

ON STAGE AT THE CENTER

Teacher's Guide

Cenicienta



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Cenicienta is a modern, bilingual stage-adaptation of *Cinderella* that tackles culture, family, and the power of language. When 10-year-old Belinda is locked in the family basement with instructions from her stepmother and stepsisters to prepare for the party upstairs, she uses her imagination to re-enact the story of Cinderella using objects around her: napkins, teapots, and doilies, to name just a few. In the process of acting out this story and connecting to her family history, she learns to stand up for herself and take charge of her life and dreams.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Glass Half Full Theatre has collaborated with performers from around the world to create original, multilingual works of theater for adults and for children, employing a range of physical theater and puppetry techniques. Since relocating to Austin, Texas in 2011, Glass Half Full Theatre has received multiple grants from the Jim Henson Foundation and the City of Austin to create new work, and received dozens of Austin theater award nominations, earning multiple Outstanding Original Script, Direction, Acting and Puppetry from the B. Iden Payne awards, and The David Mark Cohen New Play Award, Visionary Vivifier Award, and Sound Design and Acting Awards from The Aus-tin Critic's Table.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Questions to Ask:

1. During the show, you will hear Belinda speak in both English and Spanish. Do you speak any languages other than English at home?
2. Do you have a favorite celebrity author or poet? What do you think it would be like to meet him or her?
3. Has there ever been a time when you felt unappreciated or unwelcome? How did you deal with those feelings?

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Please share these tips on how to be a respectful audience member.

1. Be an engaged and polite listener. The show requires your full attention!
2. Refrain from talking to your neighbor. Students enjoy the performance more if they can hear and pay attention uninterrupted.
3. Applaud if you like something. Normally, the audience applauds at the end of an act or scene. However, great audiences applaud when they are impressed with a scene or laugh when something is funny.
4. Entering and exiting the performance space in an organized and calm manner is important for your safety and the safety of the performing artists.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

- What are some of the household objects that brought to life during the show? What characters did they play?
- One of Belinda's pet peeves is that her cousins and aunt refuse to pronounce her name correctly: they pronounce it the American way ("Be-LINH-da"), while she herself pronounces it the Hispanic way ("Be-LEEN-da"). Why do you think this upsets Belinda? Why do you think her aunt and cousins refuse to fix their pronunciation?
- This show is an example of a play within a play; Belinda is acting out the story of Cenicienta within her own story. Can you think of other examples of a play within a play or a story within a story?
- Were there any words in Spanish that you did not know, but were able to figure out using context clues?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

Similes Galore

Belinda's poems involve the use of simile: a figure of speech that compares two objects using the words "like" or "as." For example, Belinda says, "My mother is like a blanket. She protects me, and keeps me *calientita* (warm)", and, "My father is like a furnace. Even though sometimes he can get too hot, he always keeps the house warm with love".

Ask your students to write their own poems about a loved one using similes. Challenge them to answer the following questions using similes: how does your loved one make you feel? What does your loved one look like? What does your loved one remind you of? How does your loved one help you?

Cinderella Across the Globe

Many of us know the classic Western version of *Cinderella*, made popular by the Disney movie. However, there are several cultures throughout the world that have their own versions of the *Cinderella* story. Here in the Americas, we have Native American, Mexican, Appalachian, and Caribbean versions of the story. Various cultures in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East all have their own versions, too! Divide your class into groups of 3-4 students and assign each group to research one culture's version of Cinderella. Ask them to compare and contrast that culture's version of Cinderella with the Western version of Cinderella, and share their findings with the rest of the class.

Cenicienta, Part 2

The show ends when Belinda finally gets the courage to go up the stairs and meet her hero, Gary Soto. Ask your students to invent "Part 2" of Belinda's story by creating a storyboard. Some of the main ideas and questions they should draw and caption in their storyboard include: what do they think happens when Belinda meets Mr. Soto? Will she be able to successfully convince him that she was the one who wrote the poem? What will happen to Belinda's aunt and cousins?

A DIY Cinderella Story

Throughout the show, we see how creative Belinda is. While telling the story of Cinderella, she turns a kettle into the fairy godmother, transforms a fan and candlestick holder into a silly couple attending the royal ball, and uses a combination of a paper doily, a drink umbrella, and a funnel to create the evil stepmother. Challenge your students to recreate a scene from Cinderella using objects that they can find around the classroom or at home. They can further bring the story to life by creating a stop-motion video or diorama.

One Voice, Many Characters

Even though this show only features one actor, Griselda Silva, we feel as if we meet many different characters due to Ms. Silva's great voice impressions. Challenge your student to see what voice impressions they can do of the characters in *Cinderella*—either the Western version, or one of the cultural versions they explored in the "Cinderella Across the Globe" activity above.