

A Day at the Circus

by Nora Louise Syran

Flexible Cast of 22-27: 7-12F/4-9M

PERUSAL COPY

| ROLE | M/F | COSTUME SUGGESTION |
|--------------------------|-----|--|
| 3-5 Ribbon Dancers | F | Dancers are to dress similarly. Tights/leotards, ballet shoes. Each has a long, dancing ribbon. |
| 2-3 Jugglers | M/F | Jugglers should dress similarly. Bright colors |
| 3-5 Acrobats | F | Acrobats are to dress similarly. |
| 1 Tightrope-walker | F | Tutu, tights, ballet shoes. |
| 2 Clowns | M/F | Wigs, red noses, big shoes, bright colors. One carries a carton of eggs (empty or plastic, fake) and the other 1-2 cream pies (a pie dish filled with whipped cream) |
| Unicyclist | M/F | Clown outfit, but something comfortable to cycle in |
| Darius the Daredevil | M | Motorbiker look/helmet. Think “Evel Knievel”... |
| Harriette the Horsewoman | F | Equestrian. Boots. Jacket. Arm tied in a sling |
| Nathan the Knife-Thrower | M | Sparkly jacket, trousers, “Elvis Presley” Fake knives Eye-glasses. |
| Magician | M | Black suit. Magic hat—with a leafy bunch of carrots |
| Magician's Assistant | F | Sparkly dress. Elegant. |
| Reggie the Ringmaster | M/F | Sparkly top hat, long tailed coat, boots, tie |
| Leo(a) the Lion Tamer | M/F | “Indiana Jones” type outfit—whip |
| Claire Voyante | F | Fortune Teller. Gypsy. Bright. Turban. Crystal ball. |
| Stagehand 1 | M | Overalls/jeans, work shirt, apron, brush/pan |
| Stagehand 2 | F | Overalls/jeans, work shirt, apron, broom, sewing kit |

Set: A fairly bare stage. Upstage levels-platforms, cubes etc if possible. Gym mats -downstage-are recommended for the acrobats. Downstage right or left -three cubes, or chairs, and a small table with a crystal ball on it (perhaps with a tent/cloth suspended above) to indicate Mme Voyante's tent.

Lines: Dancer, Juggler and Acrobats' lines need to be assigned.

Note: Warning: The clowns need an actual pie plate filled with cream, OR one filled with confetti—and good acting/reacting from the players! A broom, dustpan and brush are also needed.

If a unicyclist can be found, you're in luck. If not, someone could play the unicyclist and go around on the unicycle in a circle, arms out, supported by the other two clowns. It's a fun visual effect as the curtain opens.

The play opens with loud, cheerful circus music. A clown cycles round the stage on unicycle. The clowns stop after a few rounds, encourage/accept the applause and address the audience. One

clown holds a carton of eggs (fake) and the other has a huge whipped cream pie (or two).

Clowns: Welcome everyone to a day at the circus!

Clowns: Oh my, oh my, oh my, do we have a show for you!

Clown 1: We have eggs!

Clown 2: We have pies!

They make as if they are going to hit each other with the eggs and pies..

Clown 1: Eggs!

Clown 2: Pies!

Clown 1: Eggs!

Clown 2: Pies!

Clown 1: Eggs!

Ringmaster: Stop this arguing at once. This isn't clowning around, this is a.....(*splat! The clown with the pie has landed it straight at the Ringmaster's face*) mess! (*Calling to a Stagehand 1*) Get me something to wipe this up....

Stagehand 1: Certainly Ringmaster, I'll have this cleaned up in a jiffy. (*starts cleaning*)

Ringmaster: I knew this morning when I lost my lucky charm bracelet that today would be a disaster..... and the circus opens tomorrow. We'll never be ready!!

Acrobat: Ringmaster, Ringmaster! We've a brand new routine all worked out.

Acrobat: Just wait, it will be brilliant.

Acrobat: Look, I've worked on this...*shows everyone an acrobatic feat (cartwheel etc)*

Acrobat: Look, I can do this...*shows everyone another feat.*

Acrobat: That's nothing, you should see my double somersault!

Acrobat: Hey, everyone let's start with a pyramid.

Acrobat: Who is the lightest?

Acrobat: I am!

Acrobat: When then climb on top!

Music. They form a human pyramid on the matts downstage center until they collapse.

Acrobat: Well, that was a mess.

Acrobat: Oh no. I've ripped my tights!

Acrobat: Me too....(*Adds the name of Stagehand 2*)

Acrobats: We need new tights....

Acrobat: Costume change!!

Acrobat: (*Adds the name of the Stagehand 2*) where are you? (*Stagehand moves to SR*)

Acrobat: They all need fixing and fast!

The Ringmaster turns his/her attention away from the acrobats.

Ringmaster: Well, jugglers—I hope you have something to save this circus....

Juggler: Yes, Reggie. Just wait, you'll see. We'll save this circus yet

Juggler: We're training Tamara the Tightrope walker how to juggle...

Tightrope-Walker: It will be wonderful, you'll see Reggie. I can add it to my act.

Music. They all start to juggle. Tamara does fairly well until she drops the balls everywhere...

Ringmaster: We're doomed....This circus is a disaster

Tightrope-Walker: No, wait, Reggie... *She wants to try it again.*

Juggler: Here, try the plate....

Tightrope-walker tries to spin the plate alongside the others and makes them all drop their plates.

Juggler: Maybe you should just stick to the tightrope...

Juggler: and we'll do the juggling...

Juggler: Stagehand 1! Clear up this mess!

(Stagehand 1 starts cleaning)

Ringmaster: Dancers, what do have for me

Dancer: We've worked on a wonderful ribbon dance for you, Reggie! Just wait...

They start to quarrel over the color of their ribbons...

Dancer: No mine's red!

Dancer: I said, I like yellow!

Dancer: This color matches my eyes!!

Dancer: Stop arguing. Let's start.

Dancer: Music, maestro!

Music starts. They start all right but after a few seconds have their ribbons tangled.

Dancer: Oh, no...help!

Dancer: Ooops...

Dancer: Ahh, I'm all twisted up

Dancer: That's my ribbon!

Dancer: No, it's mine!

Acrobats: *(Stagehand Number 2)* we need your help!!

Stagehand 1 and Stagehand 2 come to help untangle the acrobats and make things worse.

Dancer: No, not that one.

Dancer: Pull there....

Dancer: No, here...stop! *The Music stops abruptly.*

Ringmaster: *(to Emily and Stagehand 1)* You're fired! *Ringmaster storms offstage.*

They walk off toward stage left or right, passing Mme Voyante, who calls them over...

Everyone moves upstage to sit on platforms/levels, some on cubes, some on the floor. Spread out.

Depressed. The Unicyclist cycles in a slow, sad circle....

Stagehand 2: Fired?

Stagehand 1: Just like that?

Stagehands: What will become of us...

Stagehand 2: Hey, Madame Voyante's tent. It looks like she's in.

Stagehand 1: Should we?

Stagehand 2: Perhaps she....

Stagehand 1: Let's ask her.

Madame: Enter children. Don't be afraid. Take a seat. Look deeply into my crystal ball.

Stagehand 2: I don't see anything!

Madame: Keep looking....keep looking....there!

Stagehand 1: Something's happening. **PERUSAL COPY**

The Ringmaster enters and passes by Mme Voyante and the children.

Stagehand 2: Oh yes, I see...*Stagehand 1's name*, I see us flying through the air !?

Stagehand 1: I see...it's fuzzy....oh, I see an audience clapping wildly!!

Madame: I see a bright future for us all!!

Ringmaster: *Overhearing.* Bright future! You must be a fake! This circus is a mess...not even the solo acts can save it!!!

Nathan: I can, Ringmaster! I've got a new knife-throwing act..just wait...Come along Alicia. (*grabs Madame Voyante and brings her center stage*) I've been working on my aim.

Madame: Ahhh!!! I'm not Alicia! Unhand me young man!

Assistant: Uh, Nathan....I'm over here.

Drum roll. He takes out his knives...prepares to throw...

Assistant: Stop! (*he stops just in the nick of time*) Where are your glasses?

Nathan: Oh, I don't need them. They make me look like a clown.

Clowns: And what's wrong with looking like a clown??

Assistant: That's it! If you dare throw that knife at me without your glasses, I'm going on strike.

(*Picks up an "On Strike" sign. The clowns copy her, clowning around.*)

Ringmaster: You see...

Nathan: Uh, no not very well, Ringmaster. *He squints out to the audience, practically blind...*

Everyone: It's a disaster!

Magician: Now, where did I put my hat? I had it just a moment ago....

Assistant: Ahem, it's on your head.

Magician: Uh, thank you....now, where was I? Abraha-ka...*(instead of a rabbit he pulls out a bunch of carrots)* a carrot? How did that get in there??! I'll have it by tomorrow, Reggie! Really I will...if I could only find my....

Ringmaster: What are we going to do? We open tomorrow! Harriette! Where's Harriette!? *Harriette steps forward, tripping, stepping/bumping into everyone...*

Harriette: Oops, ouch *(with broken arm)*

Acrobat: Ow, you stepped on my foot!

Dancer: Watch it, will you?

Acrobat: Ouch, my hand

Dancer: Look out, you clumsy...

Ringmaster: Harriette, what have you done to yourself this time?

Harriette: I was practicing my Roman riding routine...you know, the one where I stand on top of the pair of white horses, with one foot on each horse and well, I fell ...and broke my arm. **PERUSAL COPY**

Ringmaster: That's the fourth time you've broken something this month!

Harriette: What can I say....I'm accident-prone.

Ringmaster: Well get an act sorted out before tomorrow morning or you're fired!

Harriette: Oh, Reggie..... *(near to tears)* *She goes off SL AND FALLS*
BIG SOUND EFFECT of someone falling down stairs, objects breaking, falling over etc.

EVERYONE: Oh, no...what a catastrophe! *No one can look. There's a tense moment...*
Harriet returns with a cast on her leg.

Lion Tamer: Ahchummm!

EVERYONE: Bless you.

Lion Tamer: Never fear...Leo's here! Ahchummm...Sorry, Reggie. I don't think I can ahoum perff-f-ffachoum orm tomorrow. It's my allergies again. Ahcoum.
Cracks the whip out of control with each sneeze....SR, SL then C

Ringmaster: Some fearsome act that was! Let's hope for better from...

EVERYONE: Darius the Daredevil...*(The dancers/acrobats are enchanted, solo acts less so!)*

Daredevil: Hit it!

Music plays.

Daredevil: Tomorrow, I intend to propel myself out of that cannon into the audience!

Acrobat: Hum, won't that be a bit dangerous...

Daredevil: Yes, I dare say so , but I live for danger

Dancer: Oh, won't it be a risk for the audience!?

Daredevil: Risk is my middle name!

Solo Acts: What a show off!

Nathan: Give me that mouse....

Lion Tamer: But my lion is hungry!

Nathan: Just give it here....*Sets it near Darius...*

Daredevil: Ah, a mouse!

Darius hops onto a cube. All start laughing

Acrobat: He's no dare-devil

Dancer: He's scared of a mouse

Dancer: How silly, we thought he was so tough.

Juggler: What a clown!

Clowns: Hey!!!

Acrobat: That was pathetic!

Acrobat: Who would have guessed?!

Lion Tamer: What a chicken!

Juggler: Scaredy-cat.

Ringmaster: *Exhales loudly.... That's it, we're ruined. Sits and shakes head in despair.*

The Stagehands say their goodbyes to Mme Voyante.

Stagehand 1: Well, thank you Madame Voyante. It's time to go...let's get our things...

Gossiping, some of it heard, some not. Improvised. Talking at once. The discontent grows....

Juggler: Reggie's right to fire them.

Acrobat: I don't know.

Dancer: I thought *name of Stagehand* was really helpful.

Dancer: Yes, but slow.

Dancer: Oh, yes, so terribly slow.

Acrobat: And unreliable.

Dancer: Oh, yes, I agree. I remember once when...

Acrobat: Who would have thought....

Dancer: We don't have time for people like that...

Acrobat: Really!

The stage hands return with their box of personal items. Everyone quiets down as they enter.

Stagehand 1/Stagehand 2: Well, goodbye everyone...*They hand out gifts as they go.*

Stagehand 1: Here, Darius, you better read this. *Hands him a book*
Daredevil: *Reading aloud: "Overcoming Your Fears"* This looks really good...Thanks.
Stagehand 2: Here, Leo(a) Take one of these allergy pills every day...*Gives some pills.*
Lion Tamer: Ah, ah, ah...*is magically stopped mid-sneeze. Surprised he says,* Thank you.
Stagehand 1 Harriette, I suggest you ask Tammy the Tightrope-Walker for some balance training...Just be sure she doesn't try to juggle at the same time!
Stagehand 2: *For the Magician.* Here Maestro, an agenda and and filing system; you need to get yourself organized...
Stagehand 1: Here Nathan, I found your glasses. They're really not half bad...
He reluctantly puts them on, stands looking out to the audience. The girls swoon.
Girls: Oh, Nathan!!
He stands proudly with a score of girls beside him, admiring his new look.
Acrobats and Dancers: But what about us? Don't forget us!!
Stagehands: We suggest you switch acts...
Music: They switch acts and perform perfectly. The stagehands pick up their boxes, ready to leave.
Stagehand 1: Well, good luck.
Ringmaster: *Feeling sorry for him/herself.* We're going to need a little bit more than luck.
Stagehand 2: Oh, that reminds me....Here you are, I found your lucky charm bracelet....
Ringmaster: Thank you... **PERUSAL COPY**
Dancers: Thank you for repairing our costumes
Acrobats: Thank you for always untangling our ribbons
Clowns: Thank you for cleaning up after us...
Ringmaster: I feel so ashamed of myself....I should never have fired you...and now I'm not only losing the circus, but you as well...
EVERYONE: Please stay....it's not the lucky charm bracelet that brings us luck...it's you!
Dancers/Acrobats: You've given us so much what can we give you?!Stagehands: Well, we have always wanted to have a go at the flying trapeze!!

The others stand below and watch them 'flying' above... Everyone sings "The Flying Trapeze"

Oh, they float through the air with the greatest of ease,

This daring young pair on the flying trapeze;

Their actions are graceful, they seem so at ease

And now our dear circus can stay!

THE END