

The Juggler

"I need you to start over."

"Like... from the beginning?"

"Unless you can think of somewhere better to start from?"

"Okay... Sure. I guess it started last night. I had this dream where I was at the DMV, and I had to wait in line with all these people."

"Is this related?"

"Hold on! I'm getting there."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm *sure*. Let me explain."

"Go ahead."

"Thank you."

"So, at the DMV... There was this bald dude in front of me in line, and he kept turning around and *staring* at me, but he wasn't saying anything. His eyes were so... *wide*, it was crazy. Don't you think that's weird?"

"Not really, explain to me what this has to do with your job?"

"I'm getting to it! Let me finish!"

"Okay, okay. Keep talking."

"Okay, well, I asked the guy: '*Why are you looking at me?*' and he just kept on staring, never said a word, or anything. It was really freaking me out, and so I got in his face and said something like, '*Quit looking at me, dude!*' but then, I saw that he was holding these weird, colorful balls, and I remembered that the whole reason I was at the DMV in the first place was because I needed to renew my juggling registration, because—"

"Ahem, Sorry, your *what?* Juggling registration?"

"Yeah. My juggling registration... In my dream I was a professional juggler, that's

why that guy was looking at me like that.... He was a fan..."

"So, in your dream, jugglers needed... registrations?"

"Uh huh."

"From the DMV?"

"Yep."

"Keep going."

"That was it. I woke up after that. But... I felt weird."

"What was weird?"

"Well, I was making breakfast this morning and my eggs rolled off the table, but I caught them both, one in each hand. And then I was like, *'Of course I caught them; I'm a professional juggler!'* But then, I was like, *'No, that was just a dream, you're not a juggler.'* And then, after that, I was sad because I wasn't, you know?"

"You know?"

"No, John, you're going to have to explain it to me."

"I don't know. I just liked thinking that I was a juggler for some reason, and then, when I remembered that I wasn't, I got sad. I don't know why."

"You got sad? John, we are *barely* making rent and you're telling me that you quit your job because a *dream* made you sad?"

"No, of course not! Do you think I'm that stupid, Catherine?"

"Are you telling me that you *are*?"

"You don't *know* what I'm trying to tell you because you're not letting me *talk*."

"Talk. Please, just finish the story."

"Okay, well, after that I went to work, and when I was walking into the building, there was a guy standing on the curb, juggling."

"Juggling? Like a street performer?"

"Yeah, he was all dressed up like a jester."

"And this was real life? You weren't dreaming?"

"Yes, it was real life. Don't do that."

"Do what?"

"I'm not a child, don't ask me if I was dreaming."

"I was just making sure, I'm sorry."

"It doesn't matter."

"So, what happened?"

"Nothing, he just juggled. I watched him for a minute and then went inside. Later, at lunch, I got ketchup on my nose, and I joked that I was going to quit and join him on the curb. Nobody laughed. I asked everyone, and nobody had seen him out there but me. They all thought I was making it up. I even went to look for him outside, but he was already gone by then."

"So, you quit... because you couldn't find the juggler?"

"No, of course not!"

"So what was it, then?"

"Catherine, when I went outside, I think I realized something."

"What?"

"I think... I *was* the juggler."

"John..."

"Yeah?"

"Tell me, *right now*, why you quit your job."

"Catherine, I'm going to be a juggler."

"You're going to be a juggler?"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"It's who I am."

"I'm... *sorry?*"

"I know, it doesn't make sense to you. But this is something that I need."

"This is insane. What *needs* does *juggling* fulfill?"

"How about the need to feel the wind between my fingers! To hear the cheers from the crowd as I orbit seven pins around the world from the seat of a unicycle!"

"What... the hell... are you *talking about!*?"

"I'm *talking* about my *purpose*. It's the job I was put on this planet to do."

"It's *not*—a *job!*"

"Of course it's a job! What are *you* talking about?"

"What do jugglers *do*, then, John? What do they *do!*?"

"Catherine, they juggle."

"Do you even know *how* to juggle?"

"I'll learn."

"You'll learn."

"Yeah. I will. Why are you so against me on this?"

"You think that *I'm* against *you!*?"

"It's like you want me to fail!"

"We have *bills*, John! *RENT*—how are we going to make money!?"

"Catherine, I'm going to *juggle*. The rest will come naturally."

"I think we should see other people."