

The Curious Case of The Lost Elephant

by Carolyn Boyden
with contributions from Jack Pachuta

An interactive mystery game for preteens (approx 9-12 years old).

Here's how to organize the investigation:

1.) Assign the roles on pages 8-15 to 8 kids (4 girls and 4 boys.) The others become investigators who attempt to solve the case.

No memorization is required because the individual suspects have notes with the answers to the questions that they will be asked. Everyone is involved in solving the crime since no one knows the correct solution.

2.) Read "The Circus Comes to Town," on page 2 out loud to everyone.

3.) Read "The Rules of the Game" on page 3 out loud to everyone.

4.) Make enough copies of pages 4-7 to give to each child. Page 4 provides information about what happened yesterday. The suspects and the investigators can use pages 5 and 6 to make notes. Page 7 must be filled in with the correct answers. If you want to, you can staple these pages to pieces of cardboard to make "clipboards" for everyone.

5.) Tell the kids to talk with each other to find out what everyone else knows about the crime. If you want to, you can organize this, or you can simply let everyone do whatever they want to do to gather information.

6.) When time is up (you can decide how much time to give), gather everyone together and ask them, one at a time, to answer the first three questions.

7.) Read the solution to the case on pages 16 and 17. The investigator who gave the best answers is the "Super Sleuth." You may want to award a prize for this honor.

Playing Time: *About 45 minutes - 1 hour*



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THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

The big day was finally there and the kids were all excited. The Thimble Brothers Circus had, at last, come to the town of Sassafras Corners.

Last night, young and old alike gathered in the vacant lot next to the town park to see the big top go up and to watch the animals get bathed and fed. Finally, reluctantly, each boy and girl went home to bed to dream of the wonderful sights they would see when the ringmaster began his call, "Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls . . ."

They couldn't begin to guess that he would end this call with, ". . . unfortunately the circus cannot open today."

Overnight, the most dreadful thing had happened. Somehow, from her locked cage, open only to the sky above, Eloise the elephant had disappeared.

Eloise was the star of the show. Many people came only to see the elegantly adorned elephant perform her clever tricks. Without Eloise, there could be no show.

Something had to be done and quickly. Without question, the kids of the town were up to the task. Before the day was ended, they had to discover WHO TOOK ELOISE? HOW WAS IT DONE? And WHY?

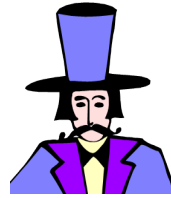
Join them now as the investigation begins. Interview each of the suspects. Listen carefully to the suspects' answers and be the first to solve the crime.



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Notes about
Olga Oglethorp



Notes about
Ira Loudmouth



Notes about
Devious Dan



Notes about
Felicity Thumbs.



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Olga Oglethorp Banker

You are a suspect. Always tell the truth when people ask you questions.

Who are you?

My name is Olga Oglethorp. I am a very important woman and I think everyone should know it. I am the banker who loaned the money to the Thimble Brothers so they could start their circus. I loaned them a lot of money with the agreement that if ever they didn't make a payment, I would take over the circus. I wanted to be sure I got my money back.

Did you like Eloise?

Of course, I liked Eloise. Everyone likes Eloise. Why, the show wouldn't be the same without her. Why, now that she is missing, I guess there is not going to even be a show. This circus is doomed. The Thimble Brothers will have to close and I will just have to take over. How very sad.

You were seen near her cage last night. Why were you there?

I was in Sassafras Corners to protect my investment. Every year at this time I go over all the books and count every item the circus owns. I count everything from tent stakes to tickets. Last night at 9:00 PM, I was at the elephant cage counting peanuts. Eloise did eat a lot of peanuts, you know. I was going to advise the Thimble Brothers to put her on a diet. It would be good for her health and good for the account books.

Where were you after you left Eloise?

A lot of things went missing last night and I had to go check out each event. It was very tiring. Especially since I also had to do all that counting. From 5:00 PM until midnight I was counting and inspecting. I checked darts, balloons, peanuts, ropes and cannons. Then I had to investigate because the darts, balloons, and ropes disappeared along with a canister of helium. Just check the timeline and you will see where I was all night.

I don't know how anyone gets rested around here. They stay up late and then at 3:00 AM they are awakened by cannon shots. These stopped at 4:00 AM but I couldn't go back to sleep and so I got up and went for a walk at 5:00 AM. At 6:00 AM, I decided to look in on Eloise. What a shock! She was missing from her locked cage. I went and told the others.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

I never wanted to be a banker. I always wanted to be a clown. I applied for clown jobs all the time but it was always the same thing. They wouldn't hire me. They said clowns were funny and I wasn't.



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