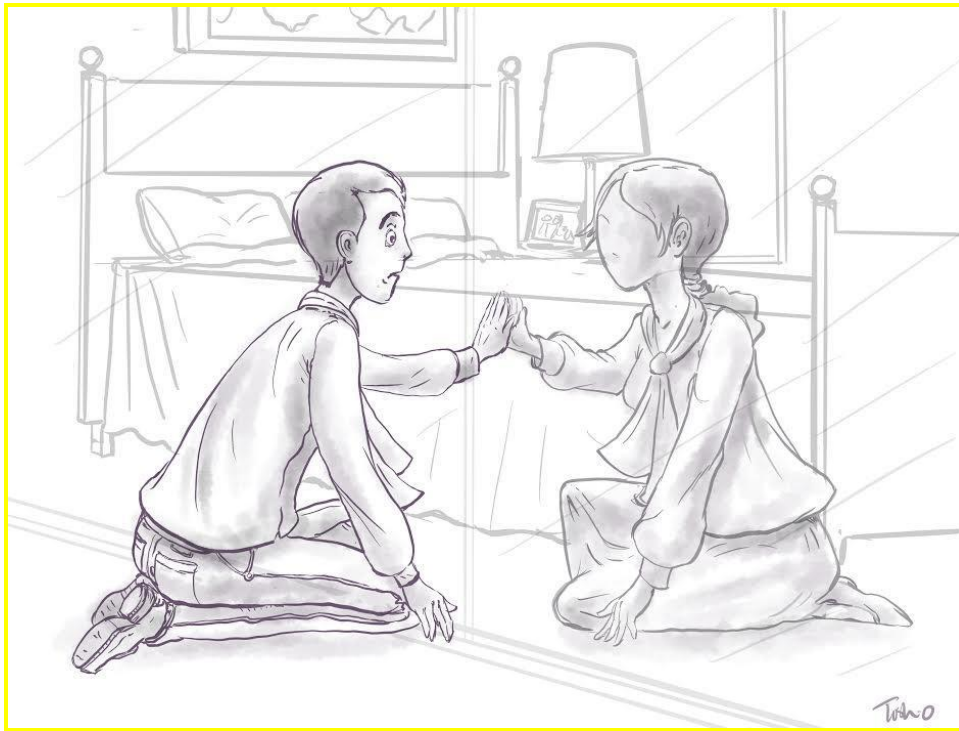


Drag

By Kate Kesner

Illustrated by Santosh Oommen

Curriculum developed by Angelina Coppola



OVERVIEW

Quick-Glance 10 Points for Usage Guide

Student Population	
Age/Grade-Level Appropriateness	* 14+/9th+
Genre/s	* Fiction * Drama * Short story
Length	* 800 words (five-minute read)
Content Advisories	* Sexual innuendos * Death
One-Sentence Summary	A scientist remembers his deceased wife as he tries on her clothes.

Lesson Planning	
Topics & Key Themes Overview	<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Love * Grief * Death * Family * Memory * Illness * Childhood * Adulthood * Gender expression * Career development <p>Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choices * Longing * Letting go * Sensuality * Familial responsibility * The power or memories * The process of mourning * The interplay between our senses and our recollection
Historic Events/Time Period for Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Contemporary disease research * The changing meaning of gender and sexuality
Complementary Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Song: “I’ll Be Seeing You” by Billie Holiday: https://bit.ly/1OvZFW7 * Article: “Papel Picado” by the Children’s Museum of Houston: https://bit.ly/2FwE2k5 * Article: “Associated Press Style” by the Owl at Purdue: https://bit.ly/2OIZMC7
Author & Artist Information	<p>Kate Kesner is a writer and a recent graduate of UC Santa Barbara. Santosh Oommen is a LA-based illustrator and storyboard artist.</p>
Key Common Core Standards (found in detail following the curriculum)	<p>Grades 9-10 Common Core Standards:</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.E CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.D</p>

	* Note: Questions recommended for assessment are marked with two asterisks
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Author Biography

Kate Kesner thinks writing is the most reliable form of transportation. A recent graduate of UC Santa Barbara’s global studies major, she is currently trying to figure out life. She likes sci-fi, dancing, and most people, and is honored to be included in Issue 6 of *Literature for Life*. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Artist Biography

Santosh Oommen is a freelance illustrator and storyboard artist for animation and film. He has worked as an animator for television, feature films, and video games produced by companies like Jim Henson Interactive, Warner Bros. Interactive, Disney, Lucasfilm, MTV, and NBC.

Santosh has also worked as an instructor and professor at Riverside City College, The Art Institute of California—Inland Empire, and the Advanced Media Vocational Academy, a school for autistic college students who are interested in media arts.

He serves on the board of the nonprofit organization Actors for Autism, as well the Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles (SILA), where he is the new member chair. At SILA, he’s served as president and chair of the Illustration West competition. Since 2013, he has been a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

He has hosted SILA’s audio podcast since its inception, interviewing authors such as Nilah Magruder, Jason Porath, Mike Cavallaro, and more. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles, where he creates storyboards for animation, pitches his shows, and illustrates his graphic novels.

SYNOPSIS

In “Drag,” scientist Jack speaks to the reader about the memory of his deceased wife, Eva, and his attempt to cope with her illness and subsequent death. As Jack tries on Eva’s clothes, he remembers moments of their time together. The presence of their children brings him back to the present. He tries to look toward his family’s future without her.

CURRICULUM

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

Topic

Option One:

Research & Writing:

Using reliable sources, research the connection between our senses and our memory.

In a one-page response, explore what you have learned. Remember to cite your sources. What unexpected facts did you discover?

Share your response with a partner. Ask them to write three strengths of your paper and three places where you can improve. Revise your paper, which you will turn in to your teacher.

Option Two:

Mini-Research Project:

In “Drag,” Jack reference Nepal and how, after a death, “you could sit for a very long time” there. In small groups, use reliable resources to research the predominant religions in Nepal, as well as their death rites and rituals.

Do the same for three additional countries of your choice. Create a comparative Google Slides, PowerPoint, or Prezi presentation in which you cite your sources. Present to the class.

Main Ideas

Journaling:

In a 10-minute journal entry, write a one-page letter to someone you care about but whom you haven’t seen recently.

You may wish to write to a close friend, a family member, or a mentor. In your letter, try to include a least one memory you have of them.

Passage-Specific Themes

Journaling & Discussion:

Read the following excerpt from “Drag”:

After a death, people give you a month, close friends, three. Then they move on, and you are frozen on the wrong side of longing.

In a five-minute journal entry, reflect on the above passage. Then, discuss the following questions with a partner:

Question One: Consider the statement, “After a death, people give you a month, close friends, three.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

Question Two: What do you think it means to be “frozen on the wrong side of longing”? Have you ever felt this way? If so, why?

If you feel comfortable doing so, share your ideas with the class.

Universal Themes

Option One:

Journaling:

In a 10-minute journal entry, explore the idea of familial responsibility by responding to the following questions:

- What responsibilities do you think spouses have to each other? Do you think these responsibilities change when a couple has children? Why or why not?
- What responsibilities do you think parents have to their children?
- How do you think a parent’s responsibilities to their children might affect their process of grieving for a spouse?

Share your ideas with a partner.

Option Two:

Mini-Research Project:

In pairs, use reliable sources to research how people respond to death. You may wish to focus your research on one of the following questions:

- How do adults respond to the death of a spouse?
- How do parents respond to the death of a child?
- How do children respond to the death of a parent?
- How do children respond to the death of a sibling?

Finally, research what resources exist in Los Angeles to support adults and/or children who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

Create a mini-presentation to present your research, as well as the resources available to support people who are grieving. Include a visual aspect, like Google Slides, PowerPoint, or Prezi.

Key Vocabulary

Definitions are context-dependent. Make sure any definitions you look up or work from are the ones that most correctly fit in the context of the story.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
unremarkable	letter-pressed	fairy rings
prayer flag	navel	parody
election	inevitable	garish
crevice	papel picado	Nepal
baby bump	interning	alchemist
longing	accentuates	senses

Vocabulary Activity Options

1. What is an alchemist? Research the practices and history of alchemy. Do you believe alchemy has scientific merit? Why or why not? Discuss your ideas with a partner.
2. Look up photographs of redwood fairy rings and mushroom fairy rings. Why do you think these

formations are called fairy rings? In pairs, research and discuss other natural phenomena, like rainbows or the Northern Lights. Scientifically, how did they come to exist? Cite reliable sources. In pairs, write a one- to two-page creative origin story describing how one natural phenomena came to exist. Your story does not have to be factually accurate, but you should use telling details and sensory language to create a picture in your reader's mind.

3. Make your own papel picado. The Children's Museum of Houston provides step-by-step instructions: <https://bit.ly/2FwE2k5>

Suggested materials: colored tissue paper, scissors, pencils or markers, string, and tape

Optional: You may wish to ask students to decorate the classroom with their creations.

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

1. In "Drag," Kesner writes in the second person, meaning she addresses the reader as "you." How does this narrative technique create a unique relationship between the narrator and the reader?
2. We learn about Eva's character through Jack's memories of her. What do you think Eva was like? If she were able to see Jack wearing her blouse, how do you think she would react? Why?
3. How do you think Jack's children bring him back to the present moment? Find these moments in the story. Do you think Jack would respond differently to Eva's death had they not had children? Why or why not?
4. How does the story's ending make you feel? If you were asked to write an alternative ending, what would happen? Why?

** Text-Dependent Question Options

1. In "Drag," Kesner weaves flashbacks into the present moment. Analyze the transitions between the two. How does the present trigger Jack's memories of the past? Cite the text.
2. How do you think Eva and Jack's relationship changes over time? Reference the text. Do you think a relationship continues even when one person has died? Why or why not?
3. In literature, tone is the author's attitude toward something or someone. In "Drag," what is the author's tone? How do you know? Cite the text.
4. Look at the story's artwork. Why do you think the artist, Santosh Oommen, chose to illustrate the story in black and white? How does this decision influence your understanding of the story?

Writing Exercises

Narrative

Journaling:

Option One: In a 15-minute journal entry, write about something or someone you would like to let go of, whether it is a grudge, a habit, a person, or a memory. How do you think letting go would change your life?

Option Two: In a 15-minute journal entry, write about a smell that reminds you of a person and/or a place. Use telling details and sensory language so your reader can visualize the person and/or place.

Creative Writing:

Option Three: At the end of “Drag,” Will walks in on his father trying on Eva’s clothes. Reread this scene. Then, rewrite it from Will’s perspective.

Descriptive

Reread “Drag” with a highlighter in your hand. Select three inspiring sentences and/or phrases from the story. Choose the sentence and/or phrase that makes you feel the most. In one paragraph, describe exactly how the sentence and/or phrase makes you feel. Use telling details and sensory language.

Then, use the same sentence and/or phrase as the opening line for a first draft of your own creative story, poem, or song. Share your writing with a classmate and revise into a second draft, which you will turn in to your teacher.

**** Analysis**

In a cohesive two-page analysis, explore Bea and Will’s characters. How are they present and how are they absent? What don’t we know about them? How do they help Jack overcome Eva’s death?

You may structure your analysis however you like, but be sure to include an introduction, which states your thesis, and a conclusion, which summarizes and supports your argument. Cite the text.

Complementary Text Option

Read the lyrics to the song “I’ll Be Seeing You” by American Jazz singer Billie Holiday. Listen to the song.

I’ll Be Seeing You

Written by Irving Kahal (1938)

Performed by Billie Holiday (1957)

I’ll be seeing you
In all the old familiar places
That this heart of mine embraces
All day and through
In that small cafe
The park across the way
The children’s carousel
The chestnut trees
The wishing well
I’ll be seeing you
In every lovely summer’s day
In everything that’s light and gay
I’ll always think of you that way
I’ll find you in the morning sun
And when the night is new
I’ll be looking at the moon
But I’ll be seeing you
I’ll be seeing you
In every lovely summer’s day

In everything that's light and gay
I'll always think of you that way
I'll find you in the morning sun
And when the night is new
I'll be looking at the moon
But I'll be seeing you.

Writing Exercise

In a 15-minute journal entry, respond to the following questions:

- What are some of your favorite lines from "I'll Be Seeing You"? Why?
- How does the song make you feel?
- Does it remind you of another song? If so, why?
- Whom do you think Holiday is singing about? How do you know?

Finally, explain how the song relates to "Drag." Share your ideas in small groups or as a class.

Activity Options

Classroom Activity One

Class Discussion & Writing:

As a class, discuss the five senses, sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Divide the class into small groups, and ask each group to select a different sense, for which they will create a word palette.

Ask students to present their words to the class and write them on the board. Then, prompt each student to write for 15 minutes about a memory using at least five of the sensory words listed. Encourage students to use telling details and sensory language so their reader can visualize the memory.

Classroom Activity Two

Mini-Research & Writing Project:

In small groups, use reliable resources to research one of the following ideas related to memory:

- How does our brain make memories?
- How are trauma and memory interconnected?
- How can a person overcome a traumatic memory?

In your group, write a collaborative two-page essay in response to one of the above questions. Remember to cite your sources. Create a Google Slides, PowerPoint, or Prezi presentation describing your research, which you will share with the class.

Follow-up Writing Exercise:

In one to two paragraphs, reflect on the process of writing a collaborative research paper. How well did you work together? How did you contribute to the project? If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently? Why?

Home Activity

Read “Drag” with a friend or family member. Discuss each other’s thoughts on the story. How are your ideas similar and/or different?

Next, write five bullet point notes from your conversation, and share them with the class.

Guest Speaker

Option One: Invite the author, Kate Kesner, to speak to the class about her story and her experience studying global studies at UC Santa Barbara. Ask her to lead a writing workshop.

Option Two: Invite the artist, Santosh Oommen, to speak to the class about his inspiration for creating the story’s artwork, as well as his career as an illustrator. Ask him to lead an art workshop.

Note: *Literature for Life* helps coordinate and facilitate author and artist visits.

Field Trip

Visit a local newspaper like the *LA Times* (2300 East Imperial Highway, El Segundo) or *LA Weekly* (724 Spring Street, Los Angeles). Ask to tour the building, discover what it’s like to be a journalist, and learn about intern opportunities for high schoolers.

Before the field trip, ask students to read one or two recent news articles published by the newspaper. Ask them to prepare questions ahead of time.

Onsite Writing Activity:

Take notes during your visit. Then, write the first draft of a one-page article describing your experience. Use telling details and sensory language so your reader can visualize exactly how you felt when visiting the newspaper’s office.

Optional: Challenge students to write their article according to Associated Press (AP) Style, the style guidelines used by real reporters. Here is a helpful link for teaching AP Style: <https://bit.ly/2OiZMC7>

Share your first draft with a partner. Ask them to write down three strengths of your article and three places where you can improve. Revise your article to a final draft, which you will share with your teacher.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS REFERENCE

This story and its exercises are appropriate for 9th grade and above. Ninth- and tenth-grade standards are cited.

Pre-Reading & Themes Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Vocabulary Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9-10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.D: Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

Post-Reading Class Discussion Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Text-Dependent Question Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Writing Exercise Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.E: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Complementary Reading Text (Comparative Writing Exercise)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Activity Options

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D: Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.