lot, they promptly report to Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, who gives them practical advice and sends them to dinner in the cook tent, ensuring they're introduced and accepted among the performers. The meal is an eye-opener for the boys; sitting at the performers' table, they shed their earlier fantasies about circus life and begin to see the performers as ordinary people with extraordinary jobs. Phil is recognized by some performers for his elephant ride during the grand entry, sparking conversations that make the boys feel a part of the circus family.

Their conversation with a trapeze artist reveals the number of people involved in the show and highlights the close-knit community within the circus. The presence of unique talents, like Billy Thorpe, the Armless Wonder, further exposes the boys to the diverse and remarkable skills found in the circus. Teddy's humor about the situation, juxtaposed with Phil's more respectful curiosity, showcases their different personalities and how they're adapting to their new environment.

After dinner, invited by Mr. Sparling, Phil contemplates riding the elephant, Emperor, in the night show, recognizing the role such acts play in drawing and pleasing crowds. As the night progresses, a tense moment unfolds with a trainer facing a dangerous situation with Bengal, a tiger in a foul mood. Phil and Teddy witness the episode, realizing the real dangers and responsibilities that come with circus life. Mr. Sparling's

handling of the situation, and the boys' firsthand experience of the unexpected perils of their new world, underscore the seriousness beneath the circus's spectacle.

Through this chapter, the narrative effectively captures the excitement, wonders, and sobering realities of circus life, as seen through the eyes of two young and hopeful boys. Their journey from village lads to circus performers is marked by anticipation, discovery, and a growing awareness of the complexities and dangers of their chosen path.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER XII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XII titled "A Thrilling Rescue" from "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings", the protagonist, Phil, displays remarkable courage during a life-threatening situation at the circus. Amidst a show, a tiger named Bengal attacks, trapping both Phil and the unconscious tiger trainer, Bob, in its cage. Phil, relying on his quick thinking, seizes the tiger's tail, drawing its attention away from Bob and enduring the tiger's violent thrashing to buy time for help to arrive.

As chaos ensues, Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, leads a group of circus men armed with makeshift weapons to the rescue. Phil's bold strategy enables the men to distract Bengal long enough to safely extract Bob from the cage. Meanwhile, Teddy, Phil's friend and fellow circus boy, manages to detach Phil from the tiger's grip, albeit Phil collapses shortly after from exhaustion and possibly injuries sustained during the ordeal.

The circus crew, under Mr. Sparling's command, then engages in a tense standoff with the tiger, eventually managing to secure Bengal and prevent it from escaping the cage, thus averting further danger. Phil is hastily cared for; despite his protests to continue performing that night, Mr. Sparling insists he rest, recognizing Phil's bravery and quick thinking as true marks of a showman.

Later, Phil is determined to ride in the circus parade, showcasing his resilience and dedication to the circus. His decision to make a brief appearance, against medical advice, reassures the public of his welfare and further cements his reputation as a brave and devoted circus performer.

Additionally, the chapter delves into the aftermath of the rescue and the immediate preparations for the circus's next move. Phil and Teddy, now more involved with the circus family, assist with the teardown and packing, eager to learn and adapt to their

new environment. Their adventures continue as they navigate the logistics of circus life, including where to sleep and how to contribute further to the circus's success.

This chapter serves not only as a thrilling narrative of heroism and teamwork but also highlights Phil's growth in character and commitment to circus life, enduring challenges with valor and a positive spirit.



## CHAPTER XIII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XIII of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," entitled "The Dawning of a New Day," Teddy and Phil experience the harsh realities of circus life firsthand. Their day begins abruptly when they are ejected onto the cold ground from their makeshift bed by a tentman eager to start his day's work, leading to an immediate confrontation between the inexperienced boys and the harried staff. As they battle the chilly dawn, the two friends decide to warm up with some physical activity. Unfortunately, their efforts result in an unplanned dip in a nearby stream, exacerbating their discomfort.

Shivering and miserable, the boys' spirits are initially low as they face the demands of circus life without the glamor they had imagined. However, their morning takes a turn for the better after they stumble upon the cook tent. A kind showman offers them hot coffee, which not only warms their bodies but also lifts their spirits. The showman's encouragement prompts Phil and Teddy to volunteer for work in the cook tent, beginning their day with a sense of purpose.

Their work at the cook tent quickly transforms their outlook. Engaged and active, they bond with the friendly cook and show initiative that does not go unnoticed. Phil, in particular, seizes the opportunity to propose wearing a costume for his act with Emperor, and Mr. Sparling, the show owner, approves, seeing value in Phil's dedication and foresight. This small victory is emblematic of Phil's approach to their new circus life: facing challenges with optimism and a willingness to learn.

Mr. Sparling's acknowledgment of Phil's potential and value to the show reinforces the boys' belief in their own worth and contributions. By integrating themselves into the fabric of circus life, Phil and Teddy quickly move from being mere spectators to active participants, with Phil's role expanding beyond his expectations. Their initial adversity in the cold morning leads to a series of interactions that not only endear them to the

circus community but also affirm their commitment to their chosen path.

This chapter emphasizes resilience, the importance of a positive attitude, and the value of seizing opportunities. Despite a rough start, Phil and Teddy demonstrate that with enthusiasm and hard work, they can adapt to and overcome the challenges of circus life, drawing one step closer to realizing their dreams within the vibrant world of the circus.



## Summaryer

## CHAPTER XIV -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," Chapter XIV unfolds a day in Phil Forrest's ascending circus career with an audience-packed afternoon performance, indicating his increasing popularity. Phil, a humble but aspiring circus boy, doesn't let his recent fame get to his head, attributing his success to fortunate accidents rather than personal greatness. Despite this, he dreams of achieving something truly notable.

Phil's buoyancy grows as he performs his elephant act with more confidence, riding with ease and contemplating improving his act to include performing on the rings, elevating it beyond the ordinary. Encouraged by Kennedy, Phil ponders the possibilities of enhancing their act, despite initial worries about Mr. Sparling's approval.

The narrative portrays Phil's proactive nature and creativity as he discusses his idea with Kennedy and later with the property and costume departments to bring his vision to life. His suggestion for a novel act receives mixed reactions from Kennedy and Mr. Sparling but ultimately, Phil's determination and clear vision for his act convince Sparling to give it a chance. From consulting the property man and carpenter to Sparling's hesitant consent, Phil exemplifies a blend of youthful exuberance and professional persistence.

Phil and Mr. Kennedy work together on Phil's innovative idea, contributing to both the physical setup and strategic planning, demonstrating Phil's integration into the circus community and his peers' growing respect for him. Phil proposes using humor and surprise to elevate their elephant act, disclosing his plan only partially to Sparling to maintain an element of surprise. The approval from Sparling, albeit hesitant, marked a pivotal moment in Phil's career, allowing him space for creative exploration within the circus acts.

Their extensive preparation culminates in a successful secret rehearsal, establishing a foundation for their debut. The new act, blending humor with impressive acrobatics, immediately resonates with the audience, showcasing Phil's instinct for performance art and capturing the essence of circus entertainment through innovation and surprise.

Phil's act, a perfect amalgamation of humor, surprise, and skill, showcased during the grand entry, becomes the highlight. Dressed unassumingly, he reveals his presence in a dramatic fashion atop an elephant, transforming from what appears to be a bonnet decoration to a striking figure in red silk tights. This spectacular reveal not only astonishes the audience but also earns Mr. Sparling's approval, indicating Phil's undeniable talent and potential as a circus performer. Phil's journey from an ordinary boy with a dream to a circus sensation captures the essence of dedication, creativity, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

## CHAPTER XV -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Following his successful performance, Phil Forrest receives commendations from Mr. Miaco, the clown, while joking about the repercussions of becoming too prideful. Despite the jovial exchanges, there's an awareness and preparation for the physical demands of circus life, encapsulated by their discussion on dressing routines and the importance of self-care post-performance. Phil, ambitious and reflective, dreams of one day leading his own show, a notion that seems to amuse and perhaps inspire those around him.

The camaraderie between Phil and Teddy is highlighted through their shared experiences and challenges, emphasizing the necessity of adaptability and resilience in circus life. Their interactions with Mr. Miaco and other performers provide a glimpse into the makeshift familial bonds formed within the circus, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support amidst their transient lifestyle.

Phil and Teddy's struggles, from securing their sleeping arrangements in the canvas wagon to confronting the natural elements, underscore the physical and mental fortitude required of circus performers. Their humorous yet pragmatic approach to obstacles, including coping with inclement weather and envisioning pragmatic solutions like purchasing rubber coats, reflects their growing acclimatization to circus hardships and their determination to persevere.

The conclusion of their day, soaked and seeking refuge, transitions to a moment of learning and adaptation as they find solace and warmth by the steam boiler. This episode encapsulates their ongoing journey of personal and professional growth within the circus environment, driven by ambition, curiosity, and an unyielding spirit of adventure. The chapter closes on a note of anticipation and readiness for the challenges ahead, signifying Phil and Teddy's evolution from novices to emerging showmen in the enchanting yet demanding circus landscape.

## CHAPTER XVI -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Chapter XVI of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings" starts with Phil Forrest, brimming with excitement over his recent success, making his way through a storm to the village. Unbothered by the wet weather, his mind is occupied with thoughts of his achievement and the twenty dollars a week he'll earn, imagining the reactions of his Uncle Abner, Mrs. Cahill, and his friends back home. After purchasing some rain gear, he observes the dampened parade, where performers, particularly clowns, attempt to lift spirits despite the miserable conditions. Phil's focus then shifts to improve his act with the flying rings, alongside his friend Teddy. They practice daring maneuvers under the watchful eyes of their fellow performers, resulting in Teddy's humorous mishap and subsequent fall, which, luckily, ends without injury thanks to a strategically placed pile of straw.

The narrative also delves into the camaraderie and underlying competition between circus performers, highlighted through their interactions in the dressing tent. Phil and the seasoned clown, Mr. Miaco, discuss the importance of constant improvement and seizing opportunities within the circus life's precarious nature. Aside from the physical demands, this chapter reveals the emotional landscape of circus performers, showcasing their humanity, dreams, and the familial bonds they form on the road.

Phil's commitment to excel and deepen his connection with his peers is evident as he prepares for the evening performance. Despite the ongoing rain creating less-than-ideal conditions, Phil and Teddy devise a plan to stay dry, underscoring their resourcefulness and camaraderie. As Phil makes his grand entrance atop Emperor, the elephant, he deeply feels his role's significance, focusing on delivering a spectacle that captivates his audience, emphasizing his dedication to his craft and the circus life.

This chapter blends the thrill of performance with the gritty realities and close-knit community life of circus performers, encapsulating Phil's journey of growth, ambition,

and the value of perseverance amidst setbacks.



## CHAPTER XVII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XVII of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," titled "Left Behind," the aftermath of a circus accident unfolds dramatically. Two clowns, amidst their preparation for a performance, discuss a recent mishap that hints at a potentially serious injury, suggesting someone might have broken their neck. The band and clowns persist in their entertainment, quickly steering the audience's attention away from the distressing event. The narrative then shifts to Emperor, a concerned animal shown resisting until commanded by Mr. Kennedy to proceed to his quarters.

The scene moves to the dressing tent, where Phil Forrest lies injured on an improvised bed made of trunks and horse blankets, surrounded by fellow performers in varying states of costume. The uncertainty of Phil's condition is palpable as the performers wait anxiously for a doctor's diagnosis, discussing the unfortunate accident caused by a faulty wire.

Mr. Sparling, upon hearing news of the incident, rushes to the tent. His concern for Phil is evident as he demands updates and insists on assuming responsibility for the safety measures that failed. The arrival of the doctor brings a tense silence, breaking only with Mr. Sparling's urgent inquiries about Phil's condition. The doctor's examination reveals Phil's fortunate escape from more severe injuries, considering the height from which he fell. Despite suggestions to leave Phil in a local hospital, Mr. Sparling vehemently decides against it, insisting the doctor himself stay behind to ensure Phil's recovery, emphasizing Phil's importance to the circus.

Phil is moved to a hotel, where he receives constant care from the surgeon through the night. As dawn breaks, Phil regains consciousness briefly, showing concern for his absence from the circus. He is informed that the circus has moved on without him, leaving him in the care of the town's medical facilities, highlighting the familial ties and deep concern within the circus community for one of their own. The chapter closes on

a reflective note, with Phil coming to terms with his situation and the collective effort to ensure his well-being amidst the transient life of the circus.



## CHAPTER XVIII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Phil's recovery from his accident at the circus was a topic of much discussion and admiration among the local village boys. Despite his injuries, Phil embraced their curiosity and admiration, reflecting on his experience with humor and a touch of realism about the dangers of circus life. Meanwhile, the circus owner, James Sparling, deeply concerned about the accident, probed for the truth behind the incident involving Phil, the young circus performer.

Sparling's discussion with Kennedy, the trainer, revealed a startling discovery—the wire from which Phil had fallen was deliberately cut, not simply broken due to an accident or negligence. This revelation prompted a serious investigation by Sparling, indicating malicious intent behind Phil's accident. The mood in the circus was tense, with Sparling and Kennedy both deeply troubled by the implications of this sabotage. The episode highlighted the inherent risks of circus life, not just from the demanding physical performances but from potential dangers lurking within the troupe itself.

Kennedy's admission of the wire being cut and the presentation of the severed wire pieces to Sparling turned the situation from an unfortunate accident into a grave concern about safety and trust within the circus community. Sparling's reaction, from initial suspicion to silent contemplation, suggested a mix of anger, frustration, and resolve to address this severe breach of safety and camaraderie.

The chapter emphasized the camaraderie and collective concern within the circus for Phil's well-being, juxtaposed with the shock of intentional sabotage, adding a layer of mystery and tension to the narrative. This incident not only threatened the physical safety of the performers but also the trust and unity that held the circus family together, setting the stage for a deeper examination of motives and relationships within the troupe.

## CHAPTER XIX -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XIX of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," titled "Teddy Distinguishes Himself," the circus atmosphere is tense with James Sparling, the circus owner, infuriated over Phil Forrest's recent accident. Unbeknownst to the higher-ups, the chapter unfolds with a humorous focus on Teddy, Phil's chum, who becomes the unintended star of the circus. Teddy, already a natural clown, forges an amusing partnership with Jumbo, a trick mule known for its unpredictable behavior.

One day, as performers limber up, Teddy mounts Jumbo, sparking laughter among the circus folks. The mule, equipped merely with a cinch girth and bridle reins, is set to perform alone in the ring. However, a fun-loving clown provokes Jumbo with a pin just as the mule is about to enter the arena. This prompts Jumbo to burst through the entry curtains with Teddy precariously clinging onto him, much to the ringmaster's and the audience's astonishment.

Jumbo embarks on a wild performance, bucking and kicking with Teddy struggling to stay on. This unexpected act turns chaotic, with Teddy's various misadventures on Jumbo's back causing a tempest of laughter and amazement from the crowd. Mr. Sparling, witnessing the scene, initially reacts with anger but soon finds himself swept up in the hilarity of the situation. Despite efforts to halt the performance gone awry, Jumbo's antics only escalate, drawing the entire audience into a frenzy of excitement. Teddy's inadvertent clowning, including crashing through paper hoops and losing his hat to a kick from Jumbo, further adds to the spectacle.

The climax of Teddy's accidental performance comes when Jumbo, aiming to retreat, propels Teddy into the air with a series of kicks. Teddy lands amid the band, capping off his unexpected display of acrobatics with a dramatic flourish. This chapter encapsulates the essence of circus life—unexpected twists, the camaraderie among performers, and the joy derived from unintended comedy. Teddy's day as an

accidental star showcases his resilience and the inherent unpredictability of performing animals, leaving the circus audience and his fellow performers in throes of delight over the spectacle.



## CHAPTER XX -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

Chapter XX of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings" reveals a riveting continuation of Teddy and Phil's adventures within the circus world. After a tumultuous performance involving a mule act orchestrated by Teddy, he finds himself suddenly recognized and rewarded by James Sparling, the circus owner, who offers to double Teddy's salary for repeating his accidental stunt in future shows. Elevating from his humble beginnings, Teddy transitions from working in the cook tent to becoming a highlighted performer alongside an educated mule, making the duo an instant hit among the circus attendees. However, mindful of the potential dangers, Teddy decides against concluding his act with a risky dive.

During this time, Phil Forrest, Teddy's close friend and fellow circus boy, recovers from an accident and returns to the circus, eager to resume his performances. The camaraderie between Teddy and Phil is evident as they discuss financial plans, with Phil advising Teddy to save his earnings. Phil shares his own strategy of sending money home to Mrs. Cahill for safekeeping, subtly showcasing the maturity and foresight he possesses beyond his circus duties.

Their entrepreneurial spirit shines as they contemplate owning their own show one day while also recognizing the importance of education in their future endeavors. Both boys are committed to improving their act and place a special emphasis on preparing physically, with advice from Mr. Miaco, the head clown, suggesting they undertake bending exercises to enhance their flexibility and performance readiness.

Phil's visit to the menagerie tent and his interaction with Emperor, the elephant, adds a layer of personal connection and joy to his circus life, further emphasizing his multifaceted relationship with both the performers and the animals within the circus.

The chapter takes a surprising turn as Phil seeks to understand the cause of his accident better, leading to a curious discovery of a filed wire and a small file found in his trunk, hinting at potential sabotage. The conversation between Phil and Mr. Sparling about this discovery raises questions about trust, safety, and the competitive nature hidden within the circus's camaraderie.

This chapter not only highlights the themes of friendship, ambition, and resilience but also introduces a mystery element that adds depth to the narrative, leaving readers eager to follow Teddy and Phil's journey in the circus and uncover the truth behind Phil's accident.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER XXI -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XXI of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," titled "An Elephant in Jail," the narrative unfolds with a gripping episode involving Phil and the circus owner, Mr. Sparling. The chapter begins with a refusal by Phil to name a suspect he believes to be responsible for an undisclosed act, much to Mr. Sparling's frustration. Despite Sparling's anger, he holds Phil in high regard, even jokingly stating Phil might own the show someday. The circus is thriving, especially in Pennsylvania, where Phil and his friend Teddy's performances on the flying rings, under Mr. Miaco's tutelage, have become major attractions. They're also learning tumbling, assisted by a "mechanic" to prevent injury during practice.

The story then takes a turn when an unfortunate incident occurs during a parade in a mining town. A curious local, aiming to test the theory that an elephant's hide is impenetrable, stabs Emperor, one of the circus elephants, with a penknife. The elephant reacts violently, causing serious injury to the man and considerable damage to property. This leads to a legal debacle where the circus owner, Mr. Sparling, is faced with a hefty damages claim, culminating in Emperor being taken into custody by deputies.

As the ever-resourceful Mr. Sparling navigates through the legal challenges, using the incident as an advertisement opportunity, Phil is concerned about the impact on his act and salary. Sparling, despite his exasperated exterior, displays a philosophical attitude towards the ordeal, reassuring Phil. The chapter concludes with Phil in contemplation, asking about the next show's location, indicating his relentless commitment and perhaps a plan to assist in resolving the situation with Emperor.

The chapter artfully blends humor, the harsh realities of circus life, and the commanding presence of the main characters – Phil's determination, Teddy's camaraderie, and Mr. Sparling's complex personality. The incident not only showcases

the unpredictability of working with animals but also highlights the close-knit nature of the circus community as they confront challenges together.



## CHAPTER XXII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

After making sure everyone had left, Phil Forrest hurried toward the village under the cover of night, intent on reaching the blacksmith shop where he knew tension had built up against the Sparling Circus and perhaps even against Emperor, the elephant. As Phil arrived near the cemetery, voices in the distance prompted him to stealthily approach the shop, where a group of villagers gathered, discussing their recent antagonistic actions toward the circus. Amidst their conversation, Phil learned that a man injured in the earlier fray was expected to recover, which brought him some comfort, especially concerning Emperor's involvement.

Phil's concern for Emperor grew as he heard the elephant's restless movements from inside the locked shop. Despite his initial ambitions to free Emperor, Phil's contemplation of the legality and morality of breaking the lock made him reconsider. Instead, he opted to comfort the elephant through the small gesture of calling out softly and providing peanuts through a broken window—a small consolation for both.

The situation escalated rapidly when Phil, after signaling Emperor to comfort him, inadvertently provoked a dramatic escape. Emperor emphatically responded to Phil's whistle by breaking free from his confinement, demolishing the shop in a display of strength and determination. Phil, initially stunned, quickly embraced the moment. Demonstrating a remarkable bond, Emperor gently lifted Phil onto his back upon his command, and together they embarked on a daring escape from the village.

Their flight was marked by a cacophony of trumpeting calls from Emperor, which roused the entire village. As the astonished residents discovered the destruction and the elephant's escape, Phil and Emperor made their way towards the show grounds, before veering off to follow the circus's route. Phil's elation at their successful escape was mingled with apprehension about potential repercussions, but as dawn broke, they continued on, driven by the thrill of freedom and the strength of their unique

companionship.



Summaryer

## CHAPTER XXIII -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In Chapter XXIII of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," titled "The Mystery Solved," the narrative begins with Phil Forrest's dramatic return to the circus on Emperor, an elephant, startling the townspeople and circus crew. Amidst this chaos, Phil alerts everyone that they are being pursued, which propels Mr. Sparling and the circus folk into action to prevent the capture of Phil and Emperor by a vindictive posse claiming ownership of the elephant. A confrontation ensues until Mr. Sparling assertively handles the situation, promising legal settlement for any legitimate grievances while firmly refusing to surrender Phil or Emperor.

The matter is quickly resolved, with the threat of legal action convincing the posse to back down and instead attend the circus as spectators, albeit at a charge. Following this, Mr. Sparling, acknowledging the efforts and troubles brought upon by Phil—though not directly his fault—agrees to cover the costs incurred from the damages, appreciative of Phil's initiative and bravery which inadvertently boosted the circus's success.

Phil grapples with feelings of guilt and concern over potentially tarnishing his budding circus career through his well-meant actions. Yet, Mr. Sparling reassures him, crediting Phil with their success and hinting at a promising future with the circus.

As Phil prepares for an afternoon practice with Teddy Tucker, discussions and advice hint at underlying jealousy and possible sabotage within their ranks, particularly aimed at Phil. This culminates in a dramatic event during a performance in Canton, Ohio, where a storm disrupts the show, leading to a dangerous situation involving the aerial acts. This incident injures Signor Navaro, a key performer, who subsequently admits to Phil his jealousy-driven sabotage attempt, seeking forgiveness.

Phil, understanding and compassionate, assures Navaro of his forgiveness, choosing to keep the matter private. This chapter closes with Phil not only solving the mystery behind the sabotage but also showcasing his maturity, kindness, and leadership qualities, becoming a pivotal figure within the circus community.



## CHAPTER XXIV -The circus boys on the flying Rings

---

In the concluding chapter of "The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings," Phil reflects on the impacts of accidents on circus performers, revealing his introspective nature as he mulls over the honorable path in life. Early the next day, demonstrating his unyielding work ethic and eagerness, Phil awakens refreshed and immediately engages with the circus's daily operations. Despite his colleague Teddy's preference for sleeping outdoors, Phil seeks out Mr. Sparling to discuss the recent accident's ramifications on the show. In a demonstration of his proactivity and commitment to the circus, Phil offers to step in for Signor Navaro, who is recuperating, highlighting his adaptability and dedication to the show's success.

The narrative solidifies Phil's and Teddy's positions as versatile and invaluable circus performers when they propose to take over the flying rings act, showcasing their skill and ambition. Their offer and subsequent successful demonstration before Mr. Sparling not only exemplify their personal growth and teamwork but also highlight their ingenuity and the support they receive from Mr. Miaco, a senior performer. This act of stepping in not only solves a problem for Mr. Sparling but also underscores the theme of camaraderie, mentorship, and the cultivation of talent within the circus community.

Their triumphant performance, marked by innovation and daring, cements their status as sensational performers, earning them both recognition and a significant raise, symbolizing their transition from novices to established circus stars. Their dedication and talent prompt a change in the circus's routine, ensuring safety measures like the net are standard practice, indicating a shift towards a more safety-conscious operation following their act's success.

The chapter closes on a note of victory and optimism, with Phil and Teddy fully integrated into the circus as indispensable performers, embodying themes of resilience, growth, and the power of determination. Their story is a testament to the

circus not just as a space for entertainment, but as a crucible for character development and the forging of lifelong bonds.

