

COLONEL SEBASTIAN T. RAWHIDE, HIMSELF.

You were born Milton Fenwick of Piscataway, New Jersey. Not that anyone knows this. In fact, you do everything in your power to guard this valuable secret. To the world, you are Colonel Sebastian T. Rawhide, honored veteran, Southern gentleman, and owner of the most fabulous circus on the planet. Nobody must ever know that you were born to a meek little family in a meek little house. No! You are bigger than that. You are larger than life and you will stay that way!

No, nobody must know. Especially not your fiancée, Daisy Bell. Ah, pure, sweet, innocent, lovely, gracious, kind, charming, sweet – wait a minute, you said sweet already – modest, caring Daisy. You first met Daisy when the Circus was touring Georgia. Her father owns a small plantation there. You swept her away with your Southern charm. And she delighted you with her grace and style.

When it came time for the Circus to move on, you presented her with a lovely diamond engagement ring and asked for her hand in marriage. She agreed and her father agreed, although he disapproves. “You may run a freak show, but you are a true Southern gentleman, and I know that one day you will find a respectable position in life,” he said when he gave you permission to marry Daisy. By God, how can you tell her the truth now?

Daisy is the love of your life and you would do anything for her. Well, except for one thing. Daisy has been pressuring you to sell the Circus and settle down and become an accountant. Sell the Circus? The circus is your life and soul. She might well be asking you to cut off your left arm. Become an accountant? Sit behind a desk all day counting beans on your blotter? That’s the road to a slow death if you’ve ever heard one. How can you “settle down” like that? But... But... How can you refuse the love of your life? If only there was a way to change her mind about the Circus.

You love the Circus and you feel the performers are your family. You could never abandon them, even with Daisy’s urging. You care for all your acts, from the talented Credenza Brothers to the bearded Helena Ferez. You especially are proud of your “special” family, those born apart from the rest of the world, not given a chance in normal society. There are those who call them “Freaks,” but you know that they are people who have been given a gift, and your job is to help them show off their gift to the world.

The Circus started as a small wild west show, with a few wild animal acts, some stunt riders, and some acrobats. You eventually expanded to a circus, hiring Rupert and Rudolph Townshed, the Siamese twins; and

Helena. (You had Helena checked by an actual Doctor. She is female and she does have a real beard. You have a certificate to prove it now, too.) But what really got the Circus rolling was Binky the Clown.

Born Herman Binkowicz, Binky has a natural talent for physical comedy. Just being in his presence for a few minutes is all you need to start cracking up. His hilarious antics and dexterous gags made him the perfect crowd pleaser and the star of your show. People started coming in from miles around just to see Binky. The Circus flourished, you dropped the wild west show, and you were well on your way to fame and fortune. You owe Herman a great deal, and you don’t even think he knows it. He’s a humble man who just wants to make people happy.

From the boost Herman provided, you were able to set a tour for Europe. You started with England, then France, and then on to the smaller countries like Freedonia. You hired a number of new acts in Europe: Zelda the mime – she’s actually mute; The Masked Rider, the best horseback rider in all of Europe; Lydia, the Tattooed Lady; and a few others. You’ve made your way back to America now, just in time for the American debut of these new acts.

Unfortunately, the European tour wasn’t as successful as you would have liked. You didn’t really perform to “Kings and Heads of State,” although some Barons and Duchesses would occasionally drop by for a show. There were also a number of accidents toward the end of the tour. Uma the Unicyclist fell and severely twisted her ankle; she’s in a hospital in France. The box Preston the Prestidigitator used to saw a woman in half broke open revealing that she was contorted and he was sawing air. He was laughed out of the ring and you had to let him go.

The Circus is now in deep financial trouble. You need to pay the bank \$500 in cash by the end of the show, or the bank will own the Circus, and the contracts for all of your acts. However, you also owe a number of your performers back pay. You have to pay them too, or they might leave, breach of contract. And you cannot starve your friends... your family.

Worse yet, the infamous Bungling Brothers have their eyes on the Circus. The Bungling Brothers – Jack and John – are rich and devious. They are the sons of Senator Hiram Bungling, a powerful and influential man. The Bungling Brothers run a huge Circus. They get the acts and materials from buying out smaller Circuses, like yours. If your Circus defaults to the bank tonight, the Bungling brothers can buy it up for a song.

It is rumored that the Bunglings will even go so far as to sabotage a Circus when they set their sights on it. It’s

possible that Uma and Preston fell to their schemes, although that happened in Europe, and the Bunglings tend to stay put in America where their father can bail them out. So far, nothing too awful has happened, but you'd better let folks know to keep their eyes open. People could get hurt, and you cannot stand for that. But that annoying Jack Bungling has been hanging around your Circus, gloating. You'll have to give him a piece of your mind if he shows up again.

Your only hope of saving your Circus is to put on the best show ever tonight. You're opening to a large audience. Keep them happy and the money will roll in. Make them upset and, well, accounting is your only other option. But either way, the show must go on!

ROLEPLAYING HINT

You are ringmaster in the big top and without. You see yourself as a father figure to your acts, even the ones older than you are. Your two big loves are the Circus and Daisy Belle and you would do anything to protect them.

One note: You made up the name Colonel Sebastian T. Rawhide because you liked the sound. You cannot remember what the T. stands for, and must answer with a different T name (Thomas, Terrance, Todd, etc) each time you are asked.

ITEMS

The circus cashbox. It contains the few savings that you need to... to... Wait. It was right here somewhere. No, you know you left it in your "office" wagon last night. But it's gone. What should you do?

THE OTHER CHARACTERS:

Daisy Belle: Your one true love. She loves you too, or at least loves who she thinks you are. Sigh. She is pestering you to sell the Circus and become an accountant. She looks down at your showmen and "freaks." If only there was some way to convince her to love the circus the way you do. She does help out in the Circus from time to time, taking on tasks that you don't have time for. You can rely on her if you need assistance. She still wears the lovely diamond engagement ring you bought for her well over a year ago.

Jack Bungling: A black-hearted scoundrel if ever there was one. You cannot kick him out of the Circus; he has a ticket. And you cannot have him arrested; he hasn't committed any crimes, not that you can prove anyway. Besides, a phone call to his father, Senator Hiram Bungling, would get him free in nothing flat. He and his brother John run a competing Circus and they want to buy you out.

The Credenza Brothers: Alexander, Bartholomew, Clifford, and Douglas. You met them while the show was touring the Midwest three years ago, and they have

been a staple of your Circus ever since. These four have to be the best aerial acrobatic team you have ever seen. When they hit the high wire or the trapeze, they are in perfect synchronization. It is presumed that this is due to their pre-show ritual (performed secretly in their show wagon), but the Credenzas aren't saying.

Binky The Clown: The man who saved the Circus. His zany antics and clever jokes so enticed the public that they came by the wagonload. And still, he remains humble to this very day. You owe him \$50 of back pay.

Susan Wildes, The Strong Woman: Her strength is unnatural. She's rake thin and doesn't appear to have any real muscles at all, but she can effortlessly lift weights that would make three strong men struggle. She's a nice young lady, though.

The Lion Tamer: Franklin Winters has an almost natural affinity with animals; you can tell he's worked at his job for many years. He is one of the top in his profession. You also owe him \$50 in back pay.

Rupert and Rudolph Townshed: The Siamese twins; you constantly get their names mixed up. They have always been argumentative. Why, you remember one time, just when they were getting started, that Rupert – or was it Rudolph? – stormed into your office and demanded that he be paid the same as his brother (you were paying the one on the left \$2 more a show because he can play the fiddle). You had to give him singing lessons and a \$2 raise to calm him down. Lately it's been worse than ever. Now, you've heard a rumor that they aren't speaking to each other. That's ridiculous! It's time to put a stop to this.

Helena Ferez: A genuine bearded lady. She has been with the Circus for many years. One strange thing: on the recent trip to Europe, she took a leave of absence before you entered Fandonia, joining back up with the troupe after you left neighboring Freedonia. She's always claimed to be from Rumania, but now you wonder...

Peter Wainwright, the Fire Eater/Sword Swallow: You signed this man up the minute you saw him. He's everything you want in a Circus performer: he's a flashy showman with a style that cannot be beat. Also he can eat fire.

Bobo, the Dog Faced Boy: He joined up in Europe. While he has only been with the Circus a few short weeks, he has already started to fit right in. In fact, when he first started, he barely spoke English. Now he can communicate just fine. Bobo has been working with Franklin Winters and he seems to get along well with the wild animals.

Zelda the Clown: You aren't certain if Zelda is her real name, as she is completely mute. However, her tumbling, mime, and dexterity make her a valuable addition to the Circus. Zelda also joined up in Europe.

Señora Mysterioso: She tells fortunes in the sideshow before the main acts begin in the Circus tent. During the show, she charms snakes. You've never had the nerve to ask her to tell your fortune; truth be told, she gives you the willies. She joined up just before you left for Europe.

The Masked Rider: You don't know the true identity of the Masked Rider, but – without a doubt – this person is the best bareback horse rider you have ever seen. The Masked Rider pulls off stunts and tricks you have never seen before, not even at some of those Wild West shows. In fact, the Masked Rider would make all of those old cowboys green with envy, especially since **they** aren't from Europe, unlike the Masked Rider. You owe the Masked Rider \$50 of back pay as well.

The Knife Thrower: OK, you know the old trick. The knife thrower only pretends to throw blindfolded and trick knives pop up out of the rigged target. Well, this person must not have seen the trick because your knife thrower never uses it. Sure, knives are thrown while blindfolded, but a bullseye is hit every time. Yup, the knife thrower is that good. Like the Masked Rider, this person joined the Circus in Europe. You owe the Masked Rider \$50.

Lydia the Tattooed Lady: Lydia joined the sideshow just before you left for Europe. She's a sweet, shy, woman, but you get the feeling she's hiding something. Sure, many folks join the Circus because they're running away from a secret, but you do try to have a clean show and a close family. Maybe you could get Daisy to talk to her.

Zimmie the Clown: You needed another clown to round out the act before you took it to Europe and Zimmie was available. He doesn't talk much, and he sometimes scares the kids, but he is humorous in his own way. Unfortunately, times are tough and you've decided to put Zimmie on probation. You must let him know that if he has any problems today, you will have to ask him to leave the Circus.

The Great Zamboni: He came to you this morning asking for a chance to join the Circus. Although you don't have enough money to make ends meet, you do need another magician to replace Preston. You have

given him a preliminary tryout in today's show and if he does well, you can hire him, and *then* worry about paying him.

WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS NOT IN GAME:

Senator Hiram Bungling: The adage states, "As Bungling goes, so goes the Nation." Senator Bungling is one of the most influential men in the country. It is a shame that his sons, Jack and John, are so slimy.

John Bungling: Jack's younger brother. You have met John a few times, but mostly in passing. He is a capable circus performer, but he isn't very bright.

Uma the Unicyclist: Poor Uma fell off her cycle in France and twisted her ankle badly. It may have been sprained. You know that she was close friends with Daisy, so you've tried to be comforting. Uma is currently resting in a hospital in France.

Preston the Prestidigitator: He was a fairly capable stage magician, but not very flashy. You had to let him go after a cabinet flipped open revealing that illusion during his "sawing a woman in half" act.

ABILITIES

Combat: 10 cards.

Ladies and Gentlemen: You can so enrapture a crowd with your speech that you can keep them interested in your monologue for five minutes. They must pay attention to you, and ignore all else. However, you can designate up to three people who can ignore this ability and do something in the background while you create this diversion. One use.

This is My Circus: You can get one person to perform a non-lethal task for you, as long as you own the Circus. This ability will not work on Jack Bungling. One use.

Binky the Clown: You find Binky so hilarious that after a few minutes of talking with him (or interacting with him in any way), you must burst into laughter, no matter what the topic of conversation is. You cannot stop laughing until he leaves, and afterwards, you cannot clearly recall what you were talking about (or doing), but – boy – that Binky sure is funny.