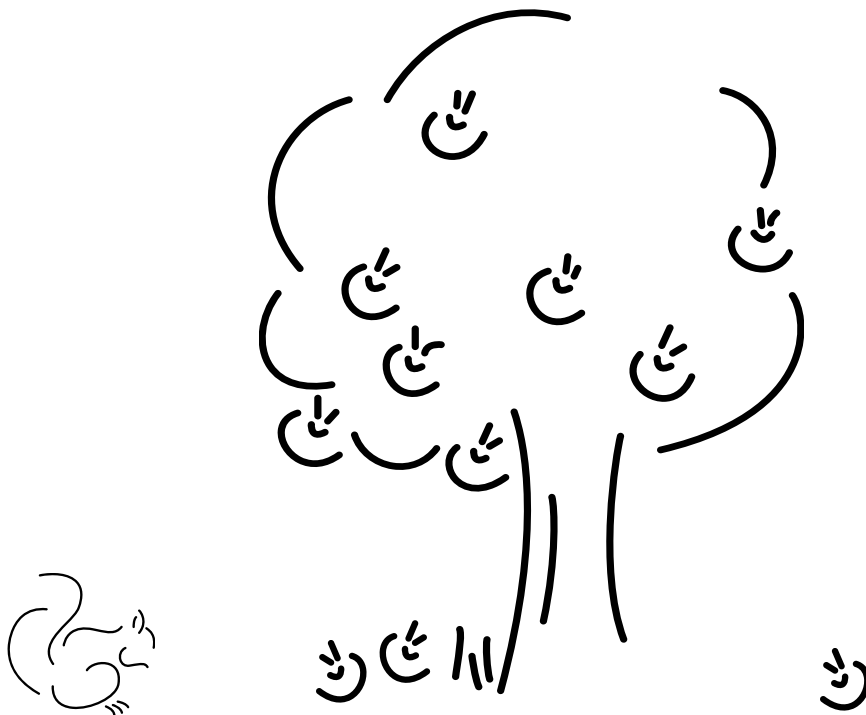
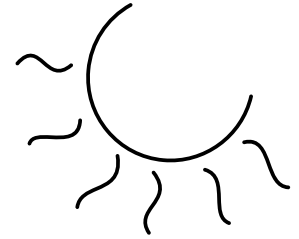


Rushcart Players

STUDY GUIDE

Cuentos Del Arbol

("Tree Tales")



A Bi-Lingual Musical Play
Esta es una Obra Musical Bilingüe



"Cuentos Del Arbol" or "Tree Tales" is a delightful bi-lingual musical drawn from Spanish and Latin American folklore. The play is designed to bring Spanish to "life" for students studying the language; and to make theatre accessible for students, parents and grandparents for whom English is a second language. Because the play is presented in a bi-lingual format, it provides literacy enhancement in both language and the arts. The stories within the piece offer pride in the cultural heritage of Spain and Latin America while also providing access to the arts and arts education without a language barrier.

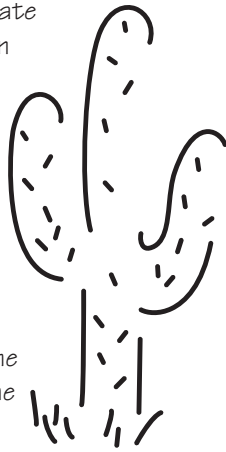
The centerpiece of all the stories is a tree (Un Arbol) that has sheltered, shielded and nurtured countless characters that have passed her way over the years. The tree's caretaker, Arbolita, shares four of these stories with Tomas, a storyteller, who is looking for tales for his collection.

The stories included are "The Garden of the Golden Oranges," adapted from a Spanish legend, told in the oral tradition; "Brothers Who Were Both Wise and Foolish," a grand adventure, also set in Spain; "Juan Bobo" or "Silly John" originating in both Mexico and Puerto Rico about a boy who makes silly mistakes that serve him well; and "Caperucita Roja" or "Red Riding Hood" a perennial favorite in Spanish and English households, told with a Latino beat and rhythm. A spirited finale sends audiences home with dancing feet, clapping hands and a happy heart.

"Cuentos. . ." is indeed filled with a fiesta of Latino and Hispanic themes, indigenous to locale, but universal to the human experience. The range of ideas for discussion includes many value clarification and strength of character issues. Young audiences will be enchanted by the colorful lore and spirited beat that enable Arbol to lift her branches and find new ways to grow each day.

ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

This Study Guide is designed to facilitate discussion and encourage projects in connection with viewing the Bi-Lingual musical, "Cuentos Del Arbol." Certainly there are many areas beyond those included in this Study Guide that you as teachers or parents might explore. It is our hope that you will use this Guide as a springboard to discovering the connections to the many themes and levels of each of the stories as well as the rich cultural colors and customs of the Latino world.



PRE-SHOW

Prepare your class for the theatre event that they will soon attend. Some of the ideas that you might share are the fact that a professional theatre company named *Pushcart Players* will be coming to your school or theatre. The actors and actresses will sing, dance and act out stories that were adapted by a playwright from Spanish and Latino folk tales.

- Discuss the differences between television programs, movies and live theatre.
- Discuss the fact that a theatre performance is recreated each time it is performed and is affected to some extent by the presence and response of each audience. There is energy felt by actors from audience and audience from actors, and the forthcoming performance in your school or theatre will be recreated especially for you!
- Use the summaries of each of the stories on the following pages to familiarize students with the content of the play. This will further help them enjoy the stories as they unfold on stage.

When students enter the theatre or auditorium, they will see a "pre-set" of the show. The costume pieces and set pieces will suggest some of the characters they will be seeing in the show.

- If they see a crown, can they guess what kind of character will wear that costume piece?
- What kind of character would use the hoe or rake that's pre-set?
- The milking bucket?
- The little red cape with a hood? And so on.

Familiarity with some of the elements of theatre and theatre terms will also be helpful. Here is a partial list which you may want to define and discuss in terms of how they are used, how they affect the play:

Vocabulary Words In Connection With Theatre

Stage	Curtain(s)	Wing Space	Actors
Director	Musicians	Technicians	Choreographer
Scenery	Costumes	Props	Stage Manager
Lights	Sound	Music	Playwright
Script	Score	Dialogue	Composer
Comedy	Tragedy	Mystery	Designer
Vision	Creation	Imagination	

Vocabulary words in connection with the play will be listed following the summary of each of the stories.

OPENING

"Cuentos Del Arbol" ("Tree Tales") opens with a burst of color, song and dance in the title song, "Cuentos, Cuentos Del Arbol." Tomas then introduces himself as a storyteller, and Arbolita, the keeper of the tree sings the song, "Un Arbol," revealing her source of many tales over the centuries.

Vocabulary

<i>Un arbol</i>	A tree
<i>Cuentos</i>	Tales
<i>Vive por siglos</i>	Can live for centuries
<i>La Vida</i>	Life
<i>Una brisa</i>	A breeze
<i>Un hogar</i>	A home
<i>La tierra</i>	The ground
<i>Sabios y bobos</i>	Wise and foolish
<i>Ricos y pobres</i>	Rich and poor
<i>Cabrerros y campesinos</i>	Goatherd and peasant
<i>Una princesa</i>	A princess

THE GARDEN OF THE GOLDEN ORANGES

The Garden of the Golden Oranges is adapted from a Spanish legend, told in the oral tradition and set in the fertile valleys and splendid heights of the Sierra Nevada. It is about dreams, visions, challenge and commitment. In this story, a young shepherd, Diego, journeys to the sun, the moon and the stars, in search of the Garden of the Golden Oranges, which, a wise old man assured him, would lead him to the most beautiful girl in the world to marry. His exhausting journey, filled with many temptations along the way, leads him back to his pasture where he is surprised to find that the happiness for which he was searching was always, quite simply, at home.

Vocabulary

<i>Mas bella del mundo</i>	Most beautiful in the world
<i>Jardin de las Naranjas de Oro</i>	Garden of the Golden Oranges
<i>El sol</i>	The sun
<i>La luna</i>	The moon
<i>Las estrellas</i>	The stars
<i>Muy felices</i>	Much happiness
<i>Muy contentos</i>	Much contentment



SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Talk about dreams and visions of the future
- Why is it important to set goals for ourselves?
- Why is it important to “reach for the highest star?”
- Why is it important to push ourselves to do a little better each day?
- What are some of the distractions or “temptations” that can cause us to lose sight of our goal(s)

EXERCISES AND PROJECTS

- Create a “photo” album (photos can be drawings done by students) chronicling Diego’s journey.
- Have students write a diary or journal as though they were Diego, telling of his encounters and how he felt about them
- Have some students write a dairy as though they were Angela, Diego’s childhood friend, telling of how she felt when Diego left and while he was away.
- Have students research the countryside in the Sierra Nevada and describe the route that Diego may have taken.

[Note: For Spanish Language Classes — use the above writing exercises to develop writing and language skills in Spanish]

TWO BROTHERS WHO WERE BOTH WISE AND FOOLISH

This story is a grand and at the same time humorous adventure of two brothers who have totally different goals and objectives in life. Also set in Spain, this rollicking tale explores the value of simple homespun pleasures as opposed to wild and showy fame and fortune.

One brother seeks fame and fortune while the other is content to live simply on his farm. After they inherit a silver peso from their father they set out to see the world. Alfredo, the older brother becomes a sharp shooter, learns to overcome thieves and bandits and gains possession of magic spectacles. Bernardo on the other hand simply learns the trade of a coppersmith. When the brothers meet at the end of a year, they go on yet another adventure, to an island to rescue a princess being held captive by a sleeping dragon. Alfredo leaps onto the island, rescues the princess but in doing so, awakens the dragon. As a sharp shooter, Alfredo easily shoots the dragon but the dragon’s dying lashes split the boat in two. Bernardo’s coppersmith skills save the day as he mends the boat and they sail to the



kingdom from which the Princess was stolen. The Queen rewards Bernardo with a bag of gold and the hand of the Princess. The Princess always wanted to milk a goat so their happily ever after will be on the farm so dear to Bernardo’s heart.

Vocabulary

Aventura	Adventure
Un hogar	A home
El mundo	The world
Un ano	A year
Un bandido	A bandit
Un tirador	A marksman
Un calderero	A coppersmith
Rescato	Rescue

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

In this story, Alfredo was daring and eager for adventure. Bernardo was content to stay at home and do his work.

- Discuss the differences in personality of these two young men
- What are the advantages to seeking adventure and taking risks? Disadvantages?
- What are the advantages of working hard and maintaining your status quo? Disadvantages?

EXERCISES AND PROJECTS

- Have students write a new or different ending for this story
- Have students draw a picture of their favorite adventure in this story

- What color would you choose to best suit Alfredo? What color for Bernardo? Why? Draw a picture or design using those two colors.

- Write a short story or poem that begins with “I love adventure because...”
- Write a short story or poem that begins with “I love my home because...”
- Find pictures and/or read about Madrid and Andalusia to imagine the hills and valleys that Alfredo and Bernardo explored in their year away from home.

[Note: For Spanish Language Classes — use the above writing exercises to develop writing and language skills in Spanish]

JUAN BOBO (Silly John)



Juan Bobo has its origins in both Mexico and Puerto Rico though it is reminiscent of folk tales from many cultures around the world. It is about a boy, Juan, who makes silly mistakes, but in the end, good things happen. When his Mama sends him to the grocer to exchange a chicken for a sack of potatoes, she instructs him to speak politely to people he meets along the way and Juan promises that he will do so. He searches his memory and recalls his mother greeting someone politely at funeral with "My sympathy and regrets on this sad occasion." The first people Juan sees are a bride and groom. They of course are offended by the greeting and recommend that next time he should say, "Live long and happy." Juan applies the advice he is given with each subsequent encounter but is sad because his greeting is always inappropriate. But in the end, he sees bumbling thieves and inadvertently drops his bag of potatoes on their heads (from the tree where he is hiding). Frightened, the thieves run off and leave their coins behind, so Juan goes home a wealthy boy. An up-tempo tango celebration suggests that life is now sweet and wonderful for Juan and his Mama.

Vocabulary

Muy rico	Very rich
Mi pena y psame en esta on this sad occasion	My sympathy and regrets occasion than dolorosa
Viva! Viva! Que vivan largos and y felices dias!	Hurrah! Hurrah! Live long and happy!
Le deseo dos por cada uno you que tenga	I wish you two for every one have
Nada de saludos, tengo que ofrecer ayuda	Never mind a greeting, just offer to help.
Amable	Polite
El consejo	Advice

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Each time Juan Bobo met someone, he greeted him or her with the greeting that was appropriate for the prior encounter.

- What was missing in Juan's thinking and logic each time?
- Discuss following directions
- Discuss the value of taking and giving advice
- Discuss the terms, "common sense" and "thinking things through"
- Why is it important to consider, evaluate and if necessary, modify advice for our own needs?
- Discuss what it means to have motives, goals and objectives
- What were Juan's motives in greeting people as he did?
- Discuss the importance of sincerity and good intentions



EXERCISES AND PROJECTS

In this story, Juan used the rake in four ways: first to rake, then as a microphone, a dancing partner and a guitar.

- Take an everyday object and see how many things it can become. Use classroom items; divide the class into small groups and assign a different item to each group. At the end of the session, have a representative from each group report the item and how many things it could be to the class.

[Note: For Spanish Language and/or Culture Classes, use items (props) connected with the language/culture and/or have the representative do the presentation in Spanish]

- Paper Bag Dramatics: Fill paper bags with assorted items (i.e. a paper clip, a twig, a hankie, a pair of glasses, a key); Divide class into small groups. Have each group develop a little story or play using the props (items in the bag) in some way within the story.

[Note: For Spanish Language and/or Culture Classes, use props connected with the language/culture and/or have students do the presentation in Spanish]

CAPERUCITA ROJA



The classic tale, **Caperucita Roja** (Little Red Riding Hood), a perennial favorite in both Spanish and English speaking house-holds, is the last of the stories that Arbolita offers Tomas for his collection. Presented with a Latin beat and a Castillian twinkle and grin, our little heroine Marguerite takes a basket of Bastilitos and Café du Leche to Grandmama. Justice triumphs when Grandmama finds help to overcome

the villain and Caperucita Roja promises never to speak to strangers again!

Vocabulary

Una nina	A girl
Mi abuela	My grandmother
Un desconocido	A stranger
Vaya Coincidencia	What a coincidence
Quien es?	Who is it?
Que ojos tan grandes tienes	What big eyes you have
Que orejas tan grandes tienes	What big ears you have
Que dientes tan grandes tienes	What big teeth you have

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Discuss why Caperucita Roja's mother instructed her to go directly to Grandmama's cottage and not to talk to strangers along the way
- Why was it difficult for Caperucita Roja to follow these instructions? (Discuss her personality, sunny disposition, friendly, outgoing nature, etc.)
- When Caperucita Roja first met the person in the woods, she was uncomfortable about him. What were some alternatives she might have employed when he first started talking to her?
- What were some alternatives when she got to Grandmama's cottage and sensed something peculiar about Grandmama? (Perhaps discuss seeking help from a neighbor, calling 911 or other emergency measures)



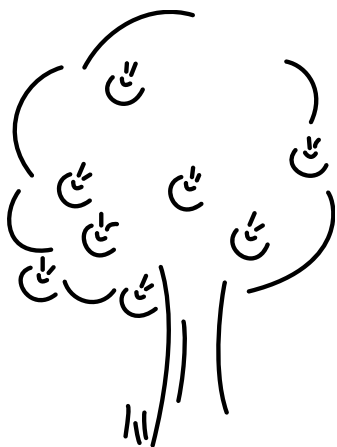
EXERCISES AND PROJECTS

- Write a newspaper article (or draw a series of pictures) that tells what happened when Caperucita Roja set out to take a basket of goodies to her Grandmama.
- Role play some of the situations presented in the story (i.e. Divide the class into groups and have each of them have the opportunity to be both the "stalked" and the "stalker;" the loving parent or grandparent and the innocent child, etc)

[Note: For Spanish Language Classes – Implement the above exercises in Spanish to develop writing skills and spoken language skills]

FINALE

Tomas tells Arbolita that he must be on his way, but thanks her for the wonderful stories, which he will now share with people in other parts of the world. A spirited reprise of "Cuentos, Cuentos Del Arbol" sends audiences home with dancing feet, clapping hands and a happy heart.



GENERAL EXERCISES AND PROJECTS IN CONNECTION WITH "CUENTOS DEL ARBOL"

- Create a patchwork quilt entitled "A Latino Heritage" (Or "Spanish" or "Portuguese" or "Hispanic" or other Heritage) by having each student create a picture or design representing the part of the Latino world from which he/she or some one he or she knows came. This can be done with fabric or by drawing on squares of paper and making a paper reproduction of a quilt. Hang it in your classroom or in the hallway of your school or home.
- Plan a Spanish/Latin American Festival in which students share foods, costumes/clothing, musical instruments, music, art work, crafts, designs and other significant aspects of Latino heritage.
- Make a Piñata in your classroom. There are many websites with excellent suggestions for this creation. Break it open on a special occasion or for a celebration.
- Celebrate Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) in your classroom or school. This is a day (comparable to our July 4th) commemorating Mexican victory over the French in 1862 against great odds at the Battle of Puebla. Cinco de Mayo today is an opportunity for Mexican-Americans to celebrate and share traditions with friends of different heritages.

You may want to modify or add to the discussion points and exercises above depending on the grade level and prior theatre experience of your students. There are many other ways in which Spanish and Latin American studies might be brought to life within the classroom. Let the curtain rise on new and imaginative ways to learn about language, heritage and the arts!



RESOURCES

Pushcart will be happy to send, upon request, a complete Bibliography of books and resources used in the development of *Cuentos Del Arbol* (Tree Tales), and songs/music presented in the play. We can also provide the sections of the play that are presented in Spanish. For further information, contact Pushcart at:

197 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ 07044
or email: information@pushcartplayers.org

Beyond the information provided in this guide, we are delighted to refer you to The Southern Poverty Law Center, founded in 1991 to provide teachers with resources and ideas to help promote harmony in a diverse school and classroom. It is a non-profit legal and education foundation that publishes a magazine/resource guide, *TEACHING TOLERANCE*, twice each year. This colorful and well-informed publication will be sent to educators throughout the United States at no charge simply by writing to:

Editor, TEACHING TOLERANCE
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104

Cuentos Del Arbol was written by Ruth Fost
Translated by Felipe Gorostiza and Cari Gorostiza
Music was composed, arranged and performed by Larry Hochman

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The Prudential 



Pushcart is a member of Actors' Equity Association, ArtPride, Arts Council of the Morris Area, New Jersey Theatre Alliance and Producer's League of Theatre for Young Audiences.

