Tragic Events, Part II

Evelyn Evelyn

Are you crying, Evelyn?No... Well, yes.
I was just thinking about Sandy.
And about Bimba and Kimba.
I miss them, Evelyn.I know,
I miss them too.
Especially this time of year, Evelyn.The year is 1991,
Terminator 2 is the highest-grossing film at the Box Office,
the first Super Nintendo Entertainment System has just been released,
and after 70 years of Communist rule
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has collapsed.And on a chicken ranch just outside of Claxton, Georgia,
twin sisters are waiting for their supper.The farm is old and operated by Alfred McClock,
an eccentric man with a fascination with Civil War weaponry.
McClock's chicken farms produces over 140, 000 chickens a year
and ships wings, thighs and legs all over the continental United States.Despite the modest success of his business,
McClock leads a solitary life,
never marrying and tending several of the chicken houses himself.
A simple man with a not entirely bad heart.
McClock never knew how to best take care of the young girls who came into his life shortly after their birth,
so he raised them the only way he knew how -
in a two foot by two foot wire-mesh cage,
on a diet of mash, crumbles, pellets and egg booster.One clear September day,
during the twins sixth year at the farm,
McClock does not come at meal time.
Night falls and still he doesn't appear.
The girls and the chickens cry out from hunger.Days pass, and the chickens in neighboring cages begin to die.
The smell of rotting poultry permeates the air of the hot, humid barn.Finally,
desperate to find food and concerned over the whereabouts of their guardian,
the twins break free from their cage.
McClock's house is locked tight,
but the girls find the garden hose, which quenches their thirst.
Still half delirious with hunger,
they make their way out to the road.Little time passes before a dusty black Cadillac Coupe DeVille drives by and pulls over.
A tall, mustachioed man with a kindly face steps out of the vehicle.
He smiles at the girls
(Hello)
and presents them with the first candy they have ever tasted - a Twix bar,
which they share in silent, odd delight.

The girls do not feel at all uncomfortable when the man leads them gently into the dark, spacious trunk.In the following days the girls are transferred into the trunks of several other cars (Hello)
by many other kindly, (Hello) candybar-offering men (Hello)
until they reach their final destination at a lakeside lodge in Manitoba.The underwood lodge is a collection of cozy, waterfront cabins with an attached trailer park along the shores of lake Winnipeg.
It is also the world headquarters of Budding Flowers Entertainment,
specializing in the production and distribution of photographs and VHS tapes for clientele with unique tastes.The girls are welcomed by Mrs. Deborah Bulgar, the fifty-two-year-old podiatrist, (?)
(Well, hello, girls!)
a woman of enormous proportions,
who lives with her own three children in the main lodge of the underwood.Upon finding that the girls have no names she christens them Eva and Lynn,
names which neither she nor the twins themselves are ever able to keep straight.(Eva, Lynn.)The twins' days at the underwood are relatively comfortable,
they are well cared for,
the food is delicious,
and there are many other girls their age.
Once a week, photo sessions take place,
convivial affairs that involve make-up,
a wide variety of dress up costumes
and inventive new games.Every few days Mrs. Bulgar introduces the girls to one of their many uncles.
(Eva, Lynn, say hello to your uncle, Mark.)
(Heeey.)
These uncles,
seemingly endless in number,
travel from all over the world to visit their nieces.The girls don't always like their new uncles,
but Mrs. Bulgar is always quick to remind them
that 'family is family' and 'blood is thicker than water'.The conjoined sisters are not popular amongst the other girls,
however, one gentle resident, a few years their senior, befriends them and takes them under her wing.(Hello, what's your name?)Her name is Sandy.(I'm Sandy.)She has soft blonde hair that reaches down to her knees.
Everyone says she looks like a mermaid.
Dressed daily by Mrs. Bulgar in trademark fishnet stockings and vintage attire,
Sandy is by far the most popular girl of the underwood.
She has so many uncles
that the twins lose count.Every night after dinner and chores,
Sandy tucks the young sisters into bed and tells them fantastic stories
until they fall peacefully to sleep.
(And after three long weeks at sea, John Luke (?) the sailor finally spotted land.)
But these happy times do not last.
Shortly after the twins' third Christmas under Mrs. Bulgar's care,
Sandy disappears,
never to return.The twins remain in the underwood for the greater part of two long, miserable years.
Without Sandy to protect them,
they are ostracized and abused by the other girls.

(What are YOU looking at, four-eyes?)
The photo sessions involve fewer fancy costumes,
and over time their uncles become more peculiar.
(Did I ask you to talk?!)
The twins begin to notice a disturbing tendency
for girls, much like their dear friend Sandy,
to quietly disappear from the underwood around their twelfth or thirteenth birthday.
The sisters brace themselves for something terrible.One autumn, when the girls are eleven,
an old man, who speaks only Spanish, takes the twins into a large orange van and drives them to their new home.(Step right up, step right up, see amazing human oddities, freaks of nature! Be warned, people with heart condition, children, women - We will accept no responsibility for fainting, reoccurring nightmares, or death.)Dillard and Fullerton, elusive and illogical traveling show
is the twelfth largest touring circus in North America.
Former insurance salesmen, Dillard and Fullerton,
distinguish their enterprise by procuring the most shocking specimen of the grotesque and unusual.
Their small administrative staff works tirelessly
to combat legal actions and public allegations of animal cruelty
and human slave trafficking.Life in the circus is harder than their time at the underwood.
There is always work to be done.
In addition to their chores of laundry and sweeping,
Mr. Dillard insist that the twins spend many hours each day practicing their act.(What are you standing around for?)The girls are frightened of the clowns,
several of whom, by amazing coincidence,
also happen to be their uncles.
(Hello!)
(Hello!)
(Hello!)
But still, overall,
these early days at the circus are happy times for the twins.Every night to the delight of audiences across the country,
the girls appear in the center ring, singing and strumming a ukulele,
atop Bimba and Kimba - the world's only known conjoined twin siamese elephants.The twins feel they have found true soulmates in Bimba and Kimba,
who they affectionately refer to as 'Elephant, Elephant'.
This special bond reciprocates by the pachyderms,
who fondly nozzle the girls with their trunks
and seem to delight in giving them rides.The twins and the elephants are inseparable.With the help of the Alphonso the Arresting, the animal trainer,
(Like this!)
the twins tend to the elephants,
feeding and grooming them daily.But one terrible August morning,
Bimba and Kimba refuse to take their food.
Due to the unsanitary conditions of their quarters
and an improper diet of popcorn and cotton candy,
the elephants have contracted a rare form of elephantine diphtheria,

compounded by early onset Alzheimer's disease.For the next two weeks the twins can only stand by helplessly,
as their companions become sicker and weaker
and begin displaying obvious signs of memory loss.
The last few days are almost unbearable.
With Bimba and Kimba's confused, sad eyes
looking up at the girls with great anguish,
but no hint of recognition.And on one grim September day
the sisters' sixteenth birthday
Elephant Elephant dies.The funeral is held the same day,
a grisly affair at an industrial trash compactor behind a Home Depot
in Fort Dodge, Iowa.The twins are devastated.
Without Bimba and Kimba life is but a terrible and meaningless void.
They resign themselves to living out the rest of their hollow existence
in solemn mourning.
The emotionally exausted sisters fall from favor within the circus.No longer willing to sing and play their ukulele,
the girls are dressed in a pink tutu and forced to balance on a giant red ball,
an impossible task for the conjoined sisters.(Get on that damn ball!)The audience roars with laughter each time they awkwardly fall.
Their discomfort is increased by a pair of radical groups ,
who have taken an interest in the twins.
Every night in most major cities, protesters assemble,
nosily waving signs and chanting slogans in front of the Box Office.The first faction claims to represent an organization called 'FASSTEN' - the Foundation for Always Separating Siamese Twins Everywhere Now.Citing the bible, FASSTEN members vehemently believe
that it is the will of the Lord that all conjoined twins
be separated and allowed to live individual lives.
Wielding symbolical surgical saws and blunt carbon knives,
FASSTEN members chide the ticket buyers for supporting the abomination of god.The second group operates under the acronym SPLIT - the Society for the Preservation of Linked Identical Twins.
A reactionary organization,
working to discredit the claims of FASSTEN,
SPLIT believes that conjoined twins will play a critical role in the second coming of Christ.The twins are terrified by both groups - the knives and saws make them very nervous,
and SPLIT members make threats to kidnap the girls
and take them to where they will be kept safe in a place of darkness until the rapture.One day before a Sunday matinee in Sacramento, a chaotic brawl erupts between the two factions
and one FASSTEN member gets alarmingly close to the twins with a hacksaw.(It's the will of the Lord!)Stricken with fear,
the sisters decide that they are no longer safe at the circus.
That night, they make a resolution - to leave the Dillard and Fullerton traveling show
forever.

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