



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (006)

TEXT: *Feiguele y Otras Mujeres*

AUTHOR: Cecilia Absatz

EDITOR: Stockcero.

1. Overview for Instructors

Feiguele y Otras Mujeres offers a compact yet powerful set of short narratives by **Cecilia Absatz**, centered on women's lives—especially adolescent girls—within Jewish-Argentine, urban middle-class environments.

The stories (among them “Feiguele”, “La siesta”, “La teta”, “El aborto”, “Un poco de paz”, “Un ballet de bailarinas”, “Lisa”) share:

- **First-person, often adolescent or female narrators**, with strong colloquial voice.
- A mix of **black humor, vulnerability, and cruelty**, particularly around family, body, and sexuality.
- A focus on the **everyday emotional violence** of school, family meals, friendships, parties, and first sexual experiences.

The title character, **Feiguele**, is a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl who describes herself as “muy gorda” and narrates with sharp intelligence her school conflicts, humiliations, Saturday nights, vacations, and her place within a family that alternately neglects and mocks her. Other texts follow women across later life stages, touching on prostitution, abortion, motherhood, and work, always with a critical, ironic eye.

This volume is ideal for:

Undergraduate courses on Latin American women's writing, Jewish-Latin American literature, the short story, and urban culture.

Courses interested in **adolescence, body politics, gender, and narrative voice**.

2. Why This Text Works in the Classroom

Short, highly readable stories

Most narratives can be read in one sitting and discussed in a single class period, making them perfect for modular course units.

Powerful adolescent and female voices

Students often recognize aspects of their own experiences in Feiguele's self-consciousness, anger, and humor, even across cultural and temporal distances.

Jewish-Argentine context

The stories open an accessible window onto Jewish life in Buenos Aires (family dynamics, Yiddish words, community expectations) within a broader Latin American framework.

The body, shame, and humor

Fatness, sexuality, menstruation, abortion, and desire are treated with a mix of directness and humor that invites nuanced discussion rather than moralizing.

Narrative technique

Absatz's use of **oral storytelling rhythms, interior monologue, and ellipsis** offers rich material for working on narrative perspective and voice.

Suggested course contexts:

Latin American Women's Writing



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Jewish-Latin American Literature
The Short Story and Urban Culture in Argentina
Gender, Body, and Sexuality in Hispanic Literature
Advanced Spanish Composition / Conversation (voice-driven close reading)

3. Suggested Reading Sequences

A. Adolescence, body image, and school

Core text:

«Feiguele»

Optional additions:

Selected passages from other stories where adolescence or early sexual awareness appears («La siesta», early sections of «Feiguele» dealing with school, parties, and family meals).

Guiding questions:

How does Feiguele narrate her own body?

– What vocabulary does she use for fatness, shame, and desire?

How does the school become a site of violence (teachers, classmates, nicknames, evaluations)?

In what ways do humor and exaggeration function as defense mechanisms?

B. Family, food, and everyday cruelty

- **Core text:**

Continuation of «Feiguele» (family meals, Mar del Plata, parents and siblings).

- **Possible pairings:**

Moments in other stories where family meals or domestic routines reveal power hierarchies («La teta», «Un poco de paz»).

- **Angles:**

Meals and food as sites of control, affection, and humiliation.

Distribution of attention and care among siblings.

Role of parents (especially the father) and domestic workers (Blanca) in shaping Feiguele's self-image.

C. Sexual awakening and taboo

Core texts:

«La siesta»

Selected sections of «Feiguele» (Luisito, Salo, the carpero, the boys at the beach).

Discussion axes:

How does Absatz represent first sexual experiences (curiosity, fear, pleasure, confusion)?

Distinguish between consensual exploration, coercion, and abuse. How clear is that boundary from the narrator's perspective?

How does humor complicate the ethical reading of these scenes?

D. Adult women: work, sex, and autonomy

Core texts:



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«La teta»
«El aborto»
«Un poco de paz»
«Un ballet de bailarinas»
«Lisa»

Teaching ideas:

How do adult female narrators describe their work (prostitution, office work, motherhood, relationships)?
Examine how these texts critique double standards around sexuality and respectability.
What continuities can you trace between adolescent Feiguele and these adult women?

4. Sample Discussion Questions

You can adapt these for class discussion, online forums, or written responses.

Voice and credibility

In «Feiguele», how reliable is the narrator?

- Identify moments where her perceptions may be distorted by shame, anger, or fantasy.
- How does this affect the reader’s sympathy for other characters (siblings, mother, Blanca)?

Humiliation and resistance

Choose one humiliating scene (e.g., the math teacher’s insult, the birthday party, the dinner table).

- What exactly makes the situation humiliating?
- How does Feiguele resist, if at all (through language, silence, fantasy, food, etc.)?

The body as battlefield

Across «Feiguele», «La siesta», and «La teta», how is the female body described?

- What roles do clothing, weight, breasts, and menstruation play?
- How do these narratives show the body as both vulnerable and a potential source of power?

Jewish-Argentine markers

Identify Yiddish expressions, references to “la hora idishe”, the bobbe, the father’s accent, etc.

- How do these details shape the representation of family and community?
- Do they reinforce or challenge stereotypes about Jewish families?

Humor vs. trauma

Absatz often uses humor in situations that border on traumatic (family fights, sexual harassment, abortion).

- What is the effect of this tonal mixture on the reader?
 - Does humor undermine the seriousness of the issues, or does it enable a different kind of critical engagement?
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5. Short Written Assignments

- **Close reading (2–3 pages)**
Ask students to analyze a single scene from «Feiguele» (for example, the classroom humiliation, buying the gift and going to the party, the family lunch with the gnocchi).
- Describe the scene in detail (who speaks, who remains silent, what is said and unsaid).
- Analyze the narrator’s language (metaphors, exaggerations, colloquialisms).
- Explain how the scene contributes to the overall portrait of Feiguele and her environment.
- **Comparative mini-essay (3–4 pages)**
Compare «Feiguele» with another Latin American text about adolescence (for example, a story by Rosario Castellanos, Clarice Lispector, or an excerpt from a coming-of-age novel).
- How do both narrators represent the transition from childhood to adulthood?
- How do gender, class, and family expectations shape each protagonist’s experience?
- **Creative + reflective task**
Invite students to write a 2–3 page monologue “in the style” of Absatz, from the perspective of a young person experiencing a difficult social situation (school, family, party).
- They should imitate, to some extent, the rhythm, humor, and interior monologue in «Feiguele».
- Follow with a 1–2 page reflection (in Spanish or English) on what they learned about narrative voice by trying to “write like” Absatz.

6. Assessment Ideas

Reading journals

- Track instances of humiliation and small acts of resistance.
- Note every time food appears and its function in the scene.
- Record moments where humor changes how you feel about a situation.

Group presentations

Assign each group one story (or one section of «Feiguele») and have them present:

- A brief plot summary.
- A thematic focus (body, family, sexuality, Jewish identity).
- 2–3 key quotes with close reading.
- One question they want to pose to the rest of the class.

In-class debates

Possible motion:

- “Feiguele is primarily a victim of her environment.”
- “Feiguele is primarily responsible for her own misfortunes.”

Students prepare arguments on both sides using textual evidence.



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