

"I won't go!" I stamped my foot. "I want to stay here. Who will help George?"

"I will," she answered. "Pablo has given me five pounds. Now I can buy George medicine. We can travel if we need to. It'll be easier to travel around if I've only two of us to clothe and feed, Ted."

"W-will I see you again?" I stammered, staring at the floorboards. I couldn't bear to look into her deep brown eyes, usually so kind and wise. "Perhaps I will be more prepared . . . after staying here one more night?" I asked, hopefully.

She smiled, but I knew her mind was made up because she stood up, smoothed down her dress and patted her bun back into place.

"I understand that this is a shock, Ted, and somewhat . . . unexpected. When you were younger, your father and I agreed it was best for him to pursue his livelihood in the circus rather than struggle to forge a living here. You'll only be away a few months. Some things cannot be prepared for; they simply need to be experienced. Of course you'll see me again."

As if remembering her own circus life, her expression became dreamy. "A spring season, learning the trade and travelling, will be just the thing. You'll become strong and disciplined. Instead of burying your head in books,