

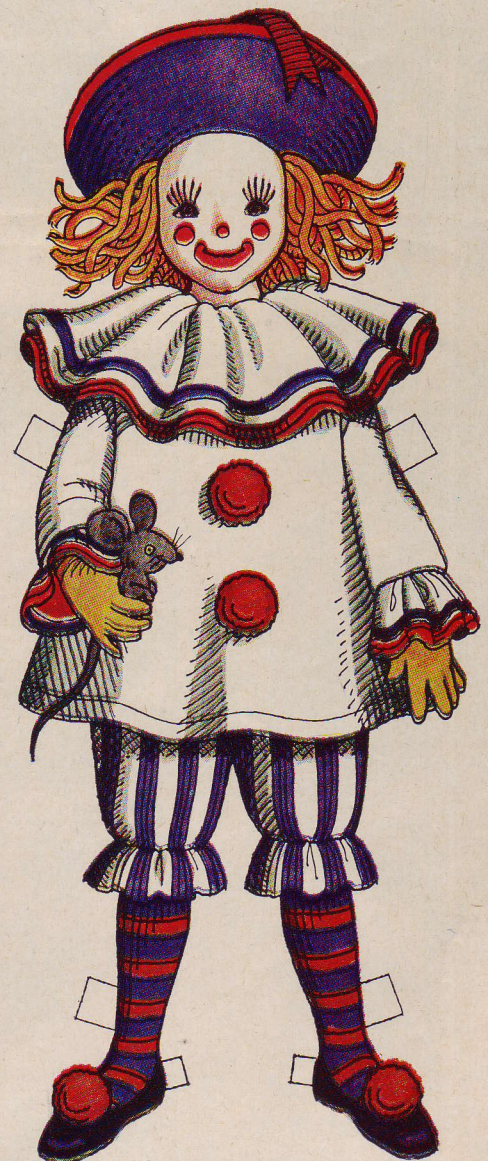
BETSY McCALL—CIRCUS CLOWN FOR A DAY



Here's how it happened: Our newspaper ran a composition contest, "If I Could Be Someone Else." Mine, "I'd Be a Circus Clown," won third prize. The three winners were published in the newspaper, and then, wow! Three weeks ago this letter came from The Greatest Show on Earth *inviting me to be a clown for a day*, with circus tickets and plane tickets for my whole family! My costume was a smock with a huge ruff; ruffled pants; striped stockings; and a round hat with a wool wig sewed to it. Funniest part was the crazy eyelashes that flapped each time I pressed a little rubber mouse. At the rehearsal, I learned to do a hoppity-hop right after my lashes fluttered, as though I were astounded. And I *was*, not by my lashes but by *everything*: all the excitement; and the elephants passing so close to me, trunks and tails joined, the littlest one a darling baby, and the biggest like a mountain marching; and the dancers in spangled costumes; and the circus smell. Everybody backstage watches everybody onstage, no matter how many times they have seen the acts. I was dazzled by the lights and the music and everything in motion on *three stages AT THE SAME TIME*—acrobats hurling through space (scary!); dancers like butterflies on ropes so high I couldn't see the top; tightrope walkers balancing on bouncy wires. And the animal acts! Snarling lions and tigers, dancing bears, funny chimpanzees—I was so enchanted I almost forgot to go on! Just in time I did, eyelashes flapping, tumbling clowns about me, people applauding, and I thought: *I want to stay here forever.*



I just love this wild knicker playsuit because it reminds me of the circus!



I wore this costume when I was a clown at The Greatest Show on Earth.