

STORY 49

*words we know*

pollution      station      famous  
earth      learn      search  
brought      thought      science  
photography      teacher      perhaps  
trouble      couple      touch  
caught      audience      caused  
wand      wander      wandered  
word      world      worthy  
phone      telephone      television  
available      computer      computing  
advertise      advertisement      seize

STORY 49

*new sounds*

-OUS as in famous

-IOUS as in devious

wa as in wash

Look through the story. Find some words with the “-ous” sound, and say them aloud. Then do the same for the “-ious” and “wa” words.

*special words*

preparation	explanation	pension
concession	earn	qualify
bought	cautious	scene

Learn how to say each special word.  
See if you can find each one in the story.  
Then you are ready to read the story.

FITZROY READERS STORY NUMBER 49

# The Grass is Greener



**Created by Faye Berryman & Philip O'Carroll**  
**Illustrated by Patricia Mullins**

Developed at Fitzroy Community School  
Text Copyright © 2013 Fitzroy Programs Pty Ltd  
Illustrations Copyright © 2013 Patricia Mullins

Originally published by Fitzroy Programs Pty Ltd Melbourne  
This Indian edition published by Saar Books Publications Pvt Ltd  
Printed by India Binding House

ISBN 978-93-82700-58-6

Mary was fourteen years old. She had finished school for the year, and wanted to earn some money during the holidays.

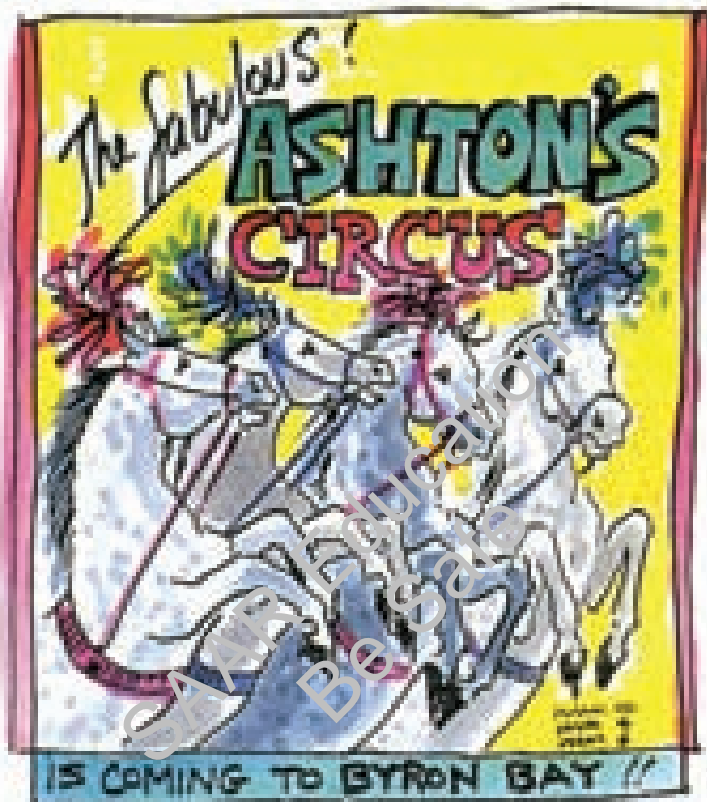


But in the seaside town of Byron Bay there were no spare jobs available. She thought she would have to get through the holidays with hardly any spending money - only the little her parents could afford to give her.



Mary had felt bored with some of her school subjects and was sick of having no money. She did enjoy computing - and got good marks. But she still needed years of schooling before she would be qualified for a computing job. This meant more years with very little money in her wallet. If only she could get an exciting job and some money... But for now, things were looking gloomy.

Mary wandered through the shopping centre, wondering what to do with herself.



She noticed a local paper on a coffee table. Someone had left it open at page fifteen. There was an advertisement: “The fabulous Ashton's Circus is coming to Byron Bay”. Mary's mood brightened. It was a very long time since the circus had come to town.

Mary remembered going when she was five. The tent had seemed enormous, and the lions had been ferocious. And she had often dreamed about circuses ever since. What would it cost to go this time?



She read the fine print at the bottom of the ad. It said, “Adults \$10, Children \$4, Concession \$6.” Concession prices were for pensioners and school children over thirteen. She would have to save \$6 in two weeks.

If she was careful, she would have enough by the time the circus arrived. Fortunately Mary's older sister Naomi was generous and promised to help her if she couldn't get enough money in time for the show.



Mary did extra jobs and saved her pay, and Naomi promised her two dollars. On the day, she bought a ticket for the very first show and couldn't wait for it to start. She was anxious to get a front seat, so as not to miss anything.



The first event was circus ponies. They were gorgeous. They trotted around the ring while the ringmaster yelled to the crowd. Then they leapt through hoops of fire - marvellous! No wonder Ashton's were famous.



Next were the clowns. They were climbing ladders and falling off. It looked so dangerous - Mary actually felt nervous.



Glamorous acrobats thrilled the crowd with their daring swings from the top of the tent. They didn't seem to be cautious at all - there was not even a net beneath them. But she knew they were very serious about safety - they just didn't make it obvious. "How glorious it would be to swing like them," thought Mary. "If only I could join the circus."

There were various other items in the show. At one stage a troop of shrieking monkeys dashed up the ropes and swung around with arms and legs outstretched. They were so vigorous - jumping everywhere.



They were humorous too - everyone laughed. After the show, Mary was desperately curious about life behind the scenes. She felt envious of the circus workers. She wanted to be one.

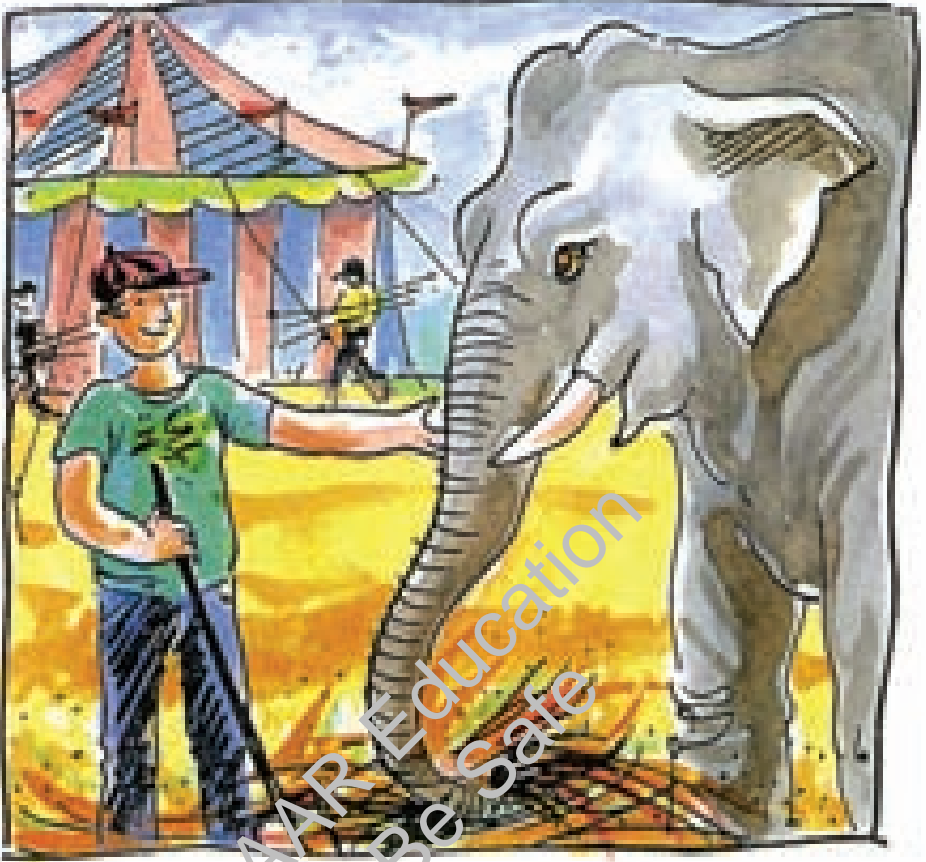
Mary left the main tent and wandered outside, among the sideshow stalls. The fairy floss and waffles smelled delicious. Naomi had given Mary some extra spending money because she knew her younger sister would definitely want some circus food!



Mary didn't want to go home. She stayed until the crowd had gone, and watched the workers cleaning up.

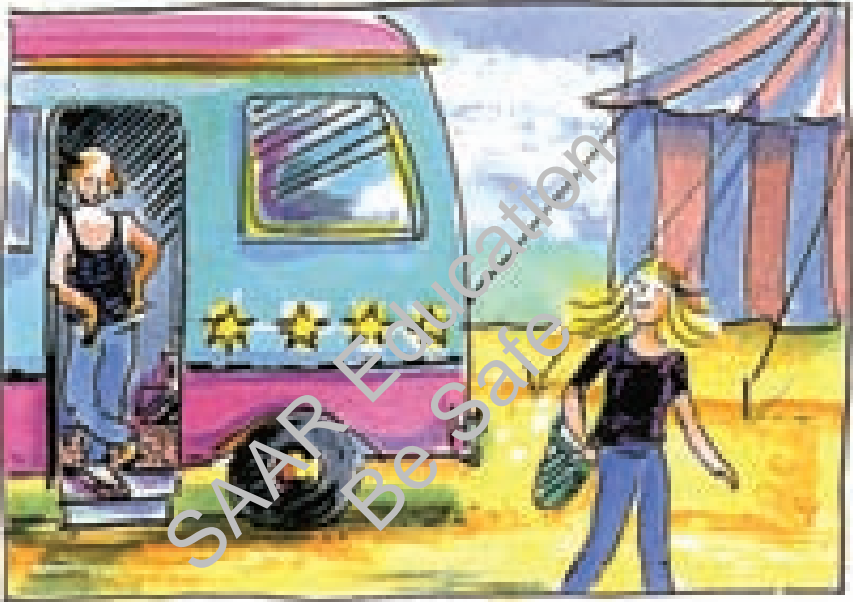


She approached a caravan that belonged to a clown. He had taken his make-up off. He looked quite old, tired and wrinkled. He noticed Mary standing there. Without even looking, he said to her, “Want to be in the circus, I suppose, young lady?” How did he know, wondered Mary. Then he muttered, “The grass is greener on the other side.”

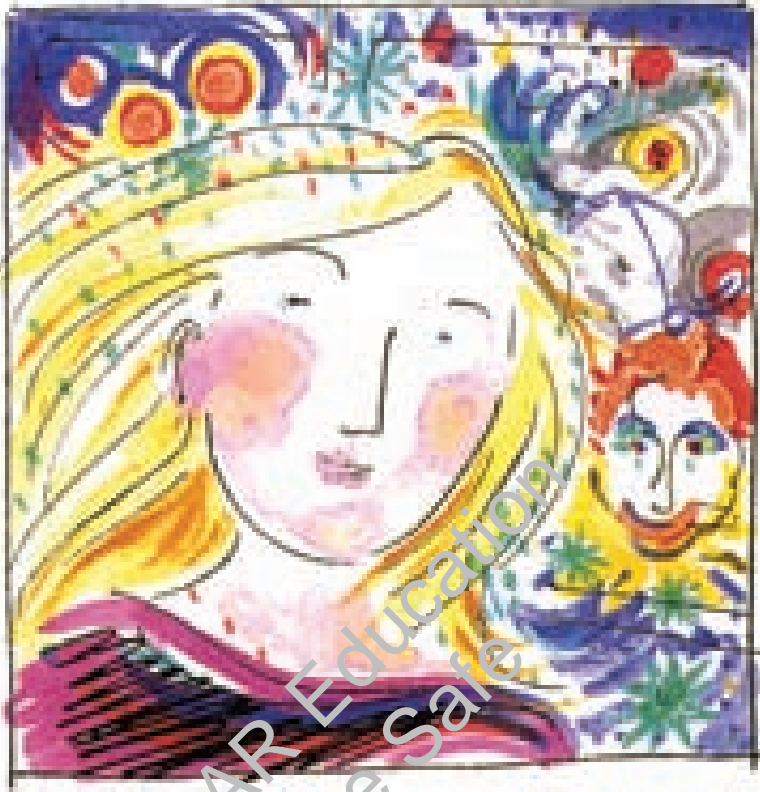


“Lots of kids want to join us,” continued the clown. “But it's not all glamorous you know. Most of the work is really quite tedious. Just look around you now.” Mary looked, and all she could see were circus people working quietly, cleaning rows of seats, raking sand and sawdust, washing cages, and feeding animals. They were the same people she had seen in the show.

The clown went on. “For every hour in the show, there's another six hours of practice and preparation, cleaning and repair. There's shifting the equipment, animals and people. Many people come to work for us, and last only a week.”



Mary looked disappointed. She hadn't thought of all these things. But as she turned to go, Clown added with a smile, “Circus work is never easy. But for those of us who really love the life, the hard work is worth it.”



Mary wandered down the main street of Byron Bay. She wasn't sure now. She had a new respect for circus workers. You'd have to be serious about the circus to put in all that work, and years of training. Perhaps her life was not so hard, after all. If she continued with her studies, she would be able to work in a few years with computers, which she really enjoyed.



Mary was wondering what the clown had meant by saying, “The grass is greener”. Two days later, she saw her English teacher sitting on a bench. She asked, “Miss Wattle, what does it mean to say ‘The grass is greener’?” Miss Wattle paused to think.



“Well, think of cows. Most are happy with the grass they've got. But some always think the grass is greener somewhere else. Wherever you put them, they push through fences looking for something better.”

Miss Wattle could see that her student understood. Mary was grateful for the explanation and wandered down to the beach. She strolled along, humming to herself, and thinking over her teacher's words.



On her way home, Mary took another look at the circus workers, who were still not finished for the day. That night, after dinner, she watched “The Computer Show” on television. She decided another year at school would help her to make up her mind.

THE END

STORY 49

*words we've used*

preparation    explanation    scene  
pension    television    concession  
earn    learn    earth  
qualify    bought    thought  
cautious    pause    because

*some new words*

luxurious    religious    melodious  
waddle    waffle    wattle  
wallow    walnut    waltz  
wasp    watchdog    wasn't

## STORY 49

### *teacher's page*

*teacher, information from this page may be shared with students when you feel they are ready for it*

Students who are taught to “sound out” have the advantage in both reading and writing. They have learned the basic sounds of English and the extra sounds (the extra ways of spelling English sounds).

When phonically trained students are trying to read a new word, they have a method: they can “attack” it, and they usually succeed in recognising the word. This makes reading a victorious experience, rather than a frustrating one (as it can be under the whole-word method, which often forces the child into sheer guesswork).

Similarly, children who have phonic skills can almost always make a reasonable attempt at *writing* new words. If they have never seen a word written, and there is more than one way of representing its sounds in English, there is no guarantee that they will guess the correct digraphs.

They may for example, write **lite** instead of **light**. But they are more likely to guess correctly, and furthermore, whatever they do write will almost certainly be understood by English readers.