

The carnival was always a boisterous event. Vibrant colored tents formed in narrow lines around in the open field. You could barely even hear yourself think between all the shouting of the carnies and the merriment of circus attendees. Carson dodged through the mass of people, trying to squeeze by the blockages people naturally form in hallways. He had only been here for a couple minutes but already regretted not staying home. One of his coworkers had given him tickets to this lousy carnival, so instead of wasting the ticket he was now wasting his day off. Thought the noise, speakers crackled before a voice boomed through speakers across the festival.

“Come one, come all! The main attraction will be starting in an hour! Please be sure to grab your ticket for a once in a lifetime show you won’t want to miss!” Carson’s ears still rang from the deafening announcement.

“Hopefully the show will be worth it.” Carson thought to himself. He turned to look at the giant red and yellow tent. You could hardly miss the tent with how much room it took up. The opening flap of the tent was adorned with murals painted on propped wooden fences. The murals depicted various happy circus animals doing tricks from an elephant balancing on a stand, to seals balancing balls and clapping, a lion jumping through hoops, to show horses balancing on their hind hooves, and other various circus animals’ attractions. Those murals alone definitely sold Carson. He slowly wedged himself through the crowd making his way towards the tent along.

The line crawled inch by inch in a wait akin to being at a DMV. Carson tapped his foot having been stuck in line waiting for the show for nearly an hour. He had already taken several photos of the murals from a bunch of different angles trying to pass the time. A five-minute warning of the show crackled on the intercom. Carson was getting impatient and frustrated. He gave a vocal sigh. The moment the show was over, he was leaving this place. He began thinking of all the things he could have

gotten done if he hadn't come. Finally, after about an hour of waiting, it was his turn. Carson eagerly stepped up to the ticket booth. He tried pushing down his frustration and regained his composure. Carson stared at the ticket seller and understood quickly why the line had taken so long. The ticket seller wore a raccoon half mask on his face which matched perfectly with his carnie attire looking like it had been dug up from the trash. An odor wafted into Carson's nose which enforced the notion the trashy outfit had once been where it belonged. The ticket seller yawned and looked up at Carson blankly.

"One adult ticket" Carson said concisely, trying his best not to sound rude. The raccoon man pressed a button on the cash register with a very loud "cha-ching" as the drawer opened.

"Great, that'll be forty!" he said doing his best to half smile after another yawn.

"Forty as in forty dollars!?" Carson yelled in astonishment.

"Yup!" the carnie said, unphased by Carson's yell. He looked as if he couldn't care less regardless.

"I'm not paying that much for some cheap show!" Carson continued to yell. He couldn't believe that extortion. He wasn't sure what pissed him off more, the wait he had just gone through, or the price gouge they expected him to pay.

"No dosh, no show" The carnie said, slamming the register's drawer shut. The carnie returned to propping his head up with one hand and waving off Carson with a yawn. Carson stormed off in a mad furor.

Carson grumbled to himself, still dumbfounded at the sheer audacity of them asking for so much. The speakers crackled loudly as an announcement boomed throughout the park.

“Blanc De Mystique’s show is now starting! Hurry and grab your seat for a once in a lifetime show you won’t want to miss!” Carson’s ears rang after the speakers quieted down.

“A once in a lifetime show, huh?” Carson griped. He looked. The once bustling carnival was now almost a ghost town as not a person could be seen. Carson could hear the many cheers of people inside the tent. Carson stopped in his tracks. Giving things a second thought. There was no way he was going to be paying full admittance price for some show. He looked around. Not a single soul to be seen outside. He tested the bottom of the tent flap, and despite its weight, he could easily sneak underneath. Carson doublechecked to make sure no one was around before slightly lifting the bottom of the tent and peered inside. He could see the underneath of metal bleachers. He could easily sneak inside and find an open seat. Carson gave the deceitful thought a once-over in his mind before sliding underneath the tent flap. He made his way to the edge of the bleacher, he carefully slipped out and quickly nabbed a seat near where he had come out from. Carson sat nonchalantly in his new seat before he felt a strong grip on his shoulder. He nearly jumped as he turned his head to see a man built like a gorilla gripping his shoulder. The strong man glared down at him as Carson gulped. Oops!

“Uh, I’ll see myself out.” Carson stammered. The strongman lifted Carson to his feet by his shoulder and began walking him to center stage. Spotlights shown down on them, highlighting the spectacle.

“Oh no, think of this as your backstage pass upgrading straight to center stage!” The strong man said, shoving Carson right up next to the ringleader. The ringleader was dressed in black and purple tuxedo and adored with a lavish hat with large ace of spades card sticking out of its brim. The most notable feature being a pure white half mask of a rabbit covering the top of his face along with the white rabbit ears and cotton tail. The magician’s rabbit ears laid back, staring at the intruder.

“And what’s your name young man?” The magician held his long thin microphone to Carson’s face.

“Uhh Carson, and I’ll be leaving!” he blurted out shyly. Carson looked around, the audience surrounding him watching intently. Carson felt himself sweating nervously as all eyes were on him.

“Now now, you just got here! But first!” The magician reached into his long sleeve and pulled out a very familiar looking wallet. Carson’s pants pocket felt oddly light. He reached his hand back to where he kept his wallet to find it was gone. He began frantically searching his other pockets for his missing wallet. Blanc reached into the wallet and pulled out some money, showing the bills off to the audience before stuffing it into his tuxedo. With a flick of his wrist, the wallet was gone from sight. Carson could feel the wallet’s weight back where it belonged. Carson gasped in shock, looking dumbfounded at the magician who had just taken money from him was bowing at the audience’s applause.

“Now that your ticket’s been paid for. How about I show you not to make a monkey out of my show!” Blanc tapped his magic wand on Carson’s head roughly. Instinctively Carson began rubbing at the top of his head, which soon turned into scratching. Carson felt his other hand began moving upwards. It felt as if someone tied several strings to his fingers arm arms and were pulling at them like a puppet. His hands raised up more as his fingers began to wiggle, scratching at his armpit. The audience erupted in laughter as Carson began involuntary scratching himself like a monkey. Hair began growing along his arms. The growing fur only adding irritation of his skin. His face went flush with embarrassment as he tried stopping himself. The hair spread like a wildfire, growing in thick. He struggled to move his body, but it refused to listen to him. Instead, he felt himself leaning down, placing his knuckle on the ground and began scratching his behind for the audience to see. Carson felt like something was crawling on his

legs as he scratched his butt. The circus tent thundered with laughter at the young man degrading himself.

“S-stop it! I’m not part of the show!” He yelled out.

“I’m afraid you’re the main attraction now, monkey!” Blanc taunted. The magician gripped Carson’s pants and with one hard tug, pantsed the dignity right out of him. Carson’s face was beat red as he covered himself up with his hands. He looked down, seeing his hairy arms and legs. They were coated in light brown thick fur, matching the color of his own head of hair. Although, his hands and feet were oddly absent of any hair. Before Carson could bend down to pick up his pants, the magician Blanc pulled out a large silk out of his sleeve and draped it over the exposed man. Carson sighed of relief, figuring the silk was for modesty. Although when he went down to hike his pants back up, they were nowhere to be found. He frantically searched the ground; his jeans being gone without a trace. Carson only had a moment of privacy before the silk was pulled away, exposing him yet again. Although this time, Carson felt much more exposed. His shirt having been changed into a bright red open vest and a small fez on his head, clothing which was very reminiscent of an organ grinder monkey. Carson quickly covered himself up in modesty with a loud surprised “eek!” This was like a nightmare. Carson tugged at the hair on his arm, giving him a short pain letting him know that fur was very much attached to him.

“Now dressed like the monkey you behave, give us a show for us, you simple knave!” The magician enchanted. Carson could feel the invisible strings on his body, making him move around like a puppet. His knuckles were pulled down to the floor making him hunch over before his legs began moving on their own. Carson walked on his feet and knuckles like a monkey, walking around the stage, giving everyone plenty of chance to see him move around. He tried calling out for help, trying to deny he was acting like a monkey. His voice betrayed him as it felt like something was forcing monkey shrieks and oops out of him in replacement to his attempted objections. As he was forced to move around,

Carson felt his gait changing. His legs began getting more squat as his balance was placed more on his knuckles than his feet. His body itched fiercely as more monkey fur grew across body. Blanc lifted his hand up and snapped his finger. Carson turned around to look at the magician beckoning him over. Carson felt his elbows raising up as his legs bowed outward. He began awkwardly monkey dancing his way toward the magician. The more Carson fought against it, the more awkward his walk became. The magician grinned as his performer stood hunched over like a monkey looking up at him.

“I think our monkey earned a little treat for his performance, what do you all think?” The crowd cheered and applauded the humiliated fool. Carson wanted to bury his face and hide, but his body refused to move. Carson glanced around the audience. Only the look of amusement could be seen, none seemed worried or mortified at his situation. It was as if this cruel treatment was the show. Blanc bent down to get on the same level as the hunched over monkey man and pulled a silk handkerchief from his sleeve. He placed the cloth over his hand before ripping it away to reveal a banana in his grip. With a flourish Blanc held out the banana to Carson. Carson wanted to swat it away, but his body only betrayed him by reaching out and grasping the banana. It was promptly peeled and shoved into his mouth. Carson was red with shame but continued standing in the center of the spotlight stuffing his face with banana. He covered his eyes, trying to shield his face from the harsh lights. A strange sensation pumped through his feet. His toes began lengthened out. It felt as if someone was stretching them from their joints, popping with each outward pull. His toes curled into the ground, gripping the dirt underneath his bare feet. His soles and arches began resembling palms. His big toes felt like they were being pulled towards the sides of his feet. Shoving the last bit of banana into his mouth, he tossed the peel over his shoulder. The magician once again snapped his fingers to get the fool’s attention.

“Now, now, Chimpy. Next trick!” Blanc whistled before pointing to a tightrope suspended a couple feet off the ground. Carson slammed his hands down in protest like a mad monkey.

“Ook! NO! I’m -ook not going to ook ook degrade myself!” Carson struggled to holler out, unable to stop himself from blurting out. Brown fur began coating over his chest, itching as it spread over him. The scratching sensation was maddening. Itching at it only minorly relieved the irritation. Blanc strode over, wrapping his arm around his fool.

“Now chimpy, these people paid for a show, and I never leave a show unfinished!” Blanc taunted, tugging on Carson’s ears, stretching them out into big monkey ears. With one final tug of the ears, he seemingly pulled a banana out of Carson’s big chimp ear. Blanc dangled it out of reach, taunting the monkey boy.

“Now, how about you do your tricks for the nice banana, you stupid monkey” he jeered. The ghostly strings tugged once again at Carson’s body, moving him against his will. His hand-like feet pattered on the bare ground. Walking felt awkward as he waddled his way over to the tightrope. His feet lifted onto the ladder wrong. A chill went down his spine as he could feel his hand-like feet gripping the rung. He could feel the metal gripped between his new palms and fingerlike toes, now forcefully aware of the newly morphed feet. His leg pushed upward against the rung as he lifted his other leg up onto the second rung. His other foot gripped the ladder. It was an extremely strange sensation, feeling his feet grasping the rungs. The cold metal ladder didn’t help matters, making Carson keenly aware of the metal gripped into his feet. He ascended the short ladder and looked down, inspecting his strange new feet. Carson stood hunched over, his knuckles resting on the ground. This new posture felt much more comfortable than standing upright, despite knowing deep down how wrong it was. The audience was very loudly cheering, egging him on. Carson gulped, slowly extending his foot out and gripped the rope with his foot. His balance wobbled as he slowly shifted his weight onto the rope. He slowly moved across the rope, deliberately gripping the rope tightly with each step. In the back of his mind, all he wanted to dash on all fours out the tent. To hide away from all the people laughing and clapping as he performed, treating him like some performing animal he was being forced to act like. His balance began

to wobble halfway across the rope. His hands spun in circles, trying to regain his balance on the rope. Panic rushed through his mind as he felt himself slipping. Instinctively, his feet gripped extra tight onto the rope as force his posture forward, gripping onto the rope with his front and back hands. His rear lifted into the air to keep balance as he walked across. Sounding like a pack of hyenas, the audience roared with laughter. With a few breaths to regain composure, Carson walked hand over hand across the rope, his exposed rear sticking straight in the air for all to see. The pigments of skin on his rear started to turn bright red, drawing all the more attention to it. His movements were much quicker across the rope on all fours, sighing of relief as he felt his feet finally grip steady ground. Blanc had a massive grin on his face, applauding his monkey.

“Give it up for the monkey! You certainly gave us quite the show!” He mocked as he gave Carson’s behind a hard smack. Carson let out a shrill monkey shriek as he turned around and rubbed at his stinging skin. His eyes turned wide, seeing the bright red monkey butt he now sported. Carson felt every shred of dignity he once had just drain from him. He felt ashamed of his degraded body as others took amusement from it. Once again, the magician granted the monkey another banana for their performance. Instinctively, Carson grasped it with his foot and began peeling it with his other. Carson was too busy being ashamed of himself to notice he was acting more like the beast he was ashamed of becoming. He stuffed his face, munching on the banana being propped up by his foot. A small tingling sensation began pricking the base of his spine. His tailbone felt like it was being yanked as a small nub poked its way out. The nub jerked around, growing with its movement.

“Now then my simian fool, how about a nice game?” Blanc laughed with an evil smirk across his face. Carson felt incredibly uneasy and a sense of dread loomed over. He shook his head rapidly. Carson tried to object, not wanting any more to do with this crazed trickster, but his words failed him. His vocal cords refused to work right, only letting out an assortment of monkey calls in lieu of his own words.

Carson gasped at the betrayal of his own voice, slapping his hands over his mouth while continuing to shake his head. The growing tail lashed around as monkey's worries grew.

"Come now, you've been such a sport so far! I just wanted to give you a chance to win back your humanity!" Blanc beamed with a sinister grin. Carson could only look in response, nodding his head shyly. His new prehensile tail curled towards the tip.

"The game is simple; all you must do is say you want to be changed back with your own human words!" He sneered, already knowing the game was impossible to win. With a gulp of fright, Carson strained his vocal cords, trying his best to form words. His voice cracked, screeching out shrill monkey calls. Words refused to form, not even a single syllable recognizable. Carson slammed his hands down in a fit of rage, shrieking out in frustration. Blanc pretended to frown.

"Tsk tsk seems our new monkey wishes to remain that way." The audience clapped and cheered, seeming to enjoy that Carson's had been denied his own humanity. What was rightfully his had been forcefully stripped away from him in the most demeaning way possible. Carson could feel his face ache as he felt it pushing outward. His face formed into a short furless muzzle. Despite his completed change, his identity had been all but stripped away from him. It was plain as day who he had once been, and despite the bestial changes, it was very clear he still had somewhat of a human face for his identity. It only served as a final jab at the monkey, announcing what he had once been, and what he had become now. A strongman waved his way onto the stage. Holding an iron collar attached to a chain leash. Carson felt the collar clasped onto him as he felt the strongman roughly tugging at his neck.

"Can our newest primate get one last cheer for his performance!" The audience stood up, cheering, clapping, whistling, and hollering as Carson was being taken off the stage like some animal. Carson strained against the tugging, but a couple jerks of the chain forced him to cooperate.

"Don't worry folks, you can always visit the star after the show located in the freakshow!"