

# Read Aloud Guide

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**Title:** *Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring* by Angela Cervantes

**Best for:** 4th - 7th grade

**Summary:** A Frida-Kahlo-inspired mystery novel: A room locked for fifty years. A valuable peacock ring. A mysterious brother-sister duo. Paloma Marquez is traveling to Mexico City, birthplace of her deceased father, for the very first time. She's hoping that spending time in Mexico will help her unlock memories of the too-brief time they spent together. While in Mexico, Paloma meets Lizzie and Gael, who present her with an irresistible challenge: The siblings want her to help them find a valuable ring that once belonged to beloved Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. But the brother and sister have a secret. Do they really want to return the ring, or are they after something else entirely?

**Why we chose this book:** Mysteries with kid detectives are so fun! This book takes you on a tour of Mexico City - in particular, Frida Kahlo's neighborhood of Coyoacan, and immerses you in Kahlo's art through the eyes of a tween trying to connect with her deceased father, learn about her culture, navigate being twelve and solve a mystery at the same time.

**Notes:** The author has created her own discussion questions, art activities, and readers scripts for the books, found on her website

**Central themes:** Mexican art history, grief & loss, memory, mixed-race families

**Introducing the book:** You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

*"This book is a mystery - Paloma goes to Mexico for a month thinking it will be boring, but ends up playing detective, trying to figure out who stole a famous ring. Do any of you like to read mysteries? Do you have a favorite kid detective?"*

**During Reading:** Stop to ask questions - children can respond to the whole group or talk to a partner

*p. 5 Do you or your family have a memory box, or a place where you keep important things about your family? Do you like to look through it?*

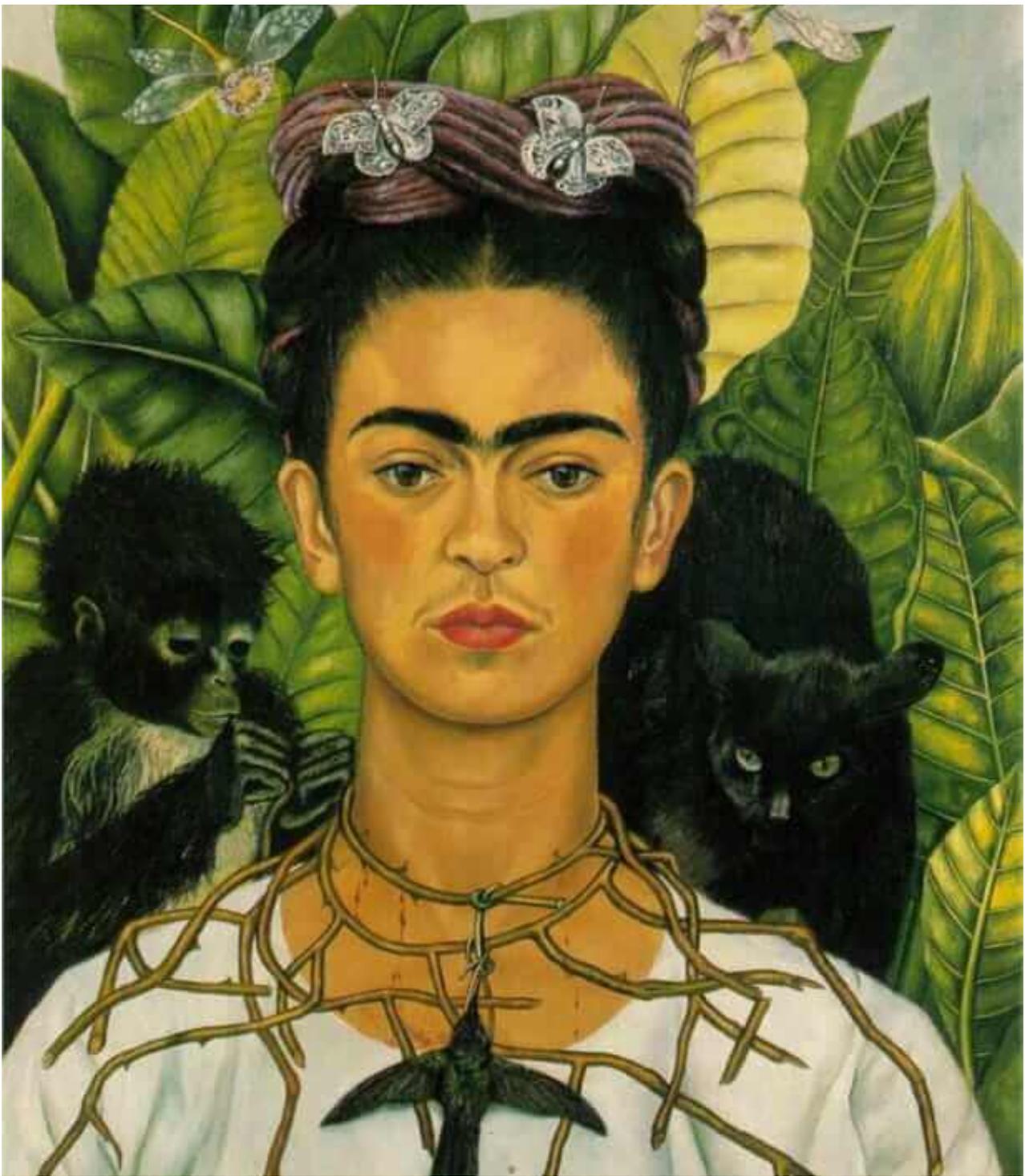
*p. 10 Show a picture of Frida Kahlo's "Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird", tell them "In this book, the mystery centers around a ring belonging to the famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Do you recognize her? Where have you seen pictures or paintings of her before? What do you see in here that's the same as a typical self-portrait? What's different?"*

**After Reading Chapters 1-2:** Debrief and make predictions with students

*"What are some things you noticed that are the same in Mexico as in the US? What are some things that are different?"*

*"Do you think Paloma will end up having a good time on her trip? Why or why not?"*

*"What does Paloma already do in her regular life that will be helpful in solving the mystery of the lost ring?"*



*Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird by Frida Kahlo, 1940*