

CHAPTER 2

ACTING LIKE CLOWNS



When Mai-Li and Lu-Jin arrived at the circus, they walked around and looked at all of the people who were there. They bought some cotton candy and some watermelon to eat. They were enjoying the circus. They were happy that the owner of the circus had given them the tickets. If he had not been so nice, they would be home right now crying because all of their money had been stolen.

While they were walking around, one of the circus workers came up to them and told them, “We have to go now. You have to get ready for the show!”

When they arrived at the main tent they went to the make-up artist who was going to dress them as clowns. Both of the girls giggled because they saw all of the clowns getting ready for the show.

The girls went over to a big long table with many mirrors on it. On the table were bottles of paint and make-up. Behind them they saw a rack with costumes of many colors. On top of the rack was a shelf and on the shelf there were colorful wigs and hats.

“Can we choose the costume we want?” Mai-Li asked.

“Sure, when we’re finished with your make-up we’ll help you decide which one is best for you,” the lady said as she sat the girls down in the chairs to put on their make-up.

Lu-Jin was first. The helper first made her face all white. Then she added a big red nose. Then with paint she drew a blue mouth and big black eyebrows. On her cheeks she had red hearts. Lu-Jin looked into the mirror and laughed out loud.

“Is that really me?” she exclaimed.

Mai-Li was next. The lady first made her face yellow with brightly colored paint. Then she made her mouth red, with a big blue nose. Her eyes were green all around. Lu-

Jin laughed at her.

“Is this going to come off?” Mai-Li asked the make-up artist.

“Yes, but it takes a while. We’ll have to use some special creams to get it off, but you won’t have anything on you when you go home, unless you want to,” the make-up artist explained as she laughed.

“You look funnier than me!” Lu Jin said.

“Great! I want to be the funniest clown in the show,” Mai-Li replied.

After they got their make-up they turned around and chose the costumes they wanted.

Lu-Jin put on a big blue shirt that looked like a dress on her. She found some baggy pants and filled them with pillows. She waddled around like a duck. Her wig was bright pink and she had on a funny red hat.

Mai-Li found a red dress with a big yellow flower. When she put it on she laughed at herself in the mirror. She added white stockings and red and white striped shoes that were a little hard to walk in because they were so big. She had on a green wig with a red flower in it. She looked very strange.

The girls admired their outfits in the long mirrors. One of the clowns came over and took their picture with the cameras the girls had brought with them.

By then, the other clowns were already dressed and ready to perform. They came over to help Mai-Li and Lu-Jin get finished. They showed them some tricks and taught them how to do a summersault in their costumes without getting them ruined. They taught them some dances and funny things they could do to entertain the audience.

Just then a message came over a speaker, “All clowns, please report to the main entrance. The show is about to begin!”

The girls jumped up and down holding each other’s hands and laughing out loud. They were so nervous but also excited. The other clowns were dancing, and the monkeys were screeching.

The big doors opened to the main floor of the circus. Mai-Li, Lu-Jin and the other clowns ran out into the center ring. The circus tent was huge. It seemed like the entire town was inside watching the circus. The people clapped and cheered as the clowns

entered the arena. Everyone was excited that the show was about to begin.

Some of the clowns did tricks, some threw water, some teased the kids in the audience, while others ran in circles. The clowns played music and rode small bicycles. The monkeys screeched and ran around playing games as well.

The girls did not know what they were doing, but they were still having a lot of fun. They just ran around in circles laughing and screaming and having a great time. They held each other's hands as they twirled round and round. They got a little dizzy, but that was okay.

The girls did not know it, but their parents were sitting in the crowd watching them. They were so proud of the girls and how they had handled themselves when the money was missing. Later they would laugh about all that happened that day.

After they were finished playing clowns, they returned to the dressing room. All of the clowns came over and told the girls they had done a wonderful job. It's not easy being a good clown.

The girls smiled at each other.

It took a while for all of the make-up to come off. After that they had to change their clothes. The girls were unhappy that they were not clowns anymore, but now it was time to go into the circus and see the rest of the show.

After changing into the clothes they had purchased for the circus, they left the dressing room and went to their seats in the crowd. They had the best seats in the tent. They had center seats and could see everything.

The lion tamer came out with his lions, and they did many tricks. The lion tamer used his whip and a chair to control the big cats. They did everything they were supposed to do. They were in a big cage so no one would get hurt.

After the lions, the elephant trainer made everyone clap when the elephants stood on their back legs and danced. The elephants had on beautiful decorations. They were big and gentle. When the tricks were finished the trainer asked if anyone wanted to ride on an elephant. Several kids, including Mai-Li and Lu-Jin, went down and got into the line. The two girls rode the elephant together and had a great time. The elephant smelled bad, but the girls did not care, it was fun to be up so high.

Next the high wire team rode a bicycle across a very thin wire that was high above the floor. The people below were silent while they did their performance. The people cheered when he reached the other side. They did many tricks including jumping from one wire to another. When they finished everyone clapped and screamed their approval.

Then the trapeze artists climbed high above the circus floor and did many stunts. The best one was where two people passed each other in the air from one trapeze bar to another. Everyone gasped and then clapped when it was over.

At the end of the circus all of the performers and animals had a parade around the circus and the crowd clapped and clapped. It was a great day.

When Mai-Li and Lu-Jin arrived home they were very tired. What a great day it had been, and they had many memories to tell their friends and family. They had taken pictures of everything to show off all of the things they had done.

The next morning they shared what they had experienced. Their parents just smiled. After they listened to all the girls had to say, they let the girls know they had been there watching the circus too. The owner of the circus had given them tickets as well. It was another big surprise.

The day was Sunday, so there was not much to do. The customers that Mai-Li and Lu-Jin had been working for wanted them to continue working for them again. But this day was going to be a quiet day.

Lu-Jin went to Mai-Li's house later in the morning. They went to Mai-Li's room and began to talk. They talked about the circus and how much fun it had been. They looked at the pictures of them in their clown costumes. They laughed and laughed at themselves.

Soon they began to discuss the missing money. It made them sad to think that someone would do such a bad thing to them. Someone had been watching them as they hid the money.

"Who do you think took our money?" Lu-Jin started the conversation.

"I've been trying to figure that out since we found the money was missing. Somebody must've seen us put the money there, and when they knew we had enough for the circus, they took it." Mai-Li surmised.

“I think you’re right. What do you think we can do about this?” Lu-Jin asked.

“Hmmm, I think I’ve got a plan,” Mai-Li jumped up with a smile. “I think I know how we can trap the person who took our money.”

“Really! How?” Lu-Jin asked as she got excited.

“Well, let me explain my plan and see what you think,” Mai-Li said as she began to lay out the plan for the capture.

The girls took out paper from the desk and began to write down their ideas. They drew a map, and then drew arrows on it. They used crayons to draw each of the parts of the plan. “I think this will work!”

Lu-Jin explained.

“So do I,” Mai-Li agreed.

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. watermelon _____ | a. hair above the eyes |
| 2. rack _____ | b. fake hair |
| 3. wig _____ | c. stand that holds clothes |
| 4. eyebrows _____ | d. red sweet fruit |
| 5. baggy _____ | e. audience |
| 6. summersault _____ | f. loose fitting |
| 7. crowd _____ | g. wobbly, shaky |
| 8. screech _____ | h. soft colorful writing |
| 9. dizzy _____ | i. loud sound |
| 10. crayon _____ | j. rolling forward |

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. The girls dressed as lion tamers. | T / F |
| 2. The lion tamer got hurt. | T / F |
| 3. The girls ate cotton candy. | T / F |
| 4. The whole town was at the circus. | T / F |
| 5. The girls put on their own make-up. | T / F |
| 6. The trapeze artists rode a bicycle. | T / F |
| 7. The high wire act fell off of the wire. | T / F |
| 8. Mai-Li's parents were at the circus. | T / F |
| 9. The girls made a plan to catch the thief. | T / F |
| 10. The girls lived close to each other. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. What did the girls ride? _____
 - a) elephant
 - b) ostrich
 - c) dog
 - d) tiger

2. What were the girls doing in the show? _____
 - a) trapeze
 - b) high wire
 - c) lion tamer
 - d) clown

3. What did the girls eat before the show? _____
 - a) watermelon and cotton candy
 - b) hotdogs and chips
 - c) taffy candy
 - d) apples

4. Where did the girls go to make their plan?
 - a) the circus
 - b) their hiding place
 - c) Lu-Jin's house
 - d) Mai-Li's house

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What did the girls do when they first got to the circus?

2. Where did the girls go after the circus worker found them?

3. What did the girls get to ride on in the circus?

4. What color flower did Mai-Li have in her hair?

5. What color was Lu-Jin's face?

6. Where did the girls go in the morning after the circus?

7. What happened to their money?

8. What did the girls do at the end of this story?

9. What did the lion tamer use to keep the lions moving?

10. Who gave the girls the tickets to see the circus?
