

Charlot was once a famous ballet dancer until he became too old. Then he found a circus and became a clown, and a very funny one at that. The only trouble was that in order to be funny, he had to take a drink or two so that he could lose his self-consciousness.

Because there was something [xxx] in his manner, due possibly to his early training as a ballet dancer, he could never warm up to an audience without taking a drink.

This was quite harmless at first because it took so little to make him feel unctuous, but as time went by, the drinking increased until he became a hardened drunkard. He could not be funny without being completely lit up.

However, Charlot was not objectionable when he was tight. In fact he was quite amusing and very good natured and very popular with the male members of the touring company. He was also generous to a fault, especially when he was drinking. On more than one occasion, on a Sunday morning, he had awakened to the cold gray facts that on putting his hand in his trouser pockets that his whole week's salary was missing—gone—only to remember with shame and humiliation and a certain amount of shyness that he had given it to an unfortunate comrade in distress.

Charlot had a beautiful wife who was very much younger than himself. She was the daughter of an old clown who had died. The clown on his death bed has extracted a promise from Charlot that he would adopt his daughter. Charlot had promised the clown on his death bed that he would adopt his child and save it from going to an orphanage. As the clown lay dying, he also extracted a promise from Charlot that he would one day marry his daughter.

And Charlot had carried out that promise. More than that, he secretly loved his young wife. In fact, she was his whole life.

But she did not really love him. She had a great respect and a deep affection for him, but it was not love. Charlot knew this, but he did not want to admit it to himself. In his dream world there was hope that a realistic