

THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOWMAN: The Life of P. T. Barnum *by* J. BRYAN III

"Grandest," "Rarest," "Unique," "Most Stupendous"—with these words P. T. Barnum described his American Museum in the 1840s. Filled with rarities, with monsters, with unbelievable shows, the American Museum became the place to go in New York City. People flocked from all over the country to see P. T. Barnum's newest sight. What would he dream of next? people thought. What *could* he dream up next? But Barnum never faltered. He filled his museum with mermaids, sword-swallowers, bearded women, and most of all with audiences. Thousands and thousands of people coming to see Barnum's latest show! Was it a hoax, was it real? It didn't matter! If it was Barnum's show it was sure to be a riproaring one.

And Barnum proved his genius again and again! First, with his triumphant tour of the midget, General Tom Thumb, whose saucy ways and gift for mimicry delighted the kings and queens of Europe, while reaping vast profits for Barnum. Then, with Jenny Lind, whose sweet voice and manner captured the idolation of America. Finally, with Jumbo, World's Largest Elephant, in P. T. Barnum's Circus—The World's Greatest Show!

Here is the story of Barnum, a three-dimensional rollicking portrait of a man nobody could fool, but who fooled everybody. Here is P. T. Barnum, the Connecticut Yankee, who became a symbol of the riotous American past, a symbol of Yankee ingenuity, and who was indeed "The World's Greatest Showman."