

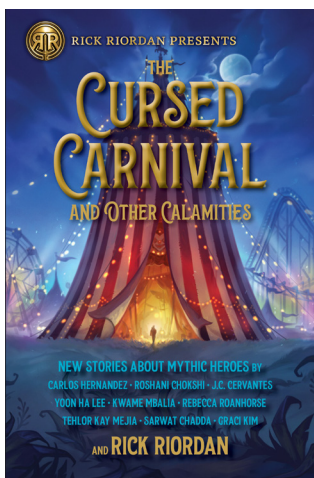


RICK RIORDAN PRESENTS

THE CURSED CARNIVAL AND OTHER CALAMITIES

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION



ABOUT THE BOOK

The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities

“I hope you enjoy your trip through the multiverse mansion as much as I did. The real danger is that once you start exploring all the wonders herein, you may want to stay forever.”

—Rick Riordan

Best-selling author Rick Riordan presents ten new stories—including one of his own—about beloved heroes that sprang from the imaginations of some of the best middle grade authors working today. A cave monster . . . an abandoned demon . . . a ghost who wants to erase history . . . a killer commandant . . . These are just some of the challenges confronting the young heroes in this highly entertaining anthology. All but one of the heroes previously starred in a popular book from Rick Riordan Presents. You’ll be reunited with Aru Shah, Zane Obispo, Min the fox spirit, Sal and Gabi, Gum Baby, Nizhoni Begay, Paola Santiago, Sikander Aziz, and Riley Oh. Who is the new hero? Read Rick Riordan’s short story to find out! Ten best-selling and award-winning middle grade authors contributed to this collection: Roshani Chokshi, J. C. Cervantes, Yoon Ha Lee, Carlos Hernandez, Kwame Mbalia, Rebecca Roanhorse, Tehlor Kay Mejia, Sarwat Chadda, Graci Kim, and Rick Riordan, who also served as the editor. There’s something for everyone in this collection of fast-paced and funny adventure stories that show what it takes to be a hero in any time, setting, and universe.

★“With an inclusive range of contributors drawing upon their respective heritages and experiences to craft culturally specific, gratifyingly adventurous tales, there’s a little something for everyone here, like a world tour of wonder and excitement.” —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Using *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* to Activate Prior Knowledge and Build Connections

As a pre-reading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		There are consequences for every action an individual makes.
		No matter the situation, you should always trust your friends.
		To be a true hero, a person must be physically strong; while other strengths are important, physical strength is the most valuable.
		Family is only defined as the people to whom you are related.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a “0” next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

Once students have had the opportunity to complete the guide, read each statement aloud and have students who agree show it by standing or raising their hands. Each student should be permitted to provide their rationale for agreeing if they wish.

EXPLORING *THE CURSED CARNIVAL AND OTHER CALAMITIES* THROUGH DISCUSSION, RESEARCH, AND WRITING

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection, or alternatively, these questions can be used as reflective writing prompts.

“Calamity Juice” Questions

- As the story opens, readers discover that Sal and Gabi are both dressed in trench coats and hats while they are at school. Given what you already know about them, why is this not actually unusual or concerning? In your opinion, what makes Culeco Academy of the Arts such an unusual school?
- Why does the pony puke smell that permeates the school cause concern for Sal and Gabi? What do you predict may be the bigger issue at hand?
- Compare Gladis to Prank Gladis. What makes each of them unique?



“Beware the Grove of True Love” Questions

- As Aru Shah stepped out of the portal and into the Night Bazaar of the Otherworld, “she knew it was bound to be a bad day” (p. 56). What is it about the Night Bazaar that Aru likes best? In what ways is this visit different or problematic?
- Mini asks, “Are we ever ready for this day?” (p. 57). What is it about the weekly Errand Day that Aru, Mini, and Brynne are forced to do as punishment that the trio finds so awful? Do you think you’d feel similarly if you were in such a position?
- After “fixing” the tale in the grove, Aru hears, “You’ve fixed the tale, but have you seen the cost of what happens when true love is lost?” (p. 78). What makes the rest of Aru’s experiences so challenging? In what ways is “seeing” the rest of the story ultimately what allows her to help resolve the greater problem?



“The Cave of Doom” Questions

- At the beginning of “The Cave of Doom,” Zane Obispo shares he’s upset with a poor review a tourist leaves for his family’s tour guide business, Maya Adventures. In what ways does Zane quickly learn that there are bigger issues at play at Isla Pájaros than a simple bad online review?
- Why do both Brooks and Zane seem reluctant to go investigate what’s happening at Bird Island? In what ways does their reaction foreshadow what is to come?
- How does Zane’s reluctance toward telling Brooks the truth about what has happened to his father complicate matters for the duo?



“The Initiation” Questions

- In what ways do Min and Jun’s recent experiences facing “space pirates, a treacherous tiger spirit, and a planet of vengeful ghosts” (p. 128) put them at an advantage on this mission?
- What are the biggest challenges for Min serving at the Thousand Worlds’ Domestic Security Ministry? What makes this first mission such an important one?
- What are your thoughts about Commandant Paik’s role in the mission?



“The Gum Baby Files” Questions

- Before reading “The Gum Baby Files,” did you have any prior knowledge of Gum Baby? If so, share your thoughts or what you know.
- What makes learning Ayanna and Junior are in danger such a motivator for Gum Baby? What can you glean from this reaction?
- Based on what you learned from “The Gum Baby Files,” why is the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson so important? Why should this history be preserved at any cost?



“The Demon Drum” Questions

- As the story opens, Nizhoni shares her version of the events surrounding her experience with the demon drum. What can be inferred by Toni remarking, “Wait, wait, wait. . . . That’s not how it happened. I should know. I was there” (p. 216). Is it possible they are both right? In what ways is perspective such a personal thing?
- Nizhoni tells readers, “Monsterslayers are held to a very high standard of ethics” (p. 218). What do you believe she means by this? In what ways do these ethics guide Nizhoni’s reactions and choices?
- Evaluate how the demon drum is ultimately defeated. What can you infer about this tactic?



“Bruto and the Freaky Flower” Questions

- Even though it can be argued that Paola was a heroine after her adventures in the lair of La Llorona, as far as her mother is concerned, Paola is still someone in need of protection and a watchful eye. Why does her mother not see Paola the way others do? Do you think it’s common for parents to do this?
- In what ways does Bruto’s illness and rapidly declining health make the possibility of losing her mother’s trust acceptable to Paola? If you were in her position, what would you do?
- Using what you learn about Paola and Dante from “Bruto and the Freaky Flower,” do you believe the two of them are good friends to each other? Using examples from the story, make a case for your position.



“The Loneliest Demon” Questions

- As the story opens, Sikander Aziz hears, “Sikander Aziz! I challenge you to a duel!” (p. 291). In what ways is this declaration unusual? How does this opening line set the stage for the events to come?
- Rabisu works hard to appear confident and fearless, but do you feel that’s an accurate description of her? Why or why not?
- What are some of the specific ways Sikander shows his support of Rabisu? If you were in a similar position, would you do the same?



“My Night at the Gifted Carnival” Questions

- Though Riley Oh declares she “hate[s] waiting in line” (p. 338) at the carnival, she does so anyway; what can be inferred by Riley’s actions? Are there other ways that Riley and Hattie prove themselves to be supportive sisters to one another?
- For Riley, being a saram is terribly difficult. While she appears to not possess magic, based on what you discover about her from “My Night at the Gifted Carnival,” what are some of the things that make Riley incredibly special anyway?
- Based on your own past carnival experiences, what makes the gifted carnival so unique? If you could visit, what would you want to see and do?



“My Life as a Child Outlaw” Questions

- What are your initial thoughts about child outlaw Demne? Was there anything about his experiences that surprised you?
- Why is the Clan Morna so dangerous to Demne? Why does it seem they are unwilling to concede in their plans to find and execute him? Why is he seen as a danger?
- What role do you predict Demne will play in future stories by Rick Riordan that are focused on Celtic or Irish mythology?



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES FOR *THE CURSED CARNIVAL AND OTHER CALAMITIES*

In *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities*, readers witness characters gaining knowledge and better understanding throughout the course of their featured story. Based on your observations, which character do you believe demonstrates the greatest growth through their short story? Compose a short persuasive essay offering your position on this issue. While considering your selected character's experiences, use textual evidence to provide specific examples to support your case.

Consider the characters featured in *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities*; what are common characteristics of these young people to each other? In what ways are their personalities and challenges faced like ones you or the people you know face? Using what you learned, which character do you think you are most like? Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting yourself with a character from the Rick Riordan Presents multiverse featured in *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities*.

Rick Riordan's short story "My Life as a Child Outlaw" in *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* collection is an introduction for many to Irish or Celtic mythology. Using library and internet resources, work in pairs to research Irish/Celtic mythology and folklore to discover the following:

- When and where did these myths and folklore develop?
- What are some of the common rationales for sharing these stories?
- What are some of the best-known Irish myths and folklore?
- Are there any tales that are similar to those from other cultures?
- How did Irish language change due to the influence of English?

After you finish your research, share your discoveries with your group.

In small groups, select a favorite story from *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that selection. Using a digital comic strip creator (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/> or <http://infinitecomic.com/> for example), begin by using the strips to create story boards for the selected story. Next, select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, assume the roles of two of the characters with each one's personality and voice and interact with one another by creating an extension of a scene from the story.

The stories of the major players in *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* are part of the great Rick Riordan Presents multiverse, but if these characters were real people you knew or went to school with, they would likely use the same social media utilized by young people like you today. Select a character of your choice from *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* collection and create an Instagram account for that character, being sure posts fit that character's aesthetic. Alternatively, create a faux Facebook profile for that character, being sure to complete all the pertinent information, like education, relationships, groups to follow, pages to like, as well as 2–3 status updates.

Create an “I Am” Poem

The purpose of this strategy is to help you demonstrate knowledge of a featured character from *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* by following written prompts to complete a poem about the individual.

Structure your poem as follows:

“I AM POEM”

FIRST STANZA:

I am (name the character)
I wonder (something the character is actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound the character might hear)
I see (an imaginary sight the character might see)
I want (something the character truly desires)

SECOND STANZA:

I pretend (something the character actually pretends to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers the character)
I cry (something that makes the character very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA:

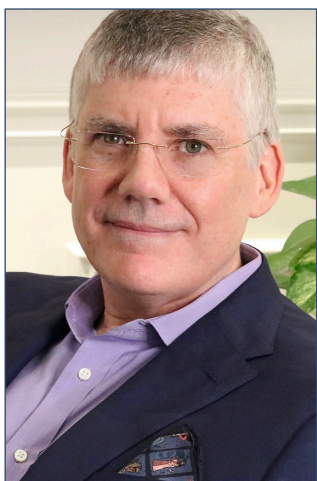
I understand (something the character knows is true)
I say (something that the character believes in)
I dream (something the character might actually dream about)
I try (something the character really makes an effort about)
I hope (something the character actually hopes for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

ESSENTIAL QUOTE ANALYSIS

Reflect on some of the collection’s more salient ideas—points the Rick Riordan Presents authors seem to be making that might get at the heart of their story’s intended meaning for readers. Select four quotes from throughout *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities* collection that seem to signify main ideas or “life lessons.” The quotes might be spoken by characters or could be part of the narration (remember to include page numbers). Next, explain why each quote seems to be so significant. How does it contribute to the story’s “message” or deeper meaning? Be sure to consider how the quotes have meaning BEYOND the characters and situations of the story collection. They have universal application to readers’ lives as well. When selecting your top four “Essential Quotes,” look for examples that have relevance to your own and others’ lives, as though the authors are speaking directly to you through the experiences and situations in the novels.

Essential Quotes from *The Cursed Carnival and Other Calamities*

Quote	Page #	Relevance in Novel	“Message” to Readers (Universal Application)



ABOUT THE EDITOR OF THE COLLECTION

Rick Riordan, dubbed “storyteller of the gods” by *Publishers Weekly*, is the author of five #1 *New York Times* best-selling series with millions of copies sold throughout the world: *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, the *Heroes of Olympus*, and the *Trials of Apollo*, based on Greek and Roman mythology; the *Kane Chronicles*, based on ancient Egyptian mythology; and *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*, based on Norse mythology. Rick collaborated with illustrator John Rocco on two #1 *New York Times* best-selling collections of Greek myths for the whole family, *Percy Jackson’s Greek Gods* and *Percy Jackson’s Greek Heroes*. His latest book is *Daughter of the Deep*, a modern take on the Jules Verne classic *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

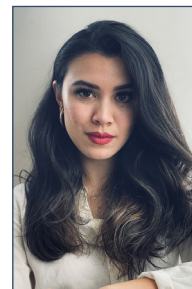
Rick is also the publisher of an imprint at Disney Hyperion, Rick Riordan Presents, dedicated to finding other authors of highly entertaining fiction based on world cultures and mythologies. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with his wife and two sons. Follow him on Twitter at @RickRiordan.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Carlos Hernandez has published more than thirty works of fiction, poetry, and drama, including *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe*, for which he won a Pura Belpré Award from the American Library Association, and its sequel, *Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe*. Carlos is an English professor at the City University of New York, and he loves to both play games and design them. He lives with his wife, Claire, in Queens, New York. Follow him on Twitter @WriteTeachPlay.



Roshani Chokshi is the author of the *New York Times* best-selling Pandava series, which began with *Aru Shah and the End of Time* and was inspired by the Hindu stories her grandmother told her. Rosh also wrote the *New York Times* best-selling YA books *The Star-Touched Queen*, *The Gilded Wolves*, and *The Silvered Serpents*. She studied fairy tales in college and once had a pet luck dragon that looked suspiciously like a Great Pyrenees dog. Roshani lives in the South and says *y’all*, but she doesn’t really have a Southern accent. Her Twitter handle is @roshani_chokshi.



J. C. Cervantes is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Storm Runner*, *The Fire Keeper*, and *The Shadow Crosser*, a fantasy adventure trilogy based on Mesoamerican mythology. Jen grew up in San Diego and was fascinated by stories about Maya gods, impossible adventures, and all things magic. She now lives in New Mexico, where she is creating more tales, including a spin-off of the Storm Runner series. Follow her on Twitter @jencerv and Instagram @authorjccervantes.



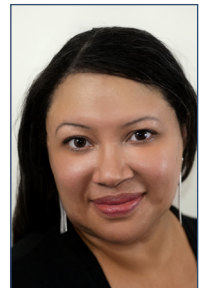
Yoon Ha Lee is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Dragon Pearl*, winner of a Locus Award and the Mythopoeic Award. He has also written several critically acclaimed short stories and the *Machineries of Empire* trilogy for adults: *Ninefox Gambit*, *Raven Stratagem*, and *Revenant Gun*. Yoon draws inspiration from a variety of sources, e.g. Korean history and mythology, fairy tales, higher mathematics, classic moral dilemmas, and genre fiction. His Twitter handle is @deuceofgears.



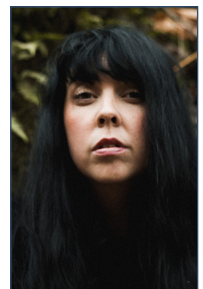
Kwame Mbalia is the *New York Times* best-selling author of the Tristan Strong trilogy, which incorporates elements from African American folklore and African mythology. He received a Coretta Scott King Author Honor award for the first book, *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky*. The book was also named to best-of-the-year lists compiled by *Publishers Weekly*, the Chicago Public Library, and the *New York Times*. Kwame lives with his wife and children near Raleigh, North Carolina, where he is currently working on two new series. Follow him on Twitter @KSekouM.



Rebecca Roanhorse is a Black Indigenous (Ohkay Owingeh) writer of speculative fiction, including *Black Sun*, *Star Wars: Resistance Reborn*, *Trail of Lightning*, *Storm of Locusts*, and a Nebula- and Hugo-winning short story, “Welcome to Your Authentic Indian Experience.” *The New York Times* best-selling *Race to the Sun*, inspired by Diné stories, was her middle grade debut. Rebecca lives in Northern New Mexico with her Navajo husband and their daughter. Follow her on Twitter @RoanhorseBex.



Tehlor Kay Mejia is an Oregon native in love with the alpine meadows and evergreen forests of her home state, where she lives with her daughter. When she’s not writing, you can find her plucking at her guitar, stealing rosemary sprigs from overgrown gardens, or trying to make the perfect vegan tamale. She is the author of *Paola Santiago and the River of Tears* and *Paola Santiago and the Forest of Nightmares*, based on Mexican folktales, as well as the YA fantasy novels *We Set the Dark on Fire* and *We Unleash the Merciless Storm*. Follow her on Twitter @tehlorkay.



Sarwat Chadda, a first-generation Muslim immigrant, is the author of *City of the Plague God*, a novel based on Mesopotamian mythology. As a lifelong gamer, he decided to embrace his passion for over-the-top adventure stories by swapping a career in engineering for a new one as a writer. That resulted in his first novel, *Devil’s Kiss*, back in 2009. Since then he has been published in a dozen languages, writing comic books, TV shows, and novels such as the award-winning Indian mythology-inspired Ash Mistry series and the epic high-fantasy *Shadow Magic* trilogy (as Joshua Khan). While he’s traveled far and wide, including to Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, he’s most at home in London, where he lives with his wife, two more-or-less grown-up daughters, and an aloof cat. Drop him a line on Twitter @sarwatchadda or Instagram @sarwat_chadda.



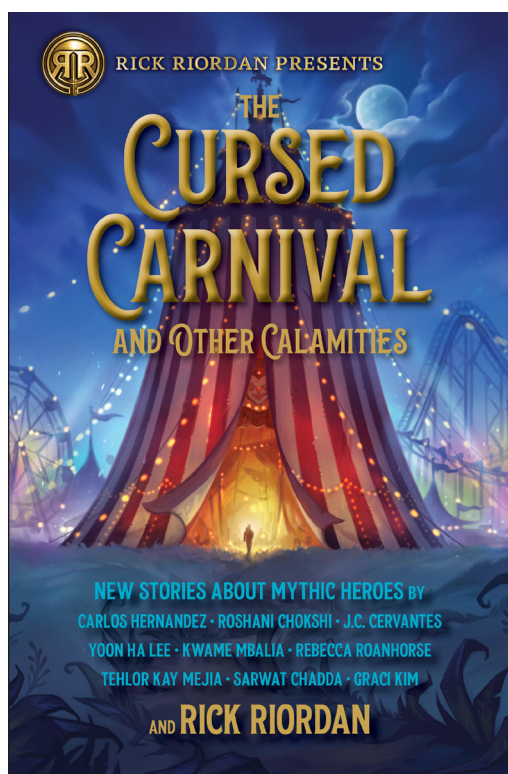
Gracie Kim is a Korean Kiwi diplomat turned author who writes about the magic she wants to see in the world. Her middle grade debut, *The Last Fallen Star*, is the first book in the Gifted Clans trilogy, inspired by Korean mythology. In a previous life, she used to be a cooking-show host, and she once ran a business that turned children's drawings into plushies. When she's not lost in her imagination, you'll find Graci drinking flat whites, eating ramyeon, and most likely hugging a dog (or ideally, many). She lives in New Zealand with her husband and daughter. Follow her on Twitter @gracikim and Instagram @gracikimwrites.



This guide was created by **Dr. Rose Brock**, an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University.

Dr. Brock holds a PhD in library science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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