

MARCH 1, 1920

DEAR JESS,

IM SORRY IT S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I LAST WROTE.

THE CARNIVAL HAS BEEN TRAVELING A LOT, AND ITS HARD TO KNOW WHERE WE WILL END UP DAY TO DAY.

I HAVE SOME MORE GOSSIP ABOUT MANFRED (THE DANCING BEAR TRAINER) AND JEN, WHO YOU REMEMBER IS THE WIFE OF THE HEAD CLOWN, BARNEY VENTIS. I THINK I TOLD YOU IN MY PREVIOUS LETTER THAT I WAS SURE THERE WAS SOMETHING GOING ON BETWEEN MANFRED AND JEN. IT S PRETTY HARD TO HIDE THAT SORT OF THING WHEN YOU ARE A SMALL GROUP THAT LIVES IN EACH OTHER S POCKETS.

I GUESS I WAS MORE RIGHT THAN I KNEW. YESTERDAY THINGS BLEW UP IN A BIG WAY. BEFORE I GIVE YOU THE DETAILS ONE IMPORTANT THING. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF THE CLOWNS THAT STAY IN MAKE UP ALL THE TIME. I EXPECT THAT THEY ARE ON THE RUN FROM SOMETHING AND DON T WANT TO BE RECOGNIZED. JEN IS ONE OF THOSE. I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS PART OF WHAT SHE DID TO FIT IN. ESPECIALLY SINCE SHE S THE ONLY WOMAN CLOWN.

WELL, YESTERDAY, BARNEY VENTIS STORMED INTO MANFRED S TRAILER, WITHOUT KNOCKING. SOMEONE, I GUESS, TOLD BARNEY THAT HIS WIFE WAS IN THERE WITH MANFRED, AND PROBABLY UP TO NO GOOD IF YOU CATCH WHAT I MEAN.

THERE WAS A LOT OF SHOUTING, AND THINGS BEING BROKEN INSIDE, WITH BARNEY AND MANFRED YELLING AT EACH OTHER. IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL OF THIS JEN COMES BARRELING OUT OF THE TRAILER, MAKE UP ALL SCRUBBED OFF AND WEARING NOTHING BUT UNDER CLOTHES. AND YOU WILL NEVER GUESS WHAT !!!

TURNS OUT THAT JEN IS ACTUALLY A JIM!! ALL THIS TIME ON THE ROAD, AND JIM WAS PRETENDING TO BE A WOMAN, SO NO ONE WOULD GUESS WHAT HE AND BARNEY HAD BEEN UP TO. THE BOTH OF THEM LIVING TOGETHER AS IF THEY WERE MARRIED.

AND ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT MANFRED WAS CHASING AFTER JEN, BECAUSE HE WAS INTERESTED IN HER. I GUESS MANFRED WASNT ALL THAT SURPRISED TO FIND OUT JEN WASNT REALLY A WOMAN. OR AT LEAST HE FIGURED IT OUT ONCE THEY WERE IN THE TRAILER ALONE, AND EITHER IT DIDNT BOTHER HIM, OR HE ALREADY KNEW THAT SHE WAS A HE.

THE FIGHT SPILLED OUT OF THE TRAILER, AND BARNEY AND MANFRED WERE MIXING IT UP IN THE DIRT. I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT IT WAS THE FUNNIEST THING I EVER SAW. BARNEY IN HIS CLOWN MAKE UP AND COSTUME, AND MANFRED ONLY WEARING HIS SHINY RED PANTS AND BOOTS. BOTH OF THEM TRYING TO LAND SOME PUNCHES.

OF COURSE A BUNCH OF THE ROUSTABOUTS CAME OVER AND BROKE UP THE FIGHT. IT REALLY WASNT MUCH OF A FIGHT, BUT THOSE WHO WERENT LAUGHING, FIGURED THE TWO OF THEM OUGHT TO BE SEPARATED BEFORE SOMEONE REALLY GOT HURT.

WELL, AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS GO BY, EVERYONE COOLS OFF. WE SEE MANFRED AND BARNEY TALKING TOGETHER OVER BY THE FOOD TENT. PRETTY SERIOUS TALKING. AND NO ONE WANTS TO GO OVER THERE, BECAUSE THEY DONT WANT TO INTERRUPT WHATS GOING ON. BUT WE ARE ALL ON PINS AND NEEDLES TO KNOW WHATS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT.

SO THE EVENING SHOW GOES BY, AND A PRETTY GOOD ONE IT WAS TOO. WE MADE GOOD MONEY THAT NIGHT.

BUT AFTER THE SHOW, WE SEE BOTH BARNEY AND JIM, TAKING THEIR THINGS OVER TO MANFREDS TRAILER. THE THREE OF THEM HAVE SOME SORT OF SITUATION GOING ON, AND ALL THREE OF THEM SEEM TO BE PRETTY HAPPY ABOUT IT. AT BREAKFAST THIS MORNING, THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER AT ONE END OF A TABLE, HEADS TOGETHER, LOOKING LIKE THE CAT THAT GOT THE CREAM.

THE UPSHOT OF ALL OF THIS IS THAT SINCE THE TRAILER THAT BARNEY AND JIM WERE IN, IS NOW EMPTY, I GOT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO CLAIM IT FOR ME.

ITS SMALL, BUT AT LEAST IT S ALL MINE. I THINK THIS IS A PROMOTION OF SOME SORT, BUT I SUSPECT IT JUST MEANS MORE WORK FOR THE SAME PAY.

I HOPE EVERYTHING IS GOING WELL FOR YOU. I HAVENT HEARD FROM MOTHER IN A FEW WEEKS, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE ON THE MOVE ALL THE TIME, SOMETIMES IT TAKES A WHILE FOR MAIL TO CATCH UP WITH ME.

WE ARE GOING TO BE TRAVELING THROUGH KENTUCKY FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. WE HAVE A BIG STOP IN MADISONVILLE. AND WILL ACTUALLY BE STAYING THERE FOR AT LEAST A WEEK. MAYBE MORE. THEY HAVE A BIG CELEBRATION THERE ON APRIL 19 A SORT OF PIONEER DAY OR SOMETHING. ANYWAY, IT'S A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO BE OFF THE ROAD FOR A WHILE, AND TO MAKE SOME GOOD MONEY AT THE SAME TIME.

WE WILL BE IN WALSHAM, TENNESSEE FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. PROBABLY MARCH 14 THROUGH MARCH 20. SO IF YOU WRITE TO ME IN CARE OF GENERAL DELIVERY, I SHOULD GET IT BEFORE WE LEAVE FOR KENTUCKY.

I MISS YOU AND MOTHER. I FEEL BAD SOMETIMES FOR NOT STAYING. BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT BEING TIED DOWN TO ONE PLACE WOULD NEVER MAKE ME HAPPY.

WRITE SOON AND TELL ME ALL THE NEWS!

VEDEL