

How to Date a Flying Mexican (27 minutes)

By Daniel Olivas

Illustration by Joe Cepeda

Curriculum developed by Andrew Ramirez

Synopsis: Dan Olivas, the author of the story, reflects on what drives him to write, and how he shared his literary passion with his late father. The story we are about to read, it turns out, was his father’s favorite. In the story, Conchita, a middle-aged woman, is happily unmarried. Conchita’s new boyfriend, Moises, amazingly can fly... or as he puts it, “levitate.” In an attempt to make sense of this, Conchita examines religious mythology and seeks the advice of her family (both living and dead) to comprehend this amazing and mysterious man in her life. Ultimately, Conchita vows to keep Moises’s great ability a secret, as she fears he will be taken from her if the news gets out. The story concludes with Conchita vowing to teach her boyfriend one of her skills, if he teaches her one of his.



Vocabulary

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| 1. havoc | 5. destitute |
| 2. eloquent | 6. noxious |
| 3. mantra | 7. inevitable |
| 4. inexorably | 8. penchant |

Pre reading writing prompt

Are “secrets” a good thing or a bad thing in our world? Think about the different secrets people might keep, as well as reasons for why people might keep a secret. Also, remember a secret can be kept by one person, or a group of people. With all this in mind, are “secrets” a positive or negative in our world?

Pre reading discussion prompt (class wide or in pairs)

Is it good or bad to “break” tradition? Before you answer, have each group take a notecard and write one “tradition” on the notecard. These traditions can range anywhere from benign — wearing green on St. Patrick’s Day — to more meaningful: like a quinceañera where the whole family attends. At the end of the day, traditions take many different forms, so take a minute to consider all the different types of tradition in your world and beyond.

Post reading discussion questions (class wide or in pairs)

1. Do you think Conchita is correct or logical in worrying about sharing Moises's secret with the world?
2. Do you think Moises and Conchita are a good match for a relationship? Why or why not?
3. Why does Moises insist on using the word "levitate" instead of fly, when describing his rare ability?
4. Do you believe Conchinta can learn to "levitate" like Moises, after he teaches her? Why or why not?
5. In relationship to this story, as well as what you know about the genre Magical Realism, what might Moises's ability to levitate symbolize?

Post reading writing reflection:

What is the significance of the last line of the story: "And finally, we hope that you remember the most important lesson of all: Do not forget to breathe." What makes this seemingly obvious advice so important? Other than the literal act of breathing, what do you think the narrator is figuratively referring to, with this last piece of advice?