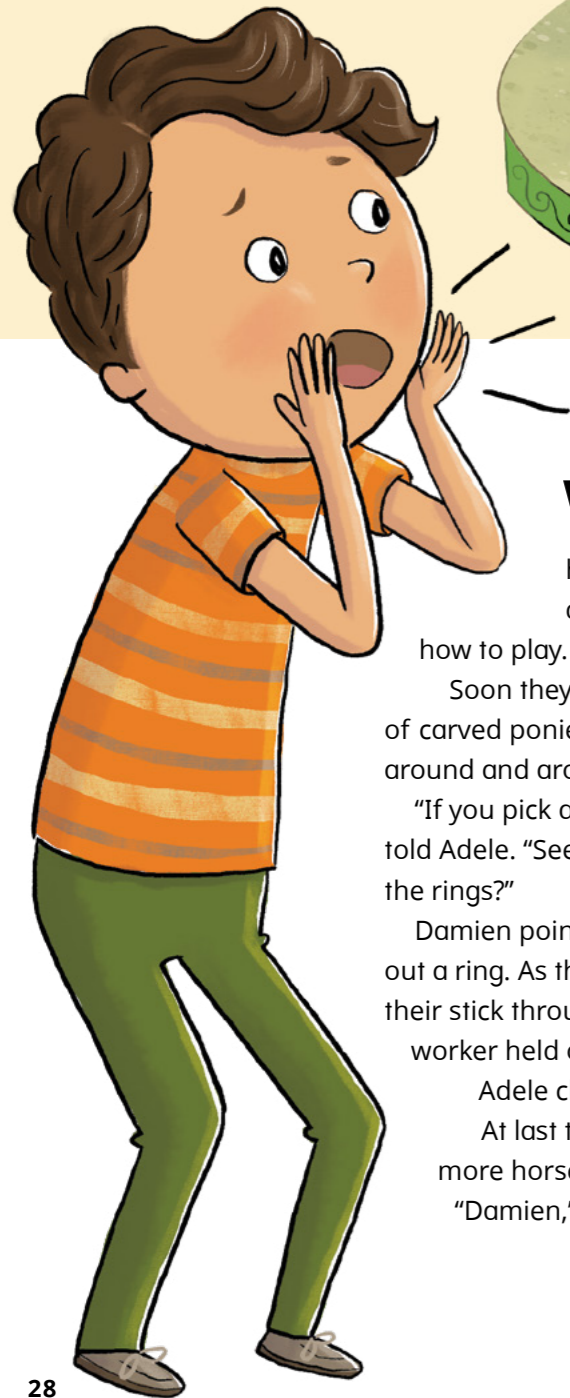


Carousel Kindness

By Hilary Watkins Lemon
(Based on a true story)



When Damien walked into the park, he heard happy music playing. His grandmother was taking him and his little sister, Adele, to ride his favorite carousel. It had a fun game with rings. Damien was excited to show Adele

how to play.

Soon they were in line. The carousel was big and colorful, with lots of carved ponies. Smiling kids sat on the ponies and waved as they rode around and around.

"If you pick a pony on the edge, you can play the ring game!" Damien told Adele. "See the sticks the kids are holding? And see the man with the rings?"

Damien pointed to the worker. He stood near the carousel holding out a ring. As they rode by on the carousel, the children tried to put their stick through the ring to catch it. Each time they caught a ring, the worker held out a new one.

Adele clapped her hands. "I want to catch all the rings!" she said.

At last they reached the front of the line. But there was only one more horse left on the carousel.

"Damien," Grand-mère said, "why don't we let Adele take this last

spot since she's never ridden it before? You can ride on the next turn."

"All right," Damien muttered. He watched the worker help Adele onto the shiny brown pony. Then the worker handed Adele a stick to catch rings.

The music began, and the carousel started to turn. Damien watched Adele from the side with Grand-mère. But Adele was holding the stick backwards! Instead of holding the stick by the big handle, she held it by the long, skinny end used to catch the rings.

"Adele, turn your stick around!" he yelled. But Adele didn't seem to hear him over the noise. When she passed the ring, her stick tapped it. But the handle was too big to fit inside the ring.

"Adele, your stick!" Damien tried again. "You won't be able to catch rings if you hold it like that!"

But Adele didn't hear him. She just smiled and laughed as the carousel spun. Her stick tapped the ring again and again. She didn't catch a single one.

Damien groaned. Adele was wasting her turn! If he were on the carousel, he would catch all the rings.

When the ride ended, he ran up to Adele.

"I told you how to hold the stick!" he shouted. "Why didn't you listen to me? You did it all wrong!"

Adele didn't yell back at Damien. She didn't cry. She just stood there and looked small, small, small.

Damien's heart pounded, and his face felt hot. It made him angry to watch Adele miss all those rings! But it was only her first time. Besides, she'd looked like she was having fun. Until now.

Damien felt terrible. He wished he hadn't yelled at Adele.

"I'm sorry," he said softly. "That wasn't nice of me."

Adele looked up.

"How about if I give you some tips for catching rings?" Damien said. "I'll sit next to you on the carousel and help you."

Adele nodded her head.

Then Damien turned to Grand-mère. "May we have two tickets so Adele can try again?"

Grand-mère smiled. "Of course." ●

This story took place in France.

