



2002

### Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story

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De Paola, Tomie. *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story*. Illustrated by Tomie De Paola. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002. ISBN 0399238662. \$16.99. 32 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Preschool; Primary;

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fairy tales; Folklore;

Subject: Fairy Tales--Juvenile fiction; Folklore--Mexico--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews; Cinderella-[Legendary character]--Juvenile fiction;

Adelita Mercada, a lovely orphan girl, is the heroine in this Mexican version of the Cinderella story. Esperanza is Adelita's faithful nurse and Adelita's only friend after her parents both die. Adelita's stepmother, Senora Micaela de la Fortuna, banishes Esperanza from the house. Afterwards, the two stepsisters, Valentina and Dulce, make life miserable for Adelita. Having been told in a dream that Adelita needs her help, Esperanza returns and fills the story's Godmother role. Esperanza leads Adelita to the storeroom to find the beautiful old-fashioned white dress, which used to be her mother's, and the accompanying beautiful *rebozo*, a shawl, which Adelita wears to the grand fiesta. Adelita introduces herself as *Cenicienta* (Cinderella) and for Javier, the son for whom the party is being given, it is love at first sight. Frightened that Javier would never love her if he knew she was just a kitchen maid, she leaves the fiesta at midnight. The *rebozo* is the clue that brings the prince to the home of Adelita and reunites the couple.

DePaola's text is interesting, with bright illustrations that are in keeping with the Mexican flavor of the tale. Italicized Spanish words and phrases, followed by their translations, are peppered throughout the text, making it a great read-aloud story for the multi-cultural classroom. ("If you ever need me, *mi'jita* - my little daughter - just call my name and somehow I will hear you," Esperanza told her.) The end of the book has a list of the Spanish phrases, their meanings, and their phonetic pronunciation.