

HOW I GOT A RHINOCEROS INTO THE ELEVATOR AT SAKS

By Kelly Meadows

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-822-8

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PUBLISHED BY BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS
1-888-473-8521

HOW I GOT A RHINOCEROS INTO THE ELEVATOR AT SAKS

A Ten Minute Comedic Monologue

By Kelly Meadows

SYNOPSIS: What could be more ridiculous than a rhinoceros in an elevator? Well, try getting it through the china department and women's wear first. This freewheeling tale pits zoology against modern theater, as an experimental director has given the rhino a part in the play. This is one ride with a rhino you won't soon forget.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either; gender flexible)

NARRATOR (m/f) A Student.

NARRATOR: We had a creative writing assignment in my language class, which was to give another student a story title and have them write it up. Creatively. Easy! (*Give the audience a look of “not really.”*) Except that I was matched up with a young man by the name of Corinthus Broadleaf. People made fun of him, obviously. It wasn't his fault—we should have needled his parents about that name, but his father was 6-3, 240 (*Pause.*) and his mother was bigger. Unfortunately, I was one of the leaders in the making-fun department, so when the time came to give him a title, I felt guilty. I didn't want to give him any more trouble than I had already, so I asked of him a simple story called “How I won the Peloponnesian War.” Easy, I thought, plus there were plenty of first hand historical sources that could pave his road to victory.

In return, he had me write a story with the title, (*Try to deliver next line in one breath!*) “How I Got a Rhinoceros into the Elevator at Saks and What Happened When it Stopped on the 12th Floor and the Lady from the Furniture Department Wondered Why the Store Smelled Like a Circus.”

I complained to the teacher, who said “You're lucky Corinthus didn't just sock you in the teeth after how rude you've been.” “But teacher, violence in school is...” (*As Teacher.*) “Nonetheless, you're lucky. Your behavior towards Mr. Broadleaf was detestable.” “So was yours,” I countered, “by allowing me to insult him unabated. Where was an authority figure when he needed one?” Needless to say, my paper was now to be twice as long as everyone else's, and I had to make sure all the elements of the title were properly represented. Fortunately, believe it or not, I'd just been through that exact experience.

(Let the audience know, with a look, that you're about to start the story.) Getting the rhino into the elevator wasn't really difficult. By the time we got there, it was ready to go in. Getting it through the china department before hand—that was a challenge. The sales assistant pointed out the obvious. (As a snooty sales clerk.) "Excuse me, but you are walking a rhinoceros through some very expensive china." "It has good taste." (As a snooty sales clerk.) "If you break it, you buy it." "What if I *don't* break it," I said, "then what? Then you don't make a sale, so I suggest you keep your threats to yourself." The sales clerk had never heard of such a thing as a rhino *not* breaking china and had nothing more to say, so we went on, now through women's clothing.

(As another clerk.) "Excuse me, but please keep that rhino from swishing its tail in our polyester jungle of expensive women's undergarments." "Excuse *me*, but it's a rhino, and if it wants to swish there's nothing I can do to stop it. We're lucky enough we got it through the china department unscathed. If you have any problems," I continued, "you can discuss them with Corinthus Broadleaf." "Excuse me, but...what a funny name," said the clerk. "I'm not laughing...anymore," I said. And on we went. Next, a mom stopped me. I don't know if she had any kids or not, but you know what I mean. A mom. (As an outraged customer.) "Excuse me, but is that rhino endangered?" I felt endangered, at any rate. By the mom. "We're going to a performance of *Rumpelstiltskin* at the *Downtown Seven Eleven*. They want a rhino for the final scene." (As the mom.) "Excuse me, but I've seen that play, and there isn't a rhino in it." "You know some directors, can't leave well enough alone. Now will you please direct me to the nearest elevator so I can get the rhinoceros to the theater?"

The teacher wrote a note on my paper at this point, asking why there was a theater in Saks, and why there was a 12th floor. She'd never been to a Saks that had more than three or four. I was wondering how on a teacher's salary she'd ever been to a Saks at all. This Saks, however – the Saks 12th Avenue of my imagination – has a small auditorium on the 12th floor behind the furniture department. Much too small for the rhino that was cast in *Rumpelstiltskin*. It was a crowded elevator full of moms and dads and kids, but we were running late, since I was held up on my way through the china and the women's department. The rhino was really pretty tame and had not been enticed at all by delicate demitasse cups or a 20% off sale on swimsuits and stockings.

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