

The Golden Hoop



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Dedicated to all the little boogers
(you know who you are)

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Once upon a time in a small city, all the children were excited. They heard that the circus was coming to their town.

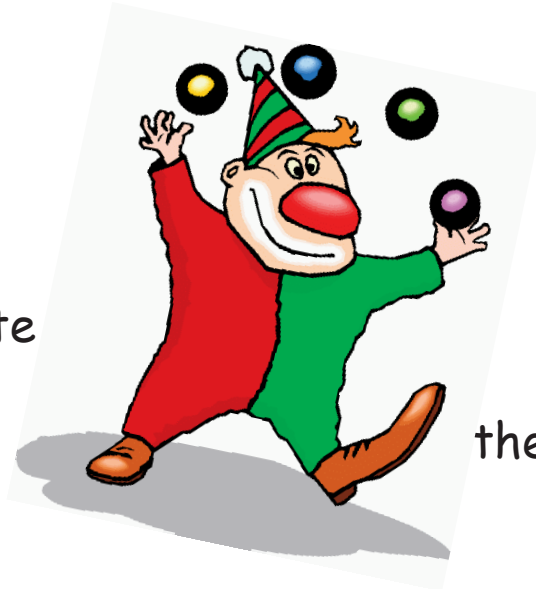
Business owners were putting up posters and handing out fliers everywhere announcing the soon coming event.



The posters were all taped to store windows, nailed to telephone poles and posted on bulletin boards.



Boys and girls in every neighborhood began to talk about their favorite acts in the circus.



Some liked the clowns best...

the girls liked the Swinging Sisters trapeze artists swinging high up in the air so sparkly and graceful. They would swing from one bar to the next flipping and flying through the air.

Lana Talluliana was a favorite.



Still others liked the acts that were called sideshows. Those were usually outside the big red and white tent and the stunts were performed for free.

There were strange looking men with tattoos all over their
bodies and women with beards,
The boys were mostly excited to see
Quick Silver, the Sword-swallower,
Flame, the Fire-eater and,



Philippos,
the Magnificent Strongman.

Izzy Belle, the darling contortionist could bend herself to a shape very much like a pretzel and amazed everyone.



There was also a man who would try and guess how much you weighed.

If he guessed wrong, he would give you a prize.



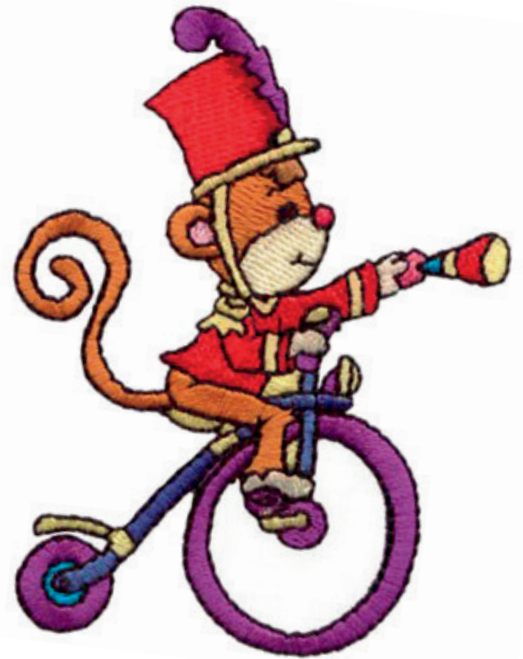
There was cotton candy, ice cream and popcorn. Everywhere you looked, there were balloons.

Yes, the boys and girls in that town certainly loved the circus



Finally the day came
when the circus rolled into town like a long snaky train.

Spider Monkeys rode tiny bicycles into the crowd of watchers while



wild hairy lions were kept safely
inside their giant cages on wheels
by the lion tamer, Zander the Great!

Following the lion tamer were 3 prancing dancing horses and their beautiful lady trainer, Natalia. She could jump and flip from one horse to another while the horses danced.



And of course there
were clowns, too.



Lots and lots of clowns.

In the parade of circus acts was also a dark haired lady named Lurlenea, the Fortune Teller, who could tell your future by gazing into a big crystal ball and reading tea leaves.



She was very beautiful.
On her ears were large
hooped earrings and
around her ankles delicate
gold chains jangled while
she walked.

Ms. Lurlenea was very
popular with the circus
audience. Everyone liked
her performances.

She was especially
popular with
Phillippos, the Strongman.

Then there was a short mysterious looking man that could Magically make things appear out of the air and disappear again. He was Ethan the Enlightened. He was quite a funny looking little man with a big round eyes, a beard and a strange hat.



After Ethan the Enlightened was a wacky fellow named Jon Jetster, the human cannon ball, who loved being shot out of a great big cannon. By the way he walked, he appeared to have been propelled across the sky one too many times.



Of course a circus would not be complete without a high wire tight rope act. Men with great balance would walk across a rope strung high in the air. The crowd always held their breath in anticipation when Aaroneto the Awesome performed.



The aerialist came next. Jessilina, the Aerialist always performed her act high in the sky. She would hang on to a beautiful scarf then twist and turn and swing from one scarf to another. She was confident and amazing.



After the parade was over, the whole crew pitched in by putting up the tents and feeding the animals. They all had a job to do and did it very well thanks to the circus owner, Trixie. She was always watching and never missed a thing. She was firm but fair and loved her circus crew.



There was always a lot of excitement getting ready for the first night's big tent performance.

Everyone scurried around putting on their costumes and stage makeup.

The clowns laughed and kidded around, telling jokes and playing pranks.

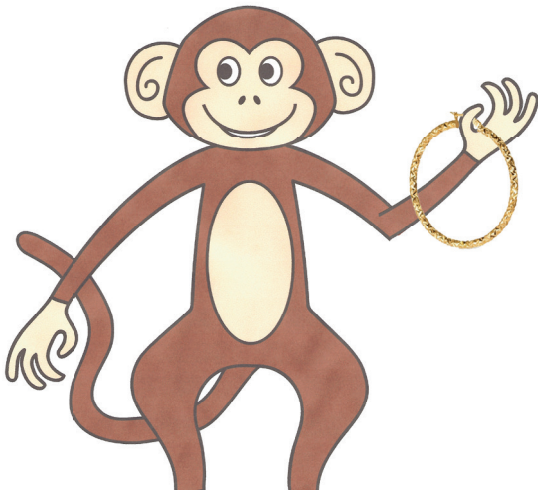
The Strongman helped with the heavy work, like loading the cannon balls.

That first night, Lurlenea, the Fortune Teller was primping in front of her mirror by combing her beautiful long dark curly hair. She was admiring some very lovely gold hoop earrings that her grandmother had given her many years ago when the Silly Spider Monkey came along jumping around from table to table.



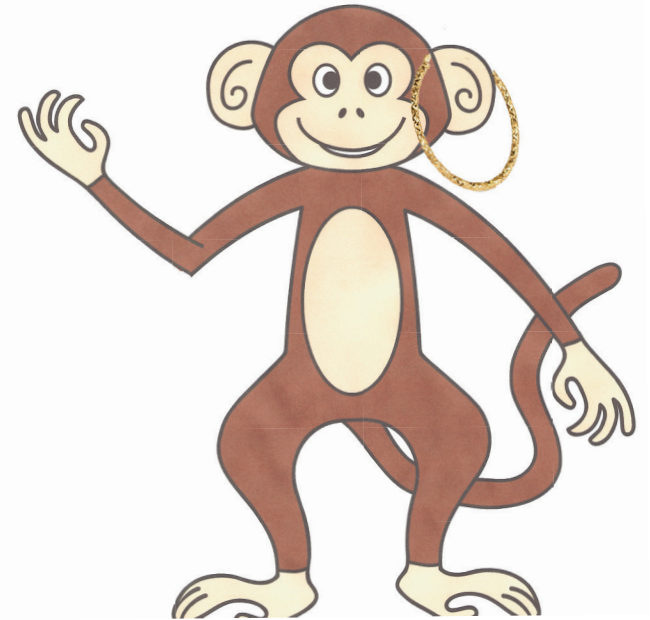
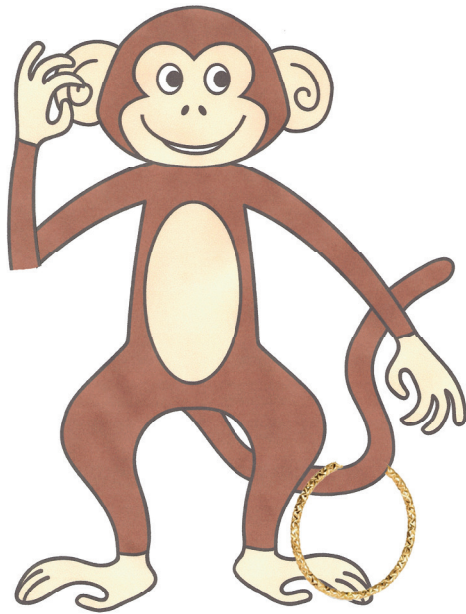
He was screeching and chattering and swinging from the rafters. All the noise startled the Fortune Teller and she dropped her precious earring. It fell to the ground under her table and she had to get down on her hands and knees to look for it.

It was really dark under her table and she felt around everywhere. She went from the left corner to the right corner and down. She looked and looked under everything and around the table and still couldn't find the earring. She was very upset and began to cry. "Where oh where could that earring have gone? " Soon everyone began to look for the earring, too.



While Lurlenea was on the floor looking for the earring, she didn't notice the mischievous monkey behind her playing with the loop of gold.

Before she could find out he had the earring, the sly silly spider monkey ran away with the earring up to the top of the highest tree to hide. The shiny earring was so much fun to play with. He put it on his arm like a bracelet, hung it on his ears, then on his tail and twirled it around.



In all of the fun he was having, he lost his grip and dropped the earring.



Down



Down



Down it tumbled

right onto Roberto the Ringmaster's cane. Then it swung around and fell into a cage... with the lion cub. The curious baby cat saw the glittering ring and pounced on it.



He batted it all over the bottom of his cage with his over-sized paw. Back and forth it slid. Soon the cart pulling the cage hit a bump and the ring bounced out through the bars making a splat on the dusty dirt path.

Just as it landed a little girl clown was skipping along. She saw the pretty piece of jewelry covered in dirt and picked it up. She looked at it very closely, wiping the dust off. "This is so beautiful" she exclaimed, but was not watching where she was going.....



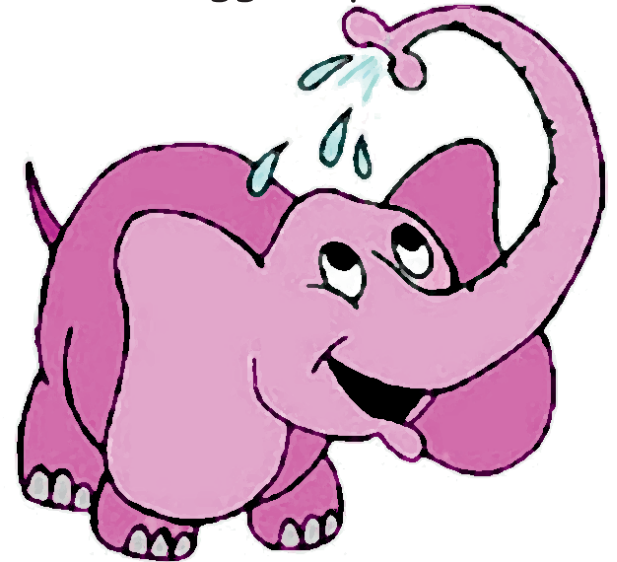


"AWWWWW" she yelled as she tripped on a rock...falling face first. She threw up her hands to catch herself and the earring went flying from her hand.

It soared high into the air landing right into a very large bucket of water...

A bucket of water that belonged to the biggest pink elephant you have ever seen.

The giant pink elephant was busy munching on hay and swigging huge snout-fulls of water. She would munch, munch, munch then turn to her bucket of water and slop the water into her mouth with her trunk.



It was right after the earring landed, ker-plop, into her bucket that the elephant pulled up a full snout of water and blew it over her back giving herself a nice shower. The water went high into the air and everything nearby got very wet. She loved hearing the children scream with delight and would sway back and forth with excitement.

She reached into the bucket again sucking up every drop of water along with the earring. Whoosh she went with the water way up in the air with the biggest spray of water she had ever made. The earring and water went flying everywhere...

throwing the earring into nearby tree branches and leaves. It toppled and twirled, bounced and slid from one branch to another. Finally it landed on the very tippy-tip of a maple leaf barely balancing there when a wind bumped it off and the earring glided right into the hole at the top of the circus tent. Swoosh. The earring fell straight down...

down into the opening and landing onto a massive trampoline.

It bounced, bounced, bounced and rolled to the center of the Circus Clown's playground and waited.



In the meantime, the circus acts were busy getting ready for the big show. The clowns had on all their colorful make-up, the high wire act wore bright glittering costumes, and the human cannon ball carried his helmet.

Everyone who had an act in the circus lined up outside the tent for the preshow parade. They were a glittery, magical and energetic group. Hula Hoops flipped and balls sailed through the air. Horses danced and music blared as they started their parade in front of the audience waving and smiling.

The Ticket Master at the entrance was very busy selling tickets so everyone could get in on time to see the circus.

Then everything inside the tent became quiet as the Roberto the Ringmaster of the three ring circus was about to start.

He wore a long red coat, a red bow tie and a tall black hat.

He was the person who was in charge of announcing the circus performances and keeping the show running smoothly.

He walked into the center of the arena, stood on a stool and held his hand up for everyone's attention.



He carried a megaphone and began to yell. "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages. We are proud to bring to you the Magnificent Three Ring Circus. You will be amazed. You will be astounded. Wonderful performers from all over the world will delight us all.

Keep your eyes open, as there will be THREE acts performing, at the same time." Then he used his arm to point right.

"In ring one, there will be Aaroneto the Awesome's daring high wire act in which he will perform amazing stunts on one thin rope stretched between these two poles."



Then he pointed to the left. "In ring number 3, there will be the Swinging Sisters trapeze artists. Their twists and twirls will delight everyone from the youngest to the oldest."



Then he pointed directly in front of him." And in the center ring, ring number 2, the craziest, goofiest, clumsiest kooky clowns you have ever seen will entertain us.



Let the Circus begin!"



Then three prancing acts tumbled in to begin their lively performances. A very loud group of somersaulting clowns entered the center.



Some were jumping very high and bounding across the floor and some clowns were juggling balls very high in the air and ALL of them were VERY loud.

Some were tripping other clowns who fell FLAT on their face while others chased each other in circles. Soon they climbed onto the over-sized trampoline and began bouncing super duper high.

And the beautiful lost earring that was in the center began bouncing too. Higher and higher. Higher and HIGHER.

It bounced higher than the clowns heads and caught on top of one of the juggling pins flying through the air.

It flipped over and over, then precisely landed right on the end of...



the balancing bar of the high wire act. There it was. Swinging back and forth. Back and forth.

With every step Aaroneto the Awesome took, the earring moved closer to the tip.

Aaroneto carefully placed one foot in front of the other using the bar to keep his balance.

He never noticed the earring on the end of the slippery bar sliding back and forth with every tilt of the bar.

Then Aaroneto the Awesome wobbled back and forth on the rope like he was going to fall. The audience was watching in great suspense then broke out in loud applause when he regained his balance.

Whew, that was close, and the earring slipped right off the pole.....



straight into the sparkly ponytail of Lana Talluliana, of the Swinging Sisters, as she was climbing the ladder to her platform. For the rest of the show, the earring went flying from the Swinging Sisters' ponytail...

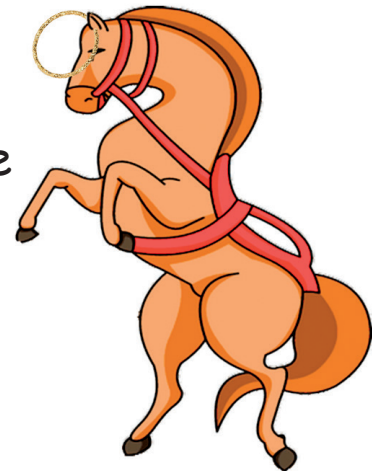


To the platform where it bounced off tumbling down and glancing off the helmet of the human cannon ball...



plopping smack dab into the mouth of the cannon. Then it was shot out of the cannon along with the wacky human cannon ball man.

Then the earring landed on the ear of a dancing horse. When the horse stood on his hind legs to dance the earring slipped off his ear and was sent flying right over to the lion cages...



and there it stuck tight in the lion's mane. As part of their act, the King lion roared and shook his head ferociously, but the earring stayed put. The more the lion shook the deeper the earring became tangled in the orange brown mane..



Zander the Great loved his lions and they loved and trusted him. He had trained his lions since they were cubs. Together, they astounded everyone with the King of the Jungle act.

After their act was over Zander the Great was grooming the lions, as he always did, and noticed something very shiny on the King's mane. "Well, would you look at that," he said.

"It's Lurlenea the Fortune Teller's earring. I wonder how it got here."

He reached through the cage bars and gently untangled the priceless gold loop out of the mane and set it on the nearby table. "Lurlenea will be so happy to get her earring back!"

Then he left to feed his lions and put them to bed for the night.

When he came back he saw Roberto the Ringmaster standing by the table where Zander the Great had put the earring. As usual, Roberto the Ringmaster was making his evening rounds, congratulating every one on a good performance, but tonight the Roberto the Ringmaster didn't seem like himself. He had a strange look on his face like he was guilty about something.

"Hey, good show" Roberto the Ringmaster said and turned quickly to walk away.

Before Zander could say thank you, the silly spider monkey screeched and jumped on Roberto the Ringmaster's shoulder making his tall black hat fall off....



revealing a shiny gold earring that was sitting right in the middle of Roberto the Ringmaster's head.

"WHAT IS THAT?"
Zander asked.
He got closer to look.

"Oh, no. That is
Lurlenea's beautiful
earring! Are you
trying to STEAL it?"



Roberto the Ringmaster turned all shades of red with embarrassment. He stammered and stuttered as he tried to come up with a good lie.

Just then Trixie walked in and saw what was going on. It was clear that Roberto the Ringmaster was not an honest man. He hid the earring under his hat and was planning on keeping it for himself...or maybe even selling it.

Since the owner had already given Roberto the Ringmaster many chances to change his ways, she decided right then and there that she had enough.

In her very gravely voice she yelled, "YOU'RE FIRED, MISTER!"



Of course, the news about Roberto the Ringmaster's attempt to steal the earring spread very quickly throughout the circus crew. He left the circus in shame.

The next day when Trixie handed Lurlenea her earring she was very, very happy.

"But what will we do without a Ringmaster," asked Lurlenea. "We need a Ringmaster to run the Circus."

Trixie patted Lurlenea's shoulder and told her not to worry. She had already been secretly training an assistant Ringmaster and was confident she would do a great job keeping the circus together.

"SHE?" asked Lurlenea?



"Yes", replied Trixie. "A very honest and capable woman. You see, since I suspected Roberto of being dishonest, I decided Jessilina would be great at the job. We were both just waiting for the day that Roberto would slip up one more time and I could fire him.

Just then Jessilina the Aerialist came bounding in all full of energy and smiles ready to accept her promotion to Head Ringmaster of the Magnificent Three Ring Circus.



The End

