

« **Mirette on the High Wire** » by Emily Arnold McCully

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Excerpt : pages 4 – 7

Page 4

“The next afternoon, when Mirette came for the sheets, there was the stranger, crossing the courtyard on air!”

Call on One Child



See, [point to Bellini] here is Bellini. Is he really walking on air?

[Anticipated response: No, he is walking on the clothesline. It's like the high-wire.]

“Mirette was enchanted”, or very delighted. “Of all the things a person could do, this must be the most magical, Her feet tingled, as if they wanted to jump up in the wire beside Bellini.”

Call on One Child



What did Mirette feel like doing when she saw Bellini on the wire?

[Anticipated response: She wanted to jump up beside him and walk on the wire too.]

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Page 6

“Mirette worked up the courage to speak.” [Point to Mirette on p. 6.] “Excuse me, Monsieur Bellini, I want to learn to do that!” she cried.

“Bellini sighed”, like this [demonstrate sighing]. “That would not be a good idea,” he said. “Once you start, your feet are never happy again on the ground.”

“Oh, please teach me!” Mirette begged. “My feet are already unhappy on the ground.” “But he shook his head”, like this [demonstrate shaking your head].

Partner Talk



Why do you think Bellini doesn't want to teach Mirette?

[Anticipated responses: This activity can be dangerous, because there is the possibility of falling. Somebody who does it seriously might want to do something a little more daring or difficult each time they do it, and

then it can become quite dangerous.]

Page 7

“Mirette watched him every day. He would slide his feet onto the wire, cast his eyes ahead, and cross without ever looking down, as if in a trance.”

Movement



Let’s do what Bellini is doing. Stand up and pretend that there is a narrow wire in front of you. Cast your eyes straight ahead, as if you are in a trance. Don’t look down!

Call on One Child



Why do you think Bellini never looks down?

[Anticipated response: Open, but that must be the way to keep from falling.]

C. CLOSING DISCUSSION

Partner Talk



Think about Bellini when he started walking on the high wire with the spotlight on him. What happened to him? [Anticipated response: He froze; he couldn’t take one more step.] **Now think about what happened when Mirette reached out her arms to him. What happened?** [Anticipated response: He could walk. He faced his fear.] **Sometimes we need other people to help us face our fears. Think of something you used to be afraid of, that you aren’t anymore. Did someone help you face your fear, like Mirette helped Bellini.**

Ask one or two pairs for their response.

[Anticipated responses: Open.]