

Storytelling

There are many things that can be done with the following stories. You can use them in your classroom for reading exercises or take home reading. Another option is to use them as one of the stations. Have each group practice a different story with props and characters. They can perform them for the whole group during the fiesta. The options are up to you. It is not one of the required stations for the Petaluma Adobe ELP.

Ashes for Sale

Cenizas a la Venta

The Emerald Lizard, Pleasant de Spain

Long ago, two neighbors lived in a small village near the city of Leon. They did their best to make their way in the world.

Pedro was sweet mannered and trusting.

Naldo was mean-spirited and clever.

One fine day Pedro met Naldo on the road. Naldo was carrying a heavy sack of corn flour on his shoulder.

“What are you taking to sell today?” asked Pedro.

Anyone could see that it was flour, but Naldo said, “Ashes from my fireplace. The people of Leon are in desperate need of our ashes.”

“What do they need ashes for?” asked Pedro.

“Fertilizer. It has just been discovered that the ashes from our village help vegetables and flowers grow twice their normal size in Leon. I’m going to make a small fortune.”

Naldo left Pedro pondering this new development and went on his way. After selling his flour in the Leon marketplace, he returned the following day with a pocketful of money.

Pedro was impressed and immediately began gathering ashes for a journey of his own. He offered to sweep out the fireplaces of every house in the village at no charge. Three days later, he had two full sacks. He put one on each shoulder and began the long walk to Leon early the next morning.

“Ashes for sale! I’ve got ashes from my village, just the kind you want for your gardens. Ashes for sale!” hollered Pedro as he walked up and down the many streets of the city.

The citizens of Leon looked strangely at him, and several questioned his sanity. Though he walked and yelled all day long, he didn’t sell so much as a cupful. By the time the sun began to set, poor Pedro knew that he had been made a fool. He sat on a sidewalk, put his head in his hands and began to weep.

A young boy approached. “Don’t cry mister,” he said. “I’ll buy your ashes.”

“You will?” asked Pedro.

“I don’t have any money, but I can trade with you. My scary mask for your worthless ashes.”

The boy held out a frightful wooden mask, carved to look like a demon. Painted red with black stripes, it had holes for its eyes and nose, while its wickedly grinning mouth sprouted sharp, jagged teeth.

“Mama says I can’t bring it into the house, because it scares her so. I don’t want to throw it away, so you take it.”

“But what will you do with my ashes?” asked Pedro.

“Carry them home and play a joke on Mama. I’ll tell her that I traded the mask for two bags of flour. When she opens the bags and sees the ashes, she’ll think they were cursed by the demon mask. Then I’ll tell her the truth and we’ll laugh.”

Pedro agreed to the trade, put the mask in his back pocket and began the long walk home. It was cold and dark, and Pedro was tired. He saw a campfire light in the distance and decided to ask for a place to sleep.

The three rough-looking men who sat around the fire were thieves of the worst kind. They would steal a crippled grandmother's cane if they could see it for a peso. Seeing that Pedro was as poor as a cockroach, they let him stay. He curled up by the fire and went to sleep hungry.

An owl, sitting on a nearby tree, hooted in the middle of the night. Pedro awoke and was afraid. His mother had told him that owls foretell of a death to come. He pulled the frightful mask from his pocket and put it on. *Mr. Death won't recognize me if I wear this* he said to himself.

Just as Pedro lay back down, one of the thieves awoke and saw the demon asleep by the fire.

"Ayy, ayy, ayy!" he yelled, waking the two other thieves. "It's the Demon of Death. He's here to take me away tonight. Save me. Please save me!"

The other two thieves jumped up, grabbed onto each other and started to back away from the reclining monster. Pedro stood up, facing the frightened men.

"It's just a mask!" he shouted, but with the disguise garbling his speech the men hear, "Today's your last!"

"Run!" cried the leader of the thieves. "Run for your lives!"

Run they did, away from the campfire and deep into the forest. They ran for all the hours left in the night and were miles away when the sun rose in the east.

When Pedro realized that they weren't coming back, he took the mask off and went back to sleep. In the morning he found the bandits treasure, a leather bag filled with gold and jewels, hidden at the base of a nearby tree.

"I'm rich!" he yelled.

Pedro tied the bag securely to his waist and ran all the way back to his village. He went to Naldo's house and showed him the treasure.

"It was just as you said. The people of Leon were crazy for my ashes. I should have taken four bags to sell. But now I'm rich and won't have to worry about such things."

It took Naldo a full week to gather enough ashes to fill four bags. He carried them to Leon on a cart. He was gone a long time. In fact, he never returned to the village.

Perhaps it hurts too much to be fooled by a fool.

Five Eggs

Cinco Huevos

The Emerald Lizard Pleasant de Spain

Jorge and Angela lived in a poor village. They often went to bed hungry.

One morning, Angela counted out their last two pesos. "Go to the market and buy an egg, husband. I'll cook it and we'll survive until tomorrow."

Jorge put on his ragged coat and walked to the busy marketplace. He approached the egg vendor and said, "You look tired, my friend. Go home to rest and let me do your work. I'll see your eggs with vigor. Anyone wanting to buy only two eggs will leave with four."

"What do you want in return for this favor?" asked the merchant.

"Two eggs are all I ask. My wife and I are hungry."

"I do need a good rest, Jorge," said the merchant, "and I know you to be an honest man. I'll return in four hours to collect the money."

Jorge ran home to Angela and placed the bounty on the table. "We feast today, my dear," he said.

"You make me proud, husband. Five delicious eggs all at one time. I'll cook them right away and we'll eat...two for you and three for me."

While Angela boiled the eggs, Jorge thought about what she had said.

"Dear wife, I think you have it backwards. I worked hard for the eggs. Three are mine. Two are for you."

"Don't be silly, Jorge. I waited and worried for your return, and now I've prepared the eggs. I deserve...three. You get two."

"Dear, dear Angela, I know how stubborn you can be, but I've worked hardest for this meal, and I want three."

"You'll get two and that's all there is to it. Now let's eat."

"Angela..." warned Jorge.

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"If you eat three eggs, I'll pack up and leave," Jorge said.

"If I don't get three eggs, I'll die," responded Angela.

"Then die, and see if I care."

To his amazement, Angela closed her eyes and fell to the floor, pretending to be dead.

"My poor Angela has died," he said loud enough for her to hear. "I'll have to make a casket for her burial. Of course, if she had agreed to two eggs, I would not have to take her to the graveyard."

"I want three," came a whispered voice from the floor.

Jorge gathered the lumber and built a sturdy coffin. He carried it into the house and with the help of his neighbors, placed Angela inside.

"My dear wife is gone," Jorge said to the others. "I'm sure she'll have plenty of eggs in heaven. Too bad she wasn't satisfied with the two she was offered here on earth."

"I still want three," the voice whispered.

They carried the coffin to the graveyard and started to dig the hole. Jorge leaned down to his wife and said, "It's time to stop playing this game. You take two and let me have three. Otherwise, you'll perish."

"I get three, now leave me alone. I'm about to be buried."

Jorge lifted the coffin lid in place and picked up his hammer to begin nailing it down.

Angela pushed the lid off and sat up saying, "All right, you win. You get three eggs and I get two. I'm hungry. Let's go home."

They ran home and sat down to eat. Angela placed three eggs on Jorge's plate and two on her own. Jorge ate one of his eggs and praised Angela for cooking it so well.

Angela ate one of hers and praised Jorge for earning five eggs.

Jorge ate his second egg and told Angela that she was a good sport. Angela ate her second egg and told Jorge that he had built a nice coffin.

Jorge picked up his third egg. "Look out behind you!" screamed Angela. "There's a tarantula on the wall!"

Jorge set the egg down and spun around to look. That was his mistake.

Angela reached over, grabbed the egg and swallowed it whole.

"Three for me," was all she said.

Juan Bobo and the Buñuelos

From Sea to Shining Sea by Lucia M. Gonzalez

Juan was a farmer. Juan was not very bright. He was so foolish and easily cheated that everyone called him Juan Bobo.

One evening as Juan was coming home after a long day of hard work in the fields; he saw three strange looking bags hidden between the bushes to the side of the road. He looked inside the sacks and saw that they were filled with gold. He took the three bags home and showed them to his wife.

"Dios mio, Juan! That gold must belong to some wicked men! Don't tell anyone that you found that gold; it must be a secret."

Then she thought, *ay no, my husband cannot keep a secret. I must come up with a plan.*

"Juan, I need you to bring me a sack of a cornmeal, three gallons of milk, three dozen eggs, and ten pounds of butter."

Juan had to go to town and bring everything his wife had asked for. He was so tired when he got back that he went right to sleep.

As soon as he fell asleep his wife began to make buñuelos; fritters made of cornmeal, milk, eggs, and butter and deep-fried like doughnuts. She spent the whole night cooking.

When Juan woke up the following morning and looked outside all the ground was covered with buñuelos. He couldn't believe his eyes. His wife said,

"Ay! It must have rained buñuelos last night!"

While Juan stood looking at the ground and at the sky, his wife rushed to the stable where their burro was eating from a pile of hay. The woman turned the burro so that its tail faced the hay. Just then, Juan entered the stable and heard his wife saying, "This is a miracle! Our burro has been eating with his tail!"

Juan was amazed at all the strange happenings of the day.

About a week later three mean-looking men with long beards and matted hair showed up at the house. They snarled at his wife, "Where is the gold your husband has been telling everyone he found? He had better give it to us right now...or else!"

Just then Juan walked into the house, and the men rushed to him, asking, "Where is our gold?"

With a pleased smile, Juan said, "Mujer! Bring me the gold you hid the other day."

In an innocent manner, the wife said, "I don't know anything about gold."

"Sure you do," Juan replied. "You know, the gold I brought home last week that I found."

"Gold? Last week?"

"Si, si...the gold I brought home the day before it rained buñuelos and our burro ate with his tail."

The three men looked at one another and said, "This poor soul must be loco." Feeling sorry for the woman who had to put up with such a fool, they left.

It is said that Juan and his clever wife lived a long and comfortable life from that day on.

Renting A Horse

Un Caballo para Alguilar The Emerald Lizard, Pleasant de Spain

Long, long ago Tio Pablo lived near San Diego on a rancho owned by Don Carlos. Tio Pablo wasn't very smart, but with the help of his friends, he got on in the world. He would work with the cattle from dawn until dusk then spend a few hours in his garden where he grew wonderful beans. He also had his own burro, but one morning, that burro ran away.

"Wah! How will I get my beans to the market? I'll have to rent a horse from Don Carlos."

Don Carlos was a rich man. Don Carlos was a stingy man and, he thought, the cleverest man in all of California. He lived in a twelve-room hacienda, high on a hill, and his corral was filled with strong horses while the hills were covered with his cattle.

Tio Pablo climbed the steep, dusty road to the rich man's house.

"I must take my beans to the market tomorrow," he explained to Don Carlos. "I'll need to rent a good horse. I can pay you five pesos."

Don Carlos smiled cruelly and said, "Ten pesos is my price...not a centavo less."

"But, I only have five pesos."

"Give me five now and the other five when you return my horse tomorrow night. You'll have plenty of cash after you sell your beans."

"But I need it for my family," protested Tio Pablo.

"And I need it for the rent of my horse," explained Don Carlos.

Tio Pablo gave him the money and said that he would return for the horse the next morning. He walked slowly down the arroyo to his small casa. Something was standing in the garden eating the sweet peppers. It was his burro! She had found her way home. Tio Pablo was so happy because now he wouldn't have to rent the expensive horse.

Realizing that Don Carlos was not going to give back his five pesos easily, Tio Pablo talked the situation over with his clever wife, Tia Teresa.

"Don't worry your head about it," smiled Tia Teresa. "We will pay Don Carlos a visit this afternoon. Play along with me and we'll get your money back, and more."

They walked to the rich man's house and asked if they might bring the horse out of the corral to see if it was suitable.

Don Carlos grumbled about the wasted effort, but brought the horse out anyway.

Tia Teresa took a piece of knotted string from her apron pocket and began to measure the length of the horse's back.

"This is where you will sit, Pablo and I since I am smaller I will sit here. The twins will fit here and abuela is a large woman and will take up quite a bit of room bringing us to...yes, to the tail. But wait! We promised Jorge that we would give him a ride to the market, too. Where will he sit?"

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Don Carlos. "You can't put six people on a horse."

"Please don't interrupt," Tia Teresa said without looking at the patron. "Let's move the twins to the horse's neck. I'll squeeze behind abuela and sit on Jorge's lap."

“What about the six sacks of beans?” asked Tio Pablo.

“We’ll strap them onto the horse’s sides, before we all climb on.”

“This is utter nonsense!” cried Don Carlos. “You can not put six people and six sacks of beans on my horse. It would kill him! I won’t rent him to you. The deal is off.”

“But you already have rented him to me,” complained Tio Pablo. “I gave you half of the money this morning.”

“I’ll give it back,” said the rich man, reaching into his pocket. “Here is your five pesos.”

“The agreement was for ten pesos,” said Tia Teresa. “The deal isn’t off unless you give Pablo the rest. You owe him another five pesos.”

“No, no! That isn’t fair. I won’t give another centavo.”

Tia Teresa measured the length of the horse’s neck and said, “I think we can put Abuela up here...she does so love to go the market.”

Don Carlos turned red in the face as he reached deep into his pocket. Pulling out another five pesos he cried, “Take it. Take it and get away from my horse.”

Smiles traveled with Tio Pablo and Tia Teresa all the way home.

The Man Turned into a Mule

Adopted from a Spanish folktale by Idries Shah in World Tales

Once there was a student who, being extremely poor, began to think of some way of adding to his very small store of silver coins. He gathered together his student friends, and they talked about it all night, each of them being in the same position. Soon, Juan Rivas, for that was his name, thought of a plan. "Friends," said he, "You look upon one tonight who tomorrow shall be the son of one of the first Grandees of Spain!" When the laughter died down, he looked very wise, but refused to tell them any more. "I assure you that if you will bear with me for a day, by this time tomorrow night I shall be back with a story which will give us all a merry time together."

Putting his plan into action, Juan Rivas, with his friend Carlos, went along the road next morning, looking for a man with a string of mules. Sure enough, after awhile he came upon such man, sitting on the first mule, and leading his string towards the next town.

Juan Rivas let the five mules pass, then as the last one came by him; he seized it, and handed it over to Carlos, who was hidden behind the hedge. "Take this mule and sell it in the market," he whispered. "Give me the money later when we all meet at the café." So saying, he placed the mule's saddle on his back and followed after the mules as if he was one. The day was very warm and the muleteer was half asleep, sitting cross-legged on the biggest animal. Nothing worried him for about half an hour, when he became aware that all the mules had come to a halt. This was the work of Juan Rivas, who was getting to the second stage of his plan.

"Get going you lazy mules!" shouted the muleteer. "Get going, you stupid beasts!" He administered a kick to the side of the animal he was sitting upon.

Still, the creature could not start, as Juan Rivas was holding onto the reins of the fourth mule. So, the muleteer got off his animal, and he saw a human being, saddled and bridled, at the back of the line.

"What in the world are you doing there, young man?" he bellowed.

"Ah, señor," said Juan Rivas sadly. "I was your fifth mule, whom you have beaten so unmercifully in the past. I have now returned to my own shape."

"But what do you mean? Explain the matter!"

"Well, my friend, I offended Holy Mother Church, many times, I am sorry to say, for which misdeeds I was turned into a mule for several years. That time I have faithfully served, and my period of imprisonment being over, I am now, by the dispensation of Providence, back to normal, as you might say, on this very day."

"But where is my mule, which cost me one hundred pieces of silver not many years ago?" asked the man.

"It may not have been many years to you, but it has been eternity to me!" cried Juan Rivas. "Understand me, please. I was that mule! The mule was I! Would that I could have told you how I felt about it over the years, when you abused me and beat me so much. But, that was my punishment, and I have served you faithfully. Now you speak to all that remains of your mule. Do you understand me now?"

“Scarcely, but I am not usually faced with this sort of thing. It appears to me, now that you must have been an animal. I always thought there was something funny about that mule!”

“Well, be quick about it and get this saddle and saddle cloth off of me, and take your uncomfortable bridle, too. I’m bruised from neck to ankle. However, all that is now over, and you will always be able to say that the son of one of the first Grandees of Spain served you as a beast of burden and is now restored to wealth and rank.”

“Are you a man of power and money, then? Oh sir, I beg you, forgive me for all I did to you when you were a mule! I hope that you will not have me imprisoned for the kicks I aimed at your Excellency.”

“No, no dear fellow,” said Juan Rivas kindly. “You were not to know that I was not a mule. Heaven, that is not your fault at all. It will not in any way help me in my case with Heaven if now I were to take vengeance on you. Think nothing of this and forget it.”

“Then I am forgiven? Your Excellency will not hold it against me? Oh God, bless you noble sir!”

“It will be a great consolation to me that none of my highly born friends will know what has been happening to me for so many wretched years,” said the student timidly. “I would indeed esteem it a favor if you do not divulge this to a living soul.”

“I promise your honor that torture would not drag the true state of affairs from me! Good bye, and may you never again incur the dissatisfaction of Holy Mother Church.”

Thus they parted, the muleteer pondering over the strange mysteries of life and Juan Rivas to his rendezvous with his friend Carlos who, he hoped, had gotten a good price for the mule.

Some weeks later, there was a market in town and the muleteer who had lost his fifth mule was looking for a new animal. The auctioneer who knew him asked what had happened to the other one. “I parted with it for personal and private reasons. I cannot discuss it.”

“Oh, well, why you did it is your own business, but if I were you I would just buy it back. It stands over there. I recognized it at once for you have been coming in every Friday with it for many years.”

“By the saints!” murmured the muleteer to himself. “So it is.” Walking over to the animal, he whispered in its large ear: “Well, your Excellency, I can’t imagine what you have been doing to incur the wrath of the Church so soon again. The Ways of Providence are terrible indeed. Have no fear, I will buy you, and this time I promise to treat you as one born to your station.”