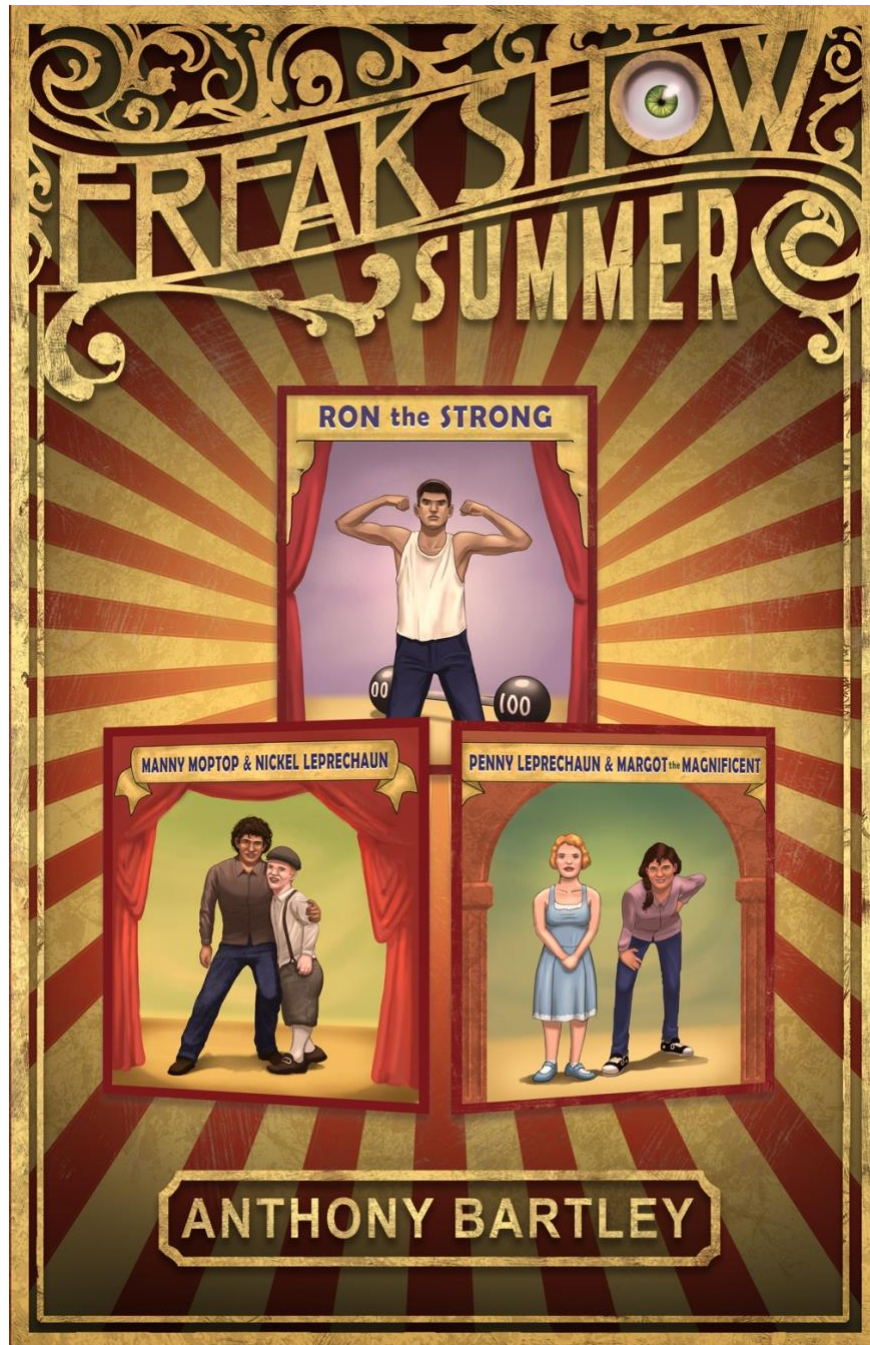


Freakshow Summer

Anthony Bartley



A Teacher's Guide

Copyright ©2022 by Anthony Bartley

Table of Contents

<i>Cast of Characters</i>	3
<i>Carnival and 1930s Terms</i>	6
<i>Chapter Synopses</i>	7
<i>Pre-Reading Activities</i>	14
<i>Chapter Activities</i>	15
Chapters 1 and 2 Activities	15
Chapters 3 and 4 Activities	16
Chapters 5, 6, and 7 Activities	17
Chapters 8 and 9 Activities	19
Chapters 10 and 11 Activities	20
Chapters 12, 13, and 14 Activities	21
Chapters 15 and 16 Activities	23
Chapters 17, 18, and 19 Activities	24
Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Activities	26
Chapters 23 and 24 Activities	28
Chapters 25 and 26 Activities	29
Chapters 27, 28, and 29 Activities	31
Chapters 30 and 31 Activities	33
Chapters 32, 33, and 34 Activities	34
<i>Additional Activities for Students</i>	36
Essay Prompts	36
Art Projects	36
Writing Based Projects	37
Multimedia Based Projects	38

Freakshow Summer Teacher's Guide

Cast of Characters

Major Characters

- **Manny “Moptop” Dobra:** The thirteen-year-old main protagonist who was orphaned while his parents worked for the carnival. He is cared for by Harriet the Bearded Woman and the Leprechaun family. He struggles to know his place in the carnival but has talent as an artist.
- **Nickel Leprechaun (Nicholas Lepozzi):** Manny’s clever best friend and a thirteen-year-old dwarf performer in the carnival as well as Penny’s younger brother. He is also Margot’s boyfriend.
- **Penny Leprechaun (Penelope Lepozzi):** A sixteen-year-old little person performer and older sister to Nickel.
- **Margot Ristani:** A thirteen-year-old tough and take-charge girl who is also Penny’s best friend. Her parents run Greg’s Grub Shack in the carnival. She is also Nickel’s girlfriend.
- **Ronaldo “Ron” Montoya:** A fourteen-year-old antagonist to the Manny and Nickel. He is resentful at being taken from his home in New Mexico to travel with the carnival.
- **Oliver Neil:** Owner and leader of the *Oliver Neil’s Marvelous Carnival* and fiancé to Constanica Montoya. He served in World War I.
- **Constancia Montoya:** Mother to Ron and fiancé to Oliver Neil. She is also a widow who had been unfairly condemned as a single mother.

Major Supporting Characters

- **Buck Leprechaun:** Nickel and Penny’s father and a performer in the Leprechaun stage act.
- **Sally Leprechaun:** Nickel and Penny’s mother and a performer in the Leprechaun stage act.

- **Harriet the Bearded Woman:** One of the carnival’s main performers who shares a magician’s stage act with Yuri the Yeti. Upon the death of Manny Dobra’s parents, she becomes his main caregiver.
- **John Huffman:** Oliver Neil’s foreman and main roustabout (laborer) known for his temper and willingness to fight. He is also the faithful husband to Olga. He served in World War I with Oliver Neil.
- **Olga One-Ton (Olga Huffman):** One of the main stage performers in the ten-in-one “odd couples acts” with Ben Beanpole. Olga is the carnival “fat lady” and often a target for ridicule.
- **Lillian the Living Work of Art:** The carnival tattoo artist and MC of several stage acts. She is also an “illustrated woman” and Manny’s mentor in drawing.
- **Herb “The Alligator Man” Oubliette:** One of the more beloved performers in the carnival. He has an uncomfortable skin condition (ichthyosis) that gives him a “scaled” appearance. Harriet is his love interest.
- **Ben Beanpole:** He also known as the “human skeleton” due to his extreme thinness. He is a beloved comedic performer with Olga. He and Herb are best friends.
- **Yuri the Yeti:** Due to excessive hair growing on his face and body (hirsutism) and Russian accent, he earned the nickname The Yeti during his carnival career. However, Yuri is also a talented pianist and magician, sharing a show with Harriet.
- **Beep the Pinheaded Ballerina:** Although he wears a dress and has a shaved head, Beep is a middle-aged man and perhaps the most beloved person in the carnival. He has a condition known as microcephaly, which has made him mentally disabled. He shares a back stage show with the Ordomoff twins.
- **Bill Hart:** John Huffman’s second-in-command and close friend. He will take on more responsibilities in the carnival as troubles hit.

Minor Characters

- **Anechka Ordomoff:** One of the conjoined twins who helps care for Beep. Anechka is also a talented piano player. She shares a back stage act with Beep.
- **Nika Ordomoff:** One of the conjoined twins who helps care for Beep. Nika is also a talented piano player. She shares a back stage act with Beep.

- **Leona the Leopard Girl:** An African-American stage performer with vitiligo, thereby giving her “leopard spots.” She is a gifted tumbler and married to Abel.
- **Abel:** A friendly game booth operator (Leona’s Shooting Gallery) whose charm makes him one of the more successful carnies. He is married to Leona the Leopard Girl.
- **Greg Ristani:** Margot’s father and owner of Greg’s Grub Shack.
- **Millie Ristani:** Margot’s mother and main performer in the belly dancing or “hoochie-coochie” show.
- **Pigeon:** One of a trio of singers in the Harpies of Crete stage act.
- **Parakeet:** One of a trio of singers in the Harpies of Crete stage act.
- **Darlene Duck:** One of a trio of singers in the Harpies of Crete stage act.
- **Mabel the Armless Wonder:** Just as the name suggests, Mabel was born without arms, but she was able to overcome the disability by using her feet to do what others do with their hands. She has one of the stage acts found in the ten-in-one.
- **Gloria the Human Pretzel:** A contortionist who has a window act in the ten-in-one.
- **Dregor the Sword Swallower:** A sword swallower and fire-breather who has a window act in the ten-in-one.
- **Theodore the Three-Legged Tap Dancer:** Born with a third, but malformed leg, he learned to dance and draw a crowd with his four-horned goat, Balderdash. He has a window act in the ten-in-one.
- **Guy Fullerton:** A senior member of the Order of the Lions’ Den who causes the carnival a great deal of trouble in Colorado.

Carnival and 1930s Terms

- Barker: A term used for a carnival employee who tries to drum up business or increase interest in carnival shows. Carnival workers prefer the term “talker.”
- Ballyhoo: This is a free “show” wherein certain performers appear in a town a day or two prior to the carnival’s arrival. It builds excitement among the citizens to visit the carnival.
- Blow-Off Show: A show that comes after the main presentation but costs extra to attend. It can be a genuine attraction or a clever and/or humorous prank.
- Boneyard: The general living and meeting area for the carnival workers and performers and often located at the back of a carnival grounds.
- Bouncer: Fake, rubber props that appear to be malformed babies in jars of preserving fluid.
- Carny: Slang used for carnival workers and performers
- Clam: Slang term for money
- Fool’s Errand: A practical joke played on carnival newcomers, often involving an elaborate search for made up items.
- Greenback: Slang term for money, especially bills.
- Hoochie-Coochie: Used in reference to a belly-dance or a show involving scantily clad dancers.
- Human Oddity: A person on exhibition in a carnival sideshow.
- Illustrated: A showman term for tattoos or a tattooed individual.
- Pickled Punk: A carnival term a malformed human fetus on display (e.g. two-headed baby, conjoined twins, etc.). In many cases, these were fakes known as “bouncers.”
- Midway: The main thoroughfare in a carnival.
- Roustabout (Rousty): A carnival or circus laborer or worker.
- Sawbuck: Slang for a ten-dollar bill.
- Sideshow: A series of shows and acts that involve performers and/or human oddities. It is also known as a freakshow.
- Stage Act: A well-developed act and is considered a main event
- Ten-in-One: Area of the carnival where ten shows are presented in one place. Often where the sideshow was located. It will offer window acts (warm up acts) and stage (main) acts.
- Townie: Nickname for citizens of any given town or city.
- Two-Bits: Slang for a quarter of a dollar.
- Widow Act: An opening act used to draw in customers to the main acts or stage acts.

Chapter Synopses

Chapter 1: Order and Chaos

Thirteen-year-old Manny Dobra and his best friend Nickel Lepozzi (also a dwarf sideshow performer) find themselves in the midst of a brawl between carnival workers/performers and a group calling themselves The Order of the Lions' Den. As the fighting becomes more intense, the boys look for a way out. Once they've escaped, they see a furious Oliver Neil, the carnival owner, walking toward the brawl with the obvious intent of breaking it up.

Chapter 2: Arrivals

A still seething Oliver Neil chastises those involved in the brawl. Because of the violence, the carnival has to move on to another venue. The carnival packs up and heads to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Upon arrival, Manny sees a significant difference in Oliver's demeanor. Nickel explains that the boss has a girlfriend in the city. After the carnival is set up, a meeting is called and everyone heads to the "boneyard," a common meeting place for the carnies as well as the living area. To everyone's surprise, Oliver introduces his fiancé, Constanca Montoya, and her fourteen-year-old son, Ronaldo "Ron" Montoya. The two will now travel with the carnival. Once the meeting ends, the boss calls Manny and Nickel over to discuss some urgent business.

Chapter 3: The Two and One

Mr. Neil gives the boys the responsibility of showing Ron around the carnival and helping him feel comfortable. Ron, however, does not seem particularly excited to be there and presents himself as a bully while the duo gives him a tour. Ron immediately fixates on Nickel's small stature, but Nickel, who is used to such treatment, appears to blow it off. Manny is not so immune to the barbs. When Ron is out of earshot, Nickel expresses his dislike for the new boy.

Chapter 4: Leona's Shooting Gallery

Before Nickel has to go prepare for his upcoming show, Manny sees him planning something mischievous for Ron. With his buddy gone, it is up to Manny to entertain the new kid. He decides to take Ron to Leona's Shooting Gallery, named after one of the performers in the sideshow. Abel, the charismatic owner and husband to Leona the Leopard Lady, allows the boys to shoot a few rounds for free. While the boys are there, Leona makes a surprise appearance. Afterwards, the boys make their way toward the ten-in-one shows. Ron comments that he is shocked that Abel, a white man, would be married to Leona, a black woman. Manny defends the couple, which aggravates Ron. Manny's dislike for the boy grows.