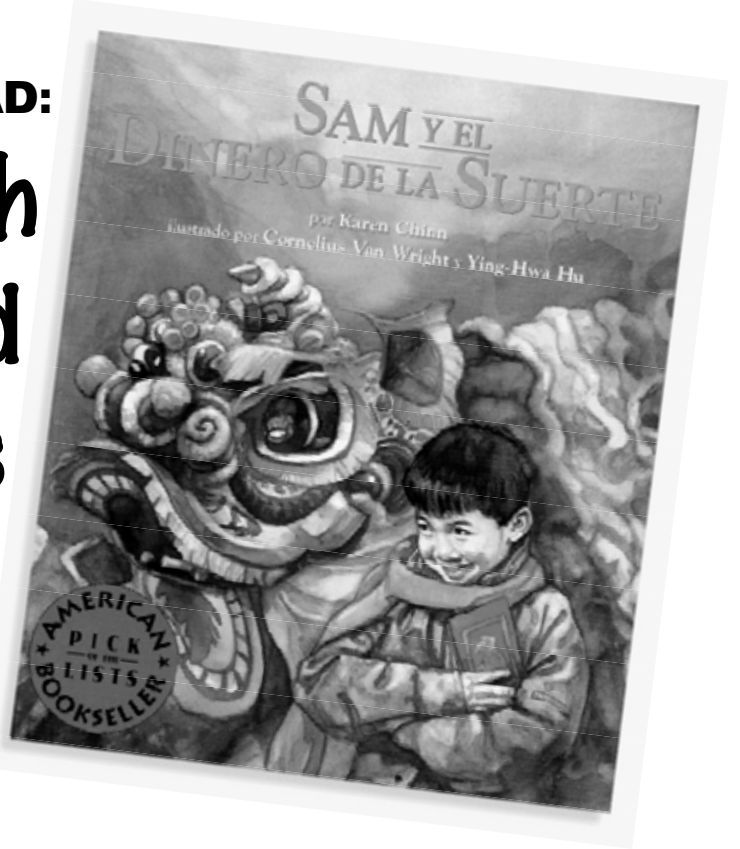


FROM THE U.S. AND ABROAD:

Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents

By Isabel Schon



From books for the very young that introduce Spanish learners to familiar objects, to a humorous novel about a boy who objects to judo lessons, to riveting accounts of the lives of Roman slaves, these books, recently published in the United States and abroad, will entice, inform, and delight young readers.

For the Young

Chinn, Karen. **Sam y el dinero de la suerte** (*Sam and the Lucky Money*). New York: Lee & Low, 2003. 32 pp. Illus. by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu. Translated by Eida de la Vega. ISBN 1-58430-167-8, \$16.95. Gr. K-3.

Despite the not-so-subtle message that it is better to give than to receive, de la Vega's easygoing Spanish rendition adds a lighthearted tone to this story set during the traditional Chinese New Year. When Sam receives a gift of four dollars, he must decide how to spend the lucky money. After exploring an American Chinatown with his mother, he gives the money to a barefoot stranger. Vivid watercolors complement and add appeal to this moralistic story.

Mi primer libro de palabras (*First Word Book*). New York: Kingfisher/Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 48 pp. Illus. by Mandy Stanley. Translated by Dileri Johnston. ISBN 0-7534-5542-0, \$6.95 (pb). Ages 2-6.

Bright, bold color illustrations of familiar objects introduce the very young to words in settings they can readily identify. From things in his/her bedroom (*¿Qué hay en tu cuarto?*), to having fun at the beach (*A divertirnos en la playa*), this well-designed, large format book is just right for young Spanish speakers (and Spanish learners) as they learn a basic vocabulary. Unfortunately, a poorly translated introduction will discourage most Spanish-speaking parents.

Pérez Falcón, Marilyn. **¡Cuí-cuí-cuidado! Animales al volante** (*Careful! Animals on Wheels*). Caracas: Ediciones Ekaré, 2002. 24 pp. Illus. by María Elena Repiso. ISBN 980-257-269-1 \$8.95 (pb). Preschool-Gr. 1.

As cat and mouse drive along, they unexpectedly crash into dog's truck and his cargo of fruit. Amid the disarray, we see the cries of cat: *¡Miiiauuuu! ¡Mi auto!*; rooster: *¡Quí-quí-ri-quí! Quieren auxilio!*; pig: *¡Oinc! ¡Fue hoy!* and so on, until policeman bull takes command of the situation. Delightful computer-generated artwork makes this animal fantasy, an original work from this Venezuelan children's publisher, a joyous bustle.

Rivera-Ashford, Roni Capin. **My Nana's Remedies/Los remedios de mi nana**. Tucson: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press, 2002. 32 pp. Illus. by Edna San Miguel. ISBN 1-886679-19-3, \$15.95. Gr. 1-3.

In a simple bilingual text, a young girl tells about the special teas and traditional remedies her nana lovingly prepares for her, such as cinnamon tea for a sore throat, mint or rosemary tea for a stomachache, rosemary tea for a loose stomach, and lots of kisses. With the Arizona desert background, the bold, colorful, folklore-style double-page spreads of a cheerful girl and her caring grandmother will especially appeal to younger children. Older readers will be interested in the medicinal plants glossary, which includes botanical drawings as well as botanical and common names and recommended uses.

Sardá, Rosa and Curto, Rosa M. **I Like Acting Grown Up/Me gusta hacer como los mayores**. ISBN 1-930332-33-5.

———. **I Like Getting Dirty/Me gusta ensuciarme**. ISBN 1-930332-32-7.

———. **I Like Growing Up/Me gusta ser mayor**. ISBN 1-930332-31-9.

———. ***I Like Hiding/Me gusta esconderme***. ISBN 1-930332-30-0.

Ea. vol.: New York: Lectorum, 2002. 24 pp. Illus. by the authors. English translation by Bernice Randall. Series: Step by Step/Paso a Paso. \$4.95 (pb). Ages 4-6.

Delightfully witty, almost cartoonish illustrations featuring young children in everyday activities make these unpretentious paperbacks with a simple bilingual text irresistible. *I Like Acting Grown Up/Me gusta hacer como los mayores* shows an energetic girl doing some of the things adults do. *I Like Getting Dirty/Me gusta ensuciarme* tells why we all enjoy getting a little dirty sometimes. A little boy tells why he is happy to be five years old in *I Like Growing Up/Me gusta ser mayor*. Two children have fun playing hide-and-seek in *I Like Hiding/Me gusta esconderme*.

Vallejo-Nágera, Alejandra. ***Los bigotes de chocolate*** (*Chocolate Milk Mustache*). ISBN 968-19-1020-6.

———. ***Los cazadores de monstruos*** (*Monster Hunters*). ISBN 1-58986-549-9.

———. ***¿Cuándo llegará mi cumpleaños?*** (*When Is My Next Birthday?*) ISBN 1-58986-548-0.

———. ***¡Cuánto me quieren!*** (*How Much They Love Me!*) ISBN 84-204-4951-2.

———. ***Mira cómo he crecido*** (*Look How I've Grown*). ISBN 1-58986-547-2.

———. ***¡No tengo sueño!*** (*I Am Not Sleepy*). ISBN 1-58986-546-4.

Ea. vol.: Miami: Alfaguara/Santillana, 2001-2002. 31 pp. Illus. by Andrés Guerrero. Series: Las Aventuras de Ricardete y Lola. \$8.95. Gr. K-2.

With gusto and charm, this appealing series describes incidents in the lives of Lola and her cousin Ricardete, two young children who are full of mischief and high spirits. Especially enjoyable are the fresh, easy-to-read, lighthearted texts and the humorous illustrations depicting children in common situations. Lola's refusal to clean her mouth after drinking chocolate milk results in a chocolate milk mustache that upsets her in *Los bigotes de chocolate*. Ricardete's new butterfly net encourages an imaginary hunting excursion in *Los cazadores de monstruos*. Ricardete's impatience about his next birthday is depicted in *¿Cuándo llegará mi cumpleaños?* Ricardete's feelings of rejection on the arrival of his new baby sister are narrated in *¡Cuánto me quieren!* Lola is happy to reminisce about her life in *Mira cómo he crecido*. Lola dislikes and postpones bedtime; consequently in the morning she is

so tired that she refuses to get up in *¡No tengo sueño!*
Middle Grades

Aliki. ***Cómo se hace un libro*** (*How a Book is Made*). Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, S.A., 2001. 34 pp. Illus. by the author. ISBN 84-261-2400-3. Gr. 2-5.

This book describes the most important steps in the book-making process. With a simple, easy-to-understand text, humorous dialogue balloons, and witty pastel illustrations, it relates the technical aspects of book production from the author/illustrator to the editor to the proofreader to the salesperson.

Lee, Claudia M., ed. ***Mandaderos de la lluvia y otros poemas de América Latina*** (*Messengers of Rain and Other Poems from Latin America*). Toronto: Tigrillo/Douglas & McIntyre, 2002. 80 pp. Illus. by Rafael Yockteng. ISBN 0-88899-471-0, \$18.95. Gr. 3-7.

Nineteen Latin American countries are represented in this anthology, which includes 64 poems by such masters of the genre as Rubén Darío (Nicaragua), Nicolás Guillén (Cuba), Gabriela Mistral (Chile), and Octavio Paz (Mexico) as well as lesser-known poets. Poetry lovers will find longtime favorites and refreshing voices among the selections; novices, however, will be challenged by the arbitrary groupings and mostly figurative language. It is especially disappointing to note that *Despedida* (*Farewell*), an anonymous poem, is wrongly attributed to the great Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, who must be objecting from his grave. The occasional pastel illustrations are mere decorations. An English edition is also available.

Santiago, Roberto. ***El mundo según Claudio: El último sordo*** (*The World According to Claudio: The Last Deaf Person*). Barcelona: Editorial Edebé, 2002. 124 pp. Illus. by Santiago García-Clairac. ISBN 84-236-5786-8, \$12.95. Gr. 5-8.

Young Claudio can't understand his father's insistence that he go to judo lessons—especially if he also has to take computing and swimming lessons and go to soccer practice twice a week. Whenever he brings it up, his father's response is, *Algún día me lo agradecerás* (Someday you'll thank me). In his efforts to be heard, he even buys his father an ear trumpet for Father's Day. With charm and humor and a delightful first-person point of view, this easy-to-read novel will ring true to Spanish speakers who believe their feelings are ignored.

Valdivieso, Carolina. ***Pequeñas historias reales*** (*Brief True Stories*). Santiago de Chile: Santillana, 2002. 35 pp. Illus. by Raquel Echenique. ISBN 956-15-0753-6, \$7.95 (pb). Gr. 3-5.

Briefly and succinctly, readers are introduced to George

Washington, Bernardo O'Higgins (Chilean general and politician who ruled Chile from 1817 to 1823, after its revolt against the Spanish), Toro Sentado (Sitting Bull, Sioux leader who guided his people at the Battle of the Little Bighorn), and a few Mapuche heroes (South American Indians who inhabited south-central Chile). These are not traditional biographical sketches; rather they include brief anecdotes that tell little-known aspects about the subjects' lives. Echenique's humorous black-and-white pencil-and-ink illustrations add a tone of whimsy to these simply written historical vignettes.

Wagener, Gerda. **¡Hay un ratón en casa!** (*A Mouse in the House!*) New York: Ediciones Norte-Sur/North-South Books, 2002. 45 pp. Illus. by Uli Waas. Translated from German by Ariel Almohar. ISBN 0-7358-1648-4, \$5.95 (pb). Gr. 2-4.

When Botas, Julia's enterprising cat, catches a mouse, the child's two siblings and mother definitely get involved. The children are delighted and leave food around the house to feed the mouse. Mother dislikes his mess and the ensuing chaos. Originally published in Switzerland, this simple Spanish rendition with vivid watercolors on every page will appeal to beginning readers ready for a longer story.

Adolescents

Bareiro Saguier, Rubén, and others. **Siete latinoamericanos en París** (*Seven Latin Americans in Paris*). ISBN 84-7884-227-6.

Poe, Edgar Allen, and others. **Cuentos policiales** (*Mystery Stories*). ISBN 87-7884-238-1.

Ea. vol.: Madrid: Editorial Popular, 2001. 111 pp. Series: Letra Grande. \$8.95 (pb). Gr. 9-adult.

Despite an ordinary design and almost drab covers, these modest paperback publications are exactly what reluctant readers would love to read. Both titles include short stories—from 5 to 20 pages—that are sure to entice, thrill, and entertain adolescents. Seven Latin American authors—Rubén Bareiro Saguier (Paraguay), Galo Galaza (Ecuador), Lira Campoamor Sánchez (Cuba), Enrique Medina (Argentina), Fernando Ainsa (Uruguay), Rudy Gerdanc (Argentina), and Pablo Montoya (Colombia)—whose only reason for being selected is that they lived in Paris, tell about their personal experiences in that magical, always-inspiring city. Five short stories full of mystery and suspense by three well-known authors of the genre—Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán—and two lesser known, Roberto Arlt and Harry Kemelman, are included in *Cuentos policiales*. A brief biographical note follows each story.

Bas, Juan. **Glabro, legionario de Roma** (*Glabro, Roman Legionnaire*). Madrid: Grupo Anaya, 2002. 118 pp. ISBN 84-667-1645-9, \$10.95 (pb). Gr. 8-12.

Glabro, a Roman slave and gladiator, recounts in vivid detail his life as a legionnaire in the Roman army while he waits his turn to entertain the public by engaging in mortal combat. The cruelty and abuse of power of the Roman Empire are dramatically depicted in this engrossing novel that is not for the faint-hearted. Despite numerous footnotes and Latin terms, historical fiction fans will appreciate the realistic characters and faithful settings. Concerned adults will object to the violence and references to prostitution. Nevertheless, this is a riveting account of the lives of Roman slaves, where death was the only reward.

En otra voz: Antología de la literatura hispana de los Estados Unidos (*Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States*). Houston, Tex.: Arte Público Press, 2002. 547 pp. Edited by Nicolás Kanellos and others. Translated by Alejandra Balestra and others. ISBN 1-55885-346-4, \$27.95 (pb). Gr. 9-adult.

This Spanish edition of *Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States* now includes Spanish translations of the introduction as well as brief biographical/introductory essays. Following the organization of the original English edition—exile, immigration, and the development of a native culture—this anthology is composed of short essays, short fiction, poems, and journalistic, political, and popular writings. With samples from the age of exploration to contemporary U.S. Hispanic literature, it combines selections of such popular works as Joaquín Murrieta's *Corridos*; *Alma pocha* by Américo Paredes; *Versos sencillos* by José Martí; and lesser known works that discuss such topics as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Spanish language, and the ambiguities of migration. Unfortunately, this delightful anthology lacks author and title indexes.

Garcirrubio Granados, Alejandro. **El genoma humano** (*The Human Genome*). 235 pp. ISBN 968-6849-46-7.

Padilla Acero, Jaime and López-Munguía Canales, Agustín. **Alimentos transgénicos** (*Genetically Modified Foods*). 214 pp. ISBN 968-6849-45-9.

Ea. vol.: Mexico City: ADN Editores, 2002. Series: Viaje al Centro de la Ciencia. \$10.95 (pb). Gr. 9-12.

Like previous titles in this series, whose purpose is to introduce controversial issues in current scientific research to adolescents, these present contemporary ideas in an accessible, almost conversational manner. The first part of *El genoma humano* is a science fiction novel that most readers would want to skip; the second part, however, is a well-written historical overview of the genome, from Darwin and natural selection to DNA, enzymes, and gene therapy. Numerous charts, a glossary, and recommended web sites (mostly U.S.) are also included. The social, economic, and environmental benefits and problems in the production of

genetically modified foods are discussed in *Alimentos transgénicos*. Using at times a question-and-answer format as well as easy-to-understand chapters such as *Mac Pérez y la comida rápida* (Mac Pérez and Fast Food), the authors urge the reader to maintain a critical perspective and to ignore sensational news regarding the future of biotechnology. Charts, a glossary, and a bibliography are included.

Lawrence, Caroline. **Los secretos del Vesubio** (*The Secrets of Vesuvius*). Barcelona: Salamandra, 2002. 185 pp. Translated by Atalaire. Series: Misterios Romanos. ISBN 84-7888-793-8. \$9.95 (pb). Gr. 6-8.

With the thrill of its predecessor, *Ladrones en el foro* (*The Thieves of Ostia*), this mystery, set in ancient Rome at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, features the teenage sleuth Flavia Gémina and her courageous friends Jonatán, Nubia, and Lupo. While they are investigating a potentially treasure-yielding riddle, they must run for their lives to escape the volcano's explosion. Spanish-speaking history and mystery fans will enjoy the action as they meet the people of the times, especially Plinio, the well-known scholar and naturalist.

Pirenne, Jacques. **Historia del Antiguo Egipto** (*History of Ancient Egypt*). 3 vols. Barcelona: Editorial Oceano/ Distributed by Gale, 2002. 1215 pp. ISBN 84-494-2301-5, \$250.00. Gr. 10-adult.

This updated version of Pirenne's classic work, first published in Switzerland in 1961, now includes excellent color maps, photos, drawings, and charts in an appealing three-volume set. Serious Egyptologists will appreciate the extensive narrative and scholarly notes that provide a detailed description of the beliefs, customs, art, people, and history of ancient Egypt. Unfortunately, a name index is included only in volume 3, and there are no cross-references.

Rennison, Louise. **Faldas cortas o piernas largas** (*It's Okay, I'm Wearing Really Big Knickers!*) Barcelona: Salamandra, 2002. 156 pp. Translated by Enrique Alda Delgado. ISBN 84-7888-785-7, \$9.95 (pb). Gr. 8-12.

Just as hilarious as its predecessor, *Mi gato Angus* (*My Cat Angus*), this story continues Georgia's "intimate diary" as she relates her disagreements with her parents about relocating to New Zealand, her anxieties about losing *el dios sexy*, the handsome boy who finally calls her, and her quandary about dumping *Dave el Risas*. Alda Delgado's carefree Spanish rendition of the original English makes Georgia's teen tribulations as complicated, engaging, and ubiquitous as the traumas of adolescents worldwide.

Sautereau, Francois. **Cuentos y leyendas del nacimiento de Roma** (*Tales and Legends of the Birth of Rome*). Madrid: Grupo Anaya, 2002. 105 pp. Illus. by Gerardo Domínguez. ISBN 84-667-1321-2, \$8.95. Gr. 7-9.

In a fast pace with lots of action, the stories in this col-

lection of 12 tales and legends from Roman mythology tell about the birth of Rome and its principal figures: Amulio, a jealous and greedy prince; Silvia, a young princess seduced by a god; Romulus and Remus, who were reared and suckled by a wolf; and the craftiness and quarrels of the gods. Static black-and-white illustrations accompany the lively Spanish rendition. History enthusiasts will appreciate the informative appendix. These are excellent tales to introduce reluctant readers to Roman mythology.


Shua, Ana María. **Planeta miedo** (*Planet Fear*). Madrid: Grupo Anaya, 2002. 88 pp. ISBN 84-667-1711-0, \$9.95 (pb). Gr. 6-9.

This collection of eight traditional tales from around the world will grab readers as they encounter supernatural elements, malignant spirits, and unexplained terror. In a fast-paced and easy-to-read style, the tales depict a Korean prime minister who married a dead woman, an African tale about blood-drinking warriors, an Australian evil spirit, a cruel maiden from Brittany, people-eating cats from Japan, a resurrected young Sioux woman, an Araucan ghost, and a Jewish man who married a woman devil. Lovers of the genre and reluctant readers will enjoy, wonder, and quaver.

Sides, Hampton, ed. **Los enigmas de la naturaleza** (*Why Moths Hate Thomas Edison*). Barcelona: Ediciones Oniro, 2002. 205 pp. Illus. by Jason Schneider. Translated by Joan Carles Guix. ISBN 84-9754-000-X, \$11.95 (pb). Gr. 8-adult.

Selected from *Outside* magazine's question-and-answer column, this collection of short essays focuses on natural history, outdoor lore, and the strange doings of the natural world. From such trivia as, *¿Para qué sirve la carne de gallina?* (What good are goosebumps?) to such details as, *¿Cómo se ingenian los pingüinos para evitar que se les congelen los pies?* (How do penguins keep their feet from freezing?), readers will be amused to learn about how the world works. Guix's lighthearted Spanish rendition and Schneider's black-and-white illustrations maintain the fun. The lack of an index limits its use to casual browsers.

Vias Mahou, Berta. **Amor en Ammán** (*Love in Amman*). Madrid: Grupo Anaya, 2001. 141 pp. ISBN 84-207-0092-7, \$12.95 (pb). Gr. 9-12.

Set in Petra, Jordan, this fast-paced love story depicts the romance between 17-year-old Nana, the daughter of a Danish archeologist, and Malik, a Jordanian young man who tries to buy her for 30 dromedaries. Some readers may be offended by a few anti-American remarks, such as *los alevines del imperio de la Coca-Cola* (the beginners from the Coca-Cola empire), but the exciting setting and contrasts between European and Middle Eastern cultures and a father devoted to archeological excavations may entice adventurers-to-be. 

Isabel Schon is director of the Barahona Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents at California State University, San Marcos. For additional recommended books in Spanish for children and adolescents, go to the Barahona Center