

THE AMAZING ELEPHANT MAN

written by

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based on the short film by Jona Headon

**INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY**

**DARWIN NORMAN** (late-30s) and **AMELIA NORMAN** (early-30s) enter holding hands. The bell above the door CHIMES. Amelia breaks away from Darwin and immediately starts trying wigs.

Darwin is built like a brick house wearing an itchy-looking brown suit. He hides his rolled up **ELEPHANT TRUNK** behind a pair of **JOKE SHOP NOSE-GLASSES** and his ears hidden beneath a fedora. Neither do a good enough job of disguising him.

NOTE: Darwin wears his nose-glasses at all times unless stated otherwise.

Amelia, robust in stature but with curves, wears a flowery red dress, garish red cat-eye glasses, and a mousy-blonde wig. Her trunk is also rolled up and elephant ears are tucked away beneath her wig.

Darwin looks around and takes in all of the types of costumes, wigs, and masks - a thousand possible identities in one room.

Amelia puts on a long brown wig and round sunglasses then closes her eyes holding two fingers up: 'peace, man'.

Darwin CHUCKLES, but stifles it, his trunk mildly TOOTS.

The SHOPKEEPER forces a polite smile. His WIFE holds their DAUGHTER (11) behind her, protecting her eyes from the sight of the freaks.

Amelia tosses her choices onto the counter then something catches her eye. She runs OFF SCREEN revealing Darwin standing in the middle of the shop, he's silhouetted against the shop window.

SUPERIMPOSE:

**T H E   A M A Z I N G   E L E P H A N T   M A N**

**INT/EXT. THEIR CAR/THEIR STREET - DAY**

Darwin pulls up and parks outside their home. The small hatchback CREAKS under the weight of them. Sweet relief when the engine turns off. Scratches and dents decorate the vehicle. 'FREAKS!' emblazoned in white paint along the driver's side.

Their home's facade matches their car. 'FREAKS!' across the door. Their window shutters forever closed.

Darwin falters for a moment, but Amelia strokes his ear with her trunk. He snaps out of it.

They get out and Darwin carries the shopping up the steps to their door. Dabs a finger... The paint is still wet.

**INT. THEIR HOME - DAY**

The door opens.

Darwin sees envelopes on the floor. He attempts to pick them up but can't bend over. Instead, he sucks them up with the power of his trunk.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The home is dimly lit and cosy with warm lamps glowing in various corners. The ambiance is 'forever a winter's Sunday evening'.

Amelia closes the door behind them.

She tries to grab the envelopes, but Darwin dodges. His trunk is dexterous. He places the bags on a cabinet and turns to her. Amelia taps her foot with her hand out. He sucks them up his trunk entirely.

Vanished!

Amelia continues to wait with her hand out.

Darwin then reaches into his pockets and pulls them out one by one and hands them over. The final envelope is from 'VIDEOSPOT'. She opens it.

A cheque slips out. Darwin attempts to suck it up but Amelia has a firm grip. She pulls away with all her might.

CRACK! A rock hits the window shutter. The fun stops. Darwin looks across to the window and nervously rolls his trunk up again.

Amelia heads upstairs HUMMING a melody to herself.

Darwin picks a blood orange from one of the shopping bags. He turns to his ant farm on a small side table and then drops a couple of segments onto the exposed soil at the top.

The ants begin picking it apart.

**INT. THEIR HOME, BEDROOM - DAY**

Amelia sets up her camcorder on a tripod. She's now wearing a Jackie Kennedy-style bouffant wig. She has her mic ready and her tropical island backdrop pinned up on the wall.

She closes her eyes and takes a moment, as if she's about to sing for the Queen of England.

She takes a deep breath.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Darwin is asleep at his armchair.

Amelia wakes him with a gentle stroke of his ear. She wears a bathrobe and nods for him to follow her upstairs. He does.

**INT. THEIR HOME, BEDROOM - DAY**

Steam billows out from the en suite bathroom, taps still RUNNING.

Darwin follows Amelia into the bathroom but she stops him and points at the computer on the desk. When he's distracted, she slinks into the bathroom and closes the door.

Darwin sits at the computer where the 'VIDEOSPOT' website is open with Amelia's latest video uploaded. It already has over ten thousand views.

He watches it. Amelia's angelic voice massages his ears. She isn't wearing a disguise, just a luxurious fur coat.

From the bathroom, Amelia SINGS the chorus in harmony. When the video ends, Darwin watches the view count grow.

Beneath the video, he notices: 'Comments are disabled for this video.'

ON COMPUTER SCREEN: He clicks into 'Settings' and then 'Comments', and then clicks on 'Enable comments'. He then goes back to the video. It PLAYS again automatically. He reads the comments.

- 'Wow! Fat AND ugly!'
- 'Ugh she's so gross!'
- 'Disgusting creature. Makes me sick.'

There are HUNDREDS more like that.

Amelia SINGS the chorus again, and Darwin holds back tears.

He clicks back to 'Settings' and the music stops. Amelia TRUMPETS. He undoes everything. And then goes back to the video. It PLAYS again.

*'Comments are disabled for this video.'*

The bathroom door opens. Darwin quickly composes himself and smiles. Amelia steps out in a bathrobe.

She looks at him holding her stomach and nods.

Darwin LAUGHS and APPLAUDS her performance. She doesn't move.

Darwin stops.

He puts his hands together and slowly parts them revealing a pregnancy test. Amelia looks in the bathroom - it's no longer on the bathtub edge. Darwin begins to shake. He drops it and heads to Amelia.

They embrace.

**INT. THEIR HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

The couple lay in bed holding each other. Amelia sound asleep, Darwin wide awake.

Stones CRACK against the window shutters and insulting slurs from YOUNG HOOLIGANS intrude.

Darwin forces his eyes shut and squeezes Amelia tighter.

**INT. THEIR HOME, BEDROOM - DAY**

Amelia awakes alone.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Amelia descends the staircase.

The house has been baby-proofed. Every edge and corner excessively padded with foam and bubble-wrap.

Amelia LAUGHS and heads back upstairs.

**INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY**

Darwin walks around the hardware store carrying paint cans, planks of wood, various tools, rolls of tape, and rolls of bubble-wrap. His face can hardly be seen behind everything.

At the checkout, the CLERK scans everything on him.

**INT. BANK - DAY**

Amelia stands at the end of a line. She wears a fur coat and a silky black bob cut wig with orange-tinted sunglasses. She HUMS to herself and holds her 'VIDEOSPOT' cheque.

Finally, it's her turn.

She approaches the counter. The teller closes her window unapologetically.

No problem. Amelia just joins another queue.

**INT. THEIR CAR - DAY - TRAVELLING**

On Darwin's drive home, he sees a 'HELP WANTED' sign in the window of a library.

**INT. THEIR HOME, SPARE BEDROOM - DAY**

Amelia enters. Darwin is holding planks of pine surrounded by his DIY equipment. He looks like a child on Christmas morning.

Darwin shows her the 'HELP WANTED' flyer.

Then he nods.

**INT. LIBRARY - DAY**

Darwin walks down an aisle pushing a trolley. One wheel quietly SQUEAKS. Every footstep a loud THUD.

LIBRARIAN (O.S.)  
 (after every step)  
 Shh... Shh... Shh... Shh...  
 Shh...

Darwin quietly slides books into their designated places.

He gets distracted by the comics on the shelf above. He takes one out and reads the first page. He TRUMPETS with laughter.

ALL (O.S.)  
 SHHHHHHH!

**INT. LIBRARY, LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Darwin is handed the bad news...

**INT. LIBRARY - DAY**

He THUDS out of the library ignoring every 'SHHH' but walks harder and harder causing books to fall off the shelves behind him.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Darwin returns home.

Amelia can see he's in a huff. Presumably his first day was also his last.

Outside, a dozen dogs great and small BARK erratically.

He opens the door again to see the commotion. A SCRAWNY DOG WALKER (12) attempts to control the pack as they BARK at a squirrel up a tree.

Amelia joins Darwin at the door. The squirrel jumps down and scurries off, and the dogs bolt after it dragging the kid with them.

Amelia, standing behind Darwin, strokes his ear with her trunk. He looks back at her. Her eyes fixed on the dogs.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Darwin stands on the grass looking down at the Scrawny Dog Walker. The dogs WHIMPER, but we can't see them.

The Scrawny Dog Walker hands over the knot of leashes and steps aside revealing the dogs hiding behind him.

They get one look at Darwin and immediately, and literally, poop themselves all over each other.

**INT. THEIR HOME - DAY**

Darwin returns home yet again, jobless.

He takes his glasses off and sets them on his chair's armrest.

Amelia TOOTS hoping for good news. Darwin turns and his tail knocks his glasses onto the cushion, but he doesn't notice. He dips his head and SIGHS.

He scratches the back of his head, stretches and YAWNS, and collapses into the chair.

*CRUNCH!*

He stands. The frame is snapped and the nose is shattered.

**INT. THEIR CAR - DAY**

Darwin pulls up slowly to the costume shop. He's wearing shades and a fedora. He looks like a 1940s detective on a stakeout. We cut out wider to reveal the rest of his outfit: a bright, colourful clown suit.

The shop's closed. The sign on the window says: 'We're on holiday! Back in a week!'

He frantically yanks on the steering wheel. The car shakes.

**INT. THEIR CAR - DAY**

Parked on a picturesque residential street. Darwin turns the rear view mirror towards him. He rolls up his trunk and begins to apply his clown makeup.

Pure white face, big red lips... the works.

He checks himself out.

Dissatisfied, he dips a finger in the black paint and draws a pair of glasses on his face. Then, in pink, smudges a nose in place.

It'll do.

**EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE, GARDEN - DAY**

Darwin is dressed as a clown with full face paint. A group of CRYING CHILDREN sit before him as he does a magic trick.

The PARENTS are infuriated.

**EXT. BIRTHDAY HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - DAY**

A MOTHER pays Darwin at the door.

Darwin holds the cash in his hand.

Then the CRYING BIRTHDAY GIRL (5) latches onto her Mother's leg. The Mother looks down at her, then back at Darwin, then at the money in his hand.

She reaches out and takes half back, and then closes the door on him.

**INT. THEIR HOME - DAY**

Darwin returns home - disappointed as usual. He unzips his clown suit and steps out of it. He's wearing normal clothes underneath. He slumps into his chair, face still painted.

Amelia hurries off into the kitchen and returns with an industrial-sized tub of ice cream and a spoon. She scoops a spoonful and offers it to Darwin, but she gets distracted before letting him have some -- An idea!

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY**

The MELODIC JINGLE of an ice cream van emanates throughout the street.

A small horde of CHILDREN dash from their homes and ditch their games to chase the van.

Darwin stops the van. All the children run around to the window, one bumps into the 'SLOW CHILDREN' sign in the back.



Darwin slides open the window and the children see him. He isn't wearing his glasses.

They SCREAM and run away.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Darwin enters whilst licking an ice cream cone. Vanilla ice cream drips down his chin and over his fingers. Morose and despondent.

Amelia steps out again, sees him, then SIGHS.

He walks past his ant farm. They stop working and follow him across the formicarium as he crosses them.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Amelia's SINGING is quiet and muffled through the ceiling.

Darwin sits and reads a hardback in his armchair. There is also a book set up before the ant farm. He turns his page, then he turns the ants' page.

Amelia stops SINGING. Did she forget the words? Mess up? Her heavy footsteps THUD across the ceiling to reset the camera, then THUD back to her mark. She starts again.

Doorbell RINGS.

Darwin checks the peephole: Two YOUNG MEN in white button-down shirts and black ties - JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

Darwin opens the door. They jump as if they just saw the devil. Darwin looks at them and waits.

They raise their hands and back away down the steps to the street.

Darwin closes the door, almost a SLAM.

Amelia stops SINGING again. Her heavy footsteps THUD across the ceiling to reset the camera.

**INT. THEIR HOME, BEDROOM - DAY**

Amelia's dressed like a hula dancer with the coconut bra and straw skirt. The backdrop is a red sunset over the ocean. She moves back to her mark and takes a deep breath -- She stops -- Another idea!

She TOOTS her trunk out the door.

Shortly after, Darwin enters the room. She gestures he do his magic for the camera.

He shakes his head.

She insists and pulls him to the mark on the floor. She hurries to the camera and unclips it from the tripod. Darwin tries to hide, and Amelia encroaches.

He TRUMPETS aggressively and storms out the room.

**EXT. THEIR HOME, GARDEN - DAY**

Amelia hangs clothes on the rotary washing line. Darwin sits on the grass watching a ladybug crawl around his thick hand. Amelia HUMS.

Darwin looks fed up with the world.

A wedge of flyers are thrown over their fence. Pages flutter to the grass. Darwin's eyes cut up to the litter and his trunk raises like a submarine periscope to blow the ladybug away.

Amelia picks one up and reads:

*'COME ONE! COME ALL! THE COLOMBUS-BIRDIE CIRCUS IS IN TOWN! ROLL UP! ROLL UP!'*

A beautiful woman with sleek brown hair dominates the page as other performers float around her. At the bottom is a small man in a red ringmaster suit.

Darwin picks up each flyer without reading and throws them in the trash can.

Amelia keeps hers.

He then storms back toward Amelia, picks up all the laundry and clothes pegs in both hands and throws it at the line.

They all hang perfectly. The rotary line slowly rotates.

He heads inside. Amelia stands dejected, realising he could've done that at the beginning. She then picks up the basket and follows.

**INT. THEIR HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Darwin sits with his ants. He presses his hand against the glass. The ants stop what they're doing and move to the centre and form a hand (like two people separated by glass, desperate for a human connection). He is a pathetic sight.

Amelia watches him with her hands on her hips. She then enters the kitchen and we hear CHOPPING.

The doorbell RINGS.

Darwin jumps and hurries to the door. Opens it. A large box appears to float as the DELIVERY MAN can hardly be seen behind it. Darwin signs the clipboard on top and a little hand reaches over and takes it.

Darwin takes the box.

The Delivery Man looks up from the signed delivery note only to just catch a glimpse of the back of an elephant? The door closes. He squints a couple times and shakes his head.

Darwin opens the box. A sea of identical NOVELTY NOSE-GLASSES. He takes a moment to decide which pair to wear.