

## Study Guide Questions for *Normal Miguel*

1. Consider the development of Miguel's conflict resolution skills from the beginning of the school year to the end. How has he matured from a style of avoidance to one of assertive confrontation?
2. How do Miguel's students deal differently from the adults with the notion of sexuality? Is this realistic? Is it different from children in the United States?
3. Is either the Captain or Tomas merely an example of a closeted homosexual hidden beyond a mask of machismo? Might they be bisexual? Or do they represent a different "category" of sexuality than we find in the United States?
4. As a teacher, what additional challenges does Miguel confront from his American counterparts? Any particular advantages over them?
5. What is the role of death in the story? How about abandonment?
6. Discuss poverty in the story and the manners in which it is or isn't overcome.
7. What is the most important theme in the book for you? What sticks in your mind about the story? Was there anything that surprised you?
8. In some ways, people consider Mexico just like the United States, only 10 or 20 years behind. In what ways might this be or not be reflected in *Normal Miguel*?
9. Throughout the story, a number of blatant acts of homophobia occur, some resolved while others not. What are your reflections in these regards?
10. In what ways has the relationship between Ruben and Miguel solidified and in what ways will they need to grow?
11. Did you personally identify with any character or situation in the book? Explain.
12. How does the overall image of Mexico described in the story compare or contrast the image you had or have?
13. The Directora and Teresita are both mother figures in the story. In what ways are they similar or different? What role does Miguel's mother play? How about Ruben's? What is the overall message regarding mothers in this novel?
14. What features of Orrantia's writing style did you like? What features did you have a hard time with?
15. Some people categorize the story in the gay romance genre. How would you categorize it? Why?