

**THE BEEBLE AND BIXLEY
TRAVELING CIRCUS AND SIDESHOW
By Michael Soetaert**

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**BEEBLEBROX AND BIXLEY
TRAVELING CIRCUS AND SIDESHOW****By Michael Soetaert**

SYNOPSIS: There's Bobo the Pathetic Clown, whose name pretty much says it all; Leo, the tightrope walker, who's afraid of heights; the bearded lady, who is cleanly shaven; and the fat man, who's gone on a diet . . . and these are the good acts. Unless the Beeblebrox and Bixley Traveling Circus and Sideshow can do the impossible in only three days, unless they can put on a show so good it will impress a world-renowned circus critic, then they will be forced to close their tent flaps forever. Come one, come all, to *The Beeblebrox and Bixley Traveling Circus and Sideshow*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(4 females, 5 males, 5 either)*

EMERALD SUNSHINE

CLEARWATER JOHNSON The owner of the circus. *(245 lines)*CLAYTON CLAYMORE The guy who wants to swindle her.
*(372 lines)*LLOYD LEPERS Clayton's boss. *(29 lines)*

DUCKWORTH

HOLLINGSWORTH The animal trainer, more or less.
(48 lines)

JUNGA THE

JUGGLING JUNGLE BOY Emerald's long lost brother. *(77 lines)*OOGA A seer of things unseen. *(37 lines)*LEONARDO ZAMBINI The low rope walker. *(51 lines)*

BOBO THE

PATHETIC CLOWN The name pretty much says it all.
*(49 lines)*CARLOS The fat man who's lost weight, and part-time sheriff. *(90 lines)*ESTRELLA The bearded lady who's shaved; married to Carlos. *(25 lines)*

THEA FISHBALM.....	One of only two customers at the circus. (56 lines)
EMMA FISHBALM.....	Her younger sister, and the other customer. (49 lines)
MARTIN GROSSMAN.....	Emerald's long-lost fiancée and professional sleazebag. (27 lines)
ALEXANDR GUTINOV	The world famous circus critic. (66 line)

SET

One set: a broken down circus wagon UR; a ragged-looking circus tent takes up most of stage left; UL are trees and various foliage; DL is the road that leads to town. Between the wagon and the tent is the idea of a field.

COSTUMES

EMERALD SUNSHINE CLEARWATER JOHNSON – When not the Master of Ceremonies, she dresses rather casually: jeans, button up shirt, boots. When dressed as the MC, she has on high, laced up boots with her pants ballooning out of the top, a pirate-style white shirt with a brightly coloured vest on over it, a top hat, and a megaphone.

CLAYTON CLAYMORE – Wears a conservative suit – Dark pants, white shirt, jacket and tie.

DUCKWORTH HOLLINGSWORTH – Dressed like an animal trainer. Khaki shirt and pants, jungle hat.

JUNGA THE JUGGLING JUNGLE BOY – Contrary to his name, he wears a nice suit. In the third act he will wear an animal skin costume . . . you know, the kind that comes over one shoulder; that, and a necktie.

OOGA – Dresses (yes, plural), shawls, beads and bangles. She's a Romanian fortune teller. The goofier, the better.

LEONARDO ZAMBINI – The tightrope walker. Bright red tights, pretty much from head to toe. It is fairly obvious that the tights weren't made for circus performances. In addition he is wearing a fur-trimmed cape and ballet shoes. His hair is slicked back and he usually has a coiled rope over his shoulder.

BOBO THE PATHETIC CLOWN – Wears no costume at all. Khaki pants, knit shirt, loafers.

CARLOS – Contrary to the title, he's not fat at all. When dressed as the fat man. . . Brightly coloured, satiny muscleman t-shirt lined with glitter, or as close as you can get. Matching pants. He also moonlights as a stereotypical southern cop – khaki outfit with all the insignias, dark glasses, Smokey the Bear hat . . . but no gun. He also wears a watch.

ESTRELLA – Estrella may have shaved, but she still gets a 5 o'clock shadow. She should pretty much match Carlos, except when he's the cop. A satiny, glitter-studded jump suit. Gaudy jewelry would be a nice touch.

EMMA FISHBALM – Wears the old lady dress, along with all the fixings -- handbag, jewelry, etc.

THEA FISHBALM – Emma's sister. Though they don't dress identical, they might as well. Heck, if you want to make them look exactly alike, knock yourself out.

MARTIN GROSSMAN – He's a throwback to the '70s. Wild print, wide lapel shirt. Plenty of gold chains, tight pants, white belt and shoes. Over the top.

LLOYD LEPERS – Another suit guy.

ALEXANDR GUTINOV – Dressed in a ridiculous outfit, much like an old 19th century Baltic prince, complete with ascot, monocle, and many various medals on his jacket. All of the medals need to be obviously fake, one of which must be made out of a soup can lid tied on with string. It is perfectly acceptable to mismatch his outfit. He has great bushy eyebrows and enormous pork chop sideburns.

PROP LIST

(In order of appearance, more or less)

DUCKWORTH

- Crate, stick, and rope
- Piece of wood
- White mice
- Snakes (I'd use rubber ones)
- Large shoebox tied with string
- Miniature calculator
- Miniature visor

CLAYTON

- Business cards
- Cell phone
- Cotton candy (needs to be hard as a rock)

LEO

- Coiled rope
- Small aquarium fish net (not a small aquarium, just the net)
- Blindfold
- Matches

BOBO

- Bicycle horn
- Long balloons (pink, green, and red)
- Straight pin
- One large clown foot

OOGA

- Deck of playing cards
- Voodoo doll with pins
- Large spinning wheel

EMERALD

- Megaphone
- Bucket

CARLOS

- Court papers (blue)
- Small regulations handbook
- Teeter board
- One ton weight
- Blindfold
- Very large knife
- Glove
- Large gas can
- Magnifying glass

THEA

- Tickets

JUNGA

- Briefcase
- Shrunken heads (three)
- Piece of paper

ESTRELLA

- Gas mask

EMMA

- Smouldering cotton candy

MARTIN

- Squirt breath freshner

LLOYD

- Small blue regulations book

ACT I

SETTING: Somewhere on the side of the road, just outside of town.

TIME: *Buy your own darn watch.*

NOTE: *As the play begins, bring up lights on stage. We see a broken down circus wagon UR. One wheel is missing and it has been propped upon old crates. A ragged-looking circus tent takes up most of stage left with the main flaps facing down stage. There are a few crates placed as seats by the wagon. UR are trees and various foliage. Down left is the road that leads to town. Between the wagon and the tent is the idea of a field. This leads to the rest of the circus.*

AT RISE: *Duckworth is at RC with his back to the audience. He is busy trying to prop a stick with a long string tied to it underneath a box, which he will do. As Clayton Claymore enters DL, Duckworth, who is slowly backing up, feeding out the string, does not see him.*

CLAY: *(friendly)* Hello!

(DUCKWORTH, startled, falls on his rear as HE spins around. HE screams, gets up, runs over and grabs his box, and then runs off DR. CLAY stands puzzled for a beat as EMERALD enters DR.)

CLAY: *(still discombobulated)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare him off.

EMERALD: Oh, never mind Duckworth. He's deathly afraid of strangers. Well . . . most people in general. Come to think about it, everybody but me.

CLAY: Why just you?

EMERALD: You can't be afraid of everybody. That just wouldn't work.

CLAY: Oh. *(after a beat, CLAY tries to get a new handle on reality—it's a lost cause, but I guess HE doesn't know that yet)* Let me introduce myself – Clayton Claymore.

(CLAY hands EMERALD a business card with one hand while offering the other for her to shake, which SHE does, but clearly her attention is on the card.)

EMERALD: (*reading the card*) Icky?

CLAY: Excuse me?

EMERALD: That's what it says on the card: Icky.

CLAY: No. That's I-C-C-I.

EMERALD: Wouldn't that be pronounced "icky"?

CLAY: We don't pronounce it. We just say I-C-C-I. International Circus Consolidators, Incorporated. I'm one of their representatives. We're an International Conglomerate that Consolidates Circuses. We find small, unprofitable circuses and merge them together with ours to make them more profitable.

EMERALD: Icky!

CLAY: No. It's I-C-C-I.

EMERALD: I wasn't talking about the card.

CLAY: (*undaunted*) I'm Clayton Claymore, but my friends all call me Clay.

EMERALD: What should I call you?

CLAY: You can call me Clay.

EMERALD: Wow. You really make friends fast.

CLAY: Maybe you can help me.

EMERALD: What? Make friends?

CLAY: Umm . . . no. Actually, I'm looking for either Beeblebrox or Bixley.

EMERALD: Well, you found them.

CLAY: Wonderful! And which one might you be? Beeblebrox or Bixley?

EMERALD: Neither.

CLAY: (*puzzled, and rightly so*) Umm . . . I'm sorry . . . but I thought you said . . .

EMERALD: Oh, I did. You see, there is no Beeblebrox, at least, not anymore. And there never was a Bixley. My Great Uncle was Beauregard Beeblebrox. But he was on my mother's side. My father was a Johnson. My name is Emerald Sunshine Clearwater Johnson. (*responding to CLAY's puzzled look*) The '70s were very good to my parents. But then they found religion, and then they went off to tell other people about it.

CLAY: So, they were missionaries?

EMERALD: Who said that?

CLAY: I thought you did.

EMERALD: No. I just said they went off to tell other people. I'm not certain anybody ever listened. But they went just the same. I haven't seen them sense.

CLAY: How old were you when they left?

EMERALD: I don't remember. Last I heard, they were on the island of Wa Hoop a Toopi.

CLAY: Where's that?

EMERALD: Right next to La Woo Na Hoo Ni. They left me with my Great Uncle Beauregard. So I guess you could say I grew up in the circus.

CLAY: Wow--that must be every kid's dream . . . to grow up in a circus.

EMERALD: Are you kiddin'? I hated it. I always dreamed of running away and becoming an accountant. Income taxes! Now there's excitement. Actuary tables. Compounded interest. Mortgage rates. Accountancy! What a life!

CLAY: You're kidding, right?

EMERALD: Some days. The trouble with living by yourself is that you can't run away. And besides, if I left, what would become of my circus?

CLAY: Well maybe that's where I can help you.

EMERALD: (*trying to hand back his card*) I'm not interested in selling the circus.

CLAY: Oh—that's not why I'm here. That's just one division of I-C-C-I. I work for the Profit Re-examination Division.

EMERALD: What?

CLAY: What we do is work with independent circuses, like your own, to show them how to be more profitable. You know . . . how to make money?

EMERALD: I know what profit means. What I don't understand is how I can make any money by paying you.

CLAY: That's the beauty of our plan. It costs you nothing. With your permission, of course, what I would like to do is examine your entire operation. Spend a week here—ten days maybe. And afterwards I would draw up a plan that, if you accepted it, I would help you put into practice. What money my company might make would come from the extra profit that you would make. It's a win-win situation!

EMERALD: When?

CLAY: Certainly. We both win.

EMERALD: No. I mean, “when.” As in, “at what point in time do you intend to start this?”

CLAY: With your permission, of course . . .

EMERALD: Of course.

CLAY: I would start now.

EMERALD: Well, I don’t know what you could possibly tell me that I don’t already know. What I need is a new wagon wheel. If in your nosing around you find one, just let me know.

CLAY: What happened to your old wheel?

EMERALD: (*sarcastically*) We took it off to make a tire swing. What do you think happened to it? It broke. My fiancé took it to get it fixed.

CLAY: Oh, so you’re engaged. When are you planning on getting married?

EMERALD: (*with no enthusiasm whatsoever*) We haven’t set a date. As soon as Martin returns I’m sure we’ll finish working out the details.

CLAY: When do you expect him back?

EMERALD: (*tersely*) Any day now.

CLAY: So how long has he been gone?

EMERALD: (*sharp*) Three years. Look. If you want to nose around, have at it. If you can figure out a way that I can make money, well great. Try not to bother the performers any more than they’re already bothered. I’ve got a show to put on this afternoon.

(*EMERALD exits UC. CLAY looks around for a few minutes and then takes out a cell phone, which HE quickly dials, or whatever it is you do with cell phones to call someone else.*)

CLAY: (*after a beat, nefariously – expand your vocab*) I’m in. Within a week this termite farm will be ours.

(*EMERALD re-enters and HE quickly puts his phone away.*)

EMERALD: (*as an afterthought*) And don't expect to get fed. There's not food enough the way it is.

CLAY: No. That'll be fine. In fact, I might just treat you all to dinner. Of course, it depends on how many of you there are.

EMERALD: Well, you already met Duckworth. (*swinging her thumb UC*) The rest are back there.

CLAY: Well, if you don't mind then, I'll just make myself at home.

EMERALD: Knock yourself out. (*as CLAY's exiting*) And if you do make yourself at home, tell me what it's like.

(*CLAY exits UC. After a beat, DUCKWORTH enters DR, still clutching his box and string.*)

DUCKWORTH: Is he gone?

EMERALD: Is he here?

DUCKWORTH: No.

EMERALD: Then he must be gone.

DUCKWORTH: You're not thinking about selling the circus, are you?

EMERALD: Well . . . why not?

DUCKWORTH: If you did, where would I go?

EMERALD: Back to the insane asylum, I'd guess.

DUCKWORTH: Oh, no. They won't take me. They say I'm not crazy enough.

EMERALD: How crazy do you have to be?

DUCKWORTH: Oh, you'd be surprised. It's a hard place to get into. They have pretty high standards.

EMERALD: You're putting me on.

DUCKWORTH: Oh, no, ma'am. There's a waiting line. Unless you've got the maniacal screaming down, you don't stand a chance.

EMERALD: But who would *want* to be in an insane asylum?

DUCKWORTH: Who wouldn't? Who would want to be out here? It used to be pretty easy to be insane. But now the competition is fierce. Why, in the olden days, you could just walk down the street yelling at yourself, and that was good enough for three days at the City Hospital. But now, what with cell phones, how do you know who's crazy and who's just yelling at their boyfriend? Of course, carrying a phone with you everywhere you go ought to be enough to get you thrown in the nuthatch, but like I say, times change.

EMERALD: (*changing the subject*) So, what are you trying to catch? Rabbits?

DUCKWORTH: Oh, no. Not rabbits. They don't like to be caught.

EMERALD: I would think nothing likes to be caught.

DUCKWORTH: The squirrels do. But they're not in season. (*confidentially*) I'm trying to catch a woodchuck.

EMERALD: I haven't seen any woodchucks around here.

DUCKWORTH: I know. That's why they'll never suspect it's a trap.

EMERALD: (*humoring him*) What are you using as bait?

DUCKWORTH: (*taking out a short piece of wood*) This.

EMERALD: Wood?

DUCKWORTH: Wood. I got the whole thing figured out. When he goes in to chuck the wood, I pull the string, and then I got him!

EMERALD: How do you know it will be a male?

DUCKWORTH: Oh, it would have to be. No females that stupid.

EMERALD: So, what are you planning to do with this woodchuck once you catch him?

DUCKWORTH: Well, first I'm going to tame him. I figure I can do that in a couple of days. And then I'm going to train him to juggle.

EMERALD: And what would a woodchuck . . . chuck . . . chuck?

DUCKWORTH: Why, wood, of course.

EMERALD: What if you can't teach him to juggle.

DUCKWORTH: Then maybe he can teach himself.

EMERALD: I don't want to talk you out of this, but . . . but your idea is nuts.

DUCKWORTH: I know. Remember? I'm insane. Everything I do is nuts.

EMERALD: Right, right—how could I forget? Like the ducks you were teaching to dance.

DUCKWORTH: No. Those were the pigeons. I was teaching the pigeons to do the Mexican hat dance. I was teaching the Mexican ducks to make a pyramid and quack "God Bless America."

EMERALD: Right. My mistake. Whatever happened to the mice?

DUCKWORTH: Oh, I've still got them. Most of them . . . (*HE reaches in his shirt pocket and takes one out, holding it by the tail*) See? (*HE puts it back*) If you see anymore, let me know. Grab them if you can.

EMERALD: (*hesitant to ask*) What . . . were you training them to do again?

DUCKWORTH: Oh, not again.

EMERALD: Excuse me?

DUCKWORTH: You asked me what I was training them to do again, but I never trained them to begin with.

EMERALD: Right. My mistake.

DUCKWORTH: I was teaching them to ice skate.

EMERALD: Oh, that's right. But you had no ice.

DUCKWORTH: Which reminds me, have you thought anymore about getting those big cats?

EMERALD: You know, I really don't think it's a good idea for us to get those. Besides, lions and tigers are really expensive.

DUCKWORTH: Oh, no. I wasn't talking about lions and tigers. I was talking about big cats. You know, tabbies—fat ones!

EMERALD: Ah . . . well . . . um . . . I'm still seeing what I can do.

(Enter LEO DL. HE is wearing bright red tights, pretty much from head to toe. It is fairly obvious that the tights weren't made for circus performances. In addition, HE is wearing a fur-trimmed cape and ballet shoes. His hair is slicked back and HE has a coiled rope over his shoulder. As HE enters, DUCKWORTH screams and runs off DR.)

EMERALD: Oh, goodness. I wonder where he's run off to this time?

(SHE exits DR.)

LEO: (*an aside*) That boy never ceases to be a source of entertainment.

(CLAY enters UC.)

CLAY: Have you seen Emerald?

LEO: She was just here.

CLAY: Where did she go?

LEO: Somewhere else.

CLAY: Oh. (*after a moment, offering his hand*) I'm Clayton Claymore. I don't believe we've met.

LEO: *(not taking the hand)* Why not?

CLAY: *(lowering his hand)* Why not what?

LEO: Why don't you believe it?

CLAY: *(totally confused)* Believe what?

LEO: That we've met. You just said that you don't believe that we've met. And I was wondering why you don't believe it.

CLAY: Because we haven't met.

LEO: Which is an excellent reason not to believe it.

CLAY: Oh.

LEO: *(striking a pose)* I am Leonardo Zambini! One of the Famous Flying Zambini Brothers.

CLAY: *(impressed)* Oh, really? And which one are you?

LEO: *(giving up the pose)* The one who doesn't fly. Actually, my name is Wyzcofonosfski. But my parents changed it.

CLAY: Why?

LEO: You're kiddin', right? Who would want to go see the Flying Wyzcofonoskis?

CLAY: I see your point. *(noticing his outfit and rubbing on the fur of the cape)* Say, isn't your outfit from Victoria's Secret?

LEO: *(defensively)* Yeah? So?

CLAY: Well, um, I . . .

LEO: Hey, it ain't what you think! Do you know how hard it is to find good tights with a matching cape? *(in confidence)* Besides, I like how it makes me feel. And how would you know it's from Victoria's Secret, anyway?

CLAY: *(quick to change the subject)* Hey! Um . . . what is it that you do here?

LEO: *(striking his pose again)* I defy death on the acrobatic high rope!

CLAY: Don't you mean wire?

LEO: *(losing pose)* Nope. *(in confidence)* And to tell the truth, it's not that high either. *(re-strikes pose)* But I do work without a net! *(HE produces a small aquarium net and then pitches it aside)* I know no fear! *(dropping pose, once again in confidence)* Well, there is one thing that scares me. *(looking around)* Heights.

CLAY: Heights?

LEO: Heights.

CLAY: Like, things-that-are-high-up-heights?

LEO: Are there other kinds of heights?

CLAY: No, I guess not.

LEO: Then that would pretty much be it, yeah. Heights.

CLAY: Doesn't that, um . . . kinda mess with your being a tight rope walker?

LEO: Not in the least. That is, as long as it's not too high.

CLAY: How high would that be?

LEO: Three inches.

CLAY: Three inches? That would mean your rope is pretty much just lying on the ground.

LEO: Now you know why I work without a net.

CLAY: So, how long have you been afraid of heights?

LEO: Ever since I was a kid. When I was little, I had to sit in a low chair. Of course, the upside was I never did any drugs. I couldn't even handle the idea of being metaphorically high.

CLAY: Well . . . yeah. Tell me, have you ever thought about getting professional help? You know, talking with somebody?

LEO: Once.

CLAY: What happened?

LEO: I had an appointment with a shrink that specialized in the fear of heights.

CLAY: Did he help?

LEO: I never went.

CLAY: Why not?

LEO: He was on the eighth floor.

CLAY: Oh . . .

(From off stage L there's the sound of a bicycle horn.)

LEO: *(startled)* Quick! I gotta go. If he asks, I was never here!

CLAY: *(as LEO's exiting DR)* If who asks?

(But it's too late; LEO has gone. After a beat, enter BOBO DR.)

BOBO: *(animated; over the top)* Hey! Hey! Hey! I'm Bobo! I'm Bobo the Pathetic Clown! *(HE honks)*

CLAY: *(consoling)* Oh, I'm sure you're not that bad. I mean, don't you think you're being a little harsh on yourself?

BOBO: *(dropping the clown stick)* Not in the least. You see, that's my angle. Every clown needs an angle. Lookit Emmitt Kelly. The sad clown. Now everybody does a sad clown, but Emmitt did it first! And Bozo, with the wild hair. Nobody can do hair like Bozo. And then there's Whizo . . .

CLAY: Whizo?

BOBO: *(with deep respect)* Oh, yeah. Whizo. Kansas City. Back in the '60s. Remember?

(Breaks into Whizo's theme song . . . and yes, this song is for real, and it really needs to be over the top, complete with silly dancing and hand motions. Wing it.)

BOBO:

Who's always smiling, never sad? It's Whizo!
Who makes the boys and girls so glad? It's Whizo!
He's that merry fellow, with a big red shiny nose,
Dressed in crazy mixed up clothes,
From his head down to his toes.
He has a great big trunk of tricks, that's Whizo!
He'll sing a song or do a dance for you!
And when you're sad, he'll make you glad.
He's the very best friend you've ever had!
That's Whizo, the clown that's who!

(At the end of the song BOBO will end up in the classic pose, on one knee with both hands extended. HE'll hold the pose for a moment while CLAY looks at him as if HE's gone completely insane, which wouldn't be far from the truth.)

BOBO: *(getting up and dusting off his pants)* I guess you don't remember Whizo, huh? But you see, that's not the point, because Whizo was . . . Whizo. He had the stupid song and he could do rope tricks. *(in a mock voice)* "How 'bout a rope trick!?" But now that he's done it, nobody else can do it. Heck, I can't even be a cigarette smoking, womanizing, drunk clown—not since Krusty! And don't even get me started on Ronald!

CLAY: Do you think anybody would care?

BOBO: What? If I got started on Ronald? Comon! The guy doesn't even do tricks!

CLAY: No. No. Not Ronald. Do you think anybody would care if you copied some other clown?

BOBO: *(in shock)* Do I think anybody would care? Of course they would care! It's the Clown Code! You can't violate the Clown Code! No clown can have the same outfit or the same routine as another clown! It's sacrosanct! Why, do you know what would happen if nobody cared? Complete chaos! Anarchy, that's what. It's what holds society together!

CLAY: What? The Clown Code?

BOBO: Can you think of anything else?

CLAY: *(hesitant, and rightly so)* Um . . . so . . . what is your costume?

BOBO: *(proudly, striking a pose)* This is it! What do you think?

CLAY: But you're not dressed up at all.

BOBO: I know! Ain't it great?

CLAY: Um . . . I'm afraid you lost me here.

BOBO: I'm the world's only clown who doesn't wear a costume! So what do you think?

CLAY: Do you want me to be honest?

BOBO: Which one will make me happier?

CLAY: *(confused)* What? *(back to his original thought)* I'm sorry, but I think your costume is pathetic.

BOBO: *(ecstatic)* Yes! They wouldn't believe me, but I told 'em the public would get it! Bobo the Pathetic Clown! Hey, ya wanna see some balloon animals?

CLAY: *(trying to get enthused)* Only if you think it's necessary.

BOBO: Yeah. It's part of my act.

CLAY: *(confused)* But don't other clowns do balloon animals?

BOBO: Not like me, they don't.

(BOBO takes a long, pink balloon out of his pocket and quickly inflates it and ties it off. HE then hands it to CLAY.)

BOBO: There!

CLAY: What is it?

BOBO: *(acting as if it should be obvious)* It's a worm.

CLAY: *(trying to cover)* Oh! I see it now.

BOBO: Ya wanna see a snake?

CLAY: How is that different than a worm?

BOBO: *(as if it should be obvious)* I use a green balloon. *(HE produces the balloon)*

CLAY: No—that's alright . . .

BOBO: *(excited)* Hey, check this one out!

(BOBO quickly blows up and ties off a red balloon. Then HE pulls out a straight pin and pops it.)

BOBO: Ya get it? It's a firecracker!

CLAY: So . . . that's it? Do you do any other animals?

BOBO: Oh, sure. A good clown is always working on his act. *(looking off into the distance)* My goal is to someday have one of my creations featured in the Balloon Museum.

CLAY: There's a balloon museum?

BOBO: I can't imagine there's not. I've been working on a legless Chihuahua . . . but I've been running into some difficulties.

CLAY: *(afraid to ask)* And what might those be?

BOBO: I only have pink, green, and red balloons. *(in confidence)* You know, Emerald keeps telling me that those are the only colors that they make. But I could swear I've seen other colors.

CLAY: Well, um, I . . . um . . . I just don't know that much about balloons. But hey, keep working. I'm sure you'll come up with something.

BOBO: *(with renewed enthusiasm)* If you come to the show this afternoon you can see my newest act! I've been working on it for over a year.

CLAY: That sounds exciting. What is it?

BOBO: *(proudly)* I ride two unicycles at the same time.

CLAY: Wouldn't that be . . . a—a bicycle?

BOBO: What's a bicycle?

CLAY: Never mind.

BOBO: *(proudly)* Well . . . what do you think of my act?

CLAY: *(hesitantly)* Um . . . if you don't mind my saying . . . well, quite honestly . . . it's the worst clown act I ever hope to see!

BOBO: Yes! Hard work does indeed pay off!

CLAY: But it doesn't look like you work at all.

BOBO: That doesn't mean it's not hard. Hey, you try doin' nothin' all day! That's what I have to work with around here! You try to be creative and whaddaya get? You just wait! Someday I'll be famous and then you'll be sorry you ever let me go!

CLAY: (*puzzled*) But you don't work for me.

BOBO: Yeah, and with that attitude I won't either.

(BOBO exits in a huff DR. Enter CARLOS and ESTRELLA. THEY are a perfectly normal guy and girl, except maybe on the thin side, which probably should be normal—but not in America. THEY are both young and good-looking. THEY are obviously in love, what with holding hands with each other and the longing looks. It's alright to go over the top, it's the theatre. In fact, they are so enthralled with each other that they don't even notice CLAY, who clears his throat to get their attention.)

CLAY: Hi. Are you folks here for the show?

CARLOS: Of course we are!

ESTRELLA: We are . . .

CARLOS: (*on cue, taking one step forward with his hand out*) Carlos

. . .

ESTRELLA: (*following his lead*) ...y Estrella.

CLAY: Carlos y Estrella?

CARLOS: Yes. It's Spanish for Carlos and Estrella.

CLAY: But . . . you're not Hispanic.

CARLOS: We're not?

CLAY: Oh . . . um . . . (*trying to cover*) How do you do? I'm Clay Claymore.

(HE hands each of them a business card.)

ESTRELLA: Icky?

CLAY: No. Why?

ESTRELLA: No reason.

CLAY: Oh. Um . . . What do you two do around here?

CARLOS: I'm the fat man.

ESTRELLA: And I'm the bearded lady.

(Responding to CLAY's puzzlement . . .)

CARLOS: I went on a diet.

ESTRELLA: And I shaved.

(THEY hug.)

CLAY: *(completely misinterpreting)* Oh. So once you looked like normal people, you fell in love!

CARLOS: What?

CLAY: *(sensing a faux faux)* Well, I . . . um . . . thought that maybe . . .

(During the following run THEY will flawlessly complete each other's sentences. It takes timing. Work on it. You can do it.)

ESTRELLA: Oh, no. We fell in love . . .

CARLOS: What?

ESTRELLA: Two?

CARLOS: No, three . . .

ESTRELLA: . . . years ago.

CARLOS: It was love . . .

ESTRELLA: . . . at first sight.

CLAY: Um . . . why . . . why did you change yourselves so dramatically?

CARLOS: Jealousy.

ESTRELLA: Jealousy.

CARLOS: A lot of fights.

ESTRELLA: A lot of fights.

CARLOS: I had her shave so no other man would want her.

ESTRELLA: And I had him lose weight so no woman would want him.

CARLOS: No more fights.

ESTRELLA: No more fights.

CARLOS: And we both discovered what we really loved about each other . . .

ESTRELLA: . . . was more than skip deep.

CLAY: So, is there much market in being a bearded lady with no beard and a fat man who's not fat?

ESTRELLA: No.

CARLOS: No.

ESTRELLA: Not really.

CARLOS: But I've been working on my new act.

CLAY: Oh?

CARLOS: Yes. I am going to be the strong man!

CLAY: *(after a quick survey of CARLOS's lack of muscles)* The strong man?

ESTRELLA: He hasn't bathed in two weeks.

CARLOS: And I no longer use deodorant.

CLAY: That should do it.

CARLOS: Now if you'll excuse us. *(to ESTRELLA)* Come, my dear. We should be getting ready for the show.

CLAY: Just exactly what is it you do to get ready.

ESTRELLA: We go stand around somewhere else.

(THEY hug and then break apart from each other, looking longingly into each other's eyes. THEY cross their arms and hold each other's hands, and head down center in a tango shuffle. Just before THEY exit, THEY meet EMERALD.)

CARLOS: *(holding up his arm pit; to EMERALD)* How's the new act coming?

EMERALD: *(choking)* Great. Keep it up!

CARLOS: OK!

(CARLOS and ESTRELLA exit, with CARLOS holding up his arm. EMERALD crosses to CLAY.)

EMERALD: I heard you were looking for me.

CLAY: Was I? Oh, yeah. Say, there's just one thing I don't understand

. . .

EMERALD: Wow. Only one?

CLAY: Well, about your circus . . .

EMERALD: Same question, different "Wow."

CLAY: (*moving on*) How do you survive at all? I mean, from what I've seen so far you make no profit whatsoever, yet you can still afford to pay your . . . acts. You do pay them, don't you?

EMERALD: More or less. Emphasis on the less.

CLAY: But where do you get your money?

EMERALD: Oh, that's simple. Uncle Beauregard left me a fortune. I guess, technically, he left it to the circus. You see, aside from being an aspiring circus man, my uncle was also a two bit inventor who only had one good idea – ever. But, who boy, it was a doosie!

CLAY: Really?

EMERALD: Of course, really. He invented the Scha-twap-twap-twap®.

CLAY: The what?

EMERALD: The Scha-twap-twap-twap®. You know, that thing in the window shades and the pull down maps and the movie screens . . . when you pull it down and let it go, it goes scha-twap-twap-twap? Yeah. He invented it.

CLAY: Wow.

EMERALD: Well, somebody had to.

CLAY: So he invented that thing? What's it really called?

EMERALD: It's really called a Scha-twap-twap-twap®. I mean, what would you call it? (*SHE waits a beat*) Exactly! Made him a fortune. He never had to work another day in his life, which was a good thing, since he bought this circus.

CLAY: So why don't you just take the money and buy your way out of here?

EMERALD: It's not that simple. He left a yearly allowance, which I'm sure was quite generous when he set it all up back in the '50s. Honestly, it's barely enough to survive on, but we get by. There's just nothing left over for anything extra, even fixing wagon wheels. But you know, if we could find just one good act, then that would be the difference. We could be famous – maybe even get on Johnny Carson.

CLAY: Um . . . Johnny Carson's not on anymore.

EMERALD: Well, maybe we could get on Arsenio Hall. Or maybe Dick Cavet. Makes no difference to me.

CLAY: Do you really think all that would happen if you got your one good act?

EMERALD: No. But it's good to dream.

CLAY: So what would happen to all of your Uncle's money if you sold the circus? You *could* sell it, couldn't you?

EMERALD: Oh, I could sell it, alright. I'm sure that people would be knocking each other over to buy this termite infested disaster.

CLAY: *(aside)* Oh, you'd be surprised.

EMERALD: Excuse me?

CLAY: Nothing. Nothing.

EMERALD: But if I sell it, my uncle's will clearly states that all the money in his estate goes to the Circus Retirement Fund. I wouldn't get a penny. Well, at least not until I retire. And only if I want to retire in Idaho.

CLAY: Why Idaho?

EMERALD: It's got to be located somewhere.

CLAY: But if you did sell the circus, then you would get the money for that, right?

EMERALD: I suppose so, but after I paid back wages I'd probably be slightly less in debt than I am right now.

CLAY: But you could leave it behind, couldn't you? Just walk away?

EMERALD: I could leave it behind right now if I wanted to. I could go find out what's taking "Bixley" so long to get the wheel fixed.

CLAY: Then why don't you?

EMERALD: And who would take care of all of these people?

CLAY: They're adults. They can take care of themselves.

(DUCKWORTH enters UL chasing a white mouse with a fish net. A little dark thread and a white ball of fluff and you're in business. HE misses it several times with great theatrics. When HE gets to CLAY, HE notices him standing there, screams, and runs back the direction HE came. EMERALD gives CLAY a knowing look.)

CLAY: I can see your point. But you still don't have to be responsible for these people.

EMERALD: Of course I do.

CLAY: Why?

EMERALD: Because I can be. And no one else is willing to be. Do I need any more reason than that? Look, don't you think I'd like to leave all this behind? It's just not as simple as you make it out to be. I have a responsibility. You just can't walk away from your responsibilities.

CLAY: But don't you have a responsibility toward yourself?

EMERALD: (*terse*) If you'll pardon me, I've got a show to get ready for.

(*EMERALD exits UC. As CLAY is watching her, LLOYD enters DR. HE's trying to keep a low profile.*)

LLOYD: Psst! Psst!

CLAY: (*startled, then turns around; surprised*) Lloyd! What are you doing here?

(*CLAY crosses to LLOYD.*)

LLOYD: I came to see how you were doing.

CLAY: It's going to be a slice of pie. These people are so stupid they don't realize they're sitting on a goldmine.

LLOYD: So, do you think you can get them to sell.

CLAY: Nothing to it. But I have a backup plan. I've found out that they've been sitting on this same piece of ground for over three years. Go down to the county seat and see what kind of laws are on file.

LLOYD: What are you looking for?

CLAY: Loitering. Squatting without a permit. Heck, I don't know. You're supposed to be the genius of the operation. Find something. There's got to be some law that they're breaking. That's what we pay our taxes for. If you have to, make something up. If you want to get their circus license, that might be the only way to put enough pressure on her if she doesn't want to sell. (*aside*) And Krishna knows, she may be stupid enough to not want to sell.

(*EMMA and THEA enter from UL. They don't see CLAY at first, but HE sees them.*)

CLAY: Now quick, get out of here before you blow my cover.

(LLOYD exits and CLAY starts to cross left, acting as if nothing is up.)

THEA: *(seeing CLAY)* Oh! Look Emma. It must be a new act!

CLAY: Excuse me?

EMMA: *(excited; to CLAY)* What is it you do, dear? *(to THEA)* Oh, Thea, I hope he's a juggler. I do so love jugglers. I haven't seen a good juggling act since we saw that circus in Hurley back in '48. *(to CLAY)* He juggled flaming knives, you know. You don't juggle flaming knives, do you? *(to THEA)* You know, that's the only time I ever saw anyone juggle flaming knives. I don't think I've ever heard anyone scream that much. *(to CLAY)* They said he was a very lucky young man.

THEA: *(to CLAY)* They say he would've bled to death if the flames had cauterized the arteries.

EMMA: He should've stuck to chickens.

THEA: He had a good act there.

EMMA: I've never seen anyone else juggle live chickens before.

THEA: Or since.

EMMA: And every once in a while he'd juggle eggs, too.

CLAY: *(finally able to get a word in edgewise, so to speak)* No. I'm sorry. You've got me mistaken. I couldn't possibly be an act. I have no talent whatsoever.

EMMA: Trust me. No one would notice.

CLAY: Actually, I'm here to watch the show.

(EMMA and THEA stare at him blankly for a few moments.)

THEA: *(finally)* You're kidding, right?

CLAY: No. Why would I be kidding?

EMMA: Because nobody comes to watch the show, that's why.

CLAY: Oh. Then are you with the circus, too.

THEA: No. We came to watch the show.

CLAY: I thought you said nobody came.

EMMA: Nobody other than us.

THEA: We come here every Sunday.

EMMA: We wouldn't miss it.

CLAY: (*shocked disbelief*) Why?

THEA: What else would we be doing on a Sunday afternoon?

EMMA: (*to THEA*) Well, that nice young man from down at the church says we should spend our Sundays in church and not at the circus.

THEA: Yes, and that nice young man from down at the shopping mall thinks we ought to spend our Sundays in his store buying things we don't need. Who are you going to believe?

CLAY: So you ladies come to *all* of the shows?

THEA: Absolutely.

CLAY: (*more shocked disbelief*) Why?

EMMA: Well, at first . . . do you remember sister?

THEA: Oh, yes. At first we came because we love the circus.

EMMA: We always went when we were young. Papa would take us.

THEA: Yes, until he had that nasty accident. Remember, dear?

EMMA: Oh, how could I forget.

THEA: (*in confidence to CLAY*) I don't care what they tell you, never tease an elephant.

(*EMMA nods her head in solemn consent.*)

THEA: (*shifting back to original conversation*) So when the circus came to town, we wanted to see how good it was. Remember?

EMMA: Oh, I remember . . .

THEA: And then we kept coming back to see if it would get any better.

EMMA: And when it never did, we started coming to see if it could get any worse.

THEA: And we haven't been disappointed yet.

CLAY: Why don't you stop?

THEA: Over time it became a habit.

EMMA: Like voting.

THEA: We keep doing it, but it never gets better.

EMMA: (*suddenly realizing*) Well, how rude of us. We never introduced ourselves. I'm Emma and this is my sister, Thea.

THEA: It's short for Theodosia, you know. It's a little town in southern Missouri.

CLAY: So, is that where you're from?

THEA: Nope. Papa and Mama were just passing through. That's where I was born.

CLAY: Why?

THEA: (*with all innocence*) I don't think it's so much a question of why as when.

CLAY: No. No. I didn't mean it that way. I meant, why did they name you after the town you were born in?

EMMA: They named all of us after the towns we were born in.

THEA: Well, really only Papa. Mama didn't want anything to do with naming the children.

CLAY: I'm almost afraid to ask why.

EMMA: Mama called it plausible deniability. Whatever that means.

THEA: And Papa named us all after the towns so he could keep track of us easier.

CLAY: So, do you have a lot of brothers and sisters?

EMMA: On, no. Not anymore. We're all we have left. Oh, but there was a passel of us at one time.

THEA: Let me see . . . there was Kansas City and Detroit.

EMMA: There was Dallas/Fort Worth. The poor dear.

THEA: There was South Bend. A wonderful young man. Went by his middle name.

EMMA: He was lucky to have one.

CLAY: Why?

EMMA: Because most of us didn't.

CLAY: Why did he go by his middle name?

THEA: Oh, you'd have to ask him.

EMMA: There was Manchester. A lovely young girl. Had the hardest time meeting men. Never could understand why.

THEA: Then there was Sioux Falls.

CLAY: Well, at least she could go by Sue.

EMMA: I suppose that's true, but he never liked to be called that.

THEA: And then there was me and Emma.

CLAY: Emma? What town is named Emma?

EMMA: Oh, none. At least none that I know of. (*in mirthful confidence*) You see, Mama never told Papa she was with child until after I'd been named.

THEA: You see, Papa was a traveling man.

CLAY: I gathered.

EMMA: And, of course, after I'd been named, it was too late.

THEA: And a good thing, too. Could you imagine going through life named Toadsuck?

EMMA: Why, there's no way I ever would've married.

CLAY: Oh, so you were married once?

EMMA: No.

THEA: Neither of us ever married.

EMMA: We decided early on to just be Aunts.

THEA: That way we could devote all of our time to all of our nieces and nephews.

CLAY: Oh. How many nieces and nephews do you have?

THEA: None.

EMMA: Not a one.

THEA: It's left us off with a lot of free time.

EMMA: That's why we go to the circus.

CLAY: Don't you think it would've been nice to take a child to the circus with you?

THEA: *(in confidence)* Oh, I'd never bring a child here.

EMMA: Well, Sister, we'd better hurry if we're going to get a good seat.

CLAY: Is that really necessary?

THEA: Oh, my dear, yes. There are only two seats. And if you're going to the show, that means one of us has to sit on the ground.

CLAY: Then I suppose I'd better find something to sit on.

THEA: See ya in the show, sonny.

(THEA and EMMA enter the tent while CLAY exits UC, leaving the stage blank for a moment. EMERALD enters UL. SHE has on high, laced up boots with her pants ballooning out of the top. SHE has on a pirate-style white shirt with a brightly colored vest on over it. SHE is also wearing a top hat and has a megaphone. In short, SHE's dressed like the master of ceremonies. SHE's not excited in the least. SHE stands there getting up her nerve to start yet another show when suddenly OOGA and CLAY enter very nosily from UC. OOGA has CLAY in a headlock, oblivious to the fact that CLAY isn't really fighting back.)

OOGA: *(without accent)* I caught him! I caught him!

(THEA and EMMA re-enter from the tent.)

THEA: Oh, goody!

OOGA: I did it! I caught him!

EMMA: Who did you catch, dear?

OOGA: *Him!* I caught *him!* He's a spy! He was snoopin' around tryin' to steal our secrets!

EMERALD: Secrets? What secrets?

EMMA: Oh, look Sister. It's that nice young man again.

EMERALD: *(to OOGA)* Let him go!

OOGA: But he's a spy!

THEA: *(to EMMA)* That's why you shouldn't do drugs, sister. It'll make you delusional.

EMERALD: Oh, let him go you idiot! He's not a spy. He works for a company that is considering buying our circus.

THEA: See, dear, I told you he was on drugs.

EMMA: I thought you were talking about Ooga.

THEA: Of course not. Ooga's not on drugs. She's just crazy.

EMMA: It's just so hard to tell the difference. *(to CLAY, who is still in a headlock)* Did you bring enough to share?

EMERALD: Let him go!

(OOGA reluctantly releases CLAY.)

CLAY: *(trying to maintain his composure; to OOGA)* And who are you?

OOGA: *(with accent)* I am Ooga, the Somewhat Less Than Magnificent, Seer of Things Unseen, Knower of Things Unknown, *(shifting accent)* and a pretty good pitch player if you ever need an extra. I have my own cards.

CLAY: *(skeptical)* Yeah, right.

OOGA: No, really, I do. Here, see? *(SHE takes out a deck of cards and fans them)* See? Most of them are there.

CLAY: I wasn't talking about the cards. I was talking about the other stuff.

OOGA: Oh . . . *(picking up accent)* Ooga . . . Seer of Things Unseen, Knower of Things Unknown . . .

CLAY: Yeah. Those things. Tell me, Miss Amazo, if you're so good at seeing the unseen, or whatever it is you say, then how come you didn't know I wasn't a spy?

OOGA: Oh, but I didn't know.

CLAY: Ha!

OOGA: (*undaunted*) But that's what I foretold, that I *wouldn't* know. Now I know. Therefore, I am the seer of the unknown.

CLAY: (*impressed*) Wow. That's really impressive.

OOGA: (*dropping the accent*) Trust me. You gotta learn to think fast in this business. So, what brings you here? (*startling CLAY; picking back up her accent*) Wait! Don't tell me what you're thinking! For that I know! You're thoughts are as clear to me as Formica in an oven.

CLAY: What?

OOGA: Quiet! Don't disturb the spirits.

CLAY: I think the only one disturbed around here is you.

OOGA: (*dropping the accent*) You haven't been here very long, have you? (*picking the accent back up, and, with great flair, placing her hand on CLAY's forehead*) Wait! I know your thoughts. You are thinking . . . you are thinking . . . that I, the Great Ooga . . . am full of mooshah!

CLAY: Wow. You're pretty good.

OOGA: Stay for the show, and I will tell you what the people on the other side of the world are thinking. I learned how to channel the entire planet in order to know such things.

CLAY: What do the people on the other side of the world usually say?

OOGA: (*dropping the accent*) How should I know? I don't speak Chinese.

(*CLAY starts to answer when EMERALD lifts her megaphone and shouts with more enthusiasm than SHE's had all day. As SHE's barking, DUCKWORTH, LEO, BOBO, and CARLOS and ESTRELLA will ALL enter, a few from here, a few from there . . . work it out.*)

EMERALD: Ladies and Gentlemen, Young and Old, Children of All Ages, Come one, Come all! Step right this way for the most

amazing show on earth, or anywhere else for that matter. It's the Beeblebrox and Bixley Traveling Circus and Sideshow!

(And with that SHE strides into the tent followed by EVERYONE else. Drop lights on stage.)

End of Act One

DO NOT COPY

ACT II

The stage is empty for a moment as the lights come up, then DUCKWORTH comes running out of the tent screaming. HE is covered with snakes. HE runs off DR, still screaming. After a beat, the SISTERS come out of the tent, followed by CLAY, who is enraptured. HE is still holding his cotton candy, and will do so through most of the Act.

THEA: You know, I do believe the shows are getting better. I especially liked how Bobo made himself disappear.

EMMA: Oh, no, dear. I don't believe that was part of the show.

THEA: You don't suppose we ought to go look for him, do you?

EMMA: Why on earth would we want to do that?

THEA: You have a point, sister. Maybe Estrella will find him. That is, if she ever comes back down. How do you suppose they got her to go that high?

EMMA: I'm really not sure, sister. But I don't believe that was part of the show, either.

THEA: We really should stay around and congratulate Leonardo, though.

EMMA: Yes. He walked the entire distance of the tent blindfolded.

THEA: And he didn't even use a rope.

(LEONARDO comes out of the tent, still blindfolded, and walks into the side of the wagon.)

THEA: *(to LEONARDO)* Dear, you can take off your blindfold now.

(Leonardo doesn't take off his blindfold, but manages to stumble off stage DR.)

EMMA: *(to CLAY)* Dear, how did you like the show?

CLAY: *(HE is still enraptured, staring off into space)* I fell in love.

(OOGA has entered from the tent just in time to hear CLAY's line.)

OOGA: That is just as I predicted! *(to the SISTERS)* You heard me! I predicted there would be great upheaval in the cosmic flux! And the flux has been upheavaled!

THEA: *(ignoring OOGA, giddy at the thought of young love; to EMMA, sing-songish)* I think I know who he's in love with!

EMMA: Don't be silly. You're too old for that sort of thing!

THEA: Not me, silly.

EMMA: Well it certainly isn't me.

THEA: No, don't you see that he's fallen in love with E-M-E-R-A-L-D?

OOGA: *(not trying to be quite as secretive)* Vat? You've fallen in love with Emerald?

CLAY: *(snapping out of his bliss somewhat)* No. I mean, yes. But not like that. I've fallen in love with everybody. With the entire circus.

(EMERALD enters from the tent. SHE is very bedraggled. Her hair is down, hat gone, shirt tail out, and her foot is stuck in a pail. SHE pulls her foot free and stumbles over to CLAY.)

EMERALD: Do you have a match?

CLAY: No. I'm sorry. I don't smoke.

EMERALD: Who said anything about smoking?

(Enter CARLOS dressed like the stereotypical southern cop, complete with accent, sunglasses, Smokey-the-Bear-hat, swagger, and a big chew of something that HE'll constantly chew. Hey, when was the last time you got to chew gum on stage? HE also has a blue, folded piece of paper.)

EMERALD: *(noticing CARLOS)* Who are you supposed to be?

CARLOS: I'm Deputy Sheriff Felix Finkelmeyer.

EMERALD: No you're not! You're Carlos.

CARLOS: Not on Tuesdays and Thursdays I'm not.

CLAY: But it's Sunday.

CARLOS: Overtime. Bubba's out with the flu.

CLAY: There really is a sheriff named Bubba?

CARLOS: *(dropping the southern accent)* Naw. It's part of the job. We all have to have good ol' boy names. I mean, would anyone listen to a cop named Gaylord?

CLAY: Would anybody name their kid Gaylord?

CARLOS: (*back with accent*) You'd be surprised, sir.

EMERALD: What? You moonlight as a cop?

CARLOS: You never said we couldn't have a part-time job, ma'am.

EMERALD: But a cop?

CARLOS: (*dropping the southern accent*) Yeah, well, somebody's got to do it. And the pay's not bad, except we have to provide our own uniforms, but you can get those fairly cheaply at thrift stores. It's hard to get matching pants, though. And the commission is nice.

EMERALD: (*incredulous*) You work on commission?

CLAY: I knew it! I always knew cops worked on commission!

EMERALD: What do you get commission for?

CARLOS: (*the accent's back*) Mostly for writin' tickets, ma'am, but we get a pretty good lick for servin' papers. (*HE hands her the folded blue paper*) And you've been served.

EMERALD: What? (*as SHE reads the paper*) "The above aforementioned is hereby notified that they are forthwith required to vacate their illegal occupation of said property within 72 hours of said notification." What the heck does that mean?

CARLOS: It means that you've got three days to move the circus, ma'am.

EMERALD: Would you quit calling me ma'am!

CARLOS: I'm sorry, ma'am, but that's department regulations. We are to address every lady as "ma'am" and every gentleman as "sir." Unless, of course, you're uncooperative. Then we're allowed to call you a "pissant."

CLAY: That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

CARLOS: Hey, pissant! That'll be enough out of you!

EMERALD: (*trying to clear her muddled mind*) Why do we have to go?

CARLOS: (*referring to a small book HE produces from his pocket*) "County Code 147.2: No business shall occupy in any way county land for more than 24 hours without an occupancy permit." (*aside*) Once I don't need to use the book anymore I get a 50 cent an hour raise.

EMERALD: But we've been here for three years!

CARLOS: The law may move slowly, ma'am, but it still moves. I'm sorry, but you've got . . . *(checking his watch)* 71 hours and 49 minutes to move this business off of county land.

EMERALD: Or what?

CARLOS: *(once more producing his book)* "Failure to comply with said regulation will result in the confiscation of said business by the county for sale at public auction." I'm sorry, ma'am, but if you don't leave in . . . *(checking his watch)* 71 hours and 47 minutes, then the county takes over ownership of your business and the only way you can get it back is to outbid someone else at the monthly auction.

EMERALD: That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!

CARLOS: Of course it is, ma'am. It's the law.

EMERALD: But you know that we can't leave! We haven't been able to go anywhere for three years. What makes you think we can go now?

CARLOS: I'm sorry, ma'am. It's not my job to think, only to enforce the law. *(tipping his hat)* Have a nice day.

(Carlos exits the way HE came, and EVERYONE watches him go.)

OOGA: *(finally)* I see . . . I see . . . *(dropping accent)* We're in pretty deep trouble. *(SHE turns and goes back into the tent)*

EMERALD: *(in resigned disgust)* Well that's just dandy! *(SHE turns and exits UC)*

THEA: *(to EMMA)* Well, I suppose we don't need these season tickets anymore.

(THEA tosses her tickets in the air, and EMMA catches them before they hit the ground, or picks them up after they do . . . whichever.)

EMMA: I think we should keep them.

THEA: What on earth for?

EMMA: They might become collector's items.

(The two SISTERS exit DL, leaving CLAY alone on stage for a beat. Then LLOYD enters DR. LLOYD happily claps his hands together, causing CLAY to jump.)

LLOYD: We got 'em now! In three days the circus will be ours!

CLAY: (*alarmed*) You've got to call them off!

LLOYD: Why on earth would I want to do that?

CLAY: Because!

LLOYD: Because? You actually think that saying "Because" explains anything?

CLAY: But you don't understand! This circus. All these people. We can't put them out of business!

LLOYD: (*suspecting the worse*) Are you getting soft on me?

CLAY: No! I mean, yes. I mean, I don't know. It doesn't matter. We can't put this circus out of business.

LLOYD: I think you're getting soft on me.

CLAY: But these are nice people. They've got a wonderful thing here. We can't. We can't stop this.

LLOYD: I knew it! I knew you were too soft for this job. I knew it from the very beginning. Remember? That first job we went on? The Yakking Yaks . . .

CLAY: What? Because I told you that nobody wanted to pay to see yaks yak?

LLOYD: No. Because you lacked vision. Of course no one wants to see yaks yak. But people will line up to see yaks yakkity-yak. I'll have you know it's still the number one act in our 7-17 year old redneck male demographic in Montana, Wisconsin, and northeast Idaho. But you would've walked away from the yak.

CLAY: My mama taught me well.

LLOYD: But it wasn't the yaks that tipped me off to you. I could've written that off as a rookie mistake. It was the squirrel.

CLAY: What squirrel?

LLOYD: The squirrel you swerved to miss just outside of Missoula.

CLAY: I don't remember missing any squirrel!

LLOYD: And that's why I knew from the start that you were soft. (*HE pokes CLAY in the stomach with his finger*) A regular crème puff.

CLAY: (*slapping his finger away*) What? Because I didn't run over a squirrel?

LLOYD: No. Because you didn't even think about missing him. The really good ones – the ones that were born for this job – wouldn't

have thought twice about hitting a squirrel. In fact, they wouldn't have thought at all.

CLAY: And I always thought thinking was an asset.

LLOYD: Don't kid yourself. It's overrated.

CLAY: Well, I don't think it's a bad thing to save a squirrel.

LLOYD: (*with an indignant snort*) You would! And one more thing – you're fired!

CLAY: What?

LLOYD: You're fired! And don't try to quit. It's too late for that! Fired! Fired! Fired! Ha! And don't even try to get a job in the Circus Consolidation Industry, buddy. You're career is kaput! Kaput! (*HE spits as part of the last "kaput"*)

CLAY: (*puzzled*) Isn't your company the only circus consolidation business in the world?

LLOYD: That's beside the point! You're blackballed!

CLAY: So what? You know, making money isn't everything.

LLOYD: If you're a Republican it is. You actually think it matters if you save this pathetic circus? Do you think it can even be saved? Let me tell you something, buddy, you've thrown away your career for nothing. You can't save this pathetic circus. The wheels are already in motion!

CLAY: What wheels? These wheels haven't moved for over three years.

LLOYD: Not those wheels. *The* wheels. In three days this circus will be mine, and there's nothing you can do about it. Nothing! Nein! Nada! Nyt! Zip!

CLAY: I get it already. But let me tell you something, Bub! (*HE pokes him back*) I'm not giving up!

LLOYD: (*as HE's exiting DR; with a laugh*) Do what you want. But in three days this circus will be mine!

(*EMERALD enters as LLOYD's leaving.*)

EMERALD: Who was that?

CLAY: (*sheepishly*) That was my boss.

EMERALD: What was he doing here?

CLAY: I'm sorry, Emerald, but I wasn't exactly honest with you.

EMERALD: How can you be *in*-exactly honest? I've always thought honesty was an either / or proposition. You can't be sorta honest. It doesn't work that way.

CLAY: When I came here, I told you I was trying to help your circus.

EMERALD: Don't forget the sideshow. After all, what's the Beeblebrox and Bixley Traveling Circus without the Sideshow?

CLAY: This would be a lot easier for me to say if you'd quit interrupting me.

EMERALD: It would be a lot easier to say if you'd just come out and say it. It would've been a lot easier if you would've just told me from the start that you wanted to take my circus only for the name. Well, no. Actually you wanted what goes with the name. Am I right?

CLAY: What? You knew?

EMERALD: I know I look stupid. But don't let the blonde hair fool you, I'm not.

(The next line or so can be deleted if the actress playing EMERALD isn't blonde.)

CLAY: But you're not blonde.

EMERALD: Exactly. You didn't want to save us. You didn't want the name. You only wanted the license.

CLAY: *(embarrassed)* Yes. You're right. The Beeblebrox and Bixley Traveling Circus and Sideshow has been around for a long, long time. They have one of the few lifetime regional licenses left. Why do you think it is that for as long as you've been here no other circus has ever come through? But I guess you already know. It's because they can't. Not as long as you're here. Not as long as you've got that license. No matter where you go -- *(looking around)* -- if that were actually possible -- no one else could perform. It's like having exclusive rights wherever you go. That license is worth a fortune. Well, maybe not for you.

EMERALD: And you want it.

CLAY: Not anymore. I'm sorry.

EMERALD: What are you sorry for? Lying to me? I don't believe it truly counts unless the person you're lying to doesn't know you're lying.

CLAY: *(confused, but not letting that stop him)* But if you knew, why did you let me stay?

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