

***THE ENL
COLLECTION***

**The Circus is
Coming to Town**

Intermediate

Hal Ames

**A collection of short stories
and worksheet exercises for students.
English as a New Language**

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The ENL Collection – The Circus is Coming to Town
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About the author

Hal has enjoyed creating easy to read stories for most of his life. He has transformed this love of writing into useful tools for learners of English as a new language.

He began teaching English as a new language when he lived in the Philippines. He began teaching Korean students both face-to-face and via the internet.

Upon his return to the United States, he has continued to teach English as a new language to students in Korea, Japan, China, France, Germany, Russia, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Brazil, Lithuania, Mexico, Israel, and The Philippines. His students have ranged from 6 years old to 60 years old.

He emphasizes that language is about communication and that understanding the function of speaking another language is very valuable in today's society.

These stories have been used in his classes to increase vocabulary and comprehension through using fun and exciting adventures. Originally, they were created for a summer English camp, where he was the director.

The Circus is Coming to Town

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | CHAPTER 1 SAVING MONEY | 1 |
| 2. | CHAPTER 2 ACTING LIKE CLOWNS | 11 |
| 3. | CHAPTER 3 THE PLAN..... | 21 |

THE CIRCUS IS COMING TO TOWN

HAL AMES

PART 1 - SAVING MONEY



The girls had been waiting for this day for months. A man had delivered advertisements to everyone in the neighborhood inviting them to come to the circus. He left a flyer on everyone's door. When the girls saw that the circus was coming to their town, they ran to their parents to ask if they could go.

Their parents said it would be okay, but they would have to save money to pay for the tickets and the food. The girls agreed to work hard to earn money for the circus.

Mai-Li and Lu-Jin were best friends. Many people said they were just like twins. They did just about everything together. Their parents became friends also, and they went on many trips and had picnics.

For three months, the girls asked all their neighbors if they could do extra work for them. They cleaned clothes, washed floors, ran errands, and did anything else they were asked to do. The people of their town were surprised at how hard they worked, and that they always had such big smiles.

When someone would ask them why they were working so hard they would say, "We're going to the circus!"

Every day the girls counted their money. They were excited because their money was growing and they were getting close to their goal; they were going to go to the circus.

They had a special place to hide the money because they were afraid that it

might be stolen. They put the money under Lu-Jin's house next to one of the poles.

Day after day, week after week, the girls worked and worked. They counted their money and got more and more excited. The circus was coming to town, and they were going to go!

A week before the circus was going to arrive, the girls counted their money once again and cheered because they had just enough. During the next week, the money they would earn would give them more to spend on food and games. They were getting so excited that everyone around them got excited too.

Three days later, another man came through their neighborhood and passed out new flyers. This one said there was going to be a parade in the city to welcome the circus. The parade was going to be free, and it was going to be at 3:00 pm the next day.

The girls let their customers know they would not be able to work because they were going to see the parade.

The girls went to the store to purchase matching clothes. Mai-Li bought a blue dress and a pink blouse, while Lu-Jin bought a pink skirt and a blue blouse. Their parents were so proud of them because they had used their own money.

The next day Mai-Li and Lu-Jin got all dressed up. They put on their best dresses and they asked their mothers to help them look beautiful. They put flowers in their hair and red lipstick on their lips. They put red nail polish on their fingers and toes. They looked very pretty when they left home dressed in their new clothes.

The girls left very early. They wanted the best seats along the road. When they got to the parade many people were already there. They looked for a long time to find the right place to sit. Finally, the owner of the vegetable market waved at the girls to come sit on his balcony so they could see the parade. The girls shouted out in glee. They had done many jobs for Mr. Kai and he was happy to see them.

Right at 3:00 o'clock, as the parade began, the first to come around the corner were the clowns. They were so silly. They were dressed in bright colors and had funny hair. They jumped, twirled, and sang funny songs. They were riding on very small bicycles, and some of them had cute monkeys dressed in clown costumes sitting on their shoulders. They all looked so funny. The girls giggled and laughed at them.

Next to turn the corner was the marching band with the big drum. The drum was so big it took five people to push it down the road. There were men on each side of it with huge drum sticks banging on the drum. It was so loud, but it was fun to see. The trumpets and the trombones were making music and everyone began to dance.

The lions and the tigers were the next to appear. They were in large cages that were pulled by horses. The lions and tigers growled as they walked back and forth in their cages. The girls were a little afraid, but Mr. Kai said they shouldn't worry; the cages were locked and very safe.

After the lions and tigers went by, the elephants came into view. They had beautiful blankets on them and red hats. There were seven big ones and two little ones. They made the street shake as they walked by. Some of the children gave the elephants peanuts to eat. They laughed as the elephants took the food with their trunks.

The elephants passed by and then all the actors and performers came around the corner and began to entertain them. There was dancing and singing in the street. The tightrope performers, the trapeze artists, the pyramid builders, the gymnasts, and all the people who are in the circus walked past them.

At the very end was the biggest wagon. The ringmaster, dressed in his red coat and high black hat, blew his whistle and welcomed the crowd to come to the circus the next day.

Everyone cheered and cheered! This was the most exciting event that had

ever happened in their town.

The girls thanked Mr. Kai for letting them sit on his balcony. They smiled at all the people as they walked slowly home. They laughed and laughed as they remembered all the things they had seen. It only made them more eager to see the circus.

After they returned home they went to the hiding place to get the money they had earned for the circus. Like usual, they looked around to see if anyone was watching before going to their hiding place, and then they crawled under Lu-Jin's house to get the money.

They had put it into a red music box that Mai-Li received from her grandmother for her birthday, and buried it beside the third post. They took a small shovel to dig up the money.

Lu-Jin started to dig into the soft soil. She tossed the dirt away as the girls giggled. They were going to the circus, and they had enough money to buy food, and candy, and prizes in the arcade. They were going to see the shows and best of all they were going inside to see the animals and clowns.

Lu-Jin looked up at Mai-Li in surprise. The box was missing. Their money was gone. Mai-Li took the shovel and began to dig new holes thinking they had forgotten where they had buried the box.

After searching everywhere, they just looked at each other.

“Where did the money go?” Lu-Jin said with tears in her eyes.

Mai-Li and Lu-Jin just sat and cried. What happened to their money?

The girls were covered in dirt as they walked into Lu-Jin's house. Her mother saw the girls crying and asked, “What's wrong girls? Why are you so dirty and why are you crying?”

“Someone took our money. We hid it under the house, but someone found it and took it. Now we can't go to the circus,” the girls said as they sobbed through their tears.

Lu-Jin's mother didn't know what to say. She went to get her phone to call the police to report the missing money.

The police came to the house about an hour later. They went with the girls to the spot where the money had been buried. The police then started asking questions of all the neighbors to see if they could find the money. After two hours, the police returned to the girls to give them the sad news that the money was gone. The girls ran to Lu-Jin's room and cried.

They sat on her bed and tried to think of who might have taken their money.

They decided to watch a movie. While they were watching the movie, and eating popcorn, there was a knock on Lu-Jin's door. Her parents answered the door and talked to a man who stood outside. The man left and then her parents returned to the living room.

"Girls, we have something to tell you," Lu-Jin's father said. "Come here I have something to show you."

The girls got up from the floor and went to the kitchen. Lu-Jin's father was smiling and he pointed to the table and told them to look inside the envelope. When they opened it, they found two tickets to the circus. Also, there was extra money for food, rides, prizes, and other things they might want.

The girls looked up in surprise. "How, who, where, what....." the girls didn't know what to say.

"All the townspeople were upset that you lost your money so they told the owner of the circus what happened to you. So, he brought this so you could enjoy his circus. He has one condition though," Lu-Jin's father told the girls with a smile on his face.

"What do we have to do?" the girls said together.

"You will have to dress up as clowns and join the show!" Lu-Jin's father said with a big smile on his face.

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. circus _____ | a. small jobs at home |
| 2. advertisements _____ | b. shout |
| 3. neighbors _____ | c. bar hanging from ropes |
| 4. chores _____ | d. small laugh |
| 5. errands _____ | e. announcements |
| 6. trumpet _____ | f. show with clowns and animals |
| 7. trapeze _____ | g. things to do on a list |
| 8. giggle _____ | h. people who live close by |
| 9. shovel _____ | i. musical instrument |
| 10. cheer _____ | J. used to dig |

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Mai-Li and Lu-Jin were sisters. | T / F |
| 2. Mr. Kai owned a movie theater. | T / F |
| 3. There were elephants in the parade. | T / F |
| 4. Mai-Li bought a pink blouse and a blue skirt. | T / F |
| 5. The girls hid their money. | T / F |
| 6. A policeman gave them tickets to the circus. | T / F |
| 7. The money was in a shoe box. | T / F |
| 8. The girls were going to be clowns in the circus. | T / F |
| 9. The girls did chores at home. | T / F |
| 10. Lu-Jin's father found the thief. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Why were the girls saving money? _____
 - a. to go on a school trip
 - b. to go to the circus
 - c. to buy a gift for their parents
 - d. to pay off a debt

2. What were the girl's names? _____
 - a. Mai-Te and Lou-Sung
 - b. Mai-Li and Lu Jin
 - c. Mai-Jun and Lu-Li
 - d. Sally and Beth

3. What happened to the money? _____
 - a. it was stolen
 - b. it was lost
 - c. they spent it
 - d. it was burned

4. Who let them sit on his balcony?
 - a. Mr. Kwan
 - b. Mr. Lee
 - c. Mr. Kai
 - d. Mr. Ames

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

1. What did the man put on the doors in the girl's neighborhood?

2. What color was Lu-Jin's skirt?

3. Where did the girls bury the music box?

4. Where did the girls sit during the parade?

5. What animals were in the parade?

6. Where did the girls go after finding the money was missing?

7. What kind of clothes did the ringmaster wear?

8. What were the girls doing when the man brought circus tickets?

9. What did the man bring to the house?

10. Who sent the tickets for the circus to the girls?

THE CIRCUS IS COMING TO TOWN

HAL AMES

PART 2 - ACTING LIKE CLOWNS



The next morning Mai-Li and Lu-Jin woke up early. They were so excited that they were going to be clowns in the circus. They met outside of Mai-Li's house and walked to the park where the circus had been set up during the week before.

When Mai-Li and Lu-Jin arrived at the circus, they walked around and looked at all the people and attractions that 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 have been at home crying because all the money they had saved from working had been stolen.

While they were walking around, one of the circus workers came up to them and told them, "Follow me. We must 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. The girls giggled when they saw all 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 where they found several 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 the girls sat down in the chairs.

Lu-Jin was first. The make-up artist made her face all white. She added a big red nose, then drew a blue mouth and finally made 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. When Lu-Jin saw her, she laughed at her.

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

“Yes, but it takes a while. We’ll use some special creams to get it off. You won’t have any make-up 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 finished getting their make-up applied, 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. It was a little hard to walk 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 somersault in their costumes without ruining them. They taught them some dances and funny things they could do to entertain the audience.

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

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

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 as the show was about to begin.

Some of the clowns did tricks, some threw water, and some teased the kids in the audience, while still 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 even so, they were having a lot of fun. They just ran around in circles laughing and screaming while having a wonderful time. They held each other’s hands as they twirled around and around. 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 about how they had handled themselves when the money was missing. Later they would laugh about all that had happened that day.

After the girls were finished playing clowns, they returned to the dressing

room. All the members of the circus came over and told them they had done a wonderful job. They said it was not easy being a good clown.

The girls smiled at each other. They felt very proud.

It took a while for all the make-up to come off. After that, they had to change back into 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 were in the center so they could see everything.

The lion tamer came out with his lions and tigers, 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 in the crowd would get hurt.

After the big cats were returned to their pens, the elephants came into the tent. Then the 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 line. The two girls rode the elephant together and had a wonderful 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 watched their performance. The people cheered when they reached the other side. They did many tricks including jumping from one wire to another. When they finished everyone clapped and screamed in 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 the other. Everyone gasped while they did the trick and then clapped when it was over.

At the end of the circus, all the performers and animals paraded around the circus tent. The crowd was very happy and they clapped and clapped.

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 the things they had done.

The next morning, they shared what they had experienced with their families. 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 next day was Monday. The customers that Mai-Li and Lu-Jin had been working for asked them to continue working for them, but they decided that this day was going to be a quiet day. They needed to rest.

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 themselves in their clown costumes. They laughed and laughed.

Soon they began to discuss the missing money, and what they might do to get it back. They were sad to think that someone would do such a bad thing to them. Someone must have been watching as they were hiding the money.

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

"I've been trying to figure that out ever 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 it?" 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 colored crayons to draw each of the parts of the plan.

When Lu-Jin looked at the plans, she exclaimed “I think this will work!”.

“So do I,” Mai-Li agreed.

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. watermelon _____ | a. hair above the eyes |
| 2. rack _____ | b. artificial hair |
| 3. wig _____ | c. stand that holds clothes |
| 4. eyebrows _____ | d. red sweet fruit |
| 5. baggy _____ | e. audience |
| 6. somersault _____ | f. loose fitting, not tight |
| 7. crowd _____ | g. wobbly, shaky |
| 8. screech _____ | h. colorful drawing pencil |
| 9. dizzy _____ | i. loud sound |
| 10. crayon _____ | j. head down 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 the make-up themselves. | T / F |
| 6. The trapeze artists rode a bicycle. | T / F |
| 7. The person on the high wire fell off. | 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 tamers
 - d) clowns

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 arrived at 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 on her dress?

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

6. Where did the girls go the day after the circus?

7. What happened to their money?

8. What did the lion tamer use to keep the cats moving?

9. Who gave the girl's parents the tickets to see the circus?

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

THE CIRCUS IS COMING TO TOWN

HAL AMES

PART 3 - THE PLAN



The circus was leaving the town, and everything was returning to normal. Most of the townspeople were talking about the circus and how much fun it had been, so 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 everyone very happy.

Since it was summertime, the sun remained in the sky very late in the evening. The girls went to Mai-Li's house and stayed up all night talking and making plans to get their money back. They thought that if their plan worked, they would be able to discover who the thief was and maybe they could find who took it.

They remembered the day when they went under Lu-Jin's house to get the money, but it was gone. The police had come, 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 as far as anyone knew, there was nothing that could be done about it.

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.

In the morning, the two girls got dressed and went to work for their

customers. They told all 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 the chores, and they did it with a big smile as they worked. Once again, they did laundry, cleaned houses, scrubbed 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 because 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 under the house. 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 their employers 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 designed it. Each day they did the same thing. They crawled under Lu-Jin's house to pretend to bury the money in another special box, only they did not put any money there. Every time they went under the house, 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're 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're you working so hard?" the parents questioned the 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. We've got a very special secret we want to tell you," Mai-Li jumped in.

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

"Um, well, we thought that if we could save enough money to go to the city for all of us to go, then we'd 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’ll 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’re 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’ll be able to go on the trip. If not, we can just tell them we didn’t earn enough money. Either way we’re 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. Actually, maybe they’ll help us with our plan, and they won’t even know they’re helping.”

Lu-Jin agreed that it was a good idea.

The next day the girls went about their business as usual. They did all the normal things they would do on a day like that. At the end of the day they crawled under the house and checked 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 any marks might be 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 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 fourth part of the plan went into effect. The girls told all 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 complete their plans.

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

Now they were going to put the final and fifth part of the plan into action. They were pretty sure they would be able to catch whoever it was who was going to take 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 sleep at Mai-Li's. Instead they hid under the house, waiting for the mystery person to arrive.

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

Suddenly, 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 from the opening. Someone was coming. Who could it be?

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 Su-Nan 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 they could not find the dog. He had vanished.

When the girls went home, their parents were surprised at how dirty the girls were.

“Why are you so dirty and why are you coming home at this late hour?” their parents questioned them.

The girls told them about the plan, about the dog, and of how he had run away.

The next day the girls saw the dog sleeping next to the house. When they approached him, he came up to them wanting attention. Just then, Mai-Li noticed 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 people had reported missing and had never found.

The mystery of the missing music box was now solved. Mai-Li and Lu-Jin 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.

The End

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, sells goods |
| 8. museum _____ | h. home for a king, emperor |
| 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 second time, 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?
