

# *Trino's Time* Readers Theatre

Adapted by Diane Gonzales Bertrand

Taken from the novel,

*Trino's Time*,

By Diane Gonzales Bertrand

(Piñata Books, 2001)

## Assigned Readers:

Reader One (Narrator)

Mom

Trino

Hector

Lisana

Jimmy

Coach Treviño

## Scene One

Reader One: Trino Olivares got into a fight with his project partner, Hector, before Texas History class and his teacher, Coach Treviño, told him he had to bring ten questions about Jose Antonio Navarro to class the next day or else!

At home, Trino's mom is unemployed. Her boyfriend, Nick, has offered to help her find a job in the housekeeping department at a local university, but she feels too intimidated by her poor education to apply.

MOM: What are you doing? Trino, it's late. Go to bed.

Reader One: History book opened in front of him, Trino sat at the kitchen table, trying to come up with three more questions about Jose Antonio Navarro. It had taken him a long time to write each question neatly. He searched through his book, trying to find more information about the man, but gave up. He guessed that's why Coach was letting them use books in the library.

TRINO: I'm trying to write down ten questions about this man. It's for a school project. I just can't think of anything else. Can you help me, Mom?"

MOM: (sighing) What are you doing?

TRINO: You see, this guy, Jose Antonio Navarro, was one of the *Tejanos* who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence.

MOM: (impatient) I don't know anything about that stuff, Trino. Ask your teacher.

TRINO: What I have to do tonight is write down ten questions--stuff I want to know about this man. But you know, Mom? I don't care about this guy. I wish teachers wouldn't give us all the stupid stuff to do. That's why I don't like school.

MOM: Ay, *mijo*, you sound just like me when I was your age. Now, I wish I had paid attention. Learned how to read good--then I could get a better job. (*pause*) You need to try and learn this stuff that the teachers want, Trino. So you can be smart--book smart. Then you'll get a job that doesn't break your back.

(*thoughtfully*) Look at Nick. He's always thinking of better ways to do something. He knows how to use his *cabeza*. When he was in charge at the motel where I worked, everything ran so smooth. Now he's working at a college and doing his tree jobs. He likes what he does and where he works. I wish I could be like him.

TRINO: Nick wants you to work with him at the college. That's what he told me today. He said you would like it there, Mom. (*pause*) Nick told me today that sometimes a man--a person--has to help himself before he can help others.

MOM: Why would he say that to you?

TRINO: I don't know, Mom, he just did.

MOM: When I go looking for a job, I get asked a lot of questions. Mostly about where I've worked before--stuff like that. This guy--the one you want to write about for school--maybe you could find out what jobs he did before he signed--whatever it was he signed--  
What about his family--*la familia*--who were they? Were they rich people, or was he a man from the *barrio*?

TRINO: That's good, Mom. I can write down those questions. I just need one more. Do you have any other ideas?"

MOM: *Pues*, I don't know. Why did he sign--what did you say it was called?

TRINO: The Texas Declaration of Independence, Mom.

MOM: Oh! Well--what happened after he signed it? I mean, sometimes when I sign a paper I get something good. Sometimes I sign a paper and I owe more money. Was he glad he signed it? That something you could ask.

TRINO: That's good, Mom. (*pause*) Thanks for helping me.

MOM: It felt good to help you, *mijo*.

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## Scene Two

Reader One: On the following Saturday, Trino found his mother looking at the newspaper. He noticed her finger sliding down the columns of the *Help Wanted* page. When she saw Trino watching her, she frowned.

MOM: Are you going to work for Mr. Epifaño anymore? We need some money, not just his dented cans.

TRINO: Mom, I'm just a kid. No body's going to pay a kid for a real job. (*tired and frustrated*) Why can't you find a job?"

MOM: (*defensively*) You don't think I'm looking?

TRINO: I think you should go over to the college and see about that job that Nick was talking about—

MOM: You think I can just walk up to some lady at a desk and tell her I need a job and she'll give it to me, just like that? (*She snapped her fingers to emphasize her words*).

TRINO: I don't know why you can't try. I was scared when I had to ask this librarian to show me how to use the computer at school. I thought she would just yell at me because Zipper and I used to cause trouble. But she wasn't mean to me. She showed me how to do some stuff so I could use a computer like the other kids do.

MOM: This isn't a junior high school, Trino. I'm going to a college. You think I fit in there?

TRINO: (*slightly amused*) You think **I** fit in at a college? I'm supposed to meet a few kids from school at the college library tomorrow afternoon so we can do that history project. How do you think we all feel? A bunch of seventh graders working in a college library.

MOM: Why do you have to go there? Just ride the bus to the city library.

TRINO: The college library has books written by *Latinos*. Coach Treviño told us that if we looked for books written by *Latinos* we'd get more information about the *Tejanos*. (*pause*) Listen, Mom, tomorrow when I'm over at the college, I'll look around a little. I can tell you what it's like. My friend, Lisana, told me that Bus 75 leaves you right in front of the college. It should be easy to find the library, don't you think?

MOM: (*more sad than angry*) Go see what your brothers are doing. I'm busy right now.

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## Scene Three

Reader One: None of them expected it would be so difficult to *read* the books they found in a college library. The five of them sat at a long table on the fourth floor, each one looking for information from a different book. The college library was very quiet. Only a handful of college students sat at the tables or walked through the bookshelves.

From the start, Trino had enjoyed the silence of the large room. It was so different from the busy noise of school or the crowded commotion at his house. He thought about his mom, working in a place like this. He bet she'd enjoy the quiet too.

HECTOR: Look at this! There are no pictures in this book. Just pages and pages of writing—and the print is so small. How are we supposed to read a book like this in one afternoon?

LISANA: We don't have to read the whole book! We just take notes on the information we find. Then we put it into our own words for the report.

JIMMY: How long does the report have to be?

LISANA: Coach said about four pages. (*sigh*) I guess he figured that each partner could write two pages.

TRINO: I never wrote two pages about anything—(*a bit defensive*) Well, it's true! I'm not big on school stuff like you guys.

JIMMY: They're the ones big on school stuff. Only *my* sister would use college books for a seventh grade report. And when Coach paired Lisana up with Amanda, I thought, 'Well, there's a pair of *A* reports right there.' These two are going to make the rest of us look bad.

LISANA: Maybe Coach put us together because he knew we would be good *partners*. One of us wouldn't do all the work because the other one is lazy.

JIMMY: I'm not lazy; see? I'll look for the pages that mention Burnet, write down some notes, and call Mario tonight to read to him what I found. Happy?

Reader One: Trino opened up his spiral notebook. He was embarrassed that it looked so crumpled and torn. He knew that Amanda thought he was a loser. Every time she had to speak to him she looked like she had a stomachache.

He found the page where he had written all his questions. He was glad that he had already written down some answers below them.

Trino felt very dumb as he tried to read something written by an advanced college student. He skipped a few pages then would try to read again, but it still seemed hard to understand. He skipped a larger group of pages and looked down again. A line of Spanish caught his attention. “*El tiempo hablara por todo.*” *Time will speak for everything.* It was in quotation marks. Did Navarro say this?

Trino started reading the paragraphs above and below the Spanish sentence. He shifted in his chair and eagerly turned a page. He had found the section about the Texas Declaration of Independence. After reading and re-reading, Trino understood that after Navarro signed the paper, he said, “*El tiempo hablara por todo.*” It never occurred to Trino that Navarro spoke Spanish, but it made sense. What guts it must have taken for Navarro and his uncle to walk into a room of fifty men who didn’t speak the same language as they did!

HECTOR: Did you find something, Trino?

TRINO: I think I did. I’m just not sure what to do with it. *El tiempo hablara por todo.*

HECTOR: What does that mean?

TRINO: *El tiempo hablara por todo.* It means ‘Time will speak for everything.’ According to this book, that’s what Navarro said after he signed the Texas Declaration of Independence.

LISANA: (*dreamy*) *El tiempo hablara por todo.* It’s almost like a line of a poem.

JIMMY, HECTOR, AND TRINO: Aw, man--not poetry.

LISANA: Navarro’s words are really important. Could Amanda and I use them too? I mean, we’ll tell everyone that Navarro said it--and I promise that we’ll tell Coach that *you* found the sentence in a book. When you think about it--that time will speak for everything--I mean--it’s so truthful. Sometimes when you’re first doing something, you just don’t know if it’ll work out. But Navarro signed the paper and truly believed that everything would work out well for the Texans. And it did.

TRINO: I think it’s cool that Navarro and Ruiz, two *Tejanos* that probably didn’t speak English, come into this room filled with Anglos (*slows his words*) and they all work together because they all want the same thing.

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## Scene Four

Reader One: Trino's discovery of a true *Tejano* hero gives him a new understanding about himself. He isn't intimidated when Coach Treviño questions him the following Monday.

COACH: What are you two up to? I haven't seen you leave this table the entire period. (*surprised*) *El tiempo hablara por todo*. Where did you find those words?

TRINO: In a book about Navarro.

COACH: In our library?

HECTOR: We went to the university library on Sunday, Coach. Trino found those words in a theeee—uh? What did Amanda call it?

TRINO: A thesis. A graduate student did his thesis on Navarro and I read some of it. After Navarro signed the paper, this is what he said.

COACH: I'm impressed, guys. *Really* impressed that you both went out to the college library to get this information. You two are going to teach the class a lot when you give your report.

HECTOR: Will you give us extra credit since we used college books?

COACH: Guys, I'll give you all the extra credit you want, any time you want. You just need to do the work.

Reader One: As their teacher walked away, Trino and Hector turned toward each other. "Alright!" they both said and put their hands together in a high-five.

--The End--

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