

The Big Bag Mistake

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Summary

The Big Bag Mistake is a fictional story about two Brazilian people: a young woman called Gisela and a young man called Ricardo. At the beginning of the story Gisela and Ricardo do not know one another; however, some unexpected events bring the two together as the story unfolds.

The main characters meet on an airplane traveling from London to Rio de Janeiro. Gisela is quiet and serious and Ricardo is lively and talkative. He would like to get to know Gisela better but she's not interested. In Rio, Gisela takes her blue travel bag very quickly and runs to her bus. She doesn't want to meet Ricardo again.

When Gisela's bag is stolen from her on the bus she is upset. The thief has stolen the manuscript for her first book! She cannot believe her bad luck.

But a happy coincidence means that both Ricardo and Gisela get what they want: Gisela finds her manuscript, and Ricardo wins Gisela's attention and good favor.

Background and themes

Appearance and reality: People and things are not always what they seem to be. It's good to look carefully and think before making decisions or forming opinions.

Travel and new experience: When we meet a new person or visit a new place we soon find things to like and dislike about them. Differences of opinion and character make life interesting.

Coincidence and luck: Sometimes our lives cannot be controlled. Every person is part of a larger society and our actions can influence other people's lives in unexpected ways.

Discussion activities

Before reading

- Discuss and guess:** Have students look at the front cover of the book. Ask them questions about the book based on the cover illustration: *Where is this? Why are the characters at this place? Do the characters know each other? What might happen to these characters in the story?* Now have students look at the name of the book. Does that give them any other ideas? What is the "mistake?"
- Group work:** The two characters are in an airport. What kind of difficulties can a person have at an airport or on an airplane? In groups, have students make lists of possible problems. Put a tick (✓) beside problems the characters might have.

Arriving at airport	On airplane	Leaving airport
losing ticket	feeling sick	losing luggage ...
- Pair work:** Have students think about their holidays. *What do you usually do? Where do you go?* Have them discuss their holidays with a partner.

While reading

- Group work:** After reading pages 1–7, have students think about Gisela and Ricardo. What does Ricardo do that annoys Gisela? What does Gisela do as a result of each action? Have students write down their ideas and then share them with the class.

Ricardo	Gisela
smiles and says hello	→ says hello but doesn't smile ...
- Guess:** After reading page 11, discuss what might happen next. Have students share their ideas.

After reading

- Check:** Have students look at their guesses in Questions 2 and 5. Were they correct?
- Pair work:** Give each pair seven strips of paper. Have them look at these characters on the following pages: Ricardo (pages 2, 15); Gisela (pages 4, 8, 11, 15); thief (page 14). Write what each might be thinking. Example (Ricardo, page 2): *"I can talk to this pretty girl for hours!"* Exchange captions with another pair. Match their captions with the pictures.
- Group work:** Have students imagine that Gisela sees the thief on the street the following day. What happens next? In groups of four, have each student fold a piece of paper into four squares. Number the squares 1–4.
 In Square 1, each student draws the first thing that happens when the two meet. When the teacher gives a signal, have students pass their paper to the students on their left and draw what happens next in Square 2 (based on what they see in Square 1). At the teacher's signal, pass along the paper and draw in Squares 3 and then 4 (so that each paper has drawings from all four students). Have students share their stories together.