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Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus

Laura Lee Hope

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THEN BUNNY AND SUE JUMPED THROUGH HOOPS COVERED WITH PAPER.

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus.
(P.117).

Frontispiece

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BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE PLAYING CIRCUS

CHAPTER I

BUNNY IS UPSIDE DOWN

"Grandpa, where are you going now?" asked Bunny Brown.

"And what are you going to do?" asked Bunny Brown's sister Sue.

Grandpa Brown, who was walking down the path at the side of the farmhouse, with a basket on his arm, stood and looked at the two children. He smiled at them, and Bunny and Sue smiled back, for they liked Grandpa Brown very much, and he just loved them.

"Are you going after the eggs?" asked Sue.

"That basket is too big for eggs," Bunny observed.

"It wouldn't be – not for great, great, big eggs," the little girl said. "Would it, Grandpa?" [Pg 2]

"No, Sue. I guess if I were going out to gather ostrich eggs I wouldn't get many of them in this basket. But I'm not going after eggs. Not this time, anyhow."

"Where are you going?" asked Bunny once more.

"What's a – a ockstritch?" asked Sue, for that was as near as she could say the funny word.

"An ostrich," answered Grandpa Brown, "is a big bird, much bigger than the biggest Thanksgiving turkey. It has long legs, and fine feathers, and ladies wear them on their hats. I mean they wear the ostrich feathers, not the bird's legs."

"And do ockstritches lay big eggs?" Sue wanted to know.

"They do," answered Grandpa Brown. "They lay eggs in the hot sand of the desert, and they are big eggs. I guess I couldn't get more than six of them in this basket."

"Oh-o-o-o!" exclaimed Bunny and Sue together, with their eyes wide open.

"What big eggs they must be!" went on Bunny.[Pg 3]

"And is you going to get hens' eggs or ockstritches' eggs now, Grandpa?" asked Sue.

"Neither one, little brown-eyes, I'm going out in the orchard to pick a few peaches. Grandma wants to make a peach shortcake for supper. So I have to get the peaches."

"Oh, may we come?" asked Sue, dropping the doll with which she had been playing.

"I'll help you pick the peaches," offered Bunny, and he put down some sticks, a hammer and nails. He was trying to make a house for Splash, the big dog, but it was harder work than Bunny had thought. He was glad to stop.

"Yes, come along, both of you," replied Grandpa Brown. "I don't believe you can reach up to pick any peaches, but you can eat some, I guess. You know how to eat peaches, don't you?" he asked, smiling again at Bunny Brown and his sister Sue.

"Oh, I love peaches!" said Sue.

"And I do, too—and peach shortcake is awful good!" murmured Bunny.

"Well, come along then. It's nice and shady and cool in the peach orchard." [Pg 4]

Grandpa Brown put the basket over his arm, and gave Bunny one hand to clasp, while Sue took the other. In this way they walked down the path, through the garden, and out toward the orchard.

"Bunny! Sue! Where are you going?" called their mother to the children. Mrs. Brown had come out on the side porch.

"With Grandpa," answered Bunny.

"I'll look after them," said Grandpa Brown.

Bunny and his sister, with their papa and mamma, were spending the summer on the farm of Grandpa Brown away out in the country. The children liked it on the farm very much, for they had good fun. A few days before they had gone to the circus, and had seen so

many wonderful things that they talked about them from morning until night, and, sometimes, even after they got to bed.

But just now, for a little while, they were not talking or thinking about the circus, though up to the time when Grandpa Brown came around the house with the basket on his arm, Bunny had been telling Sue about [Pg 5]the man who hung by his heels from a trapeze that was fast to the top of the big tent. A trapeze, you know, is something like a swing, only it has a stick for a seat instead of a board.

"I could hang by a trapeze if I wanted to," Bunny had said to Sue.

"Oh, Bunny Brown! You could not!" Sue had cried.

"I could if I had the trapeze," he had said.

Then along had come Grandpa Brown.

"How many peaches do you think you can eat, Bunny?" asked Grandpa, as he led the children toward the orchard.

"Oh, maybe seven or six."

"That's too many!" laughed Grandpa Brown. "We should have to have the doctor for you, I'm afraid. I guess if you eat two you will have enough, especially with shortcake for supper."

"I can eat three," spoke up Sue. "I like peaches."

"But don't eat too many," said Grandpa. "Now I'll see if I can find a little, low tree, with ripe peaches on it, so you children can pick some off for yourselves." [Pg 6]

They were in the orchard now. It was cool and shady there, and the children liked it, for the sun was shining hot outside the orchard. On one edge of the place, where grew the peach trees, ran a little brook, and Bunny and Sue could hear it bubbling as it rippled over the green, mossy stones. The sound of running water made the air seem cooler.

A little farther off, across the garden, were grandpa's beehives, where the bees were making honey. Sue and her brother could hear the bees buzzing as they flew from the hives to the flowers in the field. But the children did not want to go very close to the hives, for they knew the bees could sting.

"Now here's a nice tree for you to pick peaches from," said Grandpa Brown, as he stopped under one in the orchard.

"You may pick two peaches each, and eat them," went on the children's grandfather.

"And don't you want us to pick some for you, like ockstriches' eggs, an' put them in the basket?" asked Sue.

"Well, after you eat your two, perhaps you can help me," answered Grandpa Brown [Pg 7] with a smile. But I think he knew that by the time Bunny and Sue had picked their own peaches he would have his basket filled. For, though Bunny and Sue wanted to help, their hands were small and they could not do much. Besides, they liked to play, and you cannot play and work at the same time. But children need to play, so that's all right.

Leaving Bunny and Sue under the tree he had showed them, where they might pick their own peaches, Grandpa Brown walked on a little farther, looking for a place where he might fill his basket.

"Oh, there's a nice red peach I'm going to get!" exclaimed Sue, as she reached up her hand toward it. But she found she was not quite tall enough.

"I'll get it for you," offered Bunny, kindly.

He got the peach for Sue, and she began to eat it.

"Oh, Bunny!" she cried. "It's a lovely sweet one. I hope you get a nice one."

"I will," Bunny said. Then as he looked at his sister he cried: "Oh, Sue! The juice is running all down your chin on your dress." [Pg 8]

"Oh-oh-o-o-o!" said Sue, as she looked at the peach juice on her dress. "Oh-o-o-o!"

"Never mind," remarked Bunny. "We can wash it off in the brook."

"Yes," said Sue, and she went on eating her peach. "We'll wash it."

Bunny was looking up into the tree for a peach for himself. He wanted to get the biggest and reddest one he could find.

"Oh, I see a great big one!" Bunny cried, as he walked all around the tree.

"Where is it?" asked Sue. "I want a big one, Bunny."

"I'll get you another one. I see two," and Bunny pointed to them up in the tree.

"You can't reach 'em," asserted Sue. "They're too high, Bunny."

"I—I can climb the tree," said the little boy. "I can climb the tree and get them."

"You'll fall," Sue said.

"No, I won't, Sue. You just watch me."

The peach tree was a low one, with branches close to the ground. And, as Bunny Brown said, he did know a little bit about climbing. He found a box in the orchard, [Pg 9]and, by standing on this he got up into the tree.

Up and up he went, higher and higher until he was almost within reach of the two peaches he wanted. Grandpa Brown was busy picking peaches at a tree farther off, and did not see the children.

"Look out, Sue. I'm going to drop a peach down to you," called Bunny from up in the tree.

"I'll look out," said Sue. "I'll hold up my dress, and you can drop the peach in that. Then it won't squash on the ground."

She stood under the tree, looking up toward her brother. Bunny reached for one of the two big, red peaches, but he did not pick it. Something else happened.

A branch on which the little boy was standing suddenly broke, and down he fell. He turned over, almost like a clown doing a somersault in the circus, and the next moment Bunny's two feet caught between two other branches, and there he hung, upside down, his head pointing to the ground.[Pg 10]

CHAPTER II

LET'S HAVE A CIRCUS!

"Bunny! Bunny! What are you doing?" cried Sue, as she saw her brother hanging, head down, in such a funny way from the peach tree branches. "Don't do that, Bunny! You'll get hurt!"

"I—I didn't mean to do it!" cried Bunny, and his voice sounded very strange, coming from his mouth upside down as it was. Sue did not know whether to laugh or cry.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny, is you playing circus?" she asked.

"No—no! I'm not playing circus!" and Bunny wiggled, and wiggled again, trying to get his feet loose. Both of them were caught between two branches of the peach tree where the limbs grew close together.

And it is a good thing that Bunny could not get his feet loose just then, or he would [Pg 11] have wiggled himself to the ground, and he might have been badly hurt, for he would have fallen on his head.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny! You *is* playing circus!" cried Sue again. She had finished her first peach, and now, dropping the stone, from which she had been sucking the last, sweet bits of pulp, she stood looking at her brother, dangling from the tree.

"No, I'm not playing circus!" and Bunny's voice sounded now as though he was just ready to cry. "Run and tell grandpa to help me down, Sue!" he begged. "I—I'm choking—I can't hardly breathe, Sue! Run for grandpa!"

Bunny was almost choking, and his face, tanned as it was from the sun and wind, was red now—almost as red as the boiled lobster, the hollow claw of which Bunny once put over his nose to make himself look like Mr. Punch, of the Punch and Judy show. For when boys, or girls either, hang by their feet, with their heads upside down, all the blood seems to run there if they hang too long. And that was what was happening to Bunny Brown. [Pg 12]

"Are you *sure* you isn't playin' circus?" asked Sue.

"No—I—I'm not playing," answered Bunny. "Hurry for grandpa! Oh, how my head hurts!"

"You look just like the circus man," said Sue. For one of the men in the circus Bunny and Sue had seen a few days before had hung by his toes from a trapeze, upside down, just as Bunny was hanging, with his head pointing toward the ground, and his feet near the top of the tent.

But of course the circus man was used to it, and it did not hurt his head as it did Bunny's.

"Hurry, Sue!" begged the little boy.

"All right. I'll get grandpa," Sue cried, as she ran off toward the tree where Grandpa Brown was picking peaches.

"Oh, Grandpa!" cried the little girl. "Come—come hurry up. Bunny—Bunny—he— —"

Sue was so out of breath, from having run so fast, and from trying to talk so fast, that she could hardly speak. But Grandpa Brown knew something was the matter.[Pg 13]

"What is it, Sue?" he asked. "What has happened to Bunny? Did a bee sting him?"

"No, Grandpa. But he—he's like the circus man, only he says he isn't playin' he is a circus. He's upside down in the tree, and he's a wigglin' an' a wogglin' an' he can't get down, an' his face is all red an' he wants you, an'—an'— —"

"My goodness me!" exclaimed Grandpa Brown, setting on the ground his basket, now half full of peaches. "What is that boy up to now?"

For Bunny Brown, and often his sister Sue, did get into all sorts of mischief, though they did not always mean to do so. "What has Bunny done now, I wonder?" asked grandpa.

"He—he couldn't help it," said Sue. "He slipped when he went up the tree, and now he's swinging by his legs just like the man in the circus, only Bunny says he isn't."

"He isn't what?" asked Grandpa Brown, as he hurried along, taking hold of Sue's hand. "What isn't he, Sue? I never did see such children!" and Grandpa Brown shook his head.[Pg 14]

"Bunny says he isn't the man in the circus," explained Sue.

"No, I shouldn't think he would be a man in the circus," said grandpa.

"He *looks* just like a circus man, though," insisted Sue. "But he says he isn't playin' that game."

Sue shook her head. She did not know what it all meant, nor why Bunny was hanging in such a queer way. But Grandpa Brown would make it all right. Sue was sure of that.

"There he is! There's Bunny upside down!" cried Sue, pointing to the tree in which Bunny was hanging by his feet.

"Oh, my!" cried Grandpa Brown. Then he ran forward, took Bunny in his arms, and raised him up. This lifted Bunny's feet free from the tree branches, between which they were caught, and then Grandpa Brown turned the little boy right side up, and set him down on his feet.

"There you are, Bunny!" cried grandpa. "But how did it happen? Were you trying to be a circus, all by yourself?"[Pg 15]

"N—n—no," stammered Bunny, for he could hardly get his breath yet. "I—I slipped down when I was reaching for a big, red peach for Sue. But I didn't slip all the way, for my feets caught in the tree."

"Well, it's a good thing they did, or you might have been hurt worse than you were," said Grandpa Brown. "But I guess you're not hurt much now; are you?"

Bunny looked down at his feet. Then he felt of his own arms and legs. He took a long breath. His face was not so red now.

"I—I guess I'm all right," he answered, at last.

"Well, don't climb any more trees," said Grandpa Brown. "You are too little."

Bunny thought he was quite a big boy, but of course grandpa knew what was right.

"I—I won't climb any more *peach* trees," said Bunny Brown.

"No, nor any other kind!" exclaimed his grandfather. "Just keep out of trees. Little boys and girls are safest on the ground. But now you had better come over where I can keep my eyes on you. I have my basket nearly [Pg 16]filled. We'll very soon go back to the house."

Bunny Brown was all right now. So he and Sue went over to the tree where grandpa was picking. They helped to fill the basket, for some of the peaches grew on branches so close to the ground that the children could reach up and pick them without any trouble.

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue had been on grandpa's farm since early summer. Those of you who have read the first book in this series do not need to be told who the children are. But there are some who may want to hear a little about them.

In the first book, named "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue," I told you how the children, with their father and mother, lived in the town of Bellemere, on Sandport bay, near the ocean. Mr. Brown was in the boat business, and many fishermen hired boats from him.

Aunt Lu came from New York to visit Mrs. Brown, the mother of Bunny and Sue, and while on her visit Aunt Lu lost her diamond ring. Bunny found it in an awfully funny way, when he was playing he was Mr. Punch, in the Punch and Judy show.[Pg 17]

In the second book, "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue on Grandpa's Farm," I told you how the Brown family went to the country in a big automobile, in which they lived just as Gypsies do. They even slept in the big automobile van.

And when Bunny and Sue reached grandpa's farm, after a two days' trip, what fun they had! You may read all about it in the book. And Bunny and Sue did more than just have fun.

The children helped find grandpa's horses, that had been taken away by the Gypsies. The horses were found at the circus, where Bunny and Sue went to see the elephants, tigers, lions, camels and ponies. They also saw the men swinging on the trapeze, high up in the big tent.

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue always wanted to be doing something. If it was not one thing it was another. They often got lost, though they did not mean to. Sometimes their dog Splash would find them.

Splash was a fine dog. He pulled Sue out of the water once, and she called him Splash [Pg 18] because he "splashed" in so bravely to get her.

In Bellemere, where Bunny and Sue lived, they had many friends. Every one in town loved the children. Even Wango, the queer monkey pet of Mr. Winkler, the old sailor, liked Bunny and Sue.

But they had not seen Wango for some time now; not since coming to the farm in the country. They had seen a trained bear, which a man led around by a string. The bear climbed a telegraph pole, and did other tricks. Bunny and Sue thought he was very funny. But they did not like him as much as they did the cunning little monkey at home in Bellemere.

Carrying the basket of peaches on his arm, and leading the children, Grandpa Brown walked back to the house. Mrs. Brown, the mother of Bunny and Sue, watched them come up the walk.

"Oh, Sue!" cried her mother. "Look at your dress! What did you spill on it?"

"I—I guess it's peach juice, Mother. It dripped all over. But Bunny hung upside down in the tree, just like the man in the circus, only he wasn't." [Pg 19]

I guess Sue was glad to talk about something else beside the peach juice stains on her dress.

"What—what happened?" asked Mother Brown, looking at grandpa. "Did Bunny—?"

"That's right," he said, laughing. "Bunny was hanging, upside down, in a tree. But he wasn't hurt, and I soon lifted him down."

"Oh, what will those children do next?" asked their mother.

"I—I didn't mean to do it," said Bunny. "It—it just—happened. I—I couldn't help it."

"No, I suppose not," said his mother. "But you must go and wash now. Sue, I'll put a clean dress on you, and then I'll see if I can get the peach stains off this one. You ought to have on an old apron."

A little later, Bunny and Sue, now nice and clean, were sitting on the side porch. It was almost time for supper.

"Bunny," asked Sue, "did it hurt when you were playin' you were a circus man only you weren't?"[Pg 20]

"No, it didn't exactly *hurt*," he said slowly. "But it felt funny. Did I really look like a circus man, Sue?"

"Yep. Just like one. Only, of course, you didn't have any nice pink suit on, with spangles and silver and gold."

"Oh, no, of course not," agreed Bunny. "But did I swing by my feet?"

"Yes, Bunny, you did."

For a moment the little chap said nothing. Then he cried out:

"Oh, Sue! I know what let's do!"

"What?"

"Let's have a circus! It will be lots of fun! We'll get up a circus all by ourselves! Will you help me make a circus?"[Pg 21]

CHAPTER III

THE POOR OLD HEN

Sue looked at Bunny with widely-opened eyes. Then she clapped her hands. Sue always did that when she felt happy, and she felt that way now.

"Oh, Bunny!" she cried. "A circus? A real circus?"

"Well, of course not a *real*, big one, with lions and tigers and all that," said the little boy. "We couldn't get elephants and camels and bears. But maybe grandpa would let us take his two horses, that he got back from the Gypsies. They have lots of horses in the circus."

"I'd be afraid to ride on a horse," objected Sue, shaking her head.

"You wouldn't if Bunker Blue held you on; would you?"

"No, maybe not then." [Pg 22]

"Well, we'll get Bunker Blue to hold us on the horse's back," said Bunny.

Bunker Blue was a big, red-haired boy—almost a man—and he worked for Mr. Brown. Bunker was very fond of Bunny and Sue. Bunker had steered the big automobile in which the Brown family came to grandpa's farm, and he was still staying in the country.

"Do you think we could really get up a circus?" asked Sue, after thinking about what Bunny had said.

"Of course we can," answered the little boy. "Didn't we get up a Punch and Judy show, when I found Aunt Lu's diamond ring?"

"Yes, but that wasn't as big as a circus."

"Well, we need only have a little circus show, Sue."

"Where could we have it, Bunny?"

The little boy thought for a moment.

"In grandpa's barn," he answered. "There's lots of room. It would be just fine."

"Would you and me be all the circus, Bunny?"