
Folktales from Around the World
THE BEAR PRINCE
(Mexico)



Teacher's Guide
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Produced
by
Colman Communications Corp.

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The producer wishes to thank Gene Cowan
and S.E. Schlosser for their assistance.

THE BEAR PRINCE

Grades 2 and Up

Viewing Time: 12:00

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

The Bear Prince has been produced for language arts and social studies students. Although the primary target audience encompasses grades 2-6, the program can easily be used in junior high and high schools. The program's main purpose is to present an entertaining Mexican folktale that portrays various aspects of Mexican culture. As with most other classic folktales, *The Bear Prince* has a deceptively simple plot that can be enjoyed by viewers of all ages. Yet, it also has a more complex inner structure that addresses cultural, psychological and philosophical norms older, more sophisticated viewers can explore. This video helps students achieve McREL Language Arts Standard 9, Level I (Grades K-2) Benchmark 1 (Understands the main idea or message in visual media); Benchmark 2 (Uses a variety of strategies to predict content and meaning through visualization); Benchmark 6 (Understands the similarities and differences between real life and life depicted in visual media); Level II (Grades 3-5), Benchmark 2 (Understands techniques used to convey messages in visual media (e.g., animation); Benchmark 5 (Understands techniques used to establish mood in visual

media); Benchmark 6 (Understands the use and meaning of symbols and images in visual media); Level III (Grades 6-8) Standard 9, Benchmark 5 (Understands how language choice is used to enhance visual media); Level IV, (Grades 9-12), Benchmark 9 (Understands how literary forms can be represented in visual narratives); McREL Arts and Communication, Level IV, Benchmark 4 (Knows the cross-cultural relationships among art motifs, designs and themes of separate societies); McREL Geography Standard 3, Level III (Grades 6-8), Benchmark 4 (Understands the patterns and processes of...(cultural) diffusion (e.g., the spread of language, arts, literature and customs from one culture to another).



Program Synopsis

The Bear Prince opens with an impoverished woodcutter hard at work in the pine-oak forests of the *Sierra Madre Occidental*, the mountain range of western and northwestern Mexico. A bear comes upon the scene and is

incensed because the woodcutter has failed to ask permission to work in the forest. The animal strikes a deal with the woodsman: he will spare the man's life if one of the woodcutter's three daughters will marry him. Later, the youngest daughter, Rosa, agrees and, when alone with the beast after their wedding, discovers that the animal is in reality a handsome prince cursed by an evil spirit who has cast a spell on him. He is a bear by day and a prince at night. The couple lives happily for a while, but eventually Rosa becomes homesick. The prince says she can visit her family, but exacts a promise that she will never reveal his secret. Rosa vows to remain silent, but when her sisters tease her for marrying "that hairy beast," she becomes angry and reveals the secret, thus betraying her husband's trust. When the prince discovers her betrayal, he disappears. But not before telling her that she can find him at only one place – at the "Castle of Faith." Rosa searches for many years, assisted by individuals she meets on her odyssey – the powerful Mesoamerican god *Quetzalcoatl* disguised as a man and dog, Mother Moon (*Madre Luna*), the Sun (*Señor Sol*) and the wind (*El Aire*). At last she finds herself at the Castle of Faith, where the prince is about to marry the evil spirit. Rosa uses three magical almonds to overcome the spirit's supernatural powers and is reunited with the prince. He takes her to his castle, where they live happily ever after.

This guide contains objectives and lesson plans for two groups of students – primary/intermediate (Level I) and advanced (Level II), for junior high/middle school and high school students. Primary/intermediate teachers may find it useful to read the Level II material to obtain a deeper understanding of the story.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

Primary/Intermediate (Level I)

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Tell the difference between make believe (fiction) and real life (non-fiction).
2. Name at least six principal characters in the story and explain their roles.
3. Identify Mexico and the *Sierra Madre Occidental* on a map.
4. Tell the difference between narrative and dialog.
5. Discuss in simple terms the three major thematic elements of the story – being faithful to your word, not living up to your promises, making up for doing the wrong thing (faithfulness, betrayal, redemption.)
6. Explain the cultural facets of Mexico shown in the story (religion, jewelry, architecture, etc.).
7. Know the meaning of ten Spanish words and phrases used in the program.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

Advanced (Level II)

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the historical background of the story and how it has evolved from its original form in Roman mythology (compare and contrast with “Cupid and Psyche” by Apuleius).
2. Name all the principal characters in the story and explain their roles.

3. Discuss how color, sound, music and dialog have been employed to enhance the story in its animated version.
4. Compare and contrast the original story as told by Señora Eva Rueda-Fraire with the animated version.
5. Discuss how the three major thematic elements of the story – faithfulness, betrayal, redemption – are exemplified by the protagonist, Rosa Margarita.
6. Explain the cultural facets of Mexico shown in the story (religion, jewelry, architecture, etc.) and discuss their significance.
7. Discuss the role of religion and religious symbolism in the story, giving emphasis to the magical almonds, *Quetzalcoatl*, Catholic marriage ritual, native polytheism, blending Catholicism with native religions.

The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN Primary/Intermediate, Level I

The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Ask your students if they know what a folktale is. Put the word on the chalkboard and divide it into its two parts. Explain that “folk” means “people” and a “tale” is a story.

So a folktale is a story told out loud by people – not necessarily stories written by authors, although authors may write down folktales to be read. Explain that folktales often help us understand people from different parts of the world because people often tell stories about things and events important in their lives. If your students are somewhat more advanced, you may want to discuss the role of folktales in a country's culture – how the stories may exhibit various cultural traits, such as values and religious beliefs. Tell the class that they will see a video of a Mexican folktale.

Hand out *Some Spanish Words & Phrases*, which introduces viewers to the Spanish used in the program. Have the students say the words aloud and, if possible, have them use each word in a sentence.

Tell the class that you will have some questions for them after they see the program. List on the chalkboard the following questions: (1) Where in Mexico does the story take place? (2) What parts of the story *could* be true in real life? (3) What parts of the story are make-believe? (4) Who are six main characters (people) in the story?

Note: you may find it useful to show the program twice – the first time to let your students merely enjoy the story; the second time for an analysis of the tale and a complete discussion of the characters, plot and theme.

Post-Viewing Activities

Locate the *Sierra Madre Occidental* on a map. Your students may have been surprised to see that there are mountains – and snow – in Mexico. During the winter months, temperatures dip below freezing in the mountainous areas. In the highest altitudes, snow covers the ground year-round. After answering the four questions

listed on the chalkboard, discuss the program, using the ***Suggested Discussion Questions, Level I***, if you prefer.

*Some key aspects of the story and its production are highlighted in **An Interview with the Producer**. You may find reading it helpful when formulating your classroom discussion of the program.*

Hand out ***The Main Characters***. Have your students complete this activity as an individual seatwork exercise or in small groups. Go over the answers after it has been finished. If your students have colored in the line drawings, display their work on your classroom bulletin board. Note that the bracelets, earrings and necklaces worn by the women in the video were silver and turquoise. Discuss the importance of silver in Mexico's history. (It was a prime factor in the Spain's desire to conquer Mexico in the 16th century.)

Hand out ***What Happened Next?*** Have your students complete this activity as an individual seatwork exercise or in small groups. Go over the answers after it has been finished. *Materials needed: paper, glue, scissors, pen or pencil.*

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN **Jr./Sr. High, Level II**

The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Discuss folk literature. Help your students understand that folktales can do several things. They can provide entertainment, of course. Yet, they also can give us insight

into the human condition and can provide important clues about the cultures from which they come. A folktale's language, descriptive elements, plot, and theme all offer information about values and social conventions within a particular culture.

Tell the class that they will now see a Mexican folktale. Afterwards, they will be expected to analyze the story.

Pass out *The Bear Prince Analysis*. Have everyone look over this exercise and ask for questions. (Younger students may need particular help with symbolism, especially if they have not had any instruction in this literary component.) After all questions have been answered, show the program.

Note: you may find it useful to show the program twice – the first time to let your students merely enjoy the story; the second time for an analysis of the tale and a complete discussion of the characters, plot and theme.

Post-Viewing Activities

Have the class fill out *The Bear Prince Analysis*. Older, more advanced students may be able to do this exercise as individual seatwork. Mid-level students may be able to do it in small groups. Younger students will probably have to do it as an all-class exercise, discussing each item as it is filled in.

Continue your discussion of the program, using *Suggested Discussion Questions, Level II*, if you prefer. If you do not use the suggested questions, be certain to thoroughly discuss the theme of *trust, betrayal* and *redemption*. (Other possibilities: “Redemption through loyalty,” or “Love conquers all.”) Also, be certain to discuss the role of religion in this story, and the importance of religion in Mexican culture. Stress the combination of Mesoamerican and European religious symbolism evident in the story: the

transformation of the man in the forest into *Quetzalcoatl* and the symbolism of the three almonds. (In biblical terms, three is a mystical number and to Christians the almond is a sign of purity; thus, Rosa is purified of her betrayal after being tested by events in her odyssey and the evil spirit. She receives redemption.)

Afterwards, explain that, as with other facets of culture, folktales evolve. Part of that evolution may take place as stories are transported from one area of the world to another. Tell your class that *The Bear Prince* comes from Mexico. However, the tale did not originate there. In fact, it comes from a collection of stories written by second century Roman author Lucius Apuleius Platonicus. The original form of the tale was entitled *Psyche and Cupid*. An animated version of *Psyche and Cupid* is available on unitedstreaming and PowerMediaPlus services, as well as on DVD and VHS from most major educational media distributors. Your students may find it very instructive to compare and contrast the two versions of this story. What are the differences? What are the similarities? What might be the reasons for the similarities and differences?

For another comparative literature lesson, have your students go to www.g-world.org/magictales/oso.html, where they will find *El Principe Oso*, the tale upon which the animated version was based. What are the similarities and differences between the two versions?

Finally, hand out and discuss *An Interview with the Producer*, either to the entire class or to any students interested in film or video production and/or animation.

Description of Blackline Masters

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, LEVEL I – Gives questions that may be asked after the program is screened. For use in primary/intermediate classes.

SOME SPANISH WORDS & PHRASES – Helps familiarize students with some of the Spanish words and phrases used in the program. For Level I.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS — An art and writing exercise to review the main characters of the story. For Level I.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? — Helps students sequence the events of the story and provides an additional writing exercise. For Level I.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRODUCER – Gives additional information on the program and how it was produced. For Level II.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, LEVEL II – Gives questions that may be asked after the program is screened. For use in jr. high and sr. high classes.

THE BEAR PRINCE ANALYSIS – Helps advanced students analyze the story from various perspectives. For Level II.

ANSWER KEY

THE MAIN CHARACTERS: (1) Rosa Margarita, married the bear prince and looked for the Castle of Faith after she revealed the prince's secret. (2) The Prince, became a bear during the day when an evil spirit cast a spell on him, married Rosa. (3) The woodcutter, agreed to have one of his daughters marry the bear. (4) *Señor Quetzalcoatl*, gave the three magical almonds to Rosa that helped her escape from the evil spirit. (5) Rosa's sister, suggested that Rosa tie up and gag the prince so he wouldn't be able to chant. (6) The evil spirit, turned the prince into a bear and almost married him.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Proper order: (1) The bear grabs the ax from the woodcutter. (2) The dog talks to Rosa in the forest. (3) *Madre Luna's* housekeeper takes pity on Rosa. (4) *Señor Sol* talks to Rosa and his housekeeper. (5) The evil spirit orders her servants to capture Rosa. (6) The prince and Rosa are reunited.

THE BEAR PRINCE ANALYSIS Possible answers: **Plot:**
Introduction: A bear happens upon a woodcutter who is cutting down trees in the bear's forest. Rising action: The woodcutter saves his life by striking a deal with the bear. The bear will spare the woodcutter if one of the woodcutter's daughters marries him. Rosa, the youngest daughter, agrees to the marriage. The bear turns out to be a prince who has had a curse placed on him. Rosa agrees to never reveal his secret, but in a fit of anger tells her sisters. One sister suggests that Rosa place a gag on the prince as he sleeps so he can't chant the magical words that turn him into a bear. When Rosa does so, the prince figures out what has happened and tells his wife that he must leave because she has betrayed his trust, and that she can find him only at the Castle of Faith. Climax: She does so after learning the way from *Señor Quetzalcoatl* (who gives her three magical almonds), the moon, sun and wind. Falling action: Rosa uses three magical almonds to escape the evil spirit who has cast the spell on the prince. Denouement: She and the prince are reunited and he takes her to his castle where they live happily ever after. **Theme:** "Trust, betrayal and redemption" or "Love conquers all." **Setting:** The Sierra Madre Occidental of northwestern Mexico. **Conflict:** Man vs. circumstances and Man vs. Himself/Herself. **Principal Characters:** The Bear Prince, woodcutter, Rosa Margarita, Rosa's sisters, *Señor Quetzalcoatl* and his dog, *Madre Luna*, *Señor Sol*, *El Aire*, the housekeepers, the evil spirit. **Protagonist:** Rosa. **Antagonists:** Rosa's temper and the evil spirit. **Symbolism:** The three almonds (the trinity, almonds as the Christian symbol for purity), the Castle of Faith (redemption and trustworthiness). **Point of view:** Omniscient.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

NARR: Long ago, in the pine-oak forests of the *Sierra Madre Occidental*, a woodcutter earned a meager living for himself and his three daughters by chopping and selling wood.

One day, a bear walked through the area.

BEAR: I never gave you permission to cut trees in my forest! So now you must pay with your life!

WOODCUTTER: Oh, please spare me, *Señor Bear*! For if I am no longer here, my three daughters will starve!

NARR: The bear considered the man's plea for a minute and then said...

BEAR: Yes, okay. I will spare you – but only if one of your daughters marries me!

NARR: At first, the woodcutter didn't know what to do. But finally, he concluded that it would be best if he agreed to the bear's terms.

WOODCUTTER: *Sí*. All right.

When the woodcutter returned home later that day, he told his daughters that one of them must marry the bear.

The two older daughters steadfastly refused, even though it would mean the end of their father.

WOODCUTTER: (Imploring) Rosa?

NARR: But the youngest, Rosa Margarita, had a much kinder heart.

ROSA: *Sí, Poppy*. I will marry *Señor Bear*.

So several days later, a priest was summoned to the forest, where he performed the sacred rites.

After the ceremony, the bear took Rosa Margarita to his cave, high in the mountains.

NARR: As the sky darkened that evening, he began chanting. Slowly, the creature was transformed into a handsome prince who then revealed a dreadful secret.

PRINCE: An evil spirit has placed a curse on me. Each night, when I chant, I turn into a man. And in the morning I chant and become a bear once again.

You may do anything you want to here, but only on one condition. You must never tell anyone that I am a prince.

NARR: Rosa promised that she would never disclose his secret.

And so for many months, the two lived contentedly together.

Yet, as time passed, Rosa became increasingly homesick. She longed to talk to her sisters, her father, and to the people in the nearby village.

One evening she said...

ROSA: I feel so alone all day when you are gone. I miss my family. I would like to visit them. If I leave early enough, I'll be back by sunset.

NARR: Although the prince did not want Rosa to go, he could see that she longed for her sisters and father, and so he consented.

PRINCE: But promise me once again that you will never reveal our secret.

ROSA: I promise! I will never tell a soul!

NARR: At sunrise the next day, Rosa readied herself. She put on some fine jewelry the prince had given her, wore her most beautiful dress – and then set off.

When she arrived home she was greeted with great joy.

WOODCUTTER: Rosa! Come give your Poppy a big hug! Oh, my wonderful daughter!

SISTER ONE: Oh, we're so happy to see you, Rosa!

NARR: Yet, it was not long before Rosa's sisters became jealous of her beautiful jewelry and clothing.

And so they began to taunt her.

SISTER ONE: How sad that you've married that hairy beast!

SISTER TWO: Yes, it must be awful for you.

NARR: And on and on they went until Rosa, in a fit of anger, finally divulged her secret.

The revelation prompted one of the sisters to conceive a plan.

SISTER ONE: Listen, Rosa! You can break the curse if you tie up your husband as he sleeps and then place a gag on him. That way, he won't be able to chant the magical words when he wakes up.

NARR: Early the following morning, before sunrise, Rosa did as her sister suggested. And the curse was broken.

Surprisingly, however, the prince was not pleased. Reckoning what had happened, he told his wife that because she had broken her promise, he must now leave – and that Rosa could find him at only one place...

PRINCE: ...at the Castle of Faith!

NARR: And then he disappeared into thin air, before Rosa could ask where the castle was.

The seasons passed and the years passed, and Rosa searched far and wide for the castle, but to no avail.

One day she entered a forest, and after walking for several hours came upon a man and his dog. As she approached them, the dog said...

DOG: *Señor Quetzalcoatl*, my master, wants to know where you are going.

ROSA: I'm looking for the Castle of Faith. Does he know where it is?

DOG: No, but *Madre Luna* – Mother Moon – might know. If you follow this path, you'll come to her house. But beware! She has a terrible temper. Aye, yi, yi!

Now, hold out your hand. My master wishes to give you a gift. If you ever find yourself in trouble break one of these magical almonds.

NARR: Rosa thanked the dog and the man, and continued her journey.

Many hours later, she approached *Madre Luna's* house. When Rosa knocked, the moon's housekeeper appeared at the door.

HOUSEKEEPER ONE: *Válgame Diós hijita!* Why are you here, daughter? If *Madre Luna* finds you at her house, she will eat you!

NARR: Rosa quickly explained what had happened, and the housekeeper, overcome with pity, offered to help.

She hid Rosa behind an oven in the kitchen, and when Mother Moon returned home for her morning meal, the servant cleverly started a casual conversation.

HOUSEKEEPER ONE: The other day I had dinner with a spotted owl and he said he once overheard you talking about the Castle of Faith. I've always wondered where it is. Do you know?

MOTHER MOON: Only the sun, *Señor Sol*, knows its location.

NARR: Later, as *Madre Luna* slept, Rosa crept from the house and continued her journey, walking toward the sun's home.

A few days later, she arrived.

HOUSEKEEPER TWO: *Yi, yi!* Don't you know the sun, *Señor Sol*, will burn you if he finds you here?

NARR: Rosa began to cry, for she was very frightened at the thought of being burned by the sun. However, between sobs, she was able to tell her story to the old lady, hoping the woman would take pity on her – and help.

The sun, radiating his terrible heat, arrived just as Rosa finished.

HOUSEKEEPER TWO: Wait, *Señor Sol!* This poor child, she comes seeking only the Castle of Faith! Don't burn her, *por favor!* Let me tell you what has happened to her!

NARR: After the old woman finished her explanation, the sun, known to be very sympathetic, said that indeed, he knew where the castle was.

SUN: I would take you there myself, but as you know, I'm not allowed to go out after dark. However, the palace of *El Aire*, the wind, is only a short distance away. He can take you to your destination.

Continue on the pathway and tell him I have sent you.

NARR: And that is what Rosa did. The wind carried her to her destination – the Castle of Faith.

GUARD: *Alto!* And what is your business here?

ROSA: I am here to see the prince.

GUARD: Oh, you cannot see him. He is to be married tonight.

ROSA: (GASP)

GUARD: Hmm. You are determined to see him, aren't you? Okay, I will let you in as long as you are careful not to let the bride see you. She would be very angry if she saw anyone who was not invited!

NARR: Rosa carefully entered the great banquet hall, where she spied the prince with his bride-to-be, the evil spirit who had cast the spell that turned him into a bear – and now, with the same magic, had blinded him from her true nature.

Suddenly, the spirit saw Rosa and commanded the servants to capture her.

But before any of them could reach her, Rosa retrieved one of the almonds and cracked it open.

Instantly, she became a mouse and skittered around the floor!

Upon seeing Rosa's transformation, the evil bride turned herself into a huge cat and began to chase the little mouse.

To escape, the mouse scampered across the prince's hand, landed on some rice, took out the second almond, broke it and thus became almost invisible, encased in a grain of rice.

No sooner had that happened, than the spirit changed herself from a cat into a chicken and began pecking at the rice!

But before she could be eaten, Rosa retrieved the third almond, broke it, and turned into a coyote!

The spirit's magic had now been broken and she flew from the castle, never to be seen again.

Once more, the prince and Rosa were together.

And that very night the couple traveled to his castle, where they lived happily ever after.

-Web Resources-

El Principe Oso

<http://www.g-world.org/magictales/oso.html>
Spanish and English versions of the story, along with explanatory notes.

Magic Tales of Mexico

<http://www.g-world.org/magictales/>
Nine tales collected by folklorist Gabriel A. Cordova, Jr.

Mexican Folklore

<http://www.americanfolklore.net/mexican-folklore.html>
Author S.E. Schlosser's excellent collection of Mexican folklore.

-Related Programs from Colman Communications-

Andrés Orozco of Mexico, Mexico: Its People, History and Government, Myths & Legends of Ancient Rome, Native-American Folktales, African and African-American Folktales, Aesop's Fables

Discussion Questions – The Bear Prince, Level I

1. Where does the story take place?
(In Mexico, in the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains)
2. Is it possible for a bear to talk? (No)
3. Is it possible for a person to be a woodcutter? (Yes)
4. What is a make-believe story called?
(Fiction)
5. What is a true story called? (Nonfiction)
6. Is “The Bear Prince” fiction or nonfiction? (Fiction)
7. Would you marry a bear to save your father? Why or why not? (Answers will vary.)
8. Do you think the two older sisters were selfish because neither would marry the bear? (Answers will vary.)
9. Was it wrong for the sisters to tease Rosa? (Teasing is never the right thing to do.)
10. Was it wrong for the woodcutter to ask his daughters to marry the bear?
(Answers will vary.)
11. Why did Rosa lose her temper? (Her sisters teased her.)
12. What did one of the sisters suggest to break the evil spirit’s curse? (Tie a gag on the prince so he wouldn’t be able to chant.)
13. What did the prince do when he discovered that Rosa had broken her promise? (He disappeared.)
14. Where could Rosa find the prince? (At the Castle of Faith)
15. Who was the first person Rosa met when she searched for the prince?
(Señor Quetzalcoatl)
16. Who is *Quetzalcoatl*? (A powerful god of the native peoples who lived in Mexico long ago)
17. Who spoke for *Señor Quetzalcoatl*?
(His little Chihuahua)
18. What did *Señor Quetzalcoatl* give to Rosa? (Three magical almonds)
19. How did the almonds help Rosa?
(They changed her to help her escape from the evil spirit.)
20. Who were the other people Rosa saw when she searched for the Castle of Faith? (Mother Moon and her housekeeper, *Señor Sol* and his housekeeper, *El Aire*, and the guard)
21. Why did Rosa want to visit her family?
(She was homesick. She missed her father, sisters and the people in her village.)
22. Why was Rosa so frightened when she came to *Señor Sol*’s house? (She was afraid she would burn up.)

Discussion Questions – The Bear Prince, Level II

1. What is the theme of the Bear Prince? (“Trust, betrayal and redemption” or “Redemption through loyalty” or “Love conquers all.”)
2. How is the theme exhibited in the story? (The prince trusts Rosa keep their secret; Rosa reveals the secret to her sisters; Rosa redeems herself by searching for the prince for many years and by eventually finding “The Castle of Faith.”)
3. What role does religion play in this folktale? (Rosa and the bear are married by a priest; the deities she meets – *Quetzalcoatl*, *Madre Luna*, *Señor Sol*, *El Aire* – are modeled on native Mesoamerican deities; the number three [the three almonds] is a biblical mystical number; almonds are a Christian symbol of purity. In addition, Mexico is deeply religious country, with approximately 97 percent of its population Roman Catholics.)
4. Why might both Christian and native religious elements be evident in the tale? (Mexican natives had their own own religious customs and beliefs. The Spanish introduced Catholicism to native peoples in the 16th century. As is often the case in similar situations, native beliefs combined with Catholicism.)
5. How is the adage “You are what you eat” exhibited in the program? (*Madre Luna* eats cheese for her meal, a sly visual joke referring to the old saw that “The moon is made of cheese.”)
6. Do you feel that the woodcutter is justified in asking his daughter to marry the bear? Why or why not? (Answers will vary.)
7. Why do you think *Madre Luna* and *Señor Sol* play prominent roles in the story? (The sun and moon are powerful Mesoamerican deities .)
8. Do you think the two older sisters were selfish because neither would marry the bear? (Answers will vary.)
9. What do you see as the moral implications of the woodcutter asking his daughters to marry the bear? (Answers will vary.)
10. Give examples of obvious fictional elements of the story and those that are obviously derived from reality. (Realistic: the setting; the woodcutter’s work; Rosa’s homesickness; the house and its furniture; Rosa washing clothing by the stream. Fictional: talking animals; visitation to the homes of the moon, sun, wind; transformation from animal to human and *vice versa*; magical almonds; human flight; evil spirit casting spells.)
11. Was Rosa’s revelation of the secret to her sisters a moral lapse or a lapse of memory? (Answers will vary.)
12. Who is *Quetzalcoatl*? (A powerful god of the native peoples who lived in Mexico long ago)

Name _____

Spanish Words & Phrases

Many characters in the program you will see use Spanish words and phrases. They are listed below, along with their translations. After you review the meaning, write a sentence using the word or phrases. The first one is done for you.

1. *Sí* = yes

Sentence: *Si, I will do my homework now.*

2. *Sierra Madre Occidental* = Western Mother Mountain Range

Sentence:

3. *Madre Luna* = Mother Moon

Sentence:

4. *Señor Sol* = Mr. Sun

Sentence:

5. *El Aire* = The air (or wind)

Sentence:

6. *Por favor* = Please

Sentence:

7. *Válgame Dios hijita!* = Merciful heavens!

Sentence:

8. *Poppy* = Daddy

Sentence:

9. *Quetzalcoatl*: Geat green bird-snake (a god of the ancient native people of Mexico)

Sentence:

10. *Alto* = Stop

Sentence:

An Interview with the Producer, page 1

Guide writer Barri Golbus recently interviewed Warren Colman, the producer of *The Bear Prince* to learn more about the program and its production.

BG: *The Bear Prince* is the first in a series of animated videos called “Folktales from around the World.” What other stories will be in the series?

WC: We’ve just started production on the second program, “Yoshi, the Lantern Maker,” which comes from Japan. At the present, we have American, Russian, and African tales on the drawing board. We’ll see if we’ll expand the series after that.

BG: How do you select a tale? Obviously, there are many stories from which to choose.

WC: Yes, that’s right. We read about one hundred stories before selecting the one we think will make a good program. Basically, we have three criteria. First, it has to be a story that students will enjoy watching, which means it has to have some intrinsic interest, either in the plot or thematically – hopefully, both. Second, it has to mirror some key cultural factors from its country of origin. *The Bear Prince*, for instance, mirrors the *Mestizo* (mixed heritage) culture of Mexico, particularly the blending of Catholicism with native religions. Third, the story has to lend itself to a visual presentation. A lot of the stories we read had one or two elements, but not all three. And of course, it has to be appropriate for a school audience. A lot of folktales we read are wonderful, but really aren’t appropriate in a classroom setting.

BG: How does the animated version of the *The Bear Prince* differ from the original?

WC: Well, folk narratives are generally short on visual detail, so we have to fill in the gaps visually. Let me give you an example: nowhere in the original does it tell where Rosa stores the three almonds. Are they in her pocket? We – “we” being me and the animation team – decided to have her store the almonds in a little leather pouch that hangs around her neck because digging the almonds out of her pocket proved cumbersome, and the designer didn’t like a pocket on her dress from a design standpoint. We also add elements to create “teachable moments.” There is no *Quetzalcoatl* in the original version. Instead, he’s a wizard who gives “nuts” to Rosa. To strengthen the idea of religious blending that has taken place in Mexico, we changed the wizard to *Quetzalcoatl*, a powerful Mesoamerican deity and specified the nuts be “almonds,” a Christian symbol of purity. It works thematically, since Rosa uses the almonds to “purify” herself. There’s more, but you get the idea.

Name _____

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BG: What about the dog?

WC: Right, there was no talking dog in the original. I added him because I thought it added character and visual interest.

BG: I noticed that there was a shift in the program's visual treatment – and also the music – when Rosa goes on her quest to find the Castle of Faith. Was that intentional?

WC: That's a pretty astute observation. Yes, it was definitely intentional. With the exception of a talking bear and a prince who's had a spell cast on him, the first part of the program is pretty realistic, at least from a folktale perspective. But once Rosa goes on her quest, I wanted the treatment to be more fantastic, more otherworldly. The animation design team carried it off quite well, I thought. The background coloration and dutch (slanted) angles set the visual tone. We underscored this semi reality/total fantasy split with the music. The first part of the program uses primarily classical Spanish acoustical guitar and the second uses mostly full orchestration with more lush, fantasy arrangements.

BG: Did the program turn out as you imagined? Would you change anything?

WC: It turned out pretty much as I expected. As to your second question, I really wanted to have the visualization in more of a Mexican style – in the style of say, Rodolfo Morales or Frida Kahlo – but it just couldn't be done from a budgetary and technical standpoint.

BG: How do you find your talent to do the voiceover parts?

WC: It's a pretty cut-and-dry process. We send scripts and pictures of the characters to talent agents; they call in the talent for auditions and then email audio files of the auditions to us. I have a group of actors I've used over the years and I often write parts for them. Tim Dadabo, a hugely talented voiceover artist, did most of the male voices. You've heard him on hundreds of TV and radio spots (he's the Raid bugs and Pillsbury doughboy) and in video games.

BG: What about the visual part? How is that done?

WC: Obviously, we spend a lot of time on character design. It's done pretty intuitively. The character design artists submit a group of possibilities, and I choose the one that's closest to what I have in my mind's eye. Or I reject them, and tell the artist try this or that. In terms of background for location and artifacts, we spend a lot of time searching online. For instance, in the original sketches, the ax was wrong. The artist sketched an ax that would be used for beheading, not for chopping down trees. On the first go-round the artists had gold jewelry on the

Name _____

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women. Silver and turquoise would be more accurate in a Mexican setting, so we changed the jewelry. After the storyboard is approved, we work on coloration, then jump directly into the first roughs. We skip the animatics (pencil-drawn animation, without colors) because I'm very precise about movement and blocking in the technical script and I have a lot of confidence in the animation team to follow my direction. They're very professional.

BG: Any words of advice for young people interested in a career in animation?

WC: That's a tough question for several reasons. A lot of animation work has migrated overseas, mostly to India and South Korea. So I don't want to paint an overly rosy picture of job opportunities for budding young animation artists. On the other hand, at the big feature studios like Pixar and Industrial Light and Magic, there are opportunities for talented people who are well trained in art schools. If you are talented, highly trained at a university or art school and willing to work hard, there is a chance to hook up with one of the big studios. I understand there are also opportunities in the video gaming industry, although I don't claim any expertise in that area. From a producer standpoint, the field is very limited. The best training is in both film and literature. A double major in film studies and English lit would probably be best. A studio or production company, of course, won't hire a novice as a producer because producers are in charge of a lot of people, a lot of process and a lot of money. You have to learn the ropes and work your way up, through the ranks, to become a producer.

Name _____

The Main Characters

Directions: Below each picture tell who the character is and what each did in the story. Color the pictures.



1.



3.



5.



2.



4.



6.

Name _____

What Happened Next?

Directions: Cut out the pictures and place them in the proper order, as the events took place in the story. Below each picture, tell what is happening.



Name _____

The Bear Prince Analysis

Directions: Analyze the folktale according to the story elements listed below. Be succinct.

Plot:

Theme:

Setting:

Central Conflict:

Principal Characters:

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Symbolism:

Point of View: