**LESSON 8 TEACHER’S GUIDE**

**The Great Storyteller**

by Rubí Borgia

Fountas-Pinnell Level O

Realistic Fiction

**Selection Summary**

Anita is in the hospital with a broken leg from a car accident. She is feeling sad about her dog, Chispita, who died in the accident. She meets Doña María, an elderly patient who loves children and telling stories. Anita and Doña María become good friends, and Anita learns important lessons about life, death, and everlasting friendship.

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**Characteristics of the Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Realistic fiction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third-person narrative organized in three chapters, each 4-5 pages long</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter titles indicate content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Friendship in a hospital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Magic of storytelling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coping with death and sadness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Friendship can arise between people of very different ages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stories can create bonds between people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Memories and love for a friend stay in our hearts long after the friend is gone.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Friendship and the passage of time help people overcome grief.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Descriptive and figurative language to indicate the passage of time: “Little by little, the birds were disappearing.”</td>
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<td>Complex characters referred to in different ways (Doña María, the old woman, the Great Storyteller)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>Combination of simple and complex sentences</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Combination of dialogue and descriptive narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Spanish names: Anita, Doña María, Chispita (“Sparky”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Some multisyllabic compound words (storyteller, wheelchair) and words with prefixes and suffixes (disappearing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Illustrations on each page in realistic hospital setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Thirteen pages of text</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Easy-to-read chapter headings</td>
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The Great Storyteller  by Rubí Borgia

Build Background
Help students think about what friendship means to them. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: What is a good friend? How does a good friend make us feel? Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Note that the story is divided into three chapters. Tell students that this story is realistic fiction, so the characters will probably act like real people.

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this is a story about a young girl named Anita who is in the hospital. She is sad because her dog, Chispita, was killed in the same car accident. 
Suggested language: Turn to page 2 and read the chapter heading: “Anita and Chispita.” Chispita was Anita’s pet dog, who died in the car accident. Read the last sentence: Anita was ashamed, but she couldn’t stop crying about her dog. Why do you think Anita is ashamed and embarrassed about crying?

Page 3: Read the sentence: The car accident had been a serious one. What do we mean when we say that an accident is “serious”? Where would Anita be if the accident wasn’t serious?

Pages 4–5: Point out the illustration of Doña María, an older patient who is also at the hospital. Help children pronounce her name and notice the accent marks. Doña María tries to help Anita feel better by giving her advice about missing her dog. Have you ever given advice to someone who was sad? What did you say?

Page 8: Draw attention to the illustration of Anita and Doña María. In the first chapter, Doña María visited Anita in her hospital bed. How has the situation changed?

Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out what Anita learns from Doña María, the Great Storyteller.

Target Vocabulary

- advice – someone’s opinion about what someone else should do. p. 5
- ashamed – feeling embarrassed or guilty about something you did or did not do, p. 2
- borders – n. dividing lines between two areas, p. 7
- borrow – having permission to take something, use it, and then return it, p. 6
- harvest – the crop that is gathered during one growing season, p. 8
- patch – a small area of land where certain plants or a crop grow, p. 7
- separate – v. to divide a group into smaller groups or categories. p. 6
- serious – dangerous, p. 3
Read
Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Infer/Predict Strategy, and to use clues to figure out more about the selection.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the story.
Suggested language: How do you think Anita felt when Doña María told her that one day, like the birds in the tree, she would disappear? How would you feel?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Anita is sad about her dog dying.</td>
<td>• Saying goodbye to people and pets we love can be scary and sad.</td>
<td>• Doña María calls to Anita as she leaves the room, “They can’t separate us for long!” This statement could also be interpreted to mean that their friendship will last forever and that they will never be completely separated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Anita becomes good friends with Doña María, the Storyteller.</td>
<td>• Memories of the people we love stay in our hearts.</td>
<td>• The author uses the birds that go away in winter as a symbol of how Doña María will some day die and disappear but always stay in Anita’s heart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Doña María is sick and Anita is worried that one day she will die.</td>
<td>• The passage of time can help us feel better when we are sad.</td>
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<td>• Doña María tells Anita stories that help her cope with her worries and help her understand that love never dies.</td>
<td>• Stories can teach us important lessons and help us forget about our problems.</td>
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Choices for Further Support
• **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to read aloud. Remind them to demonstrate appropriate pauses, phrasing, and intonation, paying attention to quotation marks and other punctuation, as appropriate.

• **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind students that longer words are often formed from shorter, familiar words. For example, the word *storyteller* on page 4 is a compound word, combining the words *story* and *teller*. Other compound words in the story include *schoolteacher, afternoon, wheelchair, outside.*
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 8.8.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Conclusions
Remind students that they can draw conclusions about a character or situation by looking for key details in a story. Model the skill, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud

In this story, Anita learns some important lessons about friendship. One detail I remember from the story is that when Anita is feeling better, she visits Doña María to make her feel better. In this way, Anita learns that in friendship, both people give to each other. This detail will help me make a conclusion about what Anita learned.

Practice the Skill
Have students write two details describing another conclusion they made about why Doña María was so important in Anita’s life.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what happens in the story.

Assessment Prompts
- Why do you think that Anita fills the tree outside Doña María’s window with colorful paper birds?
- Tell one word that best describes Doña María. Use evidence from the story to support your thinking.
- Complete this sentence in your own words: This story was most likely written to
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

1. Think within the text: Why is Anita staying in a hospital?
   - She hurt her leg in a car accident.

2. Think within the text: Why does Anita's mother arrange to have Doña María visit her daughter?
   - Anita's mother hopes Doña María will be able to cheer up her daughter by telling stories.

3. Think beyond the text: If you were in the hospital, what kinds of stories would you most enjoy hearing?
   - Responses will vary.

4. Think about the text: Why do you think Anita makes paper birds and hangs them on the tree outside Doña María's window?
   - Anita didn't want Doña María to leave her. She thought as long as the paper birds were in the tree, the old woman would stay.

Making Connections: In The Great Storyteller, an older person tells stories to a child to help her feel better. Think of a time when someone told you stories or read them to you. What was it like to hear the stories?

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.
When Anita saw that the birds in the tree outside Doña María’s window had almost disappeared, she made paper birds and hung them in the tree. Why do you think she did that? Did she really believe they would help? Give reasons for your opinions.
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text**  Why is Anita staying in a hospital?

2. **Think within the text**  Why does Anita’s mother arrange to have Doña María visit her daughter?

3. **Think beyond the text**  If you were in the hospital, what kinds of stories would you most enjoy hearing?

4. **Think about the text**  Why do you think Anita makes paper birds and hangs them on the tree outside Doña María’s window?

Making Connections  In *The Great Storyteller*, an older person tells stories to a child to help her feel better. Think of a time when someone told you stories or read them to you. What was it like to hear the stories?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
The next day, Anita was in a good mood. Outside, the leaves were beginning to fall from the trees. There were fewer birds flying around. Soon it would be winter.

In the afternoon, Anita headed down to Doña María's room. Inside, she saw the old woman in bed. She was looking very pale.

Anita said, “Doña María, it's me, Anita.”

The old woman lifted her head and said. “Come here and sit by my side. I want to show you something.” Then she pointed to a large tree outside her window. The tree was on a small patch of land.

Grade 3
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