The Flamingos' Stockings

Las medias de los flamencos

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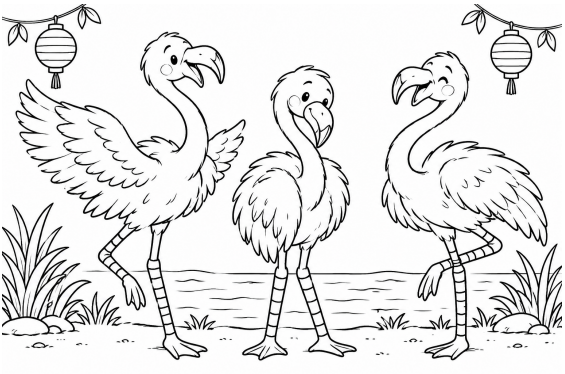

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A Play Aprende preschool reimagining, inspired by Horacio Quiroga's las medias de los flamencos.

Tonight, Lantern Light danced on the river. And the river was throwing a party. Shhh. Can you hear it waking up? *Hop! Plop! Splash!* La fiesta va a comenzar. The party is about to begin.

The frogs arrived first. *Hop, hop, hop!*

The toads followed, bouncing their round bellies. *Plop, plop!*

The Caimans, los yacarés, came with slow, heavy feet. Paso, paso, paso. The ground gave a tiny bump beneath every step. Even the fish popped their heads above the water. *Splash! Splash!*

Lanterns twinkled along the riverbank. La música comenzó. Green, gold and blue swirled across the dance floor. The frogs sparkled green.

The caimans wore shiny necklaces and the coral snakes moved like ribbons beneath the lanterns. Their stripes were rojo, blanco, negro. Red, white, black. Can you say the colors with us? Rojo, blanco, y negro.

Near the water stood three young flamingos: Flora, Floro and Florín. Flora loved bold ideas. Floro found something funny everywhere, and Florín always asked one more question.

They looked at the sparkling party. Then they looked at their own long, pale legs.

Everyone has something extraordinary, something extra special. Los sapos hacen *plop!* And the coral snakes have beautiful stripes. "We need something special too. Something red, algo blanco, and something black."

The three friends had the same idea at the same time. Medias. Stockings. Long, fancy socks for long flamingo legs.

And off they hurried. Step, step, step, step. At the first shop, Flora knocked.

Knock, *knock*. "Do you have stockings with red, white and black stripes?"

"Let me look. Green with dots, blue with stars, yellow with feathers. But red white and black? No, lo siento. Would you like to try the yellow pair?"

"Maybe just one." The yellow stocking flew up and landed on Flora's head. Wrong color, wrong place. At the second shop, Floro knocked louder.

Knock, knock! "¿Medias rojas, blancas y negras?" "No stockings like that here!"

The Flamingos' shoulders drooped. "No stockings. No fancy legs." No dancing? Not yet. "Seguimos buscando, we keep looking."

Just then, an armadillo walked by. "¿Por qué están tan tristes? Why are you so sad?"

"We want the most surprising stockings at the party. Red. White. Black."

"Go see señora lechuza. Owl notices things other animals miss."

The flamingos flew to Owl's tree. *Flap*, *flap*, *flap*. "Señora Lechuza." Owl. "Who is flapping at my tree?"

"We need stockings for the dance!" "What colors?" Do you remember? "Rojo, blanco y negro."

Owl's round eyes opened wide. She returned with three pairs of very long stockings.

Bright red stripes, white stripes, and black stripes. "Perfectas." "Wait, these colors are fresh. Muy frescos! Whatever you do, do not get them wet and at the dance keep moving. Everyone will want a closer look."

"Are they safe?" "Safe and soft. I made the colors from red berries, pale flower petals and a smooth black river clay, but one splash will wash the stripes away."

"No water, keep moving." "Easy! We love moving!"

When the flamingos returned, the whole party went… still. One frog froze in the middle of a hop. One toad stopped with a *plop*, still waiting in his belly. Even the fish forgot to splash.

Look! Flora lifted one leg. Floro lifted the other. Florín stretched both wings. And the dance began.

Pata arriba, pata abajo. Slow turn, step to the side. Can you move your shoulders with them? Up, down, turn, side!

Floro spun. Whee! Flora kicked twice. Kick, kick. Florín shook his tail feathers. Shake, shake, shake.

Across the dance floor, the coral snakes watched. "Rojo, blanco, negro. Those stripes look just like ours." She slid a little closer. The Flamingos remembered owl's warning.

"Keep moving. Sigan bailando. Keep dancing." They danced faster. *Tap*, *tap*, *tap*, *tap*.

Can you tap four times with them? One, two, three, four. The coral snakes came closer.

The flamingos danced faster, closer, faster, closer. "Wait, we want to ask..." "Corran!" The flamingos ran, *flap*, step, step, *swish*, *squish* then... they saw the river.

The Flamingos stopped. The river. Owl's warning. What did she say? "Do not get them wet."

Behind them came the coral snakes, in front of them waited the river. Snakes, River, Serpientes, Río and... *Splash!* Berry red ribbons curled through the water.

The white stripes softened. The black stripes swirled away, lighter and lighter, until every stripe had disappeared. But the bright berry color had tinted the Flamingos' pale legs.

Flora lifted one leg. "Rosadas?" "Pink!"

"Our legs are pink." The coral snakes reached the riverbank. The Flamingos stared at the snakes. The snakes stared at the Flamingos. For one quiet moment, nobody moved.

"We only wanted to know who painted such beautiful stripes." "We thought you were chasing us." "We were trying to catch up."

"Our beautiful stripes are gone." "Maybe, but your dance is still yours." From across the river, one little frog called "Me gusta el rosado." "I like pink!"

The flamingos looked at each other. They had searched everywhere for something special, but their long legs, their teamwork, and their joyful dance had been special all along. Flora still had bold ideas, Floro still found reasons to laugh, and Florín still asked good questions.

So back to the party they went. Step, step, step, step. This time, no fancy stockings were needed.

Pata arriba, pata abajo. Every step counts when we dance together. Can you say it with them? Every step counts when we dance together.

And in this Play Aprende story, that is how the Flamingos found their beautiful pink color.

And if you ever see one standing beside the water on one long pink leg, maybe it is remembering the night it danced, and danced, and danced, until its stockings went... *Splash!*

Buenas noches, flamencos!

