

INT. UNO LAKEFRONT ARENA IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUSIANA - NOON

An image of a Circus Tent fills the screen--Red, Gold and Purple in color. Inside it reads, "ALL WONDER CIRCUS." The image being shown is a FLIER. A pair of hands hold out the flier for a full view.

ALEC stands in the center of the empty arena during setup, fawning at the flier in his hands. All around, the PRODUCTION STAFF AND CREW hustle to construct the sets.

SUPERIMPOSE: 12:00 PM 7 HOURS UNTIL SHOWTIME

Alec glows with a starry-eyed giddiness, the proud company founder. Suddenly, Alec's view is broken. A familiar hand holding a digital tablet enters frame; on it is a TICKET SALES CHART for tonight's show. They appear to be deeply in the red. Alec turns to see BELLA (the Circus' Production Manager) holding the tablet with a worried expression on her face--as per usual.

Alec's eyes dart between Bella's tablet and his flier. He appears overwhelmed. He scratches his head in search of a leaderlike response. Just as Alec's mouth opens, a motorcyclist zooms right by, snatching Alec away. Bella jolts back in surprise.

On the backseat of the speeding motorcycle, Alec sits dumbfounded. He turns to the driver and finds NIKA (Bella's twin sister and the Circus' Daredevil) shooting back a bright smile. In an instant, Nika makes a harsh turn and hurls Alec off. They've arrived at the other side of the arena. Alec barely lands on his feet, still confused. Nika tosses Alec a CLIPBOARD and his TOP HAT. On the clipboard reads "Rehearsal" with blank spaces to check off one-by-one. Nika gives a peppy salute and peels out. Alec is left to his new immediate duty and straightens up with the same glowing eyes.

CUT TO:

Alec walks through the bustling set with eager eyes aimed ahead.

SUPERIMPOSE: 12:05 PM REHEARSAL

A chilling thought of the sales chart and his floundering business creeps from behind. Alec's confidence withers.

The Dancers/Musician: A pair of spotlights overtake the arena, stopping Alec in his tracks. He turns to look and is blown back by a piercing sax chord. Under the spotlights are

AMB (the Musician) and DYLAN AND JALENA (the Dancers), tearing the air with a powerful sax and dance routine. Alec is amazed by their show. Creeping back comes the memory of the sales chart but Alec now brushes it aside. He then takes his clipboard and sternly checks off their names before sliding off to the next talent.

The Strongman: Past the spotlights stands a hulking older man curling a massive barbell and bracing an iron weight between his teeth. On that weight is a large star symbol. Alec swoops behind DIAMONT (the Strongman) with clipboard ready, hopeful stars hovering around. Diamont turns to Alec and clenches the weight with his teeth. The weight (and the star symbol on it) crumbles with the pressure as Diamont returns an overpowering grin. Alec flinches as the hopeful stars around him shatter. Alec nervously checks off his clipboard and scurries away.

The Clowns: Alec begins to doubt his business again as he walks along the set. He scans his clipboard to read who's next and, when looking up, stops and cowers back. Before him is a standing curtain with a sign beside it reading "Clown Alley." From behind the curtain the silhouette of a down sloping arrow taunts Alec with visions of that sales chart. His eyes adjust to see the silhouette actually take the thin shapes of JOEY AND GRIMALD (the Clowns). They appear to be discussing their routine. Relieved and curious, Alec draws closer to listen. The silhouette of Joey pantomimes a sequence of towering forces and his comically terrified reactions. Alec cracks and bursts into laughter. Joey and Grimald perk up in alarm and open up the curtain, their thin silhouettes giving way to their true large forms. Alec is hugging his sides in laughter. Joey and Grimald comply with ear-to-ear smiles.

As Alec is laughing, a swarm of flying playing cards flutter overhead and land in front of clown alley. The cards burst into a cloud of smoke, cutting off Alec's laughter.

The Magician: From the smoke stands a mischievous figure. Alec, Joey, and Grimald look bewildered at XIANG (the Magician) who pulls out a 9 of Diamonds playing card and casts a wicked smirk. Joey and Grimald immediately panic. With a wave of Xiang's arm, the clown alley curtain closes (now emblazoned with a matching 9 of Diamonds pattern). When the curtain opens, Joey and Grimald are replaced with a huge money sack. Alec is bewitched and speechless. But instantly, the money sack and all of clown alley flash in a ball of flame, forcing Alec to shudder back. What remains are Joey and Grimald quivering in their underwear, their other clothes burnt off, and Xiang delightfully beaming. Alec nervously checks his clipboard and scampers away from the scene.

The camera follows Alec to the final stop. A wall-like figure blocks the path ahead. All is halted. Alec foolishly looks up. A BUSINESSMAN in an expensive suit with an incredible intimidating mass looks down at Alec, arms crossed. Far down below, to his side, stands Bella, clutching her tablet in trepidation. Alec straightens up as worry sets in

INT. BUSINESSMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A list of utilities and services with increasingly heftier prices. At the bottom are the current piddling ticket sales; hardly making a difference. The image being shown is a BILL. A pair of giant hands put down the bill to look down at Alec and Bella, trembling in their seats.

SUPERIMPOSE: 12:45 PM BOSS' OFFICE

All three sit at the end of a dark office room. On the Businessman's desk is a pile of bills so high it covers his face.

The Businessman's hands speak for him, as they roll a palm up in demand of pay.

Alec scratches his head and searches for a leaderlike response--annoying Bella right next to him. Alec opens his arms as he explains the wonder of their elaborate, magnificent production--a small glow coming through his eyes. Bella shares sympathy with this. The Businessman hammers a fist down, landing it on a copy of the All Wonder Circus flier. Alec and Bella flinch. Alec turns to Bella who wastes no time and hastily slams a ruffled stack of cash on the desk. Both Alec and Bella bow their heads.

As the Businessman collects his pay, Alec glances up at the mushed flier on the desk and then looks next to it at the poor sales chart on Bella's tablet. The glow in Alec's eyes fades away as his head lowers.

At the far end of the office, Nika peers through the door window distressed by the scene.

INT. OUTSIDE BUSINESSMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

All of the circus talent are gathered outside the office room. Each of them want a peek inside. Nika backs away from the door window and shakes her head. Disappointment ripples through to everyone. Xiang looks to his phone where something catches his eye. He gestures for everyone to look. All heads gather for the phone, and after a pause look back to each other.

INT. BACKSTAGE JUST BEHIND THE CURTAIN - 7 PM

The air backstage is frantic, with bodies bustling left and right.

SUPERIMPOSE: 6:58 PM SHOWTIME?

Alec sits just behind the curtain wearing his Ringmaster attire and hanging a heavy head. Bella looks to Alec with concern but turns back to instruct the production crew.

A dull gloom fills Alec's eyes as he stares at a mused Circus flier on the floor. Suddenly, Alec's view is broken. A familiar hand holding a phone enters frame. Alec jolts back and sees Nika, dressed in her Soaring Solari stunt suit. Nika brings Alec's attention to the phone. Confusion furrows his brow. Impatient, Nika marches to the curtain and motions to the sight beyond.

A light crowd--only about a quarter capacity--chatter in their seats. The sight of the small crowd dejects Alec, who hangs his head once again. Nika nudges him and points again to the crowd:

A grandfather and his granddaughter sharing popcorn in giddy anticipation, dressed from top to bottom in circus apparel.

Nika's hand moves to a group of fanatics in the audience. Couples wearing Soaring Solari shirts and magician outfits. A mother and son in clown makeup.

Alec's disheartened face softens. Nika brings the phone to his view once again. It displays the "All Wonder Circus Fan Page."

Numerous heartfelt posts from fans of all ages fill Alec's view--from selfies and family photos to rave reviews and personal blessings.

Alec is speechless.

He blinks as he feels another presence. Alec turns around and is greeted by his faithful All Wonder crew, smiling with starry, glowing eyes.

Without showing Alec's face, he walks through the curtains.

Nika and Bella watch on proudly, as everybody else scurries off to start the show.

The Businessman glowers from the far back.

INT. CIRCUS STAGE/STANDS - CONTINUOUS

The arena is dark as the audience chats in waiting. A spotlight clicks on and all noise fizzles out. From the stands, the audience all look to Alec (the Ringmaster), standing centerstage; his arms raised above his head.

The air is still. The crowd draws closer.

The Businessman can be seen impatiently tapping his finger in wait.

Alec is silent.

His eyes open.

A wonderful starry, glow radiates.

SUPERIMPOSE: 7:00 PM SHOWTIME