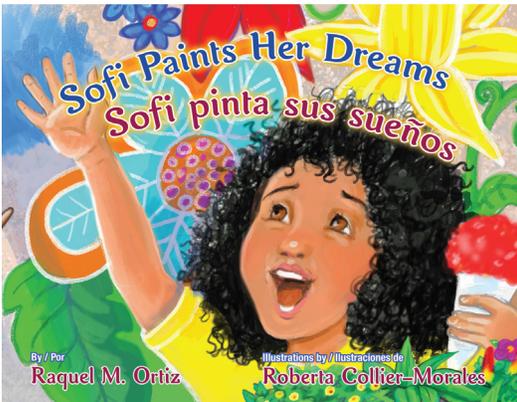


Sofi Paints Her Dreams / Sofi pinta sus sueños

By Raquel M. Ortiz
Illustrated by Roberta Collier-Morales

SUMMARY



Young Sofi enters into a New York City community garden where she finds a half painted mural. It's full of big, leafy blue and yellow plants and, where the two colors meet, a vibrant emerald green appears. As Sofi runs her fingers over the paint she's suddenly transported to a beautiful place, surrounded by plants just like the ones on the wall!

Sofi finds herself in the Dominican Republic, where she meets a young boy named Juan Luis. He's writing a song, but he's stuck on the lyrics and needs Sofi's help. After they finish the song, the pair flies over the river that separates San Pedro de Macorís from Haiti. In the city of Croix-de-Bouquets Juan Luis introduces Sofi to his friend Güerlande, a young metal artist. Güerlande also needs Sofi's help. Can Sofi make just the right shade of purple to help paint Güerlande's huge mermaid sculpture?

ABOUT THE BOOK

GENRE: Fiction
Hardcover
978-1-55885-883-1
32 pages, 11 x 8 ½

This bilingual picture book about an imaginative girl and an enchanted mural is an engaging exploration of the cultural traditions of the Caribbean. The sequel to *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural / Sofi y el mágico mural musical*, this story introduces young readers to the art and music of the beautiful island of Hispaniola. Readers will be encouraged to explore their own artistic talents after reading this introduction to the internationally acclaimed Dominican musician and songwriter Juan Luis Guerra and the Haitian artist Güerlande Balan.

THEMES

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, LATINO/HISPANIC INTEREST, ART, MURALS, IMAGINATION, MUSIC, FRIENDSHIP, OPTIMISM, ENTHUSIASM, EMPATHY AND COMPASSION, CREATIVITY, METAL ART, SCULPTOR, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAITI, NEW YORK CITY, COMMUNITY GARDENS, ARTISTS, JUAN LUIS GUERRA, GÜERLANDE BALAN, FICTION

VOCABULARY

Sofi Paints Her Dreams / Sofi pinta sus sueños has a number of words that your students may not be familiar with. Before or after the reading, review some or all of the words listed below.

Content Specific

Dominican Republic, San Pedro de Macorís, Artibonite River, Haiti, Croix-des-Bouquets, *güira*

Academic

horrible, glancing, spotted, vendor, admiring, colorful, emerald, layers, surrounded, strumming, compose, moment, soaring, swirled, beat, sculpture, humongous, shade, appeared, annoyed, steady

ELL / ESL Teaching Strategies

Encourage your Spanish-speaking students to translate the Spanish words in the English text for the class.

Act out the following words found in the text: strumming, singing, soaring, swirled, splashed, squiggly, shaky, smiled and nodded. Encourage your students to act out these words when they hear them during the reading

[Please note that the book provides a small glossary of terms on the last page for reference.]

Background Information

On Metal Art

(Information about Metal Art)

Metal art was born in the Haitian town of Croix-des-Bouquets, where companies from the capital city of Port-au-Prince would dump empty metal drums. In the 1950's, a local blacksmith, Georges Liautaud, combined metal drum parts with iron bars to make elaborate metal crosses. This became a new craft tradition. For some time, only men made metal art. Now, men, women, boys and girls hammer metal and paint metal sculptures. The artisans begin at a young age and learn from their parents, siblings or neighbors. First, the artists make their "canvas" by burning the metal in a dry banana leaf fire. Then, they cut the drum and pound the piece flat with a hammer. After that, they draw patterns onto the metal with chalk that they then carve out using a hammer and chisel. They finish by using a steel brush to shine the metal and add a topcoat to prevent the metal sculpture from rusting.

On Juan Luis Guerra

Juan Luis Guerra is a Dominican singer, songwriter, composer and producer who plays the guitar and the piano. His music is an Afro-Latin fusion, mixing merengue, bolero and other Latin rhythms. He is one of the most internationally recognized Latino artists in the world and has sold more than 300 million records. One of his songs, "Guavaberry," is about the city of San Pedro de Macorís, where part of this story takes place.



On Güerlande Balan

Güerlande Balan is a Haitian artisan who began creating metal sculptures when she was only ten years old. First she learned how to burn out barrels; then to sand drums smooth and pound them flat. Now she creates her own sculptures.

Before Reading

(Pre-reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Pre-Reading Questions

1. What is art? Who makes art? What is art made out of? What kind of art do you make? Are we all artists?
2. Do you like music? What type of music do you like? Why? Do you make music? Who makes music?
3. What are songs? What is your favorite song? Why?
4. Have you ever been to the Dominican Republic or Haiti? Have you read any stories set there? What do you know about this part of the world?
5. Look at the front and back cover. Ask the students if they think this book will be fiction or nonfiction. Take a picture walk. Ask the students what clues the author or illustrator give to help them decide whether this book is fiction or nonfiction.

Exploring the Book

1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask the students what they think the title, *Sofi Paints Her Dreams*, means. Ask who and what they think this book might be about. Ask students to make a prediction on where this story may take place. What kind of dreams might Sofi have? What things may happen to Sofi? Where might Sofi's dreams take her?
2. Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, introduction, English and Spanish text, illustration, backmatter, dedications, glossary, author's and illustrator's notes.

Establishing a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3)

Ask students to read to find out:

- Where the cities of San Pedro de Macorís and Croix-des-Bouquets are located
- Who are Juan Luis Guerra and Güerlande Balan
- What is one way to solve a problem

Encourage students to consider why the author, Raquel M. Ortiz, wants to share this story with young people. Ask students to also consider why the text is presented in both English and Spanish.

After Reading

Discussion Questions

Use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension and facilitate a deeper appreciation of the story. Encourage students to refer to the text and the illustrations to support their responses. To build close reading skills, students should cite evidence to support their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3)

1. Why was Sofi upset when she left school?
2. Where does Sofi wander into?
3. Who is in the community garden and what is she doing?
4. Where does Sofi end up once she touches the mural?
5. What does Sofi find in her new surroundings?
6. Who is Juan Luis? What is he doing?
7. What does Juan Luis need help with? How can Sofi help him?
8. What is Juan Luis' song about?
9. What does Juan Luis dream about becoming when he grows up?
10. Who is Güerlande and what type of art does she create?
11. What does Güerlande need help with? Why is this a problem for Sofi?
12. What is Sofi able to do at the end of the story and why?

Extension / Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft and Structure, Strand 6)

1. What type of person is Sofi? What does she do and say to lead you to that conclusion?
2. What do you think Juan Luis' song means? How do our songs and dreams set us free? Why?
3. Why do you think Juan Luis wanted to share his song with Güerlande? Who do you share things that you make with? Why?
4. What do Juan Luis and Güerlande have in common?
5. What is one important aspect of having friends? What clues in the text help you to come to this conclusion?
6. How are you artistic? What do you make or create? Why? How does it make you feel to create something?
7. Why do you think it's important to believe in yourself?
8. Look at Roberta Collier-Morales' illustrations closely. What do the illustrations show us about Sofi's school and neighborhood? How are the illustrations of the Dominican Republic and Haiti different? How do the colors she uses affect the mood and tone of the story?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purpose, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)
(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Craft & Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9)

1. Why does the author, Raquel M. Ortiz, choose to call the story *Sofi Paints Her Dreams*? Do you think this is a good title? Why?
2. Which parts of the book do you connect with the most? Why? Describe a time when you were frustrated because you could not do something. What did you do?
3. Why are parks and gardens important to a community? What would happen if we didn't have community gardens or parks? Who benefits from a community garden? What does a community garden provide? What can someone in a community garden do besides paint murals or plant?
4. Why is art and music important? Why do you like art and/or music? When do you create art? Make music? Sing songs? Why?
5. How do your friends help you be a better person or achieve your dreams? How do you help your friends be a better person or achieve their dreams?
6. Read the author's note on the next to the last page of the book. What is the history of metal art? Who helped Güerlande become an artist?
7. What was the song that Juan Luis and Sofi created about? What would you write a song about? Why?

ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4-7)

Below, please find strategies that may be helpful to use with English Language Learner students.

1. Review all of the vocabulary. Ask students to make predictions about word meaning and create and share an action for each word. Invite students to write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture or create a list of synonyms and antonyms.
2. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another or listen to the more fluent reader. Students who speak Spanish can help with pronunciation of the Spanish or read the Spanish alongside a student reading the English text.
3. Have each student write three to five questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
4. After the reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and ask students to summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Working in pairs, ask students to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.
5. Ask students to give a short talk about what they would like to make or create and why. Allow them to use visuals for their presentation.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use activities below to help students integrate what they have read with other curriculum areas. These activities may also be used for extension activities, advanced readers and creating a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)
(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Ask students to listen to the Juan Luis Guerra song, “Guavaberry,” which is about San Pedro de Macorís and has lyrics in both English and Spanish. Then invite them to create additional lyrics to the song. Find a link to the song here: <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/19219405/Guavaberry>
2. Invite students to research Georges Liautaud or Haitian metal art and either write a short paper or present what they have learned to the class.
3. Many of Juan Luis Guerra’s songs question or call attention to issues of social injustice. Have your students translate and study the lyrics to “Visa para un sueño,” or “El costo de la vida.” What is this song about? Why do you think Juan Luis Guerra wrote this song? What needs to be changed so that the problems mentioned in this song can be fixed?

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)
(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Share general information about the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Using a map, help them answer the following questions: What is Hispaniola? Where is San Pedro de Macorís? Where is Croix-des-Bouquets? What is the Artibonite River? Working in small teams or pairs have the students research either the Dominican Republic or Haiti. Assign each of the groups/pairs one of the following topics to research and present to the class: art, music, culture or geography.
2. Ask students to research a Haitian or Dominican artist or musician. Have them answer the following questions: What type of art / music do they create? How did they learn this art or music form? What examples of their art or music did you find? Why did you pick this artist or musician?



Art, Media and Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

(Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Juan Luis Guerra has recorded a number of songs in English. Select one of his songs and ask students to read the song, learn the lyrics and then sing it. Then, invite them to create a drawing inspired by the words.

2. Juan Luis Guerra is famous all around the world for his music and one of his specialties is the genre of merengue. Where did merengue originate? What instruments are used in a merengue? What is a tamboura or a güira? Which Juan Luis Guerra merengue is your favorite? After getting to know about merengue invite students to compose their own merengue song.

3. Invite students to create their own metal sculpture. First have them draw and color a design for a metal sculpture. Then, using pipe cleaners or wire metal, have them turn their drawing into a three dimensional work of art.



Home School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Invite students to interview their parent, caregiver or family member about a trip they have taken. What was their favorite part about the trip? What did they see and do? Did they notice the local art? What was the music like? Did they make any friends? Would they go back? Why or why not?

2. Encourage students to interview people from the Caribbean in their community and answer the following questions: What language do they speak? What type of art do they make? What kind of music do they listen to? Where is their home country located?

3. Invite students to visit an art museum or gallery to look at sculptures. Encourage students to bring materials from the museum or gallery to school and share information about their favorite piece of art with the class or in small groups.

4. Invite students to interview their parent, family member or caregiver about something that they have created. Encourage students to share what their parent or caregiver has created with the class or in small groups.

CONNECT WITH THE INTERNET

Smithsonian

La India Canela Discusses Merengue Típico

<https://folkways.si.edu/influences-on-merengue-tipico/caribbean-latin-spoken-word-world/music/video/smithsonian>

Blick Art

Flower Children

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/flower-children/>

Zany Wire Sculpture

www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/zany-wire-sculpture/

Constructed Reed Sculpture

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/constructed-reed-sculpture/>

3D Contour Collage

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/3d-contour-collage/>

Lazertran Metal Sculpture

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/lazertran-metal-sculpture/>

Festival Flowers

<https://www.dickblick.com/lesson-plans/festival-flowers/>

National Geographic Kids

Haiti

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/haiti/#haiti-girls-running.jpg>

MEET THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



RAQUEL M. ORTIZ was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio. She has been making art, singing songs and telling stories ever since she was a little girl. She is the author of a bilingual picture book, *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural / Sofi y el mágico mural musical* (Arte Público Press, 2015), and other educational materials for children. She loves all kinds of art and has worked at The Brooklyn Museum, the

Allen Memorial Art Museum and El Museo del Barrio. Currently, she creates educational material for the Puerto Rican Heritage Cultural Ambassadors Program for the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. For more information please visit: <https://colorespublishing.wordpress.com/about/>



Roberta Collier-Morales has illustrated numerous books for kids, including *Salsa* (Piñata Books, 1998). A member of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, she lives and works in Longmont, Colorado and continues to hone her writing skills. Illustrating stories is one of her greatest joys and some day she hopes to create art for one she has written. She started her career in New York City, where she married and had two

children, both of whom are now adults, before moving back to her home state of Colorado. Collier-Morales has two cats, two dogs, and a great love for nature. Her children are artists too, and she is happy to have two wonderful grandchildren.

ABOUT PIÑATA BOOKS

Piñata Books is an imprint of Arte Público Press, the oldest and largest publisher of contemporary and historical literature written by US Hispanics: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans and others. Piñata Books is dedicated to the publication of children's and young adult literature focusing on US Hispanic culture and has made giant strides in filling the void that exists in American publishing and literature: books that accurately reflect themes, characters and customs unique to US Latino culture. Books published under the imprint are designed to serve as a bridge from school to home and to support family literacy and elementary school education. Discover more surprises at <https://artepublicopress.com/about-pinata-books-2/>.

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\$17.95 • Hardcover • 978-1-55885-883-1
• 32 pages • 11 x 8 ½

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