

DEVELOPING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH SPECIAL READINGS

LA DAMA DEL ALBA

Act IV

Situation. It is the evening of the *Noche de San Juan*. Everyone is getting ready for the big *fiesta* which will take place in the meadow at the edge of the *remanso*. Someone put a *ramo* in the window of Adela. Was it Quico? He wanted to in act III. What do the colors of the flowers signify? Martin and Adela have an interesting conversation and make a decision. How are they going to solve their dilemma? The *Madre* asks Adela what Martin means to her. How do you think she will respond? Adela seems to have the idea that if things go wrong, there is always the river. What irony! Who eventually stops her from jumping in again? The children give the *Peregrina* a crown of flowers they have made. Watch to see where it shows up later.

When all have left for the dance, the *Peregrina* stays behind to wait for the person she now understands is to go with her. Who will it be? How will the drama end? Will Martin and Adela find happiness? Can the *Madre* finally get that which she so desperately wants? How will Casona tie all the pieces together? Read Act IV and find out!

Characters. In this act we see a fun-loving and witty Telva, as she banters with the *Sanjuaneras* about the affairs of the young people in the *pueblo*. We see a tender, almost poetic Martin as he prepares to go away. We now see a confident, in-charge *Peregrina*. Having overheard Martin's secret, she now understands what before was confusing to her. She knows now how things are going to turn out, and beautifully hinted at it in her story to the children at the end of Act III. Her chat with Adela calms her and gives her hope. In her conversation with Angelica she masterfully carries out her profession with style and grace. Angelica herself is a marvelous study of characterization. We can feel her loneliness and despair and want her to find the pardon and peace which she has returned to find.

Style. Casona now masterfully weaves the final fabric of his play. All the missing pieces are put together in an unexpected and satisfying ending. The conversation between the *Peregrina* and Angelica is especially well-written, as she uses beautiful imagery to convince Angelica to go with her. If to pass to the other side is so peaceful, then perhaps none of us will be afraid when the time comes to meet the *Peregrina*. (!)

Culture. The marvelous picture of the celebration of *la noche de San Juan* in Asturias continues. Don't forget to read the culture notes in the back of the book. When one *Sanjuaneras* finds a *trébol de cuatro hojas*, what is going to happen? Who finally gets the *trébol*? Some of the traditional values of the Spanish people are seen in this act. How important is appearance? Even if it is false? Does the final scene where the townspeople cover their heads and murmur *Santa, Santa* give us some insight into how some of the traditional *milagros* get started?

Language Objectives. The conversation between Telva and the *Sanjuaneras* is very funny with many innuendos and plays on words. Don't be discouraged if you don't understand much of it. It is not important to the plot. Do pay attention to the beautiful figures of speech Martin uses with Adela. (Young men, you might want to impress a young lady with some of his poetic expressions.)

Key Vocabulary. As you read the fourth 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

Sanjuaneras--these persons are simply the young girls of the village who are dressed in the traditional costumes of the region and who, in this case, are going from house to house gathering *leña* and people to take to the fiesta
gaita--musical instrument, similar to the bagpipe, typical of that region
moza--girl, young lady
podar--prune, trim (trees)
carro--cart (probably two

wheeled typical of the region)
bueyes--oxen
yugo--yoke
trébol--clover (*tréole* is the old form)
atar--to tie, bind
sombra--shadow
jurar--to swear, promise
resignada--resigned
estorbo--hinderance

llorar--to cry
lágrima--tear
corona--crown
bordón--walking stick
abandonar--to abandon
respetar--to respect, to not harm