

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
READ • LISTEN • TELL



“Ghost Trap” by Gloria Anzaldúa

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FURTHER RESEARCH AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Reflective Writing

There are two possible ways to approach this exercise:

This exercise may be completed independently, with an adequate amount of time allotted for thinking and writing out a response. Afterwards, students may hand in their papers or discuss their thoughts in small groups. Or students may draft their responses in a reading journal, before expanding one entry into a short reflective essay.

1. Identify and briefly describe the mundane settings identifiable in the story. As you do so, look closely at the passages. What does Anzaldúa reveal in her descriptions? What details is she withholding? How does her descriptive style affect the tone of the story, and where is the reader's attention focused? (You may answer this generally or by close reading one or two paragraphs from any point in the story where the setting is prominent.)
2. Select and close read a passage which depicts a mundane occurrence in the narrative, carefully examining how the fantastic exists and operates in relation to the mundane. These questions may prompt your thinking: What about the passage indicates the fantastic? How does the fantastic respond to the mundane world? How do mundane people interact with the fantastic? What relationship does the fantastic have with material objects? Give at least one specific example.
3. Choose a short scene in which the fantastic is active in a mundane setting. Imagine that the scene is being observed by someone skeptical of the fantastic. You may wish to imagine a specific person, such as a friend or family member. What do you think they would see? How could the scene be rationalized into a mundane occurrence? How might Ursula's behaviour be affected?
4. Find a passage or fundamental characteristic of the story that deals with hybridity and border-crossing. Analyze the example you have identified with respect to what you know of Anzaldúa from her biography. What do you think the author is trying to convey about the real world through this aspect of the story? Why do you think the author chose this specific way to convey that message? (You may refer to the overarching narrative to support your argument.)
5. Research the story of La Llorona, the weeping woman, whom Anzaldúa references in the opening paragraph of the story. What do you think the significance of this mythical allusion is, either in the context of that passage or the story overall? What do you think the author is trying to convey about Ursula by comparing her to this mythical woman? Explain.

