

THE CIRCUS IS COMING TO TOWN

PART 3 - THE PLAN



The circus was leaving the town, and everything was beginning to return to normal. Most of the townspeople were talking about the circus and how much fun it had been. They asked the circus owner to return the next year. He agreed and set a date to return to the town the next summer. This made the townspeople very happy.

Meanwhile, Mai-Li and Lu-Jin were making plans to catch the thief who stole their money. They remembered the day when they went to Lu-Jin's house to get the money from under her house. They went to the place where they put the money, but it was gone. The police came, but they could not find any clues. They asked everyone in the neighborhood if they had seen anything, but no one spoke up. The money was gone, and there was nothing they could do about it.

Now the girls were making a plan. They thought that if their plan worked, they would be able to discover the thief and maybe get their money back.

The girls did not tell anyone about the plan, not even their parents. It was going to be their special secret. The next day they would start their plan.

It was summertime, and the sun was in the sky very late in the evening. The girls stayed at Mai-Li's house that night. They stayed up all night talking.

In the morning the two girls got dressed and went to work for their customers. They told all of their customers that they were now saving for a special trip to the city. They would need a lot of money to make the trip since they would

have to pay for transportation, food and a place to stay. They told of their plan to visit the museums in the city and the royal palace. They were excited that they might even get to see the King.

The girls worked just as hard as before. Each day they went from one customer to the next and did all of the chores they were asked to do, and they did it with a big smile as they worked. They did laundry, cleaned houses, washed floors, cleaned yards, and washed cars. They did everything they were asked to do. Some of the merchants in the town hired the girls to run errands or make deliveries for them. Everyone liked Mai-Li and Lu-Jin. They worked very hard, and the people were impressed.

The days passed, and the girls did exactly as they had done before, except for one thing; they did not put the money into the box. They pretended every day to put the money under Lu-Jin's house, but actually they hid the money in Mai-Li's room under her bed. They checked every day to make sure that it was safe.

Day after day they continued doing the same thing. The young ladies worked hard and saved their money.

After a few weeks the girls put the second part of their plan into action. They went to the store in town and bought some nice clothes. They went to the shoe store and bought new boots. They went to the dress shop and ordered new dresses, and they went to the department store and bought some luggage to carry their clothes. They told everyone who would listen about their plans to go to the city.

The girls were excited about their plans. Everyone was happy for them and wished them the very best. The girls let the townspeople know that they were getting close to having enough money to make the trip. It was just like when they were saving for the circus.

The plan was going just as they had designed it. Each day they did the same thing. They crawled under Lu-Jin's house to bury the money in another special

box, only they did not put any money there. They looked around to see if anyone was watching and tried to be very careful when sneaking into their hiding place.

The girl's parents were a little confused about everything that Mai-Li and Lu-Jin were doing. They had not given the girls permission to go to the city, yet that was all the girls talked about. One evening when the girls arrived at Lu-Jin's house Mai-Li's parents were there. They were sitting in the living room talking with Lu-Jin's parents.

"OK girls, what's going on? Everyone is telling us that you are planning to go to the city to visit the museums and that you want to see the king. You need to tell us what your plans are. We haven't given you permission to do this, so why are you working so hard?" the parents questioned the two girls.

Mai-Li and Lu-Jin just looked at each other in surprise. They had to think quickly about how to respond to their parents.

"Come on girls, tell us what's going on," Mai-Li's father insisted.

Lu-Jin began to stammer, "Well, um, you see, what's going on is, ah, we wanted to go, ah but you see....."

"You see, we wanted to surprise you," Mai-Li jumped in. "We have a very special secret we want to tell you."

"Yeah, that's it. We have a secret," said Lu-Jin. "So what's the secret we need to tell our parents?" Lu-Jin added looking at Mai-Li with a curious look on her face.

"Um, well, we thought that if we could save enough money to go to the city for all of us to go, then we would surprise you, and then you can go too!" Mai-Li explained. "We wanted to wait until we had enough money to make the trip before we were going to tell you, but now you know."

The parents just looked at each other. What a surprise. They had not expected the girls to be saving money for a family vacation.

"Do you really think you'll have enough money saved for all of us to go?"

Lu-Jin's father asked.

"Well, not yet. It will take a little longer for us to save up that kind of money." Mai-Li answered.

The girls then left the room and ran to Lu-Jin's room.

"Wow, that was fast thinking Mai-Li, but now we have to save three times the amount of money for the trip. How are we going to do that?" Lu-Jin burst out at Mai-Li.

"Don't worry; we don't have to go through with this. Anyway, if we discover the thief and get our original money back, then we will be able to go on the trip. If not, we can just tell them we didn't earn enough money. Either way we are safe... I think." Mai-Li said but not with a lot of confidence in her words.

Mai-Li continued, "For now we are safe, and our parents won't bother us anymore. Maybe they'll help us with our plan, and they won't even know they are helping."

The next day the girls went about their business as usual. They did all of the normal things they would do on a day like that. At the end of the day they crawled under the house and buried the box without the money inside.

Part of the plan was to put a small coin on top of the box to see if the box had moved since the last time they were there. They also used a rake to smooth out the dirt to see if there were any marks in the dirt leading to where they buried the box.

On this day they noticed some marks in the dirt that went straight to where the box was hidden, but when they dug up the box they found the coin in the same place. The girls figured out that the person who knew about the box was going to wait, just like before, until the box would have all of the money in it.

The third part of the plan was working. They did not know who the person was, but they knew someone was watching them. They had to act as if nothing was wrong. They had to fool this person into thinking that they were going to be

successful.

Now that the girls knew someone was getting ready to steal the money again, the next phase of the plan went into effect. The girls told all of their friends and employers that they would be leaving for the city at the end of the week. They had enough money to go, and now they just had to finalize their plans.

That night the girls checked the box again. Once again there were tracks leading to the box, but the coin had not moved.

Now the final part of the plan was going to be put into action. They were pretty sure that they would be able to catch whoever it was who was taking their money.

That night Mai-Li told her parents that she was going to stay with Lu-Jin and Lu-Jin told her parents that she was going to stay with Mai-Li. Instead they hid under the house, waiting for the mystery person to arrive.

It was very late, and both of the girls were getting tired. They were hiding under the house. They tried to be very quiet, but it was boring. They began to get drowsy and started to drift off to sleep.

All of a sudden there was a noise. A board that covered the entrance to the crawlspace began to move to the side. A dim light came into the darkness. Someone was coming. Who was it?

The girls waited until the thief was at the box. They heard digging. At the same time the girls turned on their flashlights and pointed them directly at the spot where the box was hidden. Digging in the dirt they saw to their surprise a big black dog. It was Lu-Jin's dog. The dog was surprised and yelped as he jumped back and then ran out of the crawlspace.

The girls looked at each other in amazement. How did Kwan-Jin know about this place? How did he know that the box would be full? If he had taken the other box, what had he done with it?

The girls crawled quickly out from under the house, but could not find the

dog. He had vanished.

The next day the girls saw the dog sleeping next to the house. When they approached him he came up to them and wanted attention. Just then Mai-Li noticed that there was a mound of dirt under where he had been laying. The dirt looked soft so she went to the spot and dug into the dirt. To their surprise they found the old music box, and inside was all the money they had saved for the circus. Lu-Jin's dog had found it and buried it in his favorite place. Also in the hole were other valuable things that people had reported missing and had never found.

The mystery of the missing music box was now solved. Mai-Li and Ju-Lin went to the city with their families and had a wonderful vacation.

From then on whenever someone lost something the first thing they would do was to look in the ground where the old black dog slept.

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. normal _____ | a. gallery of old items |
| 2. secret _____ | b. tool used to smooth dirt |
| 3. customer _____ | c. regular, usual |
| 4. palace _____ | d. not told |
| 5. merchant _____ | e. stutter, hesitant speech |
| 6. luggage _____ | f. consent, say OK |
| 7. permission _____ | g. seller, vendor |
| 8. museum _____ | h. home for a king |
| 9. stammer _____ | i. shopper, consumer |
| 10. rake _____ | j. baggage, bags for travel |

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Mai-Li and Lu-Jin made a plan to get their money back. | T / F |
| 2. The girls saved money to go to the city. | T / F |
| 3. The parents knew all about the plan. | T / F |
| 4. A monkey stole the money. | T / F |
| 5. The king was going to come to their town. | T / F |
| 6. The money was in a brown milk box. | T / F |
| 7. The girls hid under the house to catch the thief. | T / F |
| 8. The original money was never found. | T / F |
| 9. The girls put their money under Lu-Jin's bed. | T / F |
| 10. The families went on a vacation together. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Who stole the money? _____
 - a) monkey
 - b) neighbor
 - c) clown
 - d) dog

2. Where did they hide the money the second time? _____
 - a) under the house
 - b) under Mai Li's bed
 - c) in the bank
 - d) under the dog

3. Whom did the girls want to see in the city? _____
 - a) king
 - b) emperor
 - c) Lu-Jin's uncle
 - d) Prince

4. What did the girls buy for the trip?
 - a) a new car
 - b) tickets to a ballet
 - c) tickets to a museum
 - d) luggage

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

1. Who gave the girls work?

2. Where did the girls hide the money the second time?

3. Why did the parents talk to the girls?

4. What were the girls planning to see in the city?

5. What did the girls buy in town?

6. What did the girls put on top of the box to show if it had been moved?

7. How many parts were there to the plan?

8. How did the girls know that someone had visited the box?

9. What were some of the jobs the girls did for their customers?

10. Who took the money?
