

## **First Runner Up**

### **BLOSSOM**

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#### **Part 1**

#### **Blossom**

I woke up to the sound of crates opening and people's loud, booming, and screeching voices, filling the air. As I open my tiny black little eyes, I see a small human.

A man shouts, "Junebug, come over here."

June. What a beautiful sound. She (I think what small humans are called. Only the ones with long hair though.) walked over with another human, but this one had short jet-black hair. His name was Quinn, and Quinn was slightly taller than June. She quickly hopped over to him and a conversation broke out.

I couldn't quite hear them, despite my big ears, and all of the other sounds around me.

June started walking over to some grey colored pail (I think) and she picked it up and filled it with some clear liquid.

When she came over and told me to "drink this it's called water." I realized she was not someone to be disturbed by.

I stuck my trunk into the water, and started to slurp it up. Water does not have much flavor to it, but I enjoyed it. While I was drinking, she just stared at me. I then looked up and realized the tips of her mouth were turned upward, like she was feeling... an emotion.

I believe an emotion is when you are feeling happy or sad. June seemed very happy. When I was done, she walked to the side of my crate. At that moment, I realized how many other animals (including elephants) were also in crates, just like me. How they were very far from home, just like me.

June quickly returned with another grey pail. This one was full of grass-like strings, not water. I went to put my trunk in, and June said, "Stop! That is for later after your training."

Training? What is that?

A woman in a red suit walked over to me and asked, "Are you ready?" I looked at her, confused, and June unlatched my creaky

crate. I took a step. I took another step. I took two more and ended up right in front of June and the strange lady.

I followed her into another truck much like the one I was already in. Quinn, June, and the lady hopped in the truck.

"Come on!" the lady said.

Quinn asked, "Brenna you know how Blossom is very agile and new. Do you mind going easy?"

## **Part 2**

### **Training**

Brenna says, "OK today we will practice walking on a tightrope."

I say, "You got this."

Then I start to trot over to Brenna. She says, "Okay so just try to walk on the tightrope."

As I climb up the ladder I shake nervously. I try to stand on the rope but fall right away. My fall is cushioned by a soft mat.

"Come on Blossom," Brenna says, "at least try."

Brenna makes me keep on trying but every time I fall.

"I can't do this anymore," I say out loud.

I don't realize until a few seconds later but Brenna is giving me a funny look. I ask, "What's wrong?"

Brenna responds with her jaw dropped to the floor. "You...can...talk...?" Quinn and June walk over in shock I'm kind of confused but I chose to ignore it and ask if we can do something else?

Brenna nods and says, "We can move on to riding a bicycle."

"What's a bicycle?" I ask.

Brenna walks over and sets this thing with wheels in front of me. "If you do good you can have some treats." She teaches me how to sit on a bicycle and when I try to ride on it I just tip over. I'm starting to get stressed because I don't know if I will be ready for the show next week. We keep training and I get a little bit better. Next we move on to balancing a ball on my trunk. This is probably my least favorite because it keeps giving me headaches. I still don't think I'll ever be ready for the show.

### Part 3

#### The Day of The Show

The week of the show came around with a blink of an eye. Everyone got backstage with shaking hands, hooves, paws, and talons. First the clown act was on and the whole crowd was laughing!

Next were the tigers, Lana had a slight misstep but otherwise the bears and tigers were fanominal. Now was the birds, and the parrots did tricks and were great!

Finally the elephants were up. I was second to walk out, behind a mother elephant named Olive and she was the one everyone looked up to. Olive was the most trained elephant there, and she came from the most elite circus training camp, "Power Academy."

She had the most amazing act—she walked on a tightrope! I know that when she gracefully walked back, it was my turn. Olive came by, then I could go.

I walked out, just like Olive, and the crowd goes silent. I quickly trotted over to the bicycle. I am so nervous, not thinking I could do it, but I closed my eyes, and I start to move!

Everyone gasped, including Brenna. It was an amazing act—the whole crowd went wild. I stay calm as a walk very gracefully (Just like Olive) to the back of the tent. I am overwhelmed by various shouts (hopefully all good and positive) and animal noises to congratulate my success. I walk to the back of the room where I see June and Quinn with bright eyes of excitement.

I also see a familiar silhouette—Brenna—standing behind June and Quinn.

After I stand by Quinn and June for some time, I walk to Brenna, and I see a flash of a radiant smile across her face.

"Great job out there, Blossom." She congratulated me! Right then and there I felt overwhelming joy. I finally knew that I was worthy and not just an elephant.

I was Blossom.