



Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel (Max's Lucha Libre Adventures #1) / Maximilian y el misterio del Ángel de la Guarda

written and illustrated by Xavier Garza

About the Book

Genre: Fiction

Format: Paperback, 208 pages

ISBN: 9781933693989

Reading Level: Grades 6 - 7

Interest Level: Grades 3 - 7

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
5.1/3.0 4.7/3.0

Lexile™ Measure: 820L

*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

Themes: Childhood Experiences and Memories, Dreams and Aspirations, Fiction, Identity, Self Esteem and Confidence, Sports (Wrestling), Mexico, Optimism and Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Texas, Latino/Hispanic/ Mexican Interest

Resources on the web:

leeandlow.com/books/maximilian-the-mystery-of-the-guardian-angel

SYNOPSIS

Maximilian is just another 11-year-old lucha libre fan. He goes to the matches, watches the movies and collects the masks of his favorite wrestlers, especially the Guardian Angel. But when he tumbles over the railing at a lucha libre match in San Antonio, Max makes a connection to the world of Mexican wrestling that will ultimately link him—maybe by blood!—to the greatest hero of all time: The Guardian Angel. What was shaping up to be one boring summer before sixth grade now seems like a story straight out of Max's beloved lucha libre movies!

Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller won a Pura Belpré Author Award Honor.

Un cuento bilingüe, ganador de Pura Belpré. Maximilian es solo otro fan de lucha libre de 11 años. Él va a los partidos, mira las películas y colecciona las máscaras de sus luchadores favoritos, especialmente el Ángel Guardian. Pero cuando cae por la barandilla en un combate de lucha libre en San Antonio, Max hace una conexión con el mundo de la lucha mexicana, que finalmente lo vinculará —¡tal vez por sangre!— Al héroe más grande de todos los tiempos: El Ángel Guardian.

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

BACKGROUND

From Author's Note

"The inspiration for *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* sprang from a short story I wrote about a kid who goes to see lucha libre matches with his uncle and ends up getting into a tug of war with a girl over his favorite wrestler's mask. Little did I know that the story I had titled back then as "Adventures in Mexican Wrestling" would lead to a series of books about the escapades of Maximilian and his world that is filled with masked heroes and villains. I am beyond thrilled to share the news that the adventures of Maximilian will continue to be published under the Cinco Puntos Press imprint at its new home, Lee & Low Books. I dedicate this relaunch of the Maximilian series to Lee Byrd and everybody else who was ever a part of Cinco Puntos Press. I wouldn't have been able to introduce *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*, and the three books that followed, to the world without you all. I also dedicate the relaunch of the series to my readers for supporting my stories over the years. Maximilian and the Guardian Angel have returned. The best is yet to come!"

The History of Lucha Libre

Lucha libre is an important and iconic part Mexican culture. In *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*, family time for Max means attending lucha libre matches together. In lucha libre there are masks, technical maneuvers, rules, and plenty of dramatic entertainment.

Lucha libre dates back to the mid-1800s. Lucha libre wrestlers are called luchadores. The luchador masks are a "sacred part of a wrestler's identity," according to Texas Highways. Lucha libre is an important activity and pastime for families and fans not only in Mexico and the United States, but around the world today. To learn more about the history of lucha libre, visit some of the following resources:

<https://www.si.com/wrestling/2019/09/17/lucha-libre-mexico-united-states>

<https://abc7.com/lucha-libre-wrestling-mexico-sports/1412999/>

<https://texashighways.com/culture/how-lucha-libre-mexican-style-wrestling-unites-two-countries/>

A Note to Educators:

Before reading this book, it is important to acknowledge that there is mention of the word/concept suicidal/suicida at the beginning of chapter 13. This word may be triggering for some students. Please consider using the necessary resources to prepare students for this chapter.

There is a brief mention of an unhealthy relationship between Lalo and the masked damsel/ La Dama Enmascarada in Chapters 12 and 13. She gets violent toward an individual(s) because of jealousy. This may also be of a triggering nature for some students, consider consulting the necessary resources to prepare students for these scenes.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Ask students what they know about lucha libre or other types of wrestling.
- Have you ever been a part of a team or project that required you to work alongside others? How was that experience? What was it like to work with others?
- Have you ever lost someone close to you? Was it temporary or permanent? How did that loss make you feel?
- Have you ever been in a difficult situation where you didn't know what to do? Who did you go to for help? What plan did you come up with to tackle the situation? How did this situation make you feel?
- Ask students to think about their families and what the concept of family means to them. How is family important to you? How do you interact with your family members? How do you help them?
- What does it mean to be a friend? What are the qualities of friendship that you value?
- If you are bilingual (or speak more than two languages), do you think bilingualism is important? Why? How does this ability affect your life? If you are not bilingual, why do you think multiple languages are significant to people who are bilingual?

You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*. Ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Book Walk:** Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, half title page, title page, message to readers, author's short bio (at the end of the book), and listing of the author's other titles. Display the book and analyze the cover. What do students notice in the illustration?
- **Read More About Author/Illustrator Xavier Garza** (<https://www.kens5.com/article/news/community/south-texas-culture-stories-storyteller-xavier-garza/273-7e27e609-2db1->

4c81-a2bc-d32a0a7892ed). What do you think the process is like to write and illustrate a book for young readers? Why do you think Xavier Garza created this book for young readers?

Encourage students to stop and jot down notes in their reading notebooks during the reading when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how hard work and dedication are crucial to achieving a goal
- why it is important to reflect on and accept one's mistakes
- the difficulties and pressures of being the middle sibling
- how Max, his family, and friends change over the course of the book, and what events cause those changes
- how young people show resilience through difficult times
- how Max's family supports and looks after one another throughout the book
- why it's important to stand up for your beliefs, identity, culture, and traditions

Encourage students to consider why the author/illustrator Xavier Garza would want to share this story with young people.

VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

aluchador, carcajadas, recompense/reward, uncanny, waffle irons/wafleras, encajosa, bravado/bravuconada, flesh-eating/caníbal, tights/leotardos, remains/restos, vendor/vendedor, feather-encrusted/emplumado, horned/colmilluda, rudos, técnicos, bait/trampa, canvas/lona, tongue-tied/traba la lengua, vengeance, hideous, silhouette/silueta, unconscious/inconsciente, excursion/excursión, punishment/castigo, figurine/figura, prehistoric/prehistoria, caveman/cavernario, whet, Richter scale/escala de Richter, gargantuan/gigantescas, featherweights/pesos pluma, behemoths, monstruos, cataclysmic/cataclísmico, immovable/inamovible, preliminaries/preliminarias,

promoter/promotor, putrid/pútridos, cowardice/desfachatez, I give up/me rindo/, devote/dedicaría, fiend/demonio, cranium/cabeza, gnaw/carcomen, bestial/bestiales, muchacho, bodyslammed/azoto, fastidiaban, proposition/propuesta, disdain/desdén, moniker/alias, chiseled/bien formado, resurrection/resurrección, amnesia, ruffians/rufiantes, blackmail/sobornando, corvette, aluminum/aluminio, fiberglass/fibra de vidrio, beserk/loca, condemn/condenarla, suicidal/suicida, fundraiser/cooperación, shrine/santuario, slacks/pantalones, compadre, protégé/protegido, spectacular/espectaculares, brute/bruto, dislocate/deslocarte, hulking/descomunal, tomboy, appointed/encargado, concealed/escondida, malevolent/malévola, catapult/impulsarse, instill/inculcarle, snares/atrapa, turnbuckles/cojines, fiend, full nelson, colossal/colossal

Academic

mimicking/imitando, diabolical, crazed, domination, hypnotic/hypnosis, abundantly, aforementioned/alienígena, charred/carbonizados, resented, shaved/afeitado, rummages, embroidered/bordado, coveted, triumphantly/triunfalmente, aliviánate, intertwined/entrelazados, accusing/acusa, murdered/asesinado, glistening/brillante, reeling/tambalee, jeers/abucea, relegated/relegaran, blatant, protrudes/protuberante, embodiment/encarnación, decapitation/decapitándola, huffing, belittle/menospreciar, mockery/burlándote, reproches/reprocha, scornful/desdeñosa

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Chapters 1-10

1. How does Max's mom feel about lucha libre? How does Max feel about lucha libre? How does the rest of Max's family feel about lucha libre?
2. Who is Lalo? Who is Lalo marrying? What connection does Max make between Lalo and the Guardian Angel?
3. What issue does Max encounter when he is speaking with the mask vendor? What negotiations take place?
4. What happens when Max is left in the ring with all the other children?
5. What excuse does Lalo tell Max to give when they get home? What does Max go home with?
6. Little Robert antagonizes Max about his crush in front of Max's best friend. What does Little Robert dare Max to do? What happens?

7. What is the story surrounding the Donkey Lady Bridge?
8. What does Max tell his mom happened at Donkey Lady Bridge? Does Max's mom believe him?
9. Who is going to watch the Guardian Angel wrestle? Who will the Guardian Angel be facing up against?
10. Why is Max's dad weary of sitting close to the ring? What action is surprising about the match between the luchadores?
11. What happens to Max at the match? Who helps Max? What does Max notice about the way the Guardian Angel looks at Lalo?
12. Where are Max and his family going after the match? Where do they end up?
13. What is the Guardian Angel asking Max's dad? What discovery do Max and his family make? Who is the Guardian Angel?
14. How does Braulia, Max's mother, feel about this revelation? What does she say about Rodolfo's brother and sister?
15. How does Rodolfo, the Guardian Angel, feel about not telling his family that he was alive? What was the relationship like between Rodolfo and Antonio?
16. What does Rodolfo tell his family about how he turned his life around and became a luchador? Who helped him? What did he learn?
17. What does Rodolfo tell doña Alicia regarding where he has been all this time? How does he come up with this story?
18. What is a luchador's biggest weapon?
19. What compromise does Max make with his uncle for keeping his identity a secret?

Chapter 11-20

20. How would you describe Old Ironsides? How does Max feel about this car? What does his dad say?
21. What type of car does Max really want?
22. What type of relationship do Braulia and Rodolfo have?
23. Sonia was Lalo's ex-girlfriend. How does Max feel about Sonia? How does Max's mom feel about Sonia?
24. What was Lalo and Sonia's relationship like?
25. How does Sonia ruin Lalo and Marisol's wedding day?
26. What does tío Rodolfo think about Lalo breaking up with Sonia?
27. How does tío Rodolfo think he can help Lalo with Sonia?
28. What does tío Rodolfo propose that they do to help pay for the damages that Sonia caused?

29. What does Sonia think about tío Rodolfo's idea? How does she feel about this?
30. Prior to the fundraiser, Vampire Velasquez shows up at Max's house. How does Max feel about this? What does he notice about Vampire Velasquez's interaction with tío Rodolfo?
31. What type of advice is Vampire Velasquez giving Max?
32. What does Vampire Velasquez say about Max's passion for lucha libre?
33. How does Max feel about Cecilia being at Rita's birthday party? What does he realize about Cecilia?
34. What does Max do to try and impress Cecilia? What ends up happening?
35. What role is Max responsible for at the fundraiser?
36. What is Max's friendship status with Cecilia after the whole incident at Rita's party?
37. What does Max think about Lalo fighting tonight?
38. What is the difference between a rudo and a tecnico?
39. What does la Dama Enmascarada do in the ring that upsets Marisol, Lalo's wife?
40. Instead of unmasking the Guardian Angel, what does la Dama Enmascarada do instead? What does the crowd witness?
41. How does Max feel about his great uncle being back? Does his great uncle keep his promise?
42. What reflection does tío Rodolfo share with Max about why he didn't let people know he was alive?
43. What is tío Rodolfo's reaction when Max tells him that he wants to be the next Guardian Angel?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* mean to you after reading the book? Why do you think the author chose this particular title? What would be another fitting title? Why?
2. How do Max's relationships with his family change throughout the story? What do Max's relationships look like in the beginning of the book versus the end of the book?
3. Do you think the Guardian Angel is a good role model for Max? Why or why not? Why do you think the Guardian Angel is Max's idol?
4. How does Max's character change and evolve from the beginning of the book versus the end of the book?
5. What makes lucha libre a good family activity? What activities do you enjoy doing with your family? Why?
6. Why does lucha libre play an integral role in Max's life? Why is it important to pursue hobbies

and passions that are important to one's beliefs, cultures, and identity?

7. What is special about sixth grade? What are the challenges? What advice do you have for Max as he gets ready for a new school year?
8. Why is it important to understand community and purpose in lucha libre? What lessons did the Guardian Angel learn when he was first starting out?
9. What important lesson does Max learn from tío Rodolfo? Why is it important to learn from your mistakes?
10. Despite constant disagreements between Rodolfo and Braulia, they still love and care for each another. Why is it important to have clear communication with family and friends? How do you handle relationships with people you may not always see eye-to-eye with?
11. Max's mother forgives Rodolfo for not telling anyone he was alive. How does that make you think differently about forgiveness? When is it important to forgive? Why do you think that?
12. What lessons does Max learn about hard work? Who or what are some examples of hard work that Max sees among his family or friends?
13. How does Max use his passion for lucha libre to work toward a goal? Who keeps him accountable?
14. Why do you think author/illustrator Xavier Garza presents this story with English and Spanish text side-by-side?
15. How does the author/illustrator Xavier Garza use humor to explore difficult subjects, such as growing up, family relationships, and identity?
16. What does family mean to you after reading this story? Have any of your perceptions or feelings toward family members changed after reading this book? How does Max's relationships with his family members inspire you to act toward your own family and friends?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. **What do you think is the author's message to the reader?** Think about Xavier Garza's message in the book. What do you think he wanted to tell young readers?
2. **Have students make a text-to-self connection.** What kind of connections did you make between this story and your own life? What is your role in your own family?
3. **Have students make a text-to-text connection.** Did you think of any other books while you read *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*? Why did you make those connections?
4. **Have students make a text-to-world connection.** What kind of connections did you

make from this book to what you have seen in the world or on the news? Why did *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* make you think of that?

- 5. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book?** Think about different character changes, the setting, and the relationships. What did you learn from reading *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*?
- 6. What different types of conflicts are presented in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*?** Discuss Max's conflicts within himself, with his family, with his friends, and in the world. Compare and contrast the different conflicts within the text.

Multilingual Learners Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are multilingual learners (ML). It is also important to stress that the Spanish used in this book is considered Mexican American Spanish and that may or may not resonate with all students. Some words may have different meanings in the Spanish used in other areas around the world.

1. Assign ML students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Review each chapter and chapter title. Have students summarize what is happening in the chapter, first orally, then in writing. Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about one of the characters in the book. Have them discuss the characteristics they admire about the person they chose.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose ML students to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up the word and record definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. The book is bilingual, with English text on the left and Spanish text on the right of each spread (except for the first page of each chapter, which has the English text above the Spanish text). Have students read both texts and compare them. Have students highlight any unknown words or phrases and then record them separately. Have students look up the definitions of the words or phrases and share their knowledge with others in the class, if applicable.
7. Have students identify true cognates throughout the book. Students can begin with one to

two pages and gradually increase to a chapter(s) where students highlight true cognates and determine the meaning to the word if they do not already know it. This is also a great opportunity to discuss false cognates with students. If time allows, have students reflect on the cognates that they found. Did they know the word in English? Did they know the word in Spanish? If it was an unknown word in English, did the identification of the Spanish cognate help them define the word? Consult ¡Colorin Colorado! (<https://www.colorincolorado.org/using-cognates-ells>) for more ideas on how to use cognates in the classroom with ML students.

ACTIVIDADES EN ESPAÑOL PARA APOYO EN PROGRAMAS BILINGÜES Y DE INMERSION DUAL

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)*

For the CCSS in Spanish, please check out <https://commoncore-espanol.sdcoe.net/CCSS-en-Espanol/SLA-Literacy>

1. Asigne el libro *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* a sus estudiantes. Coloque dos estudiantes juntos para leer el libro en voz alta. Compare las palabras en inglés y en español. ¿Cómo se comparan las palabras? Los estudiantes pueden practicar las palabras que tengan dificultad en pronunciar. Estudiantes pueden tener un cuaderno con las palabras difíciles para hacer referencia en el futuro.
2. Durante el tiempo de tiempo de lectura, haga preguntas de comprensión a los estudiantes en inglés y en español para medir el nivel de comprensión en los dos idiomas. Preguntas pueden incluir: ¿de qué se trata el cuento? ¿Conectaste con uno de los personajes en el cuento? ¿Por qué sí o no? ¿Qué parte te gusta más en el cuento?
3. Elija palabras de vocabulario. Los libros ilustrados bilingües son una excelente manera para que sus estudiantes aprendan nuevas palabras de vocabulario porque el idioma se presenta en contexto. Si es posible, haga fotocopias de las páginas. Estudiantes pueden usar subrayadores en un color para inglés y un color para español para las palabras nuevas. También, puede anotar las palabras en un póster para referencia. Reflexione con sus estudiantes sobre cuales palabras ya sabían y cuales palabras aprendieron.
4. En casa los estudiantes pueden pre-leer el libro con sus familias y puede sugerir que lean el libro juntos. Esto ayuda a practicar la lectura y a aprender de los dos idiomas, inglés y español.
5. El uso de cognados puede ser útil en libros bilingües, en español y en inglés. En esta actividad estudiantes pueden buscar cognados en el libro. Los estudiantes pueden trabajar en parejas para identificar y formar una lista si las palabras son cognados verdaderos o falsos. Al final de la actividad es importante distinguir como clase la lista de los cognados verdaderos o falsos.
6. Estas actividades solo son sugerencias. Puede encontrar más recursos para apoyar las clases de inmersión dual y bilingües. Puede leer más en (<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2013/11/04/using-dual-language-and-bilingual-books-in-third-and-fourth-grade/>).

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[al-Inguaage-and-bilingual-books-in-third-and-fourth-grade/](#))

Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Throughout the story, Max feels the pressure of being a middle sibling. Have you ever felt pressure from siblings and/or friends? What does this pressure feel like and what strategies do you use to overcome those feelings?
2. What SEL skills does Max exhibit over the course of the book? Some examples of SEL skills include problem solving, grit and perseverance, and understanding others' perspectives. How does Max demonstrate these skills? Why was it important for him to demonstrate these skills?
3. Lalo, Max's uncle, was in a relationship in which his partner's anger manifests physically. What are some healthy and unhealthy ways of dealing with anger? When you are angry, what are of the ways you can express yourself without resorting to physical violence?
4. How has a family member impacted your life? How do you think Max's family has inspired him? Provide evidence from the story to support your ideas.
5. Have students go on an SEL scavenger hunt in the text, looking for evidence in the details from the book. Assign students to relevant SEL themes, such as: empathy, problem solving, perspective taking, perseverance, and recognizing and managing emotions.
6. Encourage students to identify passages where characters manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways. Create a chart with four columns and these headings: 1) What was the cause of the conflict? 2) What was the consequence of the conflict? 3) How does the character(s) resolve the problem? 4) What are additional ways the character(s) could have solved the problem?
7. Everyone thought tío Rodolfo was dead and Max's grandfather passed away before he knew the truth. Have you ever dealt with a loss of someone you love? Why do you think people respond differently during times of sadness or trauma?
8. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Choose the character who you think changed the most throughout the book and prepare a persuasive essay that explains your views.** Defend your views by citing specific examples. Track the character's change with evidence from the book over the course of the story. What did you notice about how the character changed? Readwritethink.org's "Inferring How and Why Characters Change" lesson plan provides additional details and ideas on how to teach about character change (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/inferring-characters-change>).
- **Have students identify a place where Max changes in the book.** Why do students think that was a point where Max changed? How does Max feel before the change, what causes the change, and then how does he feel after? Create a graphic organizer with a column on the left headed "Before," a column in the middle headed "Event: What happened that caused the change," and a column on the right headed "After." Afterward, students can write an essay detailing their findings from the graphic organizer, and what they learned from analyzing Max's change.
- **Have students examine the character of Max and then select a section of the story that features interactions with different characters.** Have students examine and analyze these interactions and then write journal entries from Max's point of view, answering these questions: How does Max feel during this interaction? How does he respond to each character? Does he change during this interaction?
- **Select a scene in which you disagreed with how a character handled a situation, person, or event.** In the voice of that character, rewrite the scene as you think it should have happened. Here are a few resources on how to teach voice in writing (<https://www.teachwriting.org/612th/2020/1/29/teaching-voice-in-writing-a-guide-for-creative-teachers>) and (<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/teaching-voice-anthony>)
- **Assign students different characters from the book and have them brainstorm about a guiding question:** What can this character teach us, and how? Students can think about different characters to examine as a whole class and then break into smaller, specific character groups. Encourage students to think about how characters have made mistakes and also have done good things in the book, and ultimately what students learned from that

character. Have students share their findings: How is this character important to the book, and what lessons did they teach us over the course of the story? How did their actions develop the narrative, and why are they crucial to understanding the meaning of the book?

- **Encourage students to imagine they can interview the author.** Students can design interview questions to ask the author, Xavier Garza, of *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* if they were on a talk show, news show, or radio show. What do students want to learn more about in terms of the writing process? Consider reaching out to Xavier Garza for a virtual author visit.
- **Have students read the next book in the Max's Lucha Libre Adventures series: *Maximilian & the Bingo Rematch*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/maximilian-the-bingo-rematch-max-s-lucha-libre-adventures-2-maximilian-la-revancha-de-la-loteria>). Ask students to compare the books with the following guiding questions: what is the central idea of each title? How are the titles connected? What themes or ideas do they share? How are the main characters similar? How are they different? What kinds of problems do they experience in the books? How are their families important in their lives? What are the ways they solve critical problems and think about their actions? Have students plan their thoughts in a graphic organizer and write an afterword.
- **Conduct an Author Study on Xavier Garza with his many other titles, including *Charro Claus and the Tejas Kid*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/charro-claus-and-the-tejas-kid>) **and *Lucha Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask*** (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/lucha-libre>). How are the main characters similar? How are they different? What themes do the books have in common? How are the topics similar? How are they different? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the titles and then ask students to write an essay answering the previous questions.
- **Create a family tree that will help students follow the relationships among the characters in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* during their reading of the book.** You can do this together as a class on chart paper or you can provide students with individual copies of a blank family tree organizer. You can find and read more about using family tree graphic organizers here: (<https://awriterofhistory.com/2022/11/25/growing-a-fictional-family-tree/>).
- **Create a story map that will help students follow the different elements in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* during their reading.** Discuss the main components of the story (characters, setting, problem/solution, themes). You can do this together as a class on chart paper or you can provide students with individual copies of a blank story map organizer. You can find and read more about using story map graphic organizers here: (https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/story_maps).
- **Have students read the Message to Readers from Xavier Garza.** What did they learn from the Message to Readers after reading the story? How did it make them think differently about *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*? What is Xavier Garza's perspective and why did he decide to write this story? Have students write a reaction essay to the Message to Readers, and present three follow-up questions for Xavier Garza.

Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Ask students to research the history of lucha libre at the school or public library.** Where did lucha libre originate? How did lucha libre make its way to the United States? What are the rules of lucha libre? Why are masks important? Discuss how this information helps students understand *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*.
- **Have students read the book *Lucha Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/lucha-libre>), it is a bilingual story about lucha libre.** Encourage students to take note of what they learn about lucha libre. What did they learn from reading this book? What did students think about the book? How does this title relate to *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*? Students can write an essay what they learned about lucha libre from both books.
- **Conduct a reader's theater using two or three of the luchadores that are introduced in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*.** In groups of three or four, students can prepare a skit or scene using the characters from the book. Before allowing group work time, remind students that their skits should be school appropriate and safe. Groups can then present their act to the class. If time allows, students can create their own luchador/luchadora using inspiration from the book. For more information on how to use reader's theater as a strategy in your classroom, go to (https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/readers_theater).
- **Donkey Lady Bridge is a scary, dangerous place Max's father has told him to stay away from to keep max and his brother safe.** Have students think about the story of the Donkey Lady Bridge and reflect on any scary stories or tales they have heard from family members. What was the story? Why did their family tell them the story? Did the story keep them from doing something dangerous or going to a dangerous place? Students can record their experiences in paragraph form and present to the class if time allows

Art/Media

(K-ESS3-3 Earth and Human Activity: Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment; MS-LS2-5: Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, Dynamics: Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services;

(MS-PS3-4: Energy: Plan an investigation to determine the relationships among the energy transferred, the type of matter, the mass, and the change in the average kinetic energy of the particles as measured by the temperature of the sample)

- **Have students reimagine the cover of *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*.** What would they change? What would they keep? If time allows, have students illustrate their new book covers.
- **Citing textual evidence, select a theme portrayed in *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*.** Create a visual presentation with illustrations, drawings, and any other creative materials to reflect how this theme is developed over the course of the text.

- **Have students illustrate a feeling one of the characters experienced in the story.** What do students want to convey? What kinds of materials do they want to use? Have students share their pieces with a partner, a small group, or the whole class.
- **Encourage students to use inspiration from *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel* to create their own luchador/luchadora.** What type of luchador/luchadora would they be? A rudo or a tecnico? What would their masks be like? Have students write a description of their luchadors/ luchadoras, and if time allows, have students illustrate their characters. If possible, present in a gallery walk format.
- **Consider having students come up with questions to interview author/ illustrator Xavier Garza.** What is his process behind creating the illustration for each chapter? What medium did he use to create the illustrations? Why? What was it like to work on *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*?

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Interview a family member about the history of their family.** Have students talk about their country of origin. Why is it important to understand your family history? Why is it important to know the different parts of the world where your family is from? If students do not know their family history, have them interview someone about the history of your town or city.
- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their experiences with fighting for something they believe in or going through a hardship.** How did this person react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles? What advice do they have for someone going through something similar?
- **Have students research their family history.** Where were you born? Where were your parents and grandparents born? For additional activity and lesson ideas, check out the “Family Ties and Fabric Tales” lesson plan from Learning for Justice (<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/family-ties-and-fabric-taleselementary-grades>). To use digital storytelling to capture immigration stories, explore Crossing Border with Digital Storytelling from the American Immigration Council (http://www.communityeducationcenter.org/sites/default/files/crossing_borders_with_digital_storytelling_teacher_unit_plan_0.pdf).
- **Ask students to create portraits of people who are their personal role models using drawing, collage, photographs, or any other media with which they enjoy working.** In writing, students should describe the actions and qualities they admire about these people. They can also give their role models special abilities and powers. Students can write in prose or submit a poem or song.
- **Let students take home a copy of *Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel*.** Ask students to read with adults at home. Encourage conversation and discussion after reading. What did they like about reading a bilingual book? What did they learn from the

story?

- **Ask students to describe an activity or pastime they enjoy doing with their families.** It can be anything from an annual family tradition to a weekly hike. Encourage students to write about, sketch, or take photographs to show what meaningful time with their families is to them and how it has evolved since they were younger children



Ordering Information

General Order Information:

leeandlow.com/contact/ordering

Secure Online Ordering:

leeandlow.com/books/maximilian-the-mystery-of-the-guardian-angel

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue,
New York, NY 10016

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Xavier Garza

Xavier Garza was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, author and lucha libre aficionado Xavier Garza is a prolific and enthusiastic author, artist, and storyteller whose work focuses primarily on his experiences growing up in the small border town of Rio Grande City and is a lively documentation of the dreams, superstitions, and heroes in the bigger-than-life world of South Texas. Garza has exhibited his art and performed his stories in venues throughout Texas, Arizona and the state of Washington. He has authored and illustrated fourteen books, and has received such prestigious awards as the *Americas Honor Book Award* in 2005, the *Tejas Star Book Award* three times from 2007-2010 and the *Pura Belpré Honor Book award* in 2012. In 2014 he was awarded both the *NAACS Tejas Young Adult Book Award* and the *Texas Institute of Letters Children's Book Award*. In 2019 Xavier Garza will be inducted into the prestigious *Texas Institute of Letters*. Garza lives in San Antonio, Texas with his wife Irma and their teen son Vincent.

REVIEWS

"Offers readers authentic insights into the exciting world of lucha libre. . . . With its quick pace, humor, and endearing characters, this title is sure to turn more kids into lucha libre fans." *-Booklist*

"This action-packed winner of a 2012 Pura Belpré Author Honor Award is sure to be a favorite with many students in the upper-elementary grades." *-Language Arts*

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