



## *Brother Coyote and Sister Fox*

(‘Mano Coyote and ‘Mana Zorra)

### Thistle Theatre Education Guide

#### **About Thistle Theatre**

*Thistle Theatre* is a touring theatre company from Seattle founded in 1992 by Artistic Director, Jean Enticknap. Thistle Theatre's mission is to celebrate and enhance the art of puppetry through unique, well-crafted presentations of puppet theatre for audiences of all ages to enjoy.

#### **About The Story**

*Brother Coyote and Sister Fox* is adapted from a series of popular Mexican folktales about two characters: ‘Mano (Brother) Coyote and ‘‘Mana (Sister) Zorra (Fox). There are many variations on their adventures, but their escapades generally center around the different ways in which ‘Mana Zorra outwits ‘Mano Coyote in the pursuit of chickens. The chickens they are trying to steal come from the rancho (farm or ranch) of Doña (Mistress) Conchita. Behind the thievery is Sister Fox, who loves to trick ‘Mano Coyote into doing all sorts of silly things while she promises to steal a chicken. ‘Mano Coyote, who is very polite and easily outwitted, obliges her every time.

#### **About The Play And Music**

Thistle Theatre's adaptation of *‘Mano Coyote and ‘Mana Zorra* was written by Stephanie Díaz Reppen and Jean Enticknap. They followed the basic **plot** of the original story and then created **dialogue** for each of the characters to give them personalities and created scenes with action to make it dramatic. Despite the large number of Spanish words in the show, even if no one understands single word of Spanish, they will understand the show.

The **music** was written by a professional musician and songwriter, Sue Ennis. There are 3 original songs that the characters sing to help tell the stories. The other songs –La Cucaracha, Cielito Lindo, and Pío, Pío, Pío—are traditional Mexican songs.

**Coahuila (Coh-ah-WEE-lah)** is the name of the state in Mexico where it is believed this folktale originated. Mexico has states just like in the United States. The state of Coahuila is entirely landlocked—that means it is surrounded by land on all sides. It is located in the middle of the northern border of Mexico and is

bounded by the USA (north), Nuevo Leon (east), San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas (south), Durango (northeast) and Chihuahua (west). It has an area of 150,395 sq km (58,068 sq miles), which makes it the third largest of Mexico's states.

There are at least two theories about the name Coahuila: some say the word came from the name of a native tribe that lived in the region, and others say it came from the Nahuatl word, "Coatlhilana," which means "flying snake" or "creeping snake". Nahuatl is the language of the Aztecs, the indigenous people who once ruled the land now called Mexico and still inhabit, in far lesser numbers, most of Mexico.

### **Bunraku-Style Puppetry**

Thistle Theatre specializes in the tabletop **Bunraku-style** of puppetry. Bunraku is a form of puppetry in Japan that originated over 300 years ago. While Thistle Theatre modifies this art form, the concept remains the same. One, two or three puppeteers operate each puppet. The puppeteers wear black hoods and costumes to symbolize their invisibility. It doesn't take long for the audience to forget the puppeteers and become engrossed in the story. There are also **Rod Puppets** used in this production for the **Chicken, Cucaracha (cockroach), Bee and Baby Chick** characters.

All of the puppets were designed and built by puppeteer Brian Kooser in the Thistle Theatre studio. Two other people assisted in construction. Puppets are built for a specific show and usually used only in that show.

### **The Puppeteers**

There are three puppeteers in the show: Brian Stabile, Lisa Haslbauer and Gina Wilhelm.

## **Post Show Discussion & Activities**

- 1) **What styles of puppets were used in the production?** (Art EALR 4)
  - Bunraku-style puppets** were used for 'Mano Coyote and 'Mana Zorra.
  - Rod puppets** were used for the Chickens, Cockroaches, Bees and Chicks.
  
- 2) **What Mexican art forms were used in this production?** (Art EALR 4)
  - Traditional music** was featured: Pio, Pio, Pio, Cielito Lindo and La Cucaracha are songs that many Mexican child knows.
  - Traditional painting** style was used to paint the water.
  
- 3) **Draw a picture of each character:** (Art EALR 1)  
'Mano Coyote, Sister Fox, Chickens, Cockroach, Baby Chicks

4) **Write three words to describe each character.** You can use words in the word bank to help you.

1. Brother Coyote

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Sister Fox

\_\_\_\_\_

Word bank

clever

strong

smart

hungry

small

greedy

kind

forgiving

brave

5) **Word Matching:** See if you can draw a line to match the following Spanish words with their English meanings. (Reading GLE 1.3)

Amigo

house

Laguna

fox

Luna

farm

Bonita

silence

Zorra

friend

Gallina

wedding

Pollito

lagoon

Rancho

chick

Hambre

moon

Silencio

hen

Aburrido

pretty

Boda

hunger

Casa

boring

6) **The following sentences describe events in the story.** Number them in order of sequence or cut them out and put them in the correct order. (Reading GLE 2.2.1)

Cleotilde and shows her new chicks.

Sister Fox meets the Wax Man.

Brother Coyote is chased by bees.

Sister Fox tells ‘Mano Coyote that there is a giant cheese in the lagoon.

Brother Coyote meets an angry band of cucarachas (cockroaches)

7) What Spanish words were used in the play to describe sounds? What are those sounds in English? (Reading GLE 2.4)

**Pío, pío, pío** - sound of chicks peeping

**Ay or Ay de mi** – ouch

8) DICHOS (Reading GLE 2.4)

Dichos are a saying that is passed on the Latin culture. Americans might think of them as proverbs, clichés, or adages. They are generally passed from mother to child. In this production, we use two (spoken by Sister Fox):

**No puede beber el caldo, pero se quiere tragar la carne.**

He can’t drink the broth, but he wants to eat the meat.

**No creas que la luna es queso porque es redonda.**

Don’t think that the moon is cheese just because it’s round.

**Discuss** what do you think is meant by these saying? Can you think of any similar ones in English?

Some other favorite dichos and their meanings:

**En boca cerrada, no entra mosca.**

No bugs can fly into a closed mouth.

- *Meaning, keep your mouth shut; don’t gossip.*

**Cria fama, y hechate a dormir**

Cultivate fame, and go to sleep.

- *Meaning: be careful about what kind of reputation you create for yourself—once people start thinking of you a certain way, it’s very difficult to change their image of you.*

## Spanish Vocabulary (Reading GLE 1.3)

### **Pronunciation**

Hints: There are five basic vowel sounds in the Spanish language:

- a = ahh – as in casa (house)
- e = ehh – as in cena (dinner)
- i = eee – as in mi (me or my)
- o = ohh – as in pobre (poor)
- u = ooo – as in cucaracha (cockroach)

- The letter y sounds like the Spanish i = eee
- The letter h is silent - as in hambre (hunger)
- The letter j sounds like a hard American h - as in mejor (better)
- The letter z is soft, like an American s - as in Zorra (fox)
- There are some extra letters, too, in addition to the 26 letters of the American English alphabet:
  - ch - as in muchas (many or lots of)
  - ll - this is pronounced like a y, as in gallina (chicken)
  - ñ - this sounds like n and y put together, as in Señor (mister or sir)
  - rr - this is rolled (see below)

The Spanish r can be pronounced two ways:

- If there is only one r, as in “pero” (but), it sounds almost like a d
- Or it can be rolled, as in “rancho” (farm)
- If there are two r’s, as in “Zorra” (fox), they are always rolled.

\*Try rolling your r’s: put your tongue, very lightly, on the roof of your mouth; don’t press. Now exhale air through your mouth, making your tongue vibrate against the roof of your mouth. It should sound like a cat purring. Now try adding your voice. Don’t be discouraged if you don’t succeed the first time... Spanish-speaking children can have a difficult time pronouncing the American r!

### **Vocabulary**

- abusivo – nasty, abusive
- ahora – now
- ahora vas a ver – now you’ll see
- nos vemos – see you soon
- amigo - friend
- amigito – little friend
- a ver - let’s see
- a mi no me falta nada – I’m not missing anything
- a su servicio – at your service
- !auxilio! – help!
- ay – depending on how it’s used, it can mean “ouch” or “oh”
- bailari’n- dancer

boda – wedding  
 bonita – pretty  
 bueno – good; also used as “pues”  
 buenos dias – good morning  
 caldo – soup  
 caldo de pollo – chicken soup  
 cucaracha – cockroach  
 caballero – gentleman; also cowboy (but not used as such in this production)  
 casa – house  
 cebolla – onion  
 chile – hot pepper  
 chiquilinas – slang term meaning “tiny ones”  
 chula – cute (adj.); cutie (noun)  
 como pesa – it’s so heavy  
 ¿como puedes decir eso? – how can you say that?  
 compadre – comrade, buddy  
 con permiso – excuse me  
 corrido – a Mexican folk ballad, which tells a story or legend  
 dejeme pasar – let me pass  
 despedidas – farewells  
 después – after  
 dinero - money  
 disculpe – forgive me, excuse me  
 Doña – mistress or “ma’am” or “Lady”; a title of respect for the lady of the house  
 ¿donde estás? – where are you?  
 mariachis – musicians who play traditional Mexican songs  
 el mundo – the world  
 entonces – then  
 escuela – school  
 fue la reflexión – it was the reflection  
 gallina – hen  
 Haz me un favor – do me a favor  
 hombre – man  
 chapparito – little man  
 ladrone – thief  
 laguna – lagoon  
 luna – moon  
 mal criado – ill-bred, ill-behaved  
 maleducado – impolite, rude, ill-mannered  
 me has engañado – you have tricked me  
 me la voy a comer – I’ll eat her  
 me voy al proximo rancho – I’ll go to the next ranch  
 muchas gracias – thank you very much  
 mucho gusto de conocerle – a pleasure to meet you  
 muevete – move  
 no me oyó – he/she didn’t hear me  
 no me vayas a comer – don’t eat me  
 ¿no oyes eso? – don’t you hear that?  
 nopales – a type of cactus common in Mexico and the American Southwest  
 nuestro Señor es bueno – the Lord is good to us  
 otra vez – again

¿pa' qué hiciste eso? – why did you do that?  
perdoname – excuse me, pardon me, or forgive me  
pero – but  
piensa – think  
pollo – chicken  
pollo al carbon – barbecued chicken, but not with barbecue sauce  
pollo en mole – chicken in mole (MOHL-eh) sauce, which can be made with chocolate or chile  
por favor – please  
por supuesto – of course  
pos – slang for pues  
preciosa – precious  
pues – a “filler” word, meaning well, then, so...  
qué desgracia – what a disgrace  
qué lástima – what a shame  
qué noche mas linda – what a beautiful evening  
qué padre- that's cool, or that's great!  
¿qué puedo hacer? – What can I do?  
¿qué se cree'n?  
¿qué se hicieron? – where did they go?  
qué rico – how delicious  
qué suerte – what luck  
qué trae esta sopa – what's in this soup  
quesadilla – a snack or meal made by melting cheese between tortillas  
queso – cheese  
queso fresco – literally “fresh cheese”, but also a type of crumbly white cheese common to authentic Mexican and Latin American cuisine  
rancho - farm  
salvense – save yourselves  
sí- yes  
sí, una belleza – yes, it's beautiful  
silencio – silence  
somos amigos – we're friends  
sueltame – let go of me  
te voy a morder – I'm going to bite you  
ten cuidado – be careful  
tengo hambre – I'm hungry  
un refresquito – a little snack  
una gallina cada mañana – a hen every morning  
vamonos – let's go  
vamos a ver – we'll see  
¡Ya basta! – enough is enough!

**La Cucaracha Song**  
La cucaracha, la cucaracha

Ya no puede caminar  
Porque le falta, porque le falta  
Una pata par' andar

The cockroach, the cockroach  
Can no longer get around  
Because he's missing, because he's missing  
A leg with which to walk

### **Pío, Pío, Pío**

#### **Spanish**

Los pollitos dicen  
Pío, pío, pío  
Cuando tienen hambre  
Cuando tienen frío.  
La gallina busca  
El maíz y el trigo  
Les da la comida  
La gallina busca  
y les presta abrigo  
Ya currucaditos  
todos los pollitos  
Duermen calientitos

#### **English**

The chicks say  
Peep, Peep, Peep  
When they're hungry  
When they're cold.  
  
The hen looks for  
Corn and wheat  
She gives them food  
And seeks shelter for them.  
  
Under her two wings  
They stay very still  
And till the next day  
The chicks sleep

### **Other Latin-American Folktales and Stories to Read**

El Ratoncito Pérez  
Un Bien Con Un Mal Se Paga (a good deed is rewarded with a bad deed)  
The Seven-Headed Serpent  
Juan del Oso  
El Buen Pescador (The Good Fisherman)  
The Poor Man and the Chicken  
La Reina Isabel  
La Lagartija y El Sol/The Lizard and the Sun (by Alma Flor Ada)  
Antoñito Malverde  
Blancaflor

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