

CHAPTER XIX - The Circus Boys on the Mississippi

In Chapter XIX of "The Circus Boys On the Mississippi," titled "Teddy Joins The Band," Phil Forrest proposes a captivating idea to enhance their upcoming approach to Des Moines. He suggests that the band be divided into two parts to play on deck as they near their next location, an idea that Mr. Sparling, the circus owner, eagerly approves. Phil's suggestion aims for a triumphal entry, compensating musicians for their extra time to encourage participation.

The execution occurs early the next morning when the boat's passengers are suddenly awakened to an impromptu concert orchestrated by Phil's plan. The blaring brass, clashing cymbals, and the boom of drums stir everyone, including Teddy Tucker and Phil, from their sleep. What starts as a bewildered waking for the Circus Boys quickly turns into a playful skirmish, displaying Teddy and Phil's youthful energy and camaraderie. Their tussle, however, does not end in their cabin; it escalates in a comical yet disruptive manner involving the band playing outside their window.

Teddy's misadventure with a bass drum strikes a humorous chord. In an attempt to escape Phil's teasing, Teddy leaps through a window, inadvertently diving into and through the drum. This act disrupts the morning's performance, leading to chaotic and humorous exchanges among the band members, particularly with the drummer, who finds his musical contribution unintentionally sabotaged. Phil's intervention, aiming to rescue Teddy from further retribution, introduces another layer of chaos, marking the incident with equal parts hilarity and tension.

The chapter concludes with Phil and Teddy facing the financial responsibility for the damage caused to the bass drum. Their encounter with Mr. Sparling over the incident underscores the implicit trust and understanding between the circus owner and the boys. Despite Sparling's initial amusement and dismissive attitude towards the reimbursement for the damages, Phil insists on accountability, reflecting a mature aspect of their otherwise playful characters.

This chapter, while revealing the light-hearted and mischievous side of circus life through Teddy and Phil's antics, also sheds light on the close-knit community within the circus crew, exemplified by their interactions with Mr. Sparling and among themselves. The playful narrative maintains a tone of camaraderie and adventure that is evident throughout the "Circus Boys" series.