

## Jack Bungling

**A**h yes. Money. That is what it all comes down to, yes, isn't it? Money. Money and Power. They're the same thing, really. Especially in this day and age.

Your father has a great deal of both, you know. He's a very influential Senator. It is said, "As stands Hiram Bungling, so stands the nation." And you have his ear. Almost. And that's the rub.

You have two siblings, John and Lydia. Oh, John is no threat. You are twice as clever than him, and he's happy to follow you about and follow orders. But Lydia, dear sweet Lydia, she is father's favorite. She can twist him around her little finger, and that you cannot stand for.

You have done your best, with John, to destroy Lydia's self esteem. Being a sly fellow, you've actually managed to convince her that she isn't good enough for the two of you. And so she follows you around, trying to join your circus.

Yes, it is all about the circus. You realized early on that you would never need to have a respectable job, and so you have embarked on a series of dalliances. You try your hand at something and then when you get tired, you move on to the next big thing. For now, it is the circus.

The Bungling Brothers Circus is one of the biggest and most well known in the world. It has been built from the leftovers of many a defunct competitor's circus. You see, when you want something, you don't just sit there and wait for it. You take it. And if that means having to destroy someone else's circus to get what you want, so be it.

Your plan is as simple as it is ingenious. And it can be summed up in one word: sabotage. Not that you'd ever get your hands dirty. Oh no, nothing can be traced back to you. Especially since you have a dimwitted younger brother to do your work for you.

John Bungling may be a bit slow, but he is a master of disguise. And he has some acrobatic skills. He would make a talented circus performer. In fact he has, several times. John goes in, infiltrates the circus and they start having problems. Eventually, you come in and buy the circus out, well, what's left of it anyway. Sometimes the circus doesn't even have to go out of business. You can just hire their top acts away like rats being paid to leave a sinking ship.

And now you've set your eyes on the two sweetest plums of them all. Colonel Sebastian T. Rawhide's Circus of the Spectacular has always been a nasty thorn in your side. There is something odd about this one.

Somehow the Colonel has managed to acquire the most intriguing group of performers you have ever seen, and you aren't talking about the freaks.

His star performer is Herman Binkowicz, also known as Binky the Clown. Somehow Binky has the unfailing talent to make those around him laugh. Even you aren't immune; you've tried talking to him, tried luring him to your circus, but you usually end up bursting out into peals of laughter before you can make the offer. But Binky is far from Rawhide's oddest commodity.

Certainly he has freaks aplenty, a lovely bearded woman, a dog faced boy, and a set of talented if argumentative Siamese twins. But the one you find most intriguing is his strong lady. How is it that she is able to lift heavy weights so easily, weights that five men working cannot lift? How can she do that when she is a little slip of a lady with no muscles to speak of? You must know her secret. The rubes think it is a trick, but if it is, you've never figured it out, and you, sir, are no rube. And she is only the tip of the iceberg; this circus is full of mystery.

You must have this circus. All of it. And what you cannot have will be destroyed. Something this intriguing cannot pass you by. And that is why you have called in help.

Oh, and there was a second plum mentioned earlier, wasn't there? We'll get back to her in a minute. And no, she is not the strong lady. You deserve better than a mere freak. But back to your help.

You have sent John in to infiltrate the circus. It is part of your standard operating procedure. John arrives in disguise several days before you do and starts work on sabotage. You don't know who he is and you don't know what he has done. That way, should John make a mistake – he hasn't yet, but with his lack of brainpower, you know it is an eventuality – you have plausible deniability.

But this circus is too important to leave to one bungling Bungling brother, so you have brought in your secret weapon, Lydia, the Bungling sister. Through years of teasing, denial, and neglect, you have made Lydia into a woman seething with hate and longing. She desires your respect more than anything in the world, all the while hating you for it. The irony of it all makes you laugh.

In a desperate bid for attention, Lydia had herself tattooed. She wanted to join your circus as the tattooed lady. Father doesn't know; she wears very covering dresses when she visits him. You were about to turn Lydia down when you had an epiphany. What if you were to send Lydia to join Rawhide's circus? You smiled at Lydia and told her that you would like to give

her the opportunity to be part of the family after all. She was overjoyed.

Lydia joined Rawhide's circus just before it left for Europe. While there, the circus has had a few accidents. They have already lost Uma the Unicyclist and some magician. Bah, they were second rate acts anyway. Still, you will have to compliment Lydia when you see her, tell her she is well on her way to being a real Bungling, and give her a few more tasks to do. You're certain she'll eat it up. It will make the eventual rejection when you're finished with her all the more pleasurable. And then, when her spirit is shattered, there will be nobody to stand between you and your father. More specifically, your father's power.

In the meantime, there is the circus. And Daisy.

Ah yes, Daisy Belle, your sweet, sweet plum. She is a true southern lady, a woman whose grace and loveliness can only compliment a man of your upbringing. She will be yours. Oh certainly she is currently engaged to that pompous blowhard, Colonel Rawhide, but that will change soon enough.

You have come to the circus to speak to Daisy. You have brought her a bouquet of flowers and a box of chocolates to prove your affection. And then you will ask her to marry you. She knows who you are, and – more importantly — she knows who your father is. How can she refuse?

Daisy dares not refuse you. Nobody refuses Jack Bungling. If you cannot have her by love, then you will take her by force. You will carry her off and show her the error of her ways. If she refuses your tender affections, you show her no tender mercies. Start with the velvet glove, and should she have the insanely bad judgement to turn you away, you will show her your iron fist. Yes, one way or another, beautiful Daisy Belle will be yours!

### ROLEPLAYING HINT

You are the villain of every bad, "you must pay the rent" melodrama ever made. Think Snidely Whiplash and you're on the right track.

### ITEMS

You have a box of chocolates and a bouquet of pretty flowers.

### THE OTHER CHARACTERS:

Colonel Sebastian T. Rawhide: Blowhard fool. Bah. He may have the most unusual collection of oddities in the world for now. But soon his circus will be yours. Rawhide owes a bank payment of \$500 tonight. If he does not pay by the end of his show (end of the game), the bank will foreclose and you can easily buy him out.

Daisy Belle: Beautiful and demure. She will make the perfect bride. And if she rejects your affection, you will have to take her by force.

The Flying Credenza Brothers: They are, indeed, some of the most talented acrobats in the world. When they are performing, they almost seem to move as one person. You will have them for your circus.

Binky The Clown: Herman Binkowicz. "Binky" is what made Col. Rawhide's circus famous. His act is amazing, and he can leave a grown man helpless with laughter in minutes. He is the star of Rawhide's circus, but soon he will work for you.

Susan Wildes, The Strong Woman: She is a true enigma. How is it that a mere wisp of a woman can lift things that would take five men or more to move? There must be some trickery, and you will discover her secrets.

Franklin Winters, The Lion Tamer: He is of no importance to you. You have instructed John that he is to drug the animals and ruin his act.

Rupert and Rudolph Townshed: The Siamese twins. They left your circus to join Rawhide's. They *left* your circus. Nobody leaves your circus unless you fire them. You will have your revenge on them for showing you up!

Helena Ferez: A bearded lady. Bearded ladies are not that uncommon, but she has an air of mystery about her. If she does put on a good show then she would make a fine addition to your circus. However, you instructed John to shave off her beard last night. If she is a true bearded lady, she should grow it back.

Peter Wainwright, the Fire Eater/Sword Swallow: He is also to be sacrificed to your plans. You plan to instruct Lydia to tamper with his equipment so that it burns out of control.

Bobo, the Dog Faced Boy: Annoying child! How you hate children. You will have nothing to do with him. Perhaps you could get Lydia to tamper with him in some way.

Zelda the Clown: She seems to be attached to Binky in some way. Perhaps they are a package deal. Maybe you can use her as leverage to get Binky. You should get Lydia to speak to her as well.

Señora Misterioso: A fortune teller and a snake charmer, eh? Well, you can test her abilities by going in for a reading, or better yet having Lydia go in for one. That may blow her cover, so you'll have to think carefully about this decision.

The Masked Rider: The Masked Rider joined the circus in Europe. You know little about this person. Perhaps you should find out more.

The Knife Thrower: The Knife Thrower also joined the circus in Europe. A quite solitary individual, you know almost nothing about this one.

Lydia the Tattooed Lady: Your ace in the hole, your darling younger sister Lydia. Through years of abuse and neglect, you have made her starve for your approval. You had her join the circus before it left for Europe. She has managed to sabotage the acts of Uma the Unicyclist and Preston the Prestidigitator. You will have to compliment her and then give her more orders.

Zimmie the Clown: His evil leering grin frightens the children. You do not want him at *your* circus.

The Great Zamboni: A newcomer, he seems very mysterious. But you have figured him out. He just arrived today asking for a job. It can be none other than your younger brother, John. John has done an excellent job with disguising himself; he looks like an entirely different person.

#### **WELL KNOWN CHARACTERS NOT IN GAME:**

Senator Hiram Bungling: Father. He is a rich and powerful man. Someday, however, you will be even more rich and powerful.

John Bungling: Your younger brother. He isn't too smart, but he is a master of disguise. You gave him instructions to infiltrate the circus. He has arrived this morning as The Great Zamboni.

Uma the Unicyclist: Her act was sabotaged by Lydia and she had to be fired. You don't know the details.

Preston the Prestidigitator: Lydia also managed to sabotage his act. You don't know the details.

#### **ABILITIES**

Combat: 9 cards.

My Father Is Hiram Bungling: You have the ear of Hiram Bungling, one of the most influential men in Washington. You can advise him on three issues and will be given a special card to do so. However, Lydia and John can also advise him. Lydia is Father's favorite and will get her way on her most important issue. But if you and John work together, you can influence Father's mind on the second and third issues.

Great Escape: You may play this card if you lose a combat. You escape and do not have to deal with the results of the combat. See a Roustabout after the first time you use this, as it will start to have repercussions.

Resources: You have money and resources. You can leave for a while and get things and come back. You can also use this as a one use "get out of jail free" card if you are arrested.

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 is funny.