



The Great Casey Jr. Train Escape

I watched through my office window as the morning guests filed down Main Street, eager for their first ride on Space Mountain or whatever tickled their fancy. My eyes were drawn to the second ‘e’ in *detective* that was stenciled on the window. I stepped back and refocused my attention on the complete logo. 

W.H. Dennis Cottrell, Detective Agency, Private Investigator. "We Never Sleep"

Yes, not only was the corner of that ‘e’ fading, but so was the one in *Dennis*. I was contemplating submitting a maintenance request when my cell phone chimed the first chords to *It's a Small World*. I snatched it up before the tune had a chance to become engrained in my head. My assistant, Pinkerton, must have been the practical joker who reset my ringtone, and here he was calling.

“Grand Californian front desk how may I help you?”

There was a pause on the line as Pinkerton worked it out. “Cottrell?”

I smiled. My day wasn’t complete if I didn’t confuse my assistant five or six times. “What’s up?”

“I’m over in Fantasyland and something odd is going on. You better get over here.”

The queue to *Peter Pan* was already 40 minutes long as I strolled by. I never understood the appeal of waiting 40 minutes for a 50 second flight over diodes suspended from the ceiling, but that was just me. I found Pinkerton at the Casey Jr. Train exit where he was talking with an animated man in an engineer’s outfit. He introduced me to Jeff Hunter, who shook my hand and began talking. 

“Sorry Detective Cottrell, I’m in a bit of a bind. You see someone left the cages open on my train and all the animals escaped.”

I glanced around nervously, wondering if a tiger was about to pounce.

Jeff chortled. “They’re harmless. It’s not like I had Scar in there.” He thrust a piece of paper in my direction. “The manifest,” he explained as I took it. “It lists all the animals that escaped. The number beside each is just a tracking number we use.”

I nodded. “So how can we help you?”

Jeff glanced at the growing line for the Casey Jr. Train. “I’ve got customers,” he explained. “But I need to get those animals back. I was hoping you could find them for me.”

My eyebrows rose. “Won’t they just wander back?”

“Eventually,” Jeff began. “But they like to play games and we don’t want ‘em scaring the guests.”

“They could be anywhere,” Pinkerton injected. “How do you...“

“They’ll stay in Fantasyland,” Jeff interrupted. “And they’ll be out in the open, not inside any building or store.”

“There’s a cricket!” Pinkerton pointed to a nearby recycling bin.

Jeff smiled. “I wish it were that easy. But not *that* cricket. They are *Disney* animals after all, so they can...” he looked for the right word. “...blend in. They could be stone, wood, metal, big, small, in a painting, peeking out from behind something.”



Someone at the front of the Casey Jr. queue called out and Jeff waved, assuring he would be right there.

“Look, I gotta go.” He took a sheet of paper from his pocket and scribbled a quick map. “I’m no artist, but this should help. All the animals will definitely be within these bounds. And as I said, they won’t be inside any buildings.”

“So by inside any buildings you mean...”

Jeff fielded the redundant question from my assistant in stride. “I mean they don’t like doorways and don’t go through ‘em.”

Pinkerton nodded, taking notes. “What about windows? You know, shop windows and such?”

Again Jeff shook his head. “If there’s an open window on one of the houses here they may go just inside. But they like to be able to see the sky, and they don’t like the shop windows at all, too cluttered.”

Jeff turned his map over and scribbled a few more notes. “Some of the animals with more than one won’t necessarily stay together. They get sick of each other after a while, you know. And occasionally a wild critter could wander in so you may find more than the number listed on the manifest, but that’s fine, one of the ones you found is the right one for sure.” He scribbled a few more notes and then looked up. “There are three of them that are real good at hide-n-seek, so once you’ve found all but three just send me a text message as I’ve indicated here and I’ll send you directions on what to do next.”

“A text message?”

Jeff nodded. “Yeah, I can’t always answer my phone, but I will pick up a text message pretty quick.” He turned and started towards the train, but turned back after only a few steps. “Oh yeah, if you get stuck, you can send me a text message and ask for some help. I’ve written down how to do that too.”

“Help? What in the world...”

But Jeff was already back to the train much to the delight of the growing queue for his attraction. I looked up to find Pinkerton munching on the chocolate mouse ear of a frozen ice cream bar. I never could figure out how he stayed so rail thin when he was always eating.

“So what’s the plan?” he asked.

I shrugged. “We search for these animals.”

“Sounds like they could have morphed into just about any of the surroundings,” Pinkerton said, grabbing the paper from my hand. “Which three do you suppose are the trouble makers?”

I snatched the paper back from my assistant. “Well why don’t you stop eating long enough to help me find out!”

And with that Pinkerton and I set off to find the missing animals.

Dept. 1313

Date may 08

Subject *CIT Animal manifest*

pages 1

To *J. Hunter*

From *FL Management*

041 rabbit with pinkish nose

137 cricket

21 bear

416 2 crocodiles

893 elephant

005 2 yellowish giraffes

188 mole

353 tiger

408 horse with black tail

200 deer

055 owl

660 4 frogs

935 whale

92 stork

741 small caterpillar

510 peacock

116 6 ravens

247 2 lizards

Good luck. And remember I'm looking for the manifest numbers of the three animals you can't find.

Thanks

J. H.

Notes

fl codes:

m t w r

s w s a

p p f

c r s l

d f e

c j t

s b l c b

a i w

p d j

When you find all but three of the animals,
text me at circustrain@puzzlingthings.com with the
word "animals" followed by a space separated
list of the manifest numbers
of the three animals you can't find.
For example: animals 04 78 322
I'll let you know what to do next.

I might be able to offer some advice as to where
some of the animals like to hide. But I might not,
it just depends on if I can remember anything or
not. So if there are some you just can't find
text me the word hint or clue followed by the
animal in question.

For example: hint elephant

My information might be useless, but it doesn't
hurt to ask.

