

The Great Malaxo



When the Flederer Family Circus advertised for a magician in the Pemmican Gazette, the response was overwhelming. Within an hour, forty-one entertainer wannabes – resumes in hand and dreams of glamorous careers in the entertainment industry in their heads – were lined up in front of the Personnel Tent. The auditioning panel consisted of Yarngirl, Aquerulous and Cloaca the accountant, not the best authorities to analyze feats of prestidigitation, but the circus was temporarily short-sleight-of-handed. The auditionees ran the gamut from competent conjurers to con men, from legerdemainiacs to desperate dilettantes, but none of them, opined the trio, was quite right for the job. And then the Great Malaxo strode into the tent. “Allow me to demonstrate,” he said in a voice that sounded like cement and instantly commanded their attention, “my Amazing Hypnotic Powers™.” He gazed at each of the panelists for a moment, then turned to Cloaca. “You are getting sleepy!” he intoned, wiggling his hand in front of her face. “No, wait. It’s your *leg* that’s getting sleepy!” And he pointed his finger at her thigh. “Sleep, sleeeeeep,” he murmured. “Abra-*malaxo!*” He snapped his fingers and Cloaca reacted with a startled yelp. For, just as Malaxo had predicted, her leg *had* gone to sleep! Oh sure, it could have been because she’d been sitting awkwardly cross-legged for the last hour, but it was still enough to convince the panel that they’d found their man. Of course, “their man” would one day absquatulate with two weeks worth of general admission cash receipts plus Cloaca, but that’s another you-know-what.