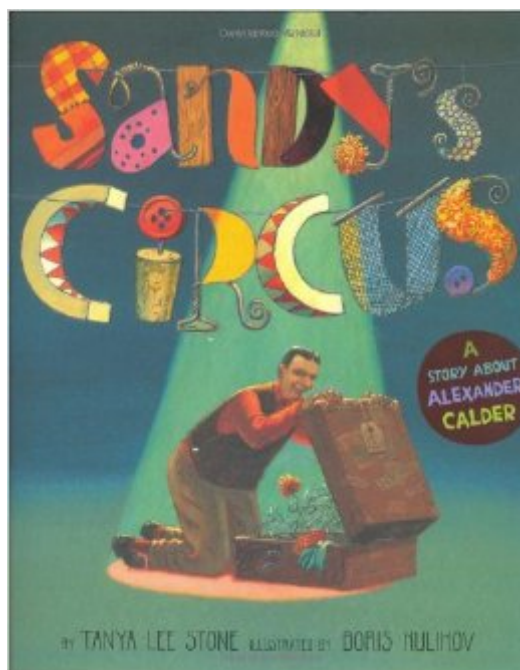


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# Sandy's Circus: A Story About Alexander Calder



## Synopsis

As a boy, Alexander "Sandy" Calder was always fiddling with odds and ends, making objects for friends. When he got older and became an artist, his fiddling led him to create wire sculptures. One day, Sandy made a lion. Next came a lion cage. Before he knew it, he had an entire circus and was traveling between Paris and New York performing a brand-new kind of art for amazed audiences. This is the story of Sandy's Circus, as told by Tanya Lee Stone with Boris Kulikov's spectacular and innovative illustrations. Calder's original circus is on permanent display at the Whitney Museum in New York City.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD750L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Viking Books for Young Readers (September 4, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0670062685

ISBN-13: 978-0670062683

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 0.2 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #90,616 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#32 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > Sculpture](#) [#56 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art](#) [#353 in Books > Arts & Photography > Individual Artists](#)

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

## Customer Reviews

Alexander "Sandy" Calder, a famous American artist and sculptor, loved nothing more as a child than making objects from scraps of wood, leather, and wire that he found around the house and neighborhood. He built a miniature castle for his sister, made toys and jewelry for his friends, and created abstract shapes using his imagination as a guide. Although Sandy studied engineering in college, he did not find his subsequent jobs satisfying, and he returned to his love of art. A trip to Paris led Sandy to design a set of miniature circus figures made from wire, cork, buttons, cloth, and other scraps. He used these figures to put on animated circus shows before delighted audiences in both Paris and New York. As the number of figures grew to fill five suitcases, the popularity of Cirque

Calder also grew and helped to establish Sandy's reputation as an innovative and talented artist. He later invented the mobile (a sculpture made with wire that gently spins in the air), a popular art form that hangs over baby cribs around the world. Sandy's Circus is a well-researched book that will find appeal among adults and children for its interesting story and dramatic illustrations. Mixed into this snapshot of Alexander Calder's life are some important economics lessons related to innovation and human resources. This valuable book will add nicely to any collection of children's books with substantive content and an entertaining story.

Sandy's parents were very artistic, but he didn't consider himself to be an artist. He was always creating something and his parents made sure he had plenty of material to work with. While his father sculpted and his mother painted he would be creating things for his friends and his sister Peggy with scrap materials he scrounged from the streets. When he grew up, he had no desire to be an artist and instead "went to college and learned more about making things by studying to be an engineer." After college he worked as a fireman on a ship and a magnificent "fiery red sunrise" and a full moon that looked "like a silver coin" inspired him to return to art school. Alexander "Sandy" Calder really was born to be an artist and when he was hired by a newspaper to draw the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circus he was hooked. By 1926 he could be found on the streets of Paris with "a roll of wire around his shoulder and a pair of pliers in his pocket." He was adept at twisting wire into astonishing portraits of his friends. The circus was probably still in the back of his mind when he created a "little wire lion." It was the start of a special circus that would cross the ocean and back many times. For a man who didn't think he was an artist, he would one day wow the world. Showtime! This was a wonderful portrait of a man that didn't seem to realize or acknowledge that he had a very unique and wonderful talent. I loved the easy flow of the story and the happy aura surrounding it. The artwork was vibrant, exciting and complimented the story perfectly. In the back of the book is a brief story about how the author became captivated by and "met" Sandy's circus in a chance encounter on a Sunday drive. There is a photograph of him at work in the back of the book. This is a Vermont Red Clover Award nominee for the 2009-10 school year. This book is one that will appeal to both child and adult alike!

I have used this book in my classroom for 2 years now. It is a great biography for kids. My students are second graders and we learn all about Alexander. We create wire figurines to make our own circus and it is a great conversation starter or writing project book. The illustrations are also beautiful.

I have purchased this book many times for gift giving and have a copy for myself. The story and the illustrations are beautiful. If you're a fan of Alexander Calder, this book is a must have. Beautiful.

This little book is beautifully illustrated and tells a lovely story about the life of Alexander Calder. I am using it for a Unit that I teach as an Elementary Art Teacher.

Kids will relate to this story of odd little boy, always fiddling with strings, trinkets, wires, endless one-of-a-kind projects. As a child and as an adult he hatched playful, "crazy" ideas, imagination working over-time, oblivious to practical concerns, advice. He would not be deterred, persisting in grand schemes in spite of setbacks, criticism. Well, most of us know a version of him, right? And the great thing is, he succeeded, earned world-wide respect for his original "impossible" creations. There is no "message," but I love that this passionate, generous, weird, nerdy genius sticks to his vision and succeeds grandly. How not to like?

I only recently became acquainted with the work of Alexander Calder, an artist who didn't call the things he made art, and found this to be another enjoyable and informative book about this non-traditional creator. Sandy, as he preferred to be called, fashioned an entire miniature traveling circus of wire, wood and other materials that wowed audiences on both sides of the globe and redefined the way people view art. A fun read aloud to share with your kiddos or a classroom full of them, especially if you let them loose to make their own creations afterward.

This is a fabulous book about Alexander Calder. I used it with my students--the little ones 4-5 year olds in Art Class and they really enjoyed it. It's application could be used with older students as well to inspire sculpture or mobile creation.

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