

# Bourne toWrite...

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## A Great Act

by Val Howard

It was always a great act when Jim Anscombe, the clown, came on. White-faced, with a garish red mouth and the most amazing hair, a brilliant, orange-red colour, which stood up on end as if he had had a most frightful electric shock. The audience roared with laughter, the children beside themselves with excitement and this before he had uttered a word. At the end of his act, the applause still ringing in his ears, he went off stage. He now felt tired, almost deflated, only to find Ian and Marge in the midst of one of their interminable rows. It was getting out of control as it sometimes did.

Ian had hit her violently across the mouth and she was coming back with a shard of mirror that had become broken in the fracas. What would have happened if he had not gone backstage at that precise moment is difficult to imagine. To make matters worse he had been in love with Marge for years, even though he knew that she could be absolutely maddening. This time something had to be done. He wrested the mirror from Marge, thus saving her from a possible charge of murder. She had certainly meant business, her fury knowing no bounds. Ian was trembling but whether from rage or fear was difficult to know.

In his youth Jim had taken a degree in psychology but job prospects at that time were scarce and he had drifted into the world of the circus, becoming an instant success. People would come in droves as soon as his name appeared. He knew that this time he would have to dredge up what little he could remember and give them a talking to that would strike home. It was now or never. He sat them down, resisting a strong desire to kiss the livid mark by Marge's mouth. Instead he gave each of them a glass of water. "What am I going to do with you two?" He asked with just the right touch of kindly exasperation. They looked shamefaced. "You don't seem to be doing each other many favours." They were like children, heads down, hanging on his every word. He wondered whether he should have spoken to them like this before but perhaps then the timing had not been right.

This mother-of-all-rows was necessary before they would listen. “These rows will continue until someone is killed.” They nodded, subdued. “What can we do?” they almost chorused. “Ian, you’ve been offered a job at Bertram Mills Circus. Take it. Its only for six months. Have a break from each other. Marge, should stay with the vanishing act here, where she reappears like some divine angel”.

Ian took the job with Bertram Mills and soon fell in love with a pretty brunette on the Flying Trapeze. She was more placid than Marge and rather boring. Jim took Marge under his wing and hoped that in time their relationship might become closer. He had already waited a long time.