

Chapter 5

Cover: Curtains closed, Sugar's shadow wielding a knife cast over it.

P. 1

Curtains open, revealing landscape overgrown with circus stuff, tents, striped tendirls, etc. (Sugarshoe reading)

"The curtains are drawn for the Starlight Calliope's next act. Gristle-loaves plump in their ovens. Noses are polished. Seltzer bottles, refilled. And somewhere, poring over a script are the sleepless eyes of a rising star."

P. 2-3

2 page spread, overgrown abandoned town. Whist, Dood, Pend, Gumbloid wander through, with pod landed nearby.

"And yet no tickets are punched. There is no queue found in front of the big top, and no one passes through its entrance."

Dood: Where is everyone, Whistles?

Whist: I don't know.

P. 4

Full page of people in cages.

P. 5

Zooms out, showing a lot more cages, stacked on top of each other. Below, Sugar writes at a desk.

P. 6

Whole page of Sugar writing over larger piece of stationery.

Stationery: (some heading) Silly Scribblin's from the pen of Sugarshoe

Mood: ~~FRUSTRATED!!!~~ a little irked...

Progress toward crucial outcome -- slow but still ok I guess

Mission restated -- expanse of circus; endeavor to entertain on terrestrial scale perpetually, and make people laugh all of the time. You can do it Sugarshoe! (note to self more motivational pep talks they really help a lot)

People in cages – noisy!

Silly doodles

P. 7-8

More written notes on scraps...

“Ecological balance optimal. Rates of growth reaching critical spike. Resources plentiful.”

“Submission of plant monsters complete. They are so weird! And they were angry. But now they they behave themselves ok. I put them in cages and some of them in chains and things like that.”

“Portion of captive plant monsters are ~~killed~~ farmed and their portions are fed to the clowns so they are not hungry.”

“Some clowns are ~~slaughtered~~ harvested and fed as meat to the captive humans so they won’t be as noisy. This helps them enjoy the show more!”

“A lot of the humans have to be ~~murdered~~ retired though, and fed to the plant monsters because the plant monsters get hungry too! And as you can see, they are important.”

“They are all important! Everything has its place. It is so beautiful. The circus is a really big success and it is growing really fast.”

“The bigger the circus gets the more people come to see it! This means the more the plant beasts get fed and they can make more clowns and grow more tents and things like that. And the more clowns there are the better and more funny the show is! Oh yeah and the more there is for the people to eat! :D”

P. 9-10

“Sometimes the plant things get worked up and a little upset I guess. They save up their food reserves and then spawn a really big, mean, nasty clown to challenge me!”

“Each one is bigger than the last.”

(name: Buttermug)

“He comes after me and then I have to outsmart him. It is like a fun game. I enjoy it so much.”

“Then there is another big feast for the people and everyone is delighted.”

P. 11

Gumb is imprisoned alone, deep in some dark chamber of SC. He can't find a way through the many layers of thick bars.

Gumb: Where are you, Whistles? You must have received the distress call by now.

P. 12-13

Whist, Dood, Pend, Gumbloid approach the deserted circus entrance.

Whist: That's strange. I thought for sure there would be a long line to see the new star.

Dood: Yeah. This is really creepy.

Whist: At least they haven't stopped cooking. It smells great!

Pend: I'm so hungry. Dad, could we get some of the great circus food you were telling me about?

Dood: No!

Shadows from behind. They are captured by clowns riding plants that walk on muscular humanoid arms, guiding them with reins.

One clown to the other: Knights of Clownhalla. It's Whistles.

Clown 2: He's alive.

Clown 1: So the legend is true.

Clown 2: We'd better move fast. If he is as heroic as they say he is, we will not stand a chance.

Whistles: Hi!

Clown: You there! You will have to come with us!

Whistles: Alright.

Gumbloid runs away.

Gumbloid: I am sorry, but I cannot stay. I must rescue my master!

Whistles: I understand. Take care, Gumbloid!

P. 14

Sugarshoe is conducting operations to prepare for more attractions of enormous scale.
(He is welding something on a mechanical weapon, like a saw)

Flippy whispers into his ear. Sugar lights up.

Sugar (into loudspeaker): Good news, everyone! The actors we have been waiting for have arrived. The next great production will begin tonight. All hands report to performance positions.

P. 15-16

Gumbloid walks through bars.

Gumbloid: I am here, sir.

Gumb: Gumbloid! Friend, boy of tin. How relieved I am to see you.

Gumb: We must find a way out of this prison. Sugarshoe cannot be allowed to perpetuate his mad act for another minute.

Gumbloid: We are in full agreement on this. I believe I encountered something which may be useful to our escape.

Gumb: Oh? You have me curious!

Gumbloid remotely controls Pend robot to break through wall.

P. 17

Sugarshoe in dressing room, having makeup applied by Flippy.

Sugar: So, Flippy... are we totally sure we have captured THE Whistles the Clown? Like, the really famous one?

Flippy: Yes, sir. I have confirmed it with my own eyes.

Sugar: Wow! Hmm...

Flippy: What is it?

Sugar: I don't know. I'm just wondering... what do you think he'll make of me? I mean, as a performer and all.

Flippy: Are you nervous?

Sugar: No! I mean... wait. No! It's just... in the presence of a clown of his stature...

Flippy: Believe me, sir. He is a very accessible clown. He will probably like you. He likes everybody.

Sugar: You think so??

Flippy: Sir, if you don't mind my asking... if you hold Whistles in such high regard, why do you plan on killing him?

Sugar pushes Flippy's face with a stiff arm.

Sugar: Clown, do not tell me how to do my job and I will not tell you how to do yours!

Flippy: But you tell me how to do my job all the time.

Sugar pauses, keeps hand on face.

Sugar: I didn't tell you to *stop*.

Flippy keeps applying makeup while his face is pushed.

P. 18

Sugar looks at watch.

Sugar: Showtime.

He is on a swing. The surroundings are obscured. He is lowered on to a central platform.

P. 19

Sugar on swing, hovering just above platform, surroundings dark. (full page)

Sugar sings a song.

P. 20

Full page.

Surroundings illuminate. Floating platforms in middle of cage spire. Platforms look like clown's face. Sugar on the nose. Whistles on the mouth. Dood and Pend on the eyes. All chained up. Nets connect to the platform via the spire edges where the beasts come out. They walk on the nets.

P. 21

Full page.

Under-side of platforms, showing spire reach daylight. Some cages are seen a little closer.

P. 22

Close-up of cages, people screaming.

Man: Let us out! You can keep my three pennies! I don't care anymore!

Man: Is that Whistles? Whistles the Clown???

Man: Who cares, I want to go home!

Panel of Sugar overlapping.

Sugar: I know you have all come to crave a show of considerable duration. I am sorry to confess this production shall put little strain on the pocket watch. But I promise its brevity will be more than made up for by the sweet succor of its triumph!

P. 23

Sugar, raising fists: Triumph, once and for all over the former circus heir, the bloodline's only son standing between me and the Calliope's throne!

Sugar: Witness, kind breadwinners and matronwives, the final act of your beloved hero. Witness the death of Whistles the Clown!!!

Clowns riding monsters come out of the compartments on to the netting. Dood and Pend struggle in their chains.

P. 24

Whist: Hi, Sugarshoe! It is nice to meet you. This act looks kind of dangerous, but it also looks exciting!

Sugar (turning around, talking to himself): Oh God, he's talking to me! What do I say?

Dood: Whistles! The new star is crazy! He doesn't want to be your friend! Look around you. We have to escape, or we're going to be killed!

One of the plants launches a spear, which plunges into the platform Pend is standing on. Pend looks scared, and looks at Whistles. Whist now looks concerned.

Whistles: It's ok. We will find a way out of this if we use teamwork.

P. 25-26

Sugarshoe: And now, without further continuation of prolonged and delayed ado, let the show... BEEEEGIIIIii...?

A shadow casts over his face. He looks up. [end page]

Falling from the spire is a small dark object getting bigger. It is the Pendlecoat robot, being ridden by Gumblin, carrying Gumbloid on his head. It falls on Sugarshoe's platform, completely obliterating it. They all continue falling down the spire, Sugarshoe included.

P. 27-30

The clown-mounted plants are closing in on them. Whist is getting anxious and struggles in chains.

Dood: Whistles, help us! I know you can do it. I know you have something special in you that no other clown has. You just have to focus!

A plant armed with a nail gun shoots Pend in the arm.

Pend: Auuurgghhh! Father!

Whistles: Master! No! [end page]

He becomes seized with emotion, twisting his face. He reaches out with his balloon arm. It inflates to a greater length. It reaches to Pend and coils around him, grabbing him. [end page]

Dood: EEEEE! Whistles!

A plant is swinging big hammers at her, pounding her platform, knocking chunks off.

Whistles: Doodlebean!

He reaches out for her with his normal arm, stretching as much as he can. It's nowhere near enough. [end page]

One of the plants thrashes Pend with a barbed whip, scarring his back. He winces in pain. Whistles looks back at him, not wanting to let go.

Whist: Hang on, Master!

P. 31-34

Below, the Pend robot, Gumblin, Gumbloid, and Sugarshoe fall. They crash into a tangle of vines and circussy organic matter. [end page]

2 page spread:

There are plant materials, fronds, vines etc everywhere. It looks like a kind of central nervous region of the circus. The robot is standing up, being directed by Gumb. Sugar is spotted crawling out of the vines. [end spread]

Sugar: Impertinent rascals! You are causing me to miss the show! If Whistles perishes before I am able to get his autograph, I will be quite sore!

Pend robot takes a few swings at Sugar, which he hops around and avoids.

P. 35-37

Sugar bumps backwards into Gumb, who holds him in place with a wrestling move.

Gumb: If you believe Whistles will perish soon, you have badly underestimated our predecessor.

While immobilized, the robot punches Sugar in the stomach. He coughs up blood. The robot winds up for another swing. [end page]

Sugar flips backwards, over and behind Gumblin. Gumblin bends over backwards to duck the punch. The punch sends the robot off balance. It spins around backwards, and topples back-first onto Gumblin. [end page]

Gumb tumbles onto his back, and backwards somersault kicks the robot in the direction of Sugar. It flips in the air, and lands on his feet facing Sugar, continues its assault.

P. 38-39

Sugar continues to back off, getting a bit afraid of the giant. He tries to talk it down.

Sugar: Pendlebot! Friend, hulk of lead. Stand down. I made you!

He runs, and hides behind a strange object. It looks like a nut, tethered to, and pointing up from the ground, about the size of a beach ball. [end page]

He uses it as protection from the wild swings of the robot. Suddenly, a huge part of the room becomes animated, shape-shifting and growing circus motif-like tendrils. A tendril lashes the robot, completely destroying its upper half. [end page]

Its legs fall over, sputtering and sparking. Everyone looks dumbfounded.

P. 40-41

Above, Whist clutches Pend, dripping sweat. A plant with two buzz saw arms approaches Whist. It throws a buzz saw at him.

Dood: Whistles, look out!

Whist leans backwards and the saw narrowly misses him. It slices his platform in half, and frees him from the chains. [end page]

Dood: You're free! Save me, Whistles!

Whist looks at Dood, then back at Pend who he's still grabbing. Then back at her.

Whist: I'll save you! Both of you!

He reaches toward her.

P. 42-43

Dood: Whistles, what are you doing?! You have to move to save one of us!

Some plants close in on Dood. One of them with big scissor arms, snapping at her (catches some hair).

Dood: "EEEK!"

On another plant, Flippy is riding.

Dood: Flippy? [end page]

Flippy (looking sullen): Doodlebean. I can't live this life anymore. I'm sorry.

He turns his plant and crashes into the one threatening her. He plows it into the wall, causing both plants to explode.

P. 44

Young Pend sees it, and gets a more serious look on his face through the pain.

Pend: Father...

He then gets zapped by a clown with an electric pole.

Whist: Master! Hang on!

Dood: Whistles! Pleeese!! Help me! That... that child is not your master. He's not the thing you want him to be no matter how hard you try to make him! His purpose is something else. His feelings... I'm sorry to say Whistles, but they're aren't real. He can't really love you. Not the way I do!

P. 45-48

Whistles looks back at Dood, and is torn.

Whist: Doodlebean.

Whist: Master.

He bites down, overwhelmed by pressure. The buzz saw plant throws another saw at him. It severs his normal arm.

Whist: YEEEEAAAARGHHHH!!! [end page]

2 page spread:

A powerful jetstream emerges from his bloody stump. [end spread]

It wraps around Doodlebean. It's a new arm made of candy. Dood looks at it wrapping around her.

Dood: ... Candy?

The psychic voice in his head says: You have to make a move, Whistles. What will it be?

P. 49-50

Pend: Whistles.

Whist looks over at Pend. There's a plant coming up behind him, threatening with a ghastly contraption of whirling drills and spikes.

Pend: She's right. Look at me. I'm suffering. I've been miserable since the moment I left the circus. I've been grateful for your kindness, but to me, it has been like poison. Depriving a twisted creature like me of a life of evil has left me deformed... emaciated. I can't go on.

The whirling blades creep up behind him.

Whistles: Master... [end page]

Pend: No one is master of Whistles the Clown. Let me go...

The blades consume him. Just before they engulf his head, he finishes, "...father."

The blades pop his balloon arm.

Whist winces: NOOOOooooo. Master...

P. 51-53

With tears and a sudden burst of energy, he pulls Dood with his candy arm, breaking her chains, pulling her towards him, just in time to evade an attack on her. [end page]

2 page spread:

She grabs on to him tight, and he jumps off the platform, towards the bottom of the spire.

P. 54-55

Sugar, Gumb and Gumbloid are gathered around the "nut". Sugar touches it again, pushing it in some direction. The entire circus seems to undulate and morph, swaying in that direction. [end page]

Sugar seems pleasantly surprised with his discovery. He goes to grab it again, but the top of the nut opens a little. A tiny strange face pokes out. It says "Sugarshoe, you bloody fool! You'll ruin everything with your reckless antics!" Everyone looks surprised by the development.

P. 56-57

Sugar inspects closer, then pulls him out of the nut with one hand. It's a tiny, mean looking imp.

Imp: Arg! What are you doing?! Don't take me out of there! Careless buffoon, don't you realize the imbalances you will cause?

Sugar shrugs off his warnings, and tosses him into the corner. [end page]

He turns his attention back on the nut, with a maniacal look of one who's stumbled on a great unknown treasure.

Gumblin: Perhaps you should heed the warning of this peculiar toadstool-imp.

Imp: Ah! Insults!

Gumblin: Sorry.

P. 58-64

2 pages...

From outside, we see the sprawling chaos of the SC tents and structures dominating the landscape. Suddenly the whole structure begins moving and changing shape. [end page]

2 page spread

It takes on semi-organic/animalistic forms, with numerous legs and tentacles composed of circus structures and candy stripes.

2 page spread

It starts stalking across the landscape, lumbering and destroying things in its path.

Imp: Look what you've done! You've accelerated our growth too much, and now have bypassed any remaining control we've maintained over it! This is a catastrophe!

P. 65

We see Whistles falling down into the darkness of the bottom of the spire, clutching Doodlebean. He has a determined look on his face.

Chapter 6

Sugar is holding the “nut”, controlling it. He is guiding it like a joystick, while ranting about his discovery. “The secret of this circus, it’s finally revealed!” Gumblin, Gumbloid, and the imp are watching him. Whistles has landed nearby, holding Doodlebean with his candy arm. (his other arm appears severed again, now that the balloon has popped).

We see a huge, amorphous beast composed of circus materials, twisted tents and tubes, lumbering enormously over the Earth.

Sugarshoe: “I can see everything by touching this thing. I see through the beast’s eyes... enchanting.” He pushes the nut in one direction. “You, beast! Now! Destroy that village!” The beast turns away from the village on a rock face, and stomps into a freighter in the water, sending dozens of large blimp-insects flying. Sugar pulls back on the nut. “Now crush that fleet of sky crafts!” A bunch of airplane-like things fly overhead, which the monster ignores. It crashes its massive weight into a bunch of stone pillars, destroying them. Sugar pushes on the nut, “Now! Make your might my will and obliterate that ugly mountain!” The beast crawls onto land, and swipes its huge “arm” at a city, wrecking it. Sugarshoe drops the nut and shrugs. “Er... Yeah, I’m not controlling it at all. It’s still delightful though!”

The imp tells him to stop horsing around with it and let him back in the nut. He grabs the tether. Sugar grabs it too, they fight over it, Sugar pushing the imp in the face. The beast gets agitated and grumbles. Suddenly the interior starts rumbling, shaking the floor they stand on. Everyone, the imp, Sugar, Gumb, Whistles etc are sucked into an orifice in a whirling stream of goo. They are all ejected out of the monster, onto the ground nearby the city being destroyed. The monster goes back to wrecking the city, grabbing buildings with tentacles and eating them. They watch, horrified.

Whistles and Doodlebean have landed together. They pick themselves up, dirty and scuffed up from the action. Whistles: “Are you ok, Doodlebean?” Dood: “I think so... Whistles, you saved me. Thank you.” Whist: “You’re welcome. I’m happy you’re ok, Doodlebean. But... Master.” Dood: “I know, Whistles. But it’s what he wanted. I thought he could only grow to be a monster. I was afraid of him at first. But watching you raise him, I saw you teach him all the good things inside you. He learned to love, and to sacrifice.” Whist: “I guess so. It just... it feels like all I ever do is lose him. I’m constantly letting go of things I love.” Dood holds his candy hand. Dood: “But Whistles... you still have m...” Interrupted by monster noise: rrgrrrRRROOOOOOOOAAARRRRRR!!!

The circus monster has turned towards them and let out a mighty bellow. Whistles looks at it and is transfixed in its shadow. Doodlebean starts backing away. “Whistles, maybe this isn’t the time. We have to run! Whistles?”

Sugarshoe and Gumblin are standing, staring at the monster in the distance. Sugar has a huge grin on his face. “I... I couldn’t even fathom a better act in the performance! The

glee is abundant!” Gumblin: “Oh, you idiot.” Sugar: “But it surely would not be a performance without spectators!” He takes out a remote and pushes a button. Something inside the monster is pushing out of his back. It suddenly lances out of the tents and fabric like a spear. It is the huge spiraling spire of caged human spectators that Whistles just escaped from. It rockets into the sky, then explodes, fragmenting it into thousands of individual cages with many screaming people in each. The cages deploy parachutes, and start floating down very slowly. Everyone has a sky-view of the devastation below.

Sugar: “I almost wish I too could be a spectator, and enjoy this feast of entertainment, but it is my solemn duty as star performer to...” Gumblin punches him in the head. Sugar crashes to the ground. Gumb: “Your devotion to performance intrudes on sickening fanaticism.” Sugar: “Oh, the final act! The duel of the superstars! Whose capers will be found more intoxicatingly whimsical!” Gumb: “Stop it. This is obviously not an act in a production, even by your standards. Can’t you see you’ve lost control of everything?” Sugar: “Improvisation is as much an art as choreography.” He pushes another button on his remote. One of the floating cages above, full of people, suddenly opens its floor like a hatch, sending all the screaming people into a freefall, which was an accident. Sugar: “Oops!” He pushes another button. Another cage opens, dropping a horrible plant monster, with ostrich legs and wings. He pushes more buttons, and more cages open dropping similar creatures. Many of them are fitted with dangerous looking weapons, like the gladiator ones had.

The imp is fleeing for his life across the countryside. He trips and falls on his face. He looks back. Gumbloid has grabbed his ankle, and stands over him. Imp: “Augh! Let me go! That thing will kill us all, I promise you! You don’t know what you fools have started!” Gumbloid: “It seems we are hardly to blame. If there is a source of all this chaos I can identify, it is you. You resided at the center of what turned out to be a hideous organism of destruction. What were you planning?” Imp: “Me?? I’m no architect of this. I only kept it in check... slumbering peacefully. That’s my only purpose! In truth, no one controls it. Everyone serves a symbiotic function towards it, keeping it alive, helping it grow. In turn, it sustains everyone else. This madness, it serves no one!” Gumbloid: “So you admit to being a cog in a ruthless machine of pure malevolence?” Imp: “No! Arg! Don’t you follow? You stupid robot!” Gumbloid kicks him in the face, sending him flying.

The ostrich plants land around Gumblin, looking menacing. Gumb looks worried, and starts backing off. The plants are gnashing and slobbering, with weapons armed. The plants all suddenly start attacking each other in a wild melee. Gumb turns to Sugarshoe, approaching menacingly. Sugar backs off, loosening his collar nervously. Gumb picks up a big stick, and hits Sugar across the face with it, knocking teeth out.

The huge monster continues to rampage in the background, roaring and thrashing in the city. Whistles is still transfixed. Doodlebean is tugging at his shirt, trying to pull him away. Dood: “Whistles, come on! We have to get away from here! What are you doing? Hello??” We see Whistle’s blank stare, closer. Some basic psychic thoughts are communicated to Whistles. They seem to be coming from the monster.

In the governess' mansion, several military types are conversing with the governess. They are urging a military strike against it immediately. She doesn't think it will do any good, but authorizes it anyway to buy some time. She thinks they only have one hope.

Whistles, still being pulled to no avail by Doodlebean, starts absently walking towards the city, approaching the monster. Dood: "Whistles, where are you going!" He pulls away from her grip, she falls. Dood: "Oh, jeez." She starts thinking to herself. "What's going on with him? He won't respond. Does he know something?" ... "I'm terrified. Everything in me is telling me to run... but I can't leave him. Everything I've ever known about Whistles tells me there's something special about him, and things will always work out if I stay with him. I should trust him, no matter how naive he appears to be sometimes. But still... look at that thing!" The monster looms large with gaping mouthfuls of ruined building.

Sugar and Gumb continue to fight. Gumb cavorts with gymnastic moves, executing more attacks on Sugarshoe. Sugar is getting knocked around and bloodied. As he's keeled over and Gumb approaches him, Sugar pulls out a soda bottle, and breaks the bottom end, making a weapon. He spins around, stabs Gumb in the chest with it. Gumb buckles in pain, bleeding. "Eat glass, fancy-boy!"

Military shows up, starts getting destroyed by monster. It wields ferris wheel buzz saw blades.

Gumbloid fights imp. Imp relays more on nature of beast, implying one with special communion with the circus like himself could theoretically control it. Gumbloid kills imp.

Whistles is transfixed by psychic communion with circus beast, and grows another balloon arm, more detailed this time. He takes control of the monster and can bend it to his will, but hasn't realized this yet.

Sugar says he'll eat Gumb, though the prospect disgusts him. That's the difference between a star like Gumb and a superstar like Sugar. Performance is to relish in the distasteful necessities. He continues to fight with broken soda bottle, and Gumb cavorts to dodge attacks.

Brief summary of final events:

Whistles is transfixed by the monster and freezes, in spite of Doodlebean's pleas to run. The monster is about to attack them but stops. There is a psychic bond between it and Whistles. Whistles can control it, but doesn't seem to be aware of this. Suddenly, Master Pendlecoat is talking to him with a booming voice. The monster has transformed into a titanic Pendlecoat, composed of tents and striped tendrils. Whistles is delighted to be talking to his master again, and converses with him as if it were old times. Doodlebean

tries to tell him everything Pendlecoat is saying is coming from Whistles' head. Whistles doesn't listen. Pendlecoat talks joyously about how they will rebuild the circus together.

Sugar gets enraged when he sees Pend-shaped circus. Thinks Pend is behind all of this. In his blind rage, Sugar is distracted and Gumb gets the upper hand in the fight, beating Sugar senseless. But Sugar weirdly doesn't care. His hatred for Pend is consuming him and driving him insane. Gumb simply stops attacking him while Sugar melts down.

The giant Pend starts picking up buildings and using them as props to "rebuild the circus" as Whist gleefully watches. Pend says they'll need food for the spectators, and starts picking up piles of clowns, and appears to consider ways to cook them. For the first time, Whistles starts to question his master. He argues with him, as if sifting through the terrible things in his own mind. Ultimately, he gets angry when Pendlecoat does something which puts Doodlebean in danger. He loses it, and shows a level of rage we haven't seen from him before. He lashes out and completely destroys Pendlecoat and the entire Starlight Calliope with his mind.

In the aftermath, we see that Gumbloid has killed the imp. Sugarshoe is laughing and clapping maniacally at Pend's final defeat, and celebrates Whistles as the true star of the circus. Gumb rolls his eyes at this spectacle, but stops fighting Sugar, who seemingly is not a threat anymore, just an annoying fan. Gumblin looks over at Whistles and Doodlebean in the distance, who are hugging each other. Gumblin is very proud and wipes a tear away.