

Under the Big Top

Bo Bennett's Big Top Bonanza has reached Sarasota, Florida – the final stop in its 1952 tour. Having successfully completed nine months of bringing joy, excitement, awe and wonder to men, women and children throughout the U.S., the performers and staff of the *Bonanza* are making plans for a restful and rewarding off-season.

As the curtain falls on the final Big Top performance of the evening and as the work crews dismantle the tents, a select few gather in *JoJo Bones' Exotic Emporium of Enigmatica* (part of the *Bonanza*), operated by celebrated impresario dwarf JoJo Bones. The *Emporium* is not dismantled until morning, and to commemorate the final night of the season's tour, JoJo Bones will host a banquet for invited guests. Those honoured with invitations will enjoy a night of revelry, food, drink and, this year, what JoJo has promised to be “startling revelations.”

Tragically, however, JoJo was killed last night. His body was found early this morning in the lion's cage, mauled by lions Gladys and Mountjoy, Burt Butler's two star performers. Since JoJo's mauled body reeked of alcohol, preliminary reports are that the dwarf wandered into the cage in a drunken and fatal stupor.

Bo Bennett, the owner and ringmaster of the *Bonanza*, has decided to go through with the banquet in honour of JoJo.

And so the selected performers and staff of *Bo Bennett's Big Top Bonanza* will assemble for the last time before dispersing for the off-season. This will be their last chance to seal their fates for the future...

Will Bo Bennett be able to get out from under his financial burdens? Who will be appointed the new manager of what was *JoJo Bones' Exotic Emporium of Enigmatica*? Who will stay with the *Bonanza*, and who will seek other employment? Where are the Van Horten jewels, and Wassily Kandinsky's “Tension in Red”? And was JoJo's death really just a tragic accident?

Roll up! Roll up!

What is included when you buy *Under the Big Top*?

- Character sheets for each guest, including background, goals and objectives, special abilities, items and money.
- A rule sheet for your guests.
- A step-by-step guide on how to run the game.
- Handouts and other essential items.

How does *Under the Big Top* work?

Under the Big Top has been written for 12 to 15 guests – plus the host or co-ordinator. The step-by-step guide explains which characters to omit should you have fewer than 15 guests (you do need at least 12, however). Here's how that works:

Number of guests	Male characters	Female characters	Characters that can be played by either sex
12	4	4	4
13	4	4	5
14	4	4	6
15	4	4	7

Under the Big Top runs over the course of three or four hours and is particularly suited to a buffet meal. One person is the Host (who plays the Circus Hand) and acts as organiser responsible for making sure everything runs smoothly and that all the guests have the information they need. They also act as referee should an impartial decision be required. The guests are performers or circus employees with their own goals. How they choose to achieve those goals is entirely up to them. *Under the Big Top* is an evening of deceit, chicanery and betrayal!

Where can I get *Under the Big Top*?

Under the Big Top is available from <http://www.freeformgames.com/>. It costs £20. We accept all major credit cards and Paypal. When you purchase the game, you'll be taken to a page where you can download it right away. We will also email you a download link and password, so you can collect your game later if that's more convenient.

What if I don't like *Under the Big Top*?

No product is perfect for everyone. We know that and you know that – and that's why we offer a cast-iron, no quibble guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied with *Under the Big Top*, let us know within 30 days and we will refund you. You can read our full terms and conditions here: <http://www.freeformgames.com/terms.php>

SARASOTA STAR

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LAST CHANCE FOR BIG TOP

The sky-blue capes of *Bo Bennett's Big Top Bonanza* have returned to Sarasota for the final performances of the season. You won't want to miss this enthralling spectacle, which opened last night to what can only be described as a thunderously popular reception by the locals.

The *Bonanza* offers two shows for the paying public.

Beginning at 7:30, the Big Top Show is proud to present the return of its two biggest stars: Marvin Mancuso, the balancing, juggling, high wire phenomenon beyond compare, and the fearless, death-defying lion tamer, Burt Butler. Both seasoned performers are guaranteed to stun and amaze.

The Flying Korchencko Brothers are again on hand, as well as the antics of Floppsy the Clown.

This spectacular show is hosted by ringmaster and owner of the circus, Bo Bennett. "Come for the games, stay for the rides," Bennett says. "But don't miss the Big Top Show."

At midnight the *Bonanza* offers *JoJo Bones' Exotic Emporium of Enigmatica*. We cannot stress enough that this show is not for the timid or faint of heart.

"Not at all," says dwarf impresario Bones. "The *Emporium* offers the talents of never-before-seen performers, uniquely suited to the tastes of brave adults. Children will be turned away at the door."

"This is not a freak show," Bones stresses. "The *Emporium* offers human anomalies displaying unheard of feats of physiology for the amazement of the paying public. You *will* be astounded."

A bold claim, for sure, but, also one that this reporter can surely verify.

For those brave enough to endure Svetlana, the contortionist, Quinn, the human pincushion and several other "human anomalies," the *Emporium* finishes with perhaps the most eerie and mystifying

performance of all: Roxanne Bones, The Blind Seer. The Seer astounds volunteers from the audience by reading their minds before chilling them to the bones by foretelling their own deaths. This is, truly, a spine-tingling ending to the late night show.

"You won't see anything like it in the world," Bones promises. "Not anywhere. Not ever."

Tickets are available at the box office, which opens promptly at 6:00.

VAN HORTEN RESIDENCE ROBBED

Sarasota police regret to report the theft last night of a substantial amount of priceless jewels from the home of Mamie Van Horten, as well as numerous local and national periodicals. Police believe that Mrs. Van Horten's mansion was broken into some time after midnight.

"I didn't hear a thing," Van Horten contends. "And I'm a very light sleeper. The rascals were quiet as church mice, I can tell you that."

While the jewelry was insured, the stolen items number amongst them invaluable heirlooms from the Van Horten collection.

"It's heartbreaking," Van Horten contends. "I'm a wreck."

Police are exploring possible leads, and welcome tips from the observant public.

ART THEFT HITS HOME FRONT

On a related note, local police have been alerted to be on the lookout for a stolen masterpiece. "Tension in Red," by famed Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky went missing last month from New York's famed Guggenheim Museum. Federal authorities have reason to believe that the painting may have been moved into the south Florida region.

The public is encouraged to keep a lookout for this invaluable piece of contemporary art.

Under the Big Top – Cast List

From *The Big Top*

Bo Bennett: Owner and ringmaster of *Bo Bennett's Big Top Bonanza*.

Marvin Mancuso: The daring high wire performer and juggler *par excellence!* A veteran and star performer of the *Bonanza*.

Burt Butler: The fearless and intrepid svengali of the beasts! Another veteran and star performer.

Dana West: Flopsy the Clown, our winning, whimsical and puckish prankster.

Dimitri Korchencko: Flyer for the Flying Korchenckos, gravity-defying, soaring hawk of the trapeze!

Vladimir Korchencko: Dimitri's brother, and catcher for the Flying Korchenckos, the mighty oak upon which Dimitri alights!

From *JoJo Bones' Exotic Emporium of Enigmatica*

Stella Sue: Beguiling consumer and tamer of nature's most feared and destructive element – fire! (i.e. fire-eater)

Svetlana Yuri: The human pretzel, a mind-bending contortionist beyond compare.

Quinn Bones: The human pincushion whose body endures the points of needles, daggers and swords!

Roxanne Bones: The Blind Seer will peer into your future and foresee your death. Do you dare?

Mischa Korchencko: Astounding charmer of snakes, mesmerizing asps, rattlesnakes and copperheads! (Sibling to Dimitri and Vladimir)

From the Staff

Frieda Laing: Assistant manager and mistress of the rides and games of chance.

Alex Marbles: Our wizard of numbers (i.e. the accountant)

And JoJo's Especially Invited Guest

Lt. Morgan Caine of the Sarasota Police Department

Your edible delights will be provided by the world-renowned catering maestro, **P.T. Connelly**.