

CHAPTER IX - The Circus Boys on the Mississippi

In Chapter IX of "The Circus Boys On the Mississippi," trouble unfolds when Teddy, one of the circus boys, is flung by a bull named Jupiter, causing alarm among the circus crew. Mr. Sparling, the show owner, is panicked and mobilizes a search for Teddy, fearing he might have fallen into the Mississippi River. Simultaneously, Mr. Kennedy is dealing with the anxious elephants on the circus boat named "Marie," especially as the gangway to the ship is lost and floating down the river. A boat is quickly dispatched to retrieve the gangway while Mr. Sparling searches for Teddy.

Phil Forrest, another Circus Boy, is alerted by the commotion and joins Mr. Sparling in locating Teddy. They find Teddy, unharmed but disoriented, believing he was kicked by an elephant named January, when in reality it was Jupiter who had tossed him. Despite his dramatic claim of "dying by inches," Teddy is found to be mostly fine, suffering from shock rather than any serious injuries.

Meanwhile, the circus faces another dilemma with the elephants, particularly with Jupiter refusing to cross the replaced gangway onto the boat. Mr. Sparling and Mr. Kennedy, recognizing Phil's knack for dealing with the animals, enlist his help. Using patience and a gentle approach, Phil successfully persuades Emperor, another elephant, to cross the gangway by rewarding him with sugar and using calming words, showcasing his unique bond and understanding of the animals. However, despite this success, Jupiter remains stubborn and refuses to follow Emperor's lead.

This chapter illustrates the unexpected challenges of circus life, highlighting themes of bravery, quick thinking, and the special connection between humans and animals. Phil's resourcefulness and calm demeanor in the face of chaos underscore his growing leadership and prowess within the circus community.