

SHERRI

Who would have imagined such a thing?

~~The twins smile as they return to their compartment~~

Start

INT. CABOOSE - NIGHT

Daniel enters, and returns to his place at the poker table.

SEBASTIAN

Look at this, Dad! A genuine,
mummified monkey's paw from India.
Morris says it has magical powers!

DANIEL

Interesting.
(to Morris)
Fifty, and raise fifty.

He peels off the bills from the wad, and tosses them in.

Morris glances at his hand, then studies Daniel's eyes.

MORRIS

Call.

He counts the money in his wallet.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Damn. I only have forty left.

Daniel notices Sebastian still admiring the monkey's paw.

DANIEL

If you want to throw in the good
luck charm, that would be fine.

MORRIS

Sebastian, hand me the monkey's paw.

Sebastian hands him the paw, and Morris tosses it on the pot.

DANIEL

What do you have?

MORRIS

(revealing his hand)
Four kings. Sorry, pal.

DANIEL

Don't be sorry.
(revealing his hand)
Jack high, straight flush...
(winks at Morris)
...Pal.

Daniel gathers his winnings.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Hey Sebastian...

Sebastian looks up from his book.

Just as Daniel tosses the monkey's paw to him, there is a
WICKED CRACK OF THUNDER.

SEBASTIAN
(as much to Morris as
to Daniel)
Thanks!

DANIEL
Now to bed.

Sebastian takes his book and the monkey's paw and exits.

ANDRE
Goodnight

Felix and Andre exit.

MORRIS
'Night

DANIEL
Goodnight.

Morris gathers up the cards as Daniel takes his cash and starts
to exit.

MORRIS
If I can get the money, would you
let me buy back the monkey's paw?

DANIEL
(shaking his head)
Sebastian would be disappointed.

MORRIS
Daniel, don't let the boy play with
it. Lock it up.

DANIEL
It's a silly good luck charm.

MORRIS
It's more than a "charm." If you
won't let me buy it back, then at
least promise me you won't let anyone
mess with it.

Daniel looks at him quizzically.

MORRIS (CONT'D)
The fakir put a spell on it. It
grants three wishes to its owner.

DANIEL
Then, maybe you should have wished
for a better hand.

MORRIS
Listen to me.

Morris grabs Daniel's arm, with urgency.

MORRIS (CONT'D)
It's real. It grants three wishes,
but trust me, those wishes always
bring heartache.

DANIEL
Okay, I'll go along with your gag.
What did you wish for?

MORRIS
I can't tell you, but my last wish
resulted in this...

He unbuttons his shirt, exposing the extent of his grizzly
scar, which extends down his torso.

INT. THE ALBESCUS' SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Nina is helping Sebastian get dressed for bed, as he excitedly
chats her up regarding the monkey's paw.

SEBASTIAN
...and Morris says a fakir put a
spell on it. It's real. Smell it.

He shoves the monkey's paw in her face.

NINA
Ugh! Nyet. Now, climb into bed, Sebby.

He climbs up into the top sleeping berth, as Daniel enters.

Daniel hands Nina two fistfuls of cash.

DANIEL
Your house money, plus a tidy profit.

She sits at the table and counts the money as Daniel gets
undressed.

Sebastian lays back in the bed looking at the monkey's paw.

SEBASTIAN

Dad, do you think the monkey's paw
is from an actual monkey?

Daniel takes the paw and examines it. He sniffs it and gives
a "that smells awful" look.

DANIEL

Seems real to me.

Daniel hands it back to Sebastian.

NINA

The original house money, plus what
you won tonight totals nine hundred
and seventy-five dollars.

She puts the money away in the lock-box.

SEBASTIAN

How much do we need to buy a house?

DANIEL

I don't know, Seb. I figure twenty-
five hundred dollars ought to buy us
a nice place, like your mother wants,
with a lawn and a white picket fence.

SEBASTIAN

How long will it take?

DANIEL

We should have the money we need in
year or so.

SEBASTIAN

(holding the monkey's
paw, examining it)
I wish you could get the rest of the
money now.

There is a sudden CRASH of thunder. Sebastian squeals, hurling
the monkey's paw across the room.

DANIEL

What is it? What has happened?

SEBASTIAN

It moved!

NINA

What did?

SEBASTIAN

The monkey's paw! It twisted in my
hand! It was like it was alive.

Nina picks it up and looks it over.

DANIEL

It couldn't have.

NINA

Maybe the lightning startled you.

Nina gives the monkey's paw to Sebastian and kisses him.

NINA (CONT'D)

We have a show tomorrow. Go to sleep,
Moya Kroshka.

Daniel turns out the light. He and Nina climb into their berth.

INT. THE ALBESCUS' SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SEBASTIAN'S BERTH -
NIGHT

Sebastian dangles the monkey's paw by the chain as the
landscape flies past the window of his sleeping berth.

In the split second of a lightning flash, what looks to be an
ANGRY MONKEY'S FACE appears in the window.

Terrified, Sebastian yanks the covers over his head.

EXT. THE STOCKTON CIRCUS SITE - DAY

Storm clouds speed across the sky, as a crowd waits to get
into the big top. People glance apprehensively at the darkening
sky as thunder BOOMS.

INT. THE BIG TOP - DAY

The stands are filled with laughter, as a troupe of clowns
chase each other around the perimeter.

LEFT RING

Andre puts an elephant through her paces.

RIGHT RING

Felix preens and flexes his muscles.

CENTER RING

A Spotlight is on MAX, 50, a rotund, mustachioed ringmaster.

MAX
Ladies and Gentlemen, Boy and Girls,
The Horace Parizzi Circus is proud
to present...

DRUMROLL...

MAX (CONT'D)
(with a flourished
gesture upward)
...the Flying Albescu Family!

Spotlights are trained on three platforms, high above the rings, where the Daniel, Nina, and Sebastian stand, poised with their trapezes.

Cued by a cymbal CRASH, they leap from their respective platforms.

INT. THE BIG TOP - HIGH ABOVE - DAY

In a series of shots, the Albescu Family performs for an enthralled audience...

- Dazzling mid-air rolls and flips.
- Nina spins upside down from a rope, looped around one foot.
- Daniel tosses Sebastian into a marvelous mid-air summersault.
- Crowd leaps to its feet cheering.

EXT. THE CIRCUS SITE - THE ROOF OF THE BIG TOP - DAY

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING strikes the highest mast of the tent.

INT. THE BIG TOP - DAY

The tent canvases ripple and billow, as the electric charge passes through the structure.

THE CROWD SCREAMS...
THE ELEPHANT REARS BACK AND TRUMPETS...
CLOWNS SCATTER...

The spooked pachyderm charges through center ring, crashing into the support structure for the aerial rigging.

The center pole snaps in two, CRASHING down.

Nina plummets into the safety net.

She is barely able to extricate herself before the terrified elephant mows through the safety netting, ripping it apart.

Andre, Morris, and the roustabouts try to regain control of the elephant.

Max tries to calm the audience.

Daniel has returned to the platform, which sways violently.

Sebastian hangs from a trapeze, as one line snaps, leaving him hanging from a single line.

Some clowns and roustabouts attempt to climb a ladder to the, now badly torqued, rigging.

Daniel, who is still aloft, notices the condition of the rigging.

DANIEL'S POV

Sebastian, desperately hanging on, looks up.

SEBASTIAN

Dad! Help me!

BACK TO SCENE

Daniel's eyes dart around as he assesses the predicament.

DANIEL'S POV

THE CROSSBEAM

holding Sebastian's last remaining line is being bent, slowly SNAPPING and splintering under tremendous pressure.

BACK TO SCENE

DANIEL

STOP!!!!!!

Everyone freezes.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(shouting to the
roustabouts below)

Do not attempt to scale the rigging.

It's extremely precarious and will
come down with the slightest movement.

He very gingerly takes a line and feeds one end through a pulley above.

He carefully lowers the other end to the roustabouts below.

He attaches a nearby harness to the rope, and ever-so-carefully ventures onto the tightrope.

There is a SLOW CREAK followed by a SNAP of splintering wood.

DANIEL'S POV

THE CROSSBEAM

continues to bend.

BACK TO SCENE

Daniel continues to make his way across the tightrope until he is above Sebastian.

He looks down at his son, directly below.

SEBASTIAN

Dad...

DANIEL

Yes, Son?

SEBASTIAN

... I don't want to die.

DANIEL

I'm not going to let you die, Son.
Just hold on.

Daniel slowly lowers the harness to him.

After some nerve-wracking attempts to reach the harness, Sebastian finally grasps it.

He begins to put the harness on, when...

The crossbeam finally SNAPS, releasing Sebastian's trapeze line.

His slender body slips through the loose-fitting harness.

The CROWD GASPS and Nina screams.

Sebastian plummets to his death.

Nina flings herself into the sawdust as she cradles her son's lifeless body.

Daniel rushes down to them.

~~INT. A CHAPEL - DAY~~

~~Numb with grief, Daniel and Nina stand vigil at Sebastian's coffin, staring at his lifeless body.~~

~~Nina kisses her son's forehead and adjusts his hair.~~

Start