

ESPAÑOL 201-202

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DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SPECIAL READINGS

LA DAMA DEL ALBA

Act III (Primera parte - pp. 63-87)

Situation. You will recall that when the *Peregrina* said goodbye to the *Abuelo* at the end of the second act, she explained that she would return in "*siete lunas redondadas*." As the third act begins seven months have gone by and it is now late June, to be exact, the 23 of June, *la noche de San Juan*. A lot of things can happen in seven months. As we see Adela interacting with Quico and Telva, we become aware that some very great changes have taken place. Then the *Madre* leaves the house and is gone for several hours. We know that she never leaves the house. Where could she have gone? Could she be changing also?

Characters. It is fascinating to see how Casona now develops the character of Adela as she changes from a desperate, lonely girl who wanted to die, to a confident, attractive woman. In the first act we met Quico, the young man who works at the *molino* and Telva's prime source of gossip. We now see him in a different light in his relationship with Adela, although he is still a match in wit with Telva as they discuss the incident at the *taberna*.

Style. Again Casona gives us reasons to worry. If the *Peregrina* is going to return, that means she will have to take someone away with her. This adds to the suspense because we begin to wonder who it will be. The *Abuelo* is sure that it will be Adela. Is there some symbolism in the story Adela tells to the children?

Culture. What a marvelous picture we get in the next two acts of the celebration of *la noche de San Juan* in Asturias. We see Quico thinking about putting a *ramo* on someone's window, we see Adela getting the typical costume ready for the *fiesta*, and everyone is talking about the *hoguera*. Make a list of the different activities and traditions that are carried out on *la noche de San Juan*. We also get real insight into what goes on in a tavern in rural Asturias. Who frequents such a place? What do they do? Do men have strong feelings about what is said about the women of their family? Do you think Martin's reaction is typical of a virile young man? What do we learn about some of the legends and ballads of that region?

Language Objectives. Pay careful attention to the words Telva uses to describe the *tabernera*. Why is the epithet "Ana Bolena" considered an insult by someone from Spain? What words does Quico use to describe women who gossip?

Key Vocabulary. As you read the second act, be aware of the meaning of key words and phrases, such as the following. You will use these words in discussing your reading.

Vocab. activo/clave

la leña-wood for fire
la hoguera-large fire (bonfire)
las llamas-the flames
el ramo-wreath of flowers
el carro-cart
buey-ox (for pulling cart)
el ama(f.)de casa)-mistress/boss (of house)
el bordado-the embroidery
el milagro-miracle
el paseo-the walk
las viñas-vineyards
el rabadán-head shepherd

la gaita-bagpipe
el gaitero-piper
la higuera-fig tree
el cura-the priest
el renacuajo-tadpole
de golpe-all at once
la orilla (del río)-the bank (of the river)
la muñeca-wrist
una venda-bandage
la taberna-tavern, saloon
la tabernera-inkeeper's wife
el mantel-table cloth
la sabana-bed sheet
bordar-to embroider

tirar piedras-throw rocks
parecer-to look like (someone else)
vigilar-to watch out, keep a look out for
atreverse-to dare (to do something)
sentir por (to feel about)
callar-to be silent, not talk
traicionar-to betray, to go against
dislocar-to sprain, dislocate
podar-to prune (a fruit tree)
vendar-to bandage
cortegar-to court (a girl)

DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SPECIAL READINGS

LA DAMA DEL ALBA

Act III (Segunda parte - pp. 88-112)

Situation. In the middle of the third act, the *Peregrina* returns. She has a very interesting chat with Adela, the children, and then finally *el Abuelo*. As she talks with the *Abuelo*, she realizes there is something which she doesn't understand, some information she lacks, and she suspects that Martin has the answer. She tricks Martin and Adela into an intimate conversation and then listens in. At the end of their talk, her eyes begin to shine brightly. Now she sees it all clearly! Now she knows what is going to happen! After learning Martin's two secrets, do you know what is going to happen? (Hint: read very carefully the story the *Peregrina* tells to the children at the end of the act.)

Characters. At the end of the act, Casona gives us more insight into Martin's character. We see in him a tenderness and a caring which we haven't seen before. We also see how he has been suffering for four years, and how honorable he was in remaining silent. We see a forcefulness in Adela we haven't seen before as she forces Martin to divulge what he has been keeping hidden.

Style. The author now starts to build up tension. Who is the *Peregrina* going to take away? Through the *Abuelo*, Casona leads us to believe it is going to be Adela. Then he cleverly leads us to the incident where the *Abuelo* shows the *Peregrina* Angélica's picture, and we are stunned by her reaction. If what she says is true, then..... Casona's greatest use of *presagio* comes at the end of the act. With the brilliant telling of a story, he gives us a key to how things are going to end. With great skill he leads us to understand as the children repeat again and again: ¿Cómo ésta (aldea)? ¿Cómo el remanso? ¿Cómo Angélica? and then the shock as the children say, ¡Qué historia tan extraña!...¿Cuándo ocurrió eso? and we hear her answer.

Culture. The marvelous picture of the celebration of *la noche de San Juan* in Asturias continues. The *Peregrina*'s answers to the children's questions give us more background to the origin of many of the activities. As the preparations continue, we learn more about what the family (and everyone else in the village) are going to do.

Language Objectives. Can you see the tenderness expressed by Martin as he finally bares his soul to Adela? For the strong, silent type which we have seen him to be, he becomes almost poetic as he pours out his emotions. And what beautiful images Casona uses as he describes the submerged village which is at the bottom of the *remanso*.

Key Vocabulary. As you read the second act, be aware of the meaning of key words and phrases, such as the following. You will use these words in discussing your reading.

Vocab. activo/clave

la leña-wood for fire
la hoguera-large fire (bonfire)
la gaita-bagpipe
el medallón-medalion (locket)
los peces-the fish
el pañuelo-handkerchief
la bella durmiente-sleeping
beauty
respetada-preserved

la imagen-the image
una mentira-a lie
las galas de la boda-wedding
outfit
el juramento en la iglesia
-wedding vow
el desconocido-the stranger
la ceremonia-wedding
ceremony
la escopeta-shotgun
la reputación-reputation
la honra-the honor

engañar-to deceive
averiguar-to find out
huir-to flee, run away
entregarse-to surrender, give
oneself over to
galopar-to gallop (on a horse)
callar-remain silent
maldecir-curse
desaparecer-to disappear