

THE CIRCUS OF STOLEN DREAMS



About the Book

A dream world turns haunting nightmare in this spellbinding debut novel, perfect for fans of *Circus Mirandus* and *The Night Gardener*.

After Andrea's brother, Francis, disappeared, everything changed. Her world turned upside down, and there was nothing she could do to right it. So when she discovers a magical dream world called Reverie in the woods near her home, Andrea jumps at the chance to escape her pain and go inside. But the cost of admission is high: Andrea must give up a memory in order to enter. And she knows exactly which memory she'd like to give up.

Once inside, Andrea discovers tent after tent of dreams come alive; she can fly on a gust of wind, brave swashbuckling pirates and search for buried treasure, reach for--and wish on--a tangible star, and much, much more. But Andrea soon realizes that not all of Reverie's dreams are meant to delight, and the Sandman behind the circus tents seems to have plans of his own. When Andrea finds a tent in which her brother's darkest nightmare has been brought to life, she realizes the dark truth: Reverie is not an escape; it's a trap.

Will Andrea and her new friend Penny have what it takes to find Francis, figure out what's really going on in Reverie, and break free from this nightmarish dream world?

A wonderfully inventive, deliciously creepy debut novel that is sure to linger in readers' minds long after the last thrilling page has been turned.

About the Author

Lorelei Savaryn (loreleisavaryn.com) is an author of creepy, magical stories for children. She holds a BA in creative writing and is a former elementary teacher and instructional coach. When she isn't writing or reading, she spends her time amidst the beautiful chaos of life with her husband, four children, and puppy outside of Chicago. You can follow her on Twitter @LoreleiSavaryn, or visit her website, www.loreleisavaryn.com to learn more, book author visits, or say hello!



How to Use this Unit Study

This standards-aligned unit of study will walk teachers and students through *The Circus of Stolen Dreams*. It is both an engaging page-turner and a thematically layered novel, which makes it perfect for a classroom read-aloud, whole class/school text, book club, small group, or school reading list.

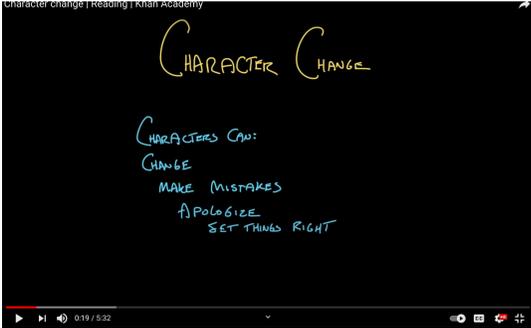
This guide is aligned with Common Core Standards for grade 5, but can be applied from grades 3-8. You will find videos, discussion questions, graphic organizers, writing exercises, and more. Please use these lessons and prompts in whatever way is helpful to you!

There is also a [Digital Guidebook](#) that links to an interactive Google Slide show. Each lesson will link you to the appropriate slide in the Guidebook, which is also available to download and use from your own computer. It might be helpful for students to have a blank journal, or a digital journal to jot answers to some of the questions throughout the unit in preparation for discussion.

The Circus of Stolen Dreams

Unit of Study

Read	Directions	Optional Extensions	Standards
<p>Before You Begin (click above to access the Digital Guidebook slide for this lesson.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take a look at the cover for THE CIRCUS OF STOLEN DREAMS, with art by Matt Saunders, and which was designed by Samira Irvani.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What does the cover tell you about the book?- What predictions do you have about the story based on the cover?- Watch the Official Book Trailer for THE CIRCUS OF STOLEN DREAMS - How does the Book Trailer set the tone for the story?- Watch this Book Talk from author Lorelei Savaryn! What are you most excited about as	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit Matt Saunders' website to learn more about who he is as an artist.• Search online to see if there are other book trailers available to watch from stories that you've loved. How did the creators of the book trailer do in representing those stories compared to what you imagined in your own mind?	<p>RL.5.7</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

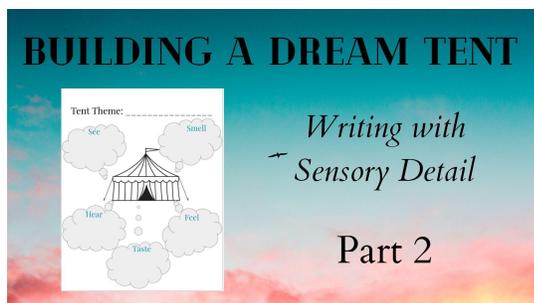
	<p>you jump into reading this story?</p> 		
<p>Read: <i>The Girl Without A Shadow</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea begins the story with a very deep wound. What is the source of her sadness? - What do Andrea's parents suggest she do? How does Andrea respond? <p>Characters Change: Watch this video on Character Change:</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea will experience significant change throughout this story. Let's begin by looking at the kind of character she is at the start. Character's Change Page. Fill in only the answer to the first prompt for now and save for future use. 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>W.5.9</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

<p>Read: Forget Your Troubles</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does Andrea feel as she approaches Reverie’s Circus built of dreams? - What would you do if you were Andrea? Would you want to go inside? Why or why not? <p>The Circus: Watch this video up until 6:50, paying special attention to how they describe the allure of the circus.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why were people historically drawn to the circus? - Why might the author of <i>The Circus of Stolen Dreams</i> have chosen to make the setting of this story a circus? Think about Andrea and what specifically makes the idea of Reverie so appealing to her. Use evidence from the text to support your conclusions. 	<p>The Greatest Showman: <i>The Greatest Showman</i> was a popular film during the writing and revision of this book. Read and discuss this article about how the movie compares to real life, including the harmful stereotypes created and perpetuated by P.T. Barnum. Then, use this internet to research some of the reasons why Barnum’s circus permanently closed in 2017.</p>	<p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: Step Right Up + The Rules</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your first impressions of Margaret Grace? Do you have any predictions as to her connection to the circus? - What does Andrea give up as 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>W.5.9</p>

	<p>payment to earn her ticket? Why do you think she chooses what she does?</p> <p>Margaret Grace: Complete the first row of boxes on the Margaret Grace page. Hold onto this page for future use.</p>		<p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: Penny</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you believe Penny when she says she has a lot of friends? Why or why not? - What sort of an impact do you think that choosing to forget her sadness will have on Andrea as the story goes on? <p>Allies: Watch this video about the function of the Ally character in fiction, and discuss how Penny might already be fitting into that role. Keep an eye out as the story progresses for other ways that Penny is an Ally to Andrea.</p> 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: Umbrellas and Dream Clocks</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Penny mentions that there are nightmare tents in this chapter. Would you want to go 		<p>SL.5.1</p>

	<p>into a nightmare tent if you were in <i>Reverie</i>? Why or why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you were Andrea, how would you feel just before entering your first <i>Reverie</i> dream? 		
<p>Read: <i>Soar + Pirates, Stars, and Nightmares</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How would Andrea describe her experience in <i>Soar</i>? - Andrea chooses not to wish on a star in the <i>Star Builder</i> tent. Why do you think she makes that decision? <p>Building a Dream Tent: (Writing with Sensory Detail)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch this video lesson from author Lorelei Savaryn (Part 1) <div data-bbox="386 919 922 1222" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the Building A Dream Tent Graphic Organizer to plan out the sensory components of your dream, using as many sensory details as you can. - Watch Part 2 of the lesson to learn how Lorelei wove in sensory details to build the <i>Soar</i> dream tent. Then, take 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>W.5.3.D W.5.5</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

your work from part one and use it to draft your immersive dream experience using sensory detail!



- Create your final draft! Write or type your final dream tent story and illustrate it. Display your dream tents at school or compile them into an anthology. (Don't forget to email a copy to the author if you do! loreleisavaryn@gmail.com)

Read: [*The First Nightmare*](#)

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the rules we've learned about how the magic of Reverie works so far?
- What could possibly be fun about going into a nightmare? Have you ever chosen to experience something scary? Why did you make that choice?

Behind the Scenes:

- Watch this video to learn an insider secret about how I crafted this nightmare scene.

The Science of Scared:
[Watch this video](#) about why it's so much fun to be scared!



[RL.5.1](#)

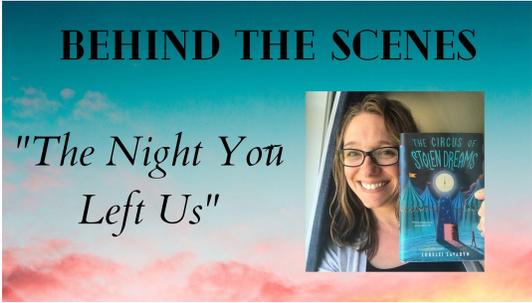
[SL.5.1](#)

	<p style="text-align: center;">BEHIND THE SCENES</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"The First Nightmare"</i></p> 		
<p>Read: <i>Something Awful</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is Andrea's plan of escaping her sadness working out for her so far? - Why do you think Penny's face falls when Andrea tells her that she never asked for a friend? - Why do you think Andrea feels like she needs to pull away from Penny? 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>Ralph's Thrift Shop</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did Andrea feel at the beginning of the chapter when she woke up in her room? How would you have felt if you were her? - Why does Andrea return to Reverie at the end of the chapter, and do you agree with her decision? Why or why not? 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>Root River</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For the first part of the story up until now, what has been Andrea's goal? - How does her goal change at the end of this chapter? And 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

	<p>what do you think will happen next?</p> <p>Behind the Scenes: Watch this video to learn the real life inspiration behind Francis's nightmare!</p> 		
<p>Read: Ripples</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In this chapter, Andrea shares with Penny that she made a decision to not cry anymore. What does that teach us about Andrea as a character? How does that give us a glimpse into her heart? - Why do you think Penny discourages Andrea from going to see the Sandman? 		<p>RL.5.1 RL.5.6</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: The Sandman's Private Dream</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In this chapter, we are introduced to the Sandman. What are your first impressions of him? <p>Margaret Grace: Fill in the additional details about Margaret Grace as she is in this scene. Margaret Grace page.</p>	<p>The Ringmaster: As we've learned, Lorelei was inspired by <i>The Greatest Showman</i> when building the magic and mystery of Reverie. Watch this clip from <i>The Greatest Showman</i> and compare the depiction of P.T. Barnum in this song to our introduction to Reverie's ringmaster, The Sandman.</p>	<p>W.5.9</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

			
<p>Read: <i>The Perfect Wish</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your opinion on the Sandman’s choice to turn his sister into a dream? - How are Andrea and the Sandman similar? How are they different? - What do you think about the Sandman’s offer of a perfect wish? What advice would you give Andrea about whether or not to take it? <p>Behind the Scenes: Lorelei and her family did a photo shoot inspired by Reverie’s Circus built of dreams! Check out their photo of this scene, shot with her husband and oldest daughter.</p> <div data-bbox="388 1213 920 1518" data-label="Image">  </div>		<p>RL.5.3</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>The Boy in Red-and-Blue Striped Pajamas</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who do you think Andrea is chasing? What evidence do 		<p>RL.5.1</p>

	<p>you have to support your prediction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do you think the Sandman shows up at the end of the Frigid Place dream? And why do you think the boy is choosing to run away? 		<p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: The Frigid Place</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you feel as you followed Andrea through her frozen home? What details in the text led to that reaction? - Has your opinion on the Sandman changed since you first met him? How so? <p>Behind the Scenes of the Frigid Place!</p> 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: Remember + The Night You Left Us</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea makes the choice to enter the memory she chose to forget of the night Francis disappeared. How has she changed since the story started, and what are some of the factors in the story so far that have led to that change? 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea’s memory takes place on the night she learned her parents were getting a divorce. Describe how she feels about this huge change in her life. - Why does Andrea think she’s to blame for Francis’s disappearance? Do you agree with her conclusion? Why or why not? <p>Behind the Scenes: Watch this video to learn the real life inspiration behind the events of this scene!</p> 		
<p>Read: Found</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In this chapter, we learn that Francis thinks he’s only been in Reverie for one night. What are your predictions as to what’s really going on in the Dream Circus? - Using examples from the story, how would you describe Andrea and Francis’s relationship with each other? - How did you feel at the very end of the chapter, when the Sandman said it wasn’t possible for them to leave? 		<p>RL.5.1 RL.5.3</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

Read: [Locked](#)
[Gates and Lies](#)

Discussion Questions:

- Andrea's goal changes again here. What is her new goal, and how does she try to achieve it?
- The Sandman shares more of his story here. How does he justify his actions? And what is your opinion on his reasons for keeping kids from going home?
- The Sandman tells Andrea that he brought her to a place where her brother 'could be found.' What do you think he means by that?
- Penny makes another appearance. Has your opinion on her changed at all given her actions in this chapter? Why or why not?

The Midpoint: This chapter marks what is known to writers as the "Midpoint." Share the following video with your students to gain deeper insight into this aspect of novel structure and writing craft:



[RL.5.1](#)
[RL.5.5](#)

[SL.5.1](#)

<p>Read: <i>Twisting Lanes</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put yourself in Andrea’s shoes. Describe how you would feel if you were her trying to reach the edge of the circus without success over and over again? - What do you think Andrea plans to do next? Do you think it will work? Why or why not? 		<p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>What Year Did You Come Here?</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrea watches Reveries fireworks and realizes that everything about the dream circus “was designed to draw you in deeper.” What do you think she means by that? Do you think the circus is a good place or a bad place, and why? - Time can be very strange in dreams. Share a time when you had a dream that felt long, but was short, or that felt short but was long? 		<p>RL.5.6</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>The Dig</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the kids could leave the circus, how do you think that time would work when they got out? Would they still be together? How much time would have passed? Justify your thinking. <p>Making a Metaphor: Lorelei is a big fan of figurative language in her writing. Here’s one example from this chapter: “Hope spread like a river</p>		<p>RL.5.4</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

	<p>through her body...growing and swelling through all the parched, cracked places inside her.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch this video from Lorelei on Making a Metaphor, and have students create some figurative language of their own!  <p>CLASSROOM ACTIVITY STARTER with Lorelei Savaryn</p>		
<p>Read: <i>The Old Man on the Dream Clock</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think about Penny’s behavior from the moment Andrea met her until now. How does her story help us make sense of her character and of the choices she has made so far? - What do you predict will happen inside <i>Inception of a Dream</i>? Why do you think that? 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: <i>Inception of a Dream</i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was Reverie’s original purpose? - Looking back, what clues were left along the way that pointed to the Sandman we’ve come to know being an imposter? 		<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

	<p>Ride Inspirations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lorelei Savaryn was inspired by classic animatronic rides at places like Disney World as she built this scene. - Check out the videos for either It's a Small World or Pirates of the Caribbean and discuss any possible influences based on these, or students' personal experiences on similar rides. 		
<p>Read: To Remember</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the significance of the chapter title? Think about this in light of what Andrea's original goal was when she entered Reverie's gates, and how her character has changed. Update your Character's Change page with this new information. - Use examples from the text to share how Penny has changed as a character from the beginning of the story through now. <p>Behind the Scenes: Watch this video about how Lorelei came up with the big plot twist about the Sandman!</p> 		<p>W.5.9</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>

<p>Read: <i><u>Unbroken</u></i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think Francis is real? Support your conclusion. - What does Andrea learn about remembering in this chapter, especially in the last paragraph on page 231? Can you relate at all to her experience with something in your own life? If you feel comfortable, share. 		<p><u>RL.5.1</u></p> <p><u>SL.5.1</u></p>
<p>Read: <i><u>"Home"</u></i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the moment in the story that authors call "the final temptation." What is the temptation to Andrea here, and why do you think the Sandman chose this specific temptation for her? - Along those same lines, what do you think she would have chosen to do at the beginning of the novel, and why? Compare that with the choice she makes now, and why she makes it. 		<p><u>RL.5.3</u></p> <p><u>SL.5.1</u></p>
<p>Read: <i><u>The Door of Tears</u></i></p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore the meaning of the fact that a door forms out of Andrea's tears. - Many times, an author will use the antagonist of a story to somehow mirror or contrast with the main character's inner struggle and growth. How does the Sandman both mirror and contrast with Andrea's inner 		<p><u>RL.5.3</u></p> <p><u>SL.5.1</u></p>

	struggle/growth at different points in the story?		
Read: <i>Race to the Dream Clock</i>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which nightmare has been the most creepy to you so far and why? <p>Behind the Scenes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch this video of how the nightmares getting set free ended up in the book! 		SL.5.1
Read: <i>The Final Confrontation</i>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put yourself in the shoes of one of Reverie children, and imagine you were watching Andrea and the (fake) Sandman's confrontation. What would you be thinking? Whose side would you be on, and why? - What is your reaction about the revelation of who the (fake) Sandman really is. Does that change your opinion of him at all, and if so, how? <p>Margaret Grace:</p>		RL.5.1 SL.5.1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After reading this final scene with Margaret Grace, look back on the three different versions of her that we meet in the story. What do you think Margaret Grace represents? How might the author have set her up as a contrast to the Sandman and Andrea? Why do you think the Sandman chose to preserve her in these specific forms? Margaret Grace page. 		
<p>Read: An Umbrella Full of Dreams</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the real Sandman, and his reaction to what has happened. - What do you think is the bravest thing that Andrea has done in this story, and why? <p>The Sandman: The Sandman is a mythological figure that has shown up in stories for a very long time. Read: The Legend of the Sandman, and Who is the Sandman? Discuss how the author of this story pulled from those legends, noting any connections you see, as well as any areas where the author took Reverie's Sandman in a different direction.</p>	<p>The Sandman in Song: Listen to the song Mr. Sandman by The Chordettes, and read through the lyrics to learn about another take on the Sandman from 1954.</p>	<p>RL.5.1</p> <p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Read: Home</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you think Andrea and her family will navigate life as a family moving forward? What might still be hard, and 	<p>Outlining a Character Change Story: Many students default to plotting their stories through a sequence of events that a</p>	<p>RL.5.2</p> <p>W.5.9</p>

	<p>what might they have to look forward to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share your reaction to the ending of this story, especially the last line. What conclusion do you draw from it? - What bigger lesson or message will you take away from <i>The Circus of Stolen Dreams</i>? <p>Characters Change: Return to your Character's Change page from the beginning of the story, and fill in the rest, using it as a springboard for discussion.</p> <p>Behind the Scenes: In this final video, I share my thoughts on the theme of my book, and what I hope readers carry with them once the story is finished.</p> 	<p>character follows. Use a blank version of the Character's Change sheet to have students outline a story based first on character development, with a plot that supports that character's internal growth.</p>	<p>SL.5.1</p>
<p>Post-Reading</p>	<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think about your initial predictions for the story vs. what actually happened, and how your predictions evolved as the story went on. How did your predictions change? 	<p>Email the Author: Use the "Say Hello" form on Lorelei Savaryn's website to drop her a note, or ask a question about the book!</p> <p>Metaphor: Using Comparisons to Paint a</p>	<p>RL.5.4 RL.5.7</p> <p>W.5.3</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take another look at the cover. Do you notice the significance of anything you may not have noticed or fully understood before? Why do you think the cover artist and designer might have chosen to include those specific elements on the cover? And what sort of reward does the cover offer to those who have finished the story?	<p>Picture: This can be used as an extension to the Making a Metaphor activity from earlier in the unit. Have students use the Metaphor Sheet to take an in-depth dive of some of Lorelei’s favorite metaphors from the story, including an extended metaphor and how they contribute to deepen and enhance the reader experience.</p>	<p>SL.5.1</p>
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