

MOSDOS PRESS
Literature

OPAL



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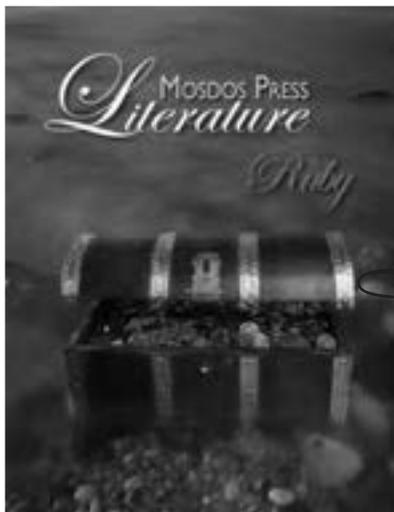
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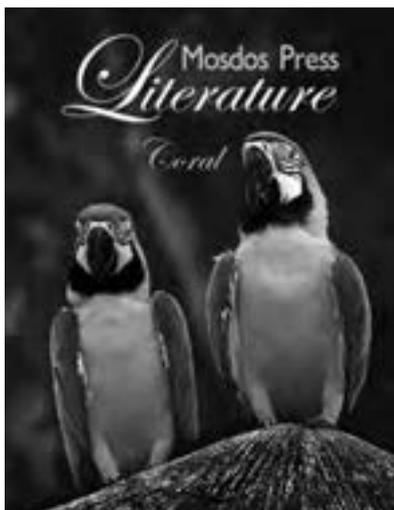
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ANTHOLOGY SERIES



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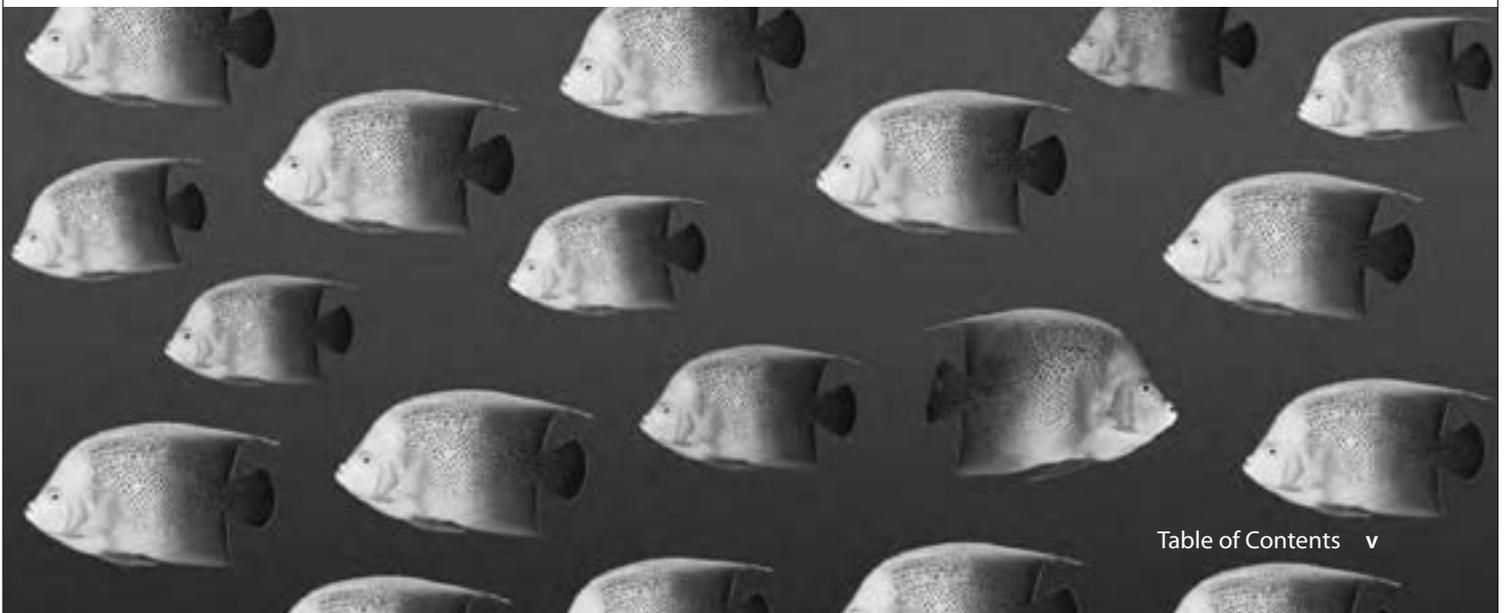
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GOLD

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For the Teacher

The information below has been provided so that you can fully appreciate the student textbook, the accompanying workbook, and—most particularly—your Teacher’s Edition.

The curriculum for each grade level has been developed in such a way that both new and experienced classroom and home school teachers are able to teach effectively and enjoyably. When a teacher is at ease with the material, and well-informed about what is being taught, the teaching that results is vastly superior to what it would be otherwise.

Please read each of the sections below so that you will be familiar with every part of the curriculum. It will be easier to follow the descriptions if you consult your books as you read.

1. **Scope and Sequence:** *Scope and Sequence* is an overview of the curriculum. Unit by unit, *Scope and Sequence* lists the teaching concept of each of the *Lessons in Literature*, the selection target skill, learning strategy, common core curriculum alignment, and genre. *Scope and Sequence* also shows the components of the selection: the tie-in poem and the student workbook activities for that selection. A brief synopsis of the selection is also included. *Scope and Sequence* will enable you to see where you are going—and where you have been—regarding the sequence of skills. You will find the target skill and common core curriculum listings very helpful for lesson plan notations.
2. **Lessons in Literature:** The *Opal* pre-curriculum begins with *Lessons in Literature*. *Lessons in Literature* introduce the literary component, or the language arts skill, that will be taught with the literary work that follows. These lessons are good teaching tools. Use *Lessons in Literature*’s original short selections to give your students initial practice with the targeted literary component or skill.
3. **Reviewing Vocabulary:** Teachers should introduce all vocabulary in the *Word Banks* of the textbook *before* students read the associated piece. In the Teacher’s Edition, the *Word Bank* vocabulary is listed on the *Lessons in Literature* pages that precede each selection. Often there are related vocabulary words that are not in the selection. These words are listed separately. Students should complete the Workbook Vocabulary Activity I *prior* to reading the selection.
4. **Getting Started:** *Getting Started* will make it easier for you to begin a dialogue with your students regarding the selection they are about to read. As such, *Getting Started* is a springboard to the selection. It may be an activity, a question, or information that will intrigue students and generate broader interest. Often, *Getting Started* is an aural exercise that will help students hone their listening skills.
5. **Selection Summary:** For each selection, the Teacher’s Edition gives a summary of the story—a synopsis that will be a good memory aid when you return to the selection each year.
6. **Blueprint for Reading:**
 - **Into:** Here, the Teacher’s Edition parallels the textbook material and both clarifies and elaborates upon the discussion of theme. Theme may be very difficult for many young readers. This fuller explanation enables you to point to specific thematic elements in the selection. *Into* is an invaluable teaching aid.
 - **Eyes On:** This section of the Teacher’s Edition focuses on the featured literary component. *Eyes On* also enables you to elaborate on writing style, tone, and language. Here, you will also find insightful teaching hints and thoughtful questions to pose. *Eyes On* helps your students understand the target skill being taught.
7. **Guiding the Reading:** You can guide your students’ understanding of the selection with both literal and analytical questions. These questions appear in the Teacher’s Edition below the textbook page from which they are drawn. The literal questions are based on the facts of the piece. The answer requires recall only, and can be derived from the page the class has just reviewed. Analytical questions are inferential. Again, the answer can be drawn from the page just read, but the answer is not stated explicitly, as it is with the literal questions. *Guiding the Reading* lists the literal and the analytical questions separately. However, since the questions build on one another, it makes sense to ask the questions in sequential order. Analytical questions build on literal questions, and often, each literal question builds on the one before it.

8. **Literary Components:** *Literary Components* provides a superior lesson tool. They may even be an education for the teacher. Here, numbers in the margins of the selection provide a legend to a list of descriptions of literary components. The numbered, underlined text provides examples of imagery, style, point of view, plot, characterization, setting, foreshadowing, suspense, rising and falling action, climax, resolution, irony, dialogue, figures of speech, and historical or scientific relevance (where appropriate).

The details of each literary component are not necessarily meant to be shared in their entirety with your class. Their most important function is to ground the educator in the material. Use your judgment, regarding how advanced your learners are, and how many of these insights you think your class will benefit from or appreciate. Often, the *Literary Components* serve as a way to explain a sophisticated point to the educator, so that he or she can, in turn, explain it coherently to the students.

9. **Tie-In Poems:** A majority of the selections have a tie-in poem that follows the selection in the textbook. A brief explanatory statement about the poem appears alongside its image in the Teacher's Edition. These tie-in poems have been provided in the textbook simply to be enjoyed, and often share a thematic or topical link with the prose selection they follow. There is no student curriculum associated with these poems, but, suggested questions are listed in the tie-in poem section to be used at your discretion.

10. **Studying the Selection:**

- **First Impressions:** The Teacher's Edition *First Impressions* parallels the textbook post-curricular questions, and suggests possible student responses.
- **Quick Review** and **Focus** provide detailed answers to the questions posed in the parallel sections of the textbook. Additional material has been included for productive classroom discussion.
- **Creating and Writing** is the final review element in the textbook. The activities in this section are challenging: the first activity requires creative writing grounded in the theme of the selection, and the final activity is non-literate (a work of art, a charitable activity, a fieldwork project, for example). Precise teacher instructions for these projects and activities are provided in the Teacher's Edition.

11. **Jill's Journal:** *Jill's Journal* is a unique literary device that follows five of the prose selections.

- This is a four-page spread: 3 pages are devoted to *Jill's Journal*; the remaining page describes a power skill for the young reader or writer. Exercises are given for practice.
- *Jill's Journal* is an "autobiographical," first-person narrative. Jill imagines herself a reporter on assignment. Her journal entries are connected topically with the selection, and place Jill the Journalist back in time or someplace in the world. These pieces are guaranteed to bring students right into the world of the story. Extensive background material is provided in the Teacher's Edition.

12. **Teacher's Answer Guide for the Workbook Activities:** The Workbook Answer Guide is located at the back of each of the two volumes of your Teacher's Edition. Notes To the Teacher has been included with suggestions regarding how best to use the student workbook. Please acquaint yourself with the workbook at the beginning of the semester, *before* you begin using the textbook with your students.

The Jar of Tassai

Lesson in Literature

What Is a Story?

Treasure of the Andes

1. Carlos tripped and fell over the urn.
2. The characters are: Carlos, Papa, Mama, Tomie, and Tomie's Mama.
3. The setting of the story is in Bolivia in the Andes Mountains near Lake Titicaca.

Selection Summary

Tassai is a young Pueblo girl who lives on a mesa overlooking the Painted Desert in Arizona. She works in the fields, grinds the corn, and helps her mother weave baskets. She is quite content, enjoying the simple pleasures of life in an agricultural society. While working outdoors, Tassai has discovered some beautiful clay and secretly made a jar out of it. She has learned to make jars from her mother, and takes enormous pleasure in forming the silky clay into a fine jar. When the jar is painted and baked, Tassai wraps it in a blanket and hides it.

Not long before, the Governor of the Pueblo had announced that a "feast," or what we might call a fair, would be held for the three towns in the area. Every person attending the fair was requested to bring something he or she had made. Prizes would be awarded for the best items.

The day of the fair dawns clear and bright. Tassai is excited, but cannot leave until she has helped her mother all day in the fields. Finally, she hurriedly grabs the blanket that holds her jar and runs to the fair. The Governor and some others are judging the entries. As they approach Tassai, she nervously starts to open her blanket, only to discover that the jar is not in it. She had taken a different blanket, which contains a corncob doll. Crestfallen, she turns to run home to get the jar. Unbeknownst to her, a little girl who saw the corncob doll follows her home. As she is coming out of her house, jar in hand, the girl cries out, for she sees a rattlesnake coming towards her. Tassai raises the jar and shatters it on the head of the snake, killing it.

The girl's father thanks Tassai and tells her that, from what he can see of the pieces, the jar would have won a prize. The Governor does award Tassai a prize, not for her jar, but for her good deed. Tassai is happy. It does not matter that her jar was broken; she can always make another.

Lesson in Literature ...

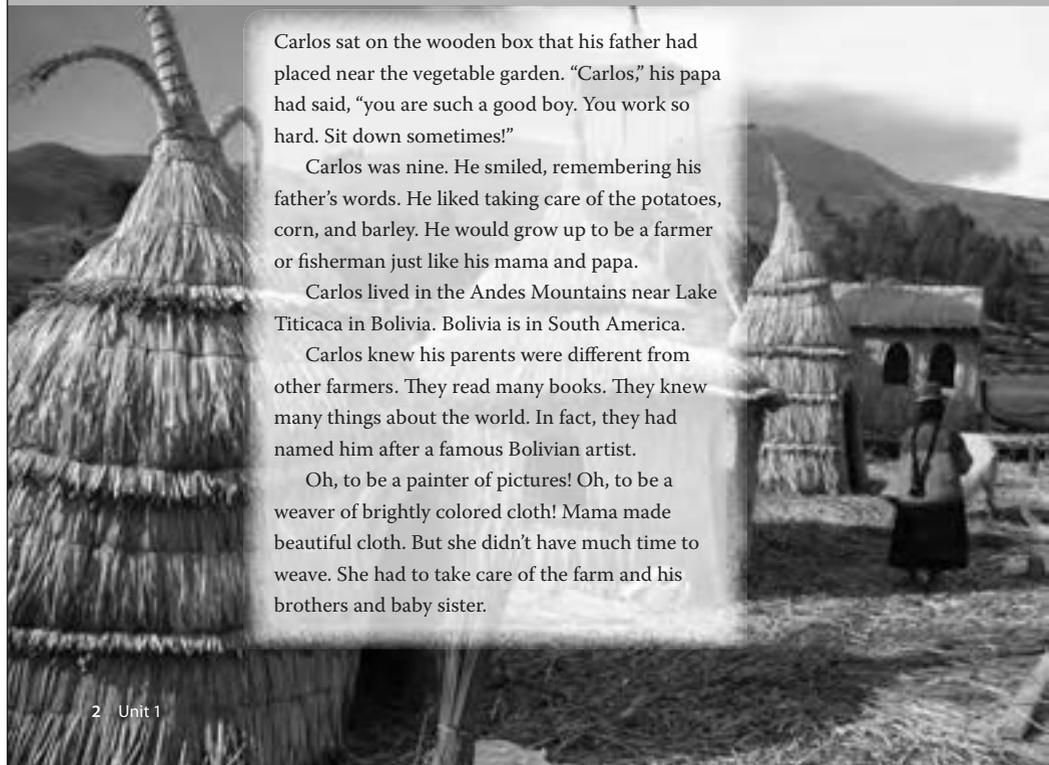
TREASURE OF THE ANDES

WHAT IS A STORY?

- A **story** is about something that *happens* at a certain *time* in a certain *place*.
- What *happens* in the story is called the **plot**.
- The *people* or *animals* in the story are called the **characters**.
- The *time* and *place* in which the events happen are called the **setting**.

THINK ABOUT IT!

1. How do the boys discover the silver urn?
2. Who are the five characters in the story?
3. Where does the story take place? Name the country the boys live in, and the mountains and the lake that are near their farm.



Carlos sat on the wooden box that his father had placed near the vegetable garden. "Carlos," his papa had said, "you are such a good boy. You work so hard. Sit down sometimes!"

Carlos was nine. He smiled, remembering his father's words. He liked taking care of the potatoes, corn, and barley. He would grow up to be a farmer or fisherman just like his mama and papa.

Carlos lived in the Andes Mountains near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia. Bolivia is in South America.

Carlos knew his parents were different from other farmers. They read many books. They knew many things about the world. In fact, they had named him after a famous Bolivian artist.

Oh, to be a painter of pictures! Oh, to be a weaver of brightly colored cloth! Mama made beautiful cloth. But she didn't have much time to weave. She had to take care of the farm and his brothers and baby sister.

2 Unit 1

Getting Started

The first discussion of the year should be about stories in general. Ask your students what some of their favorite stories are. They may name some books they have read that are familiar to most of the class. Ask them what makes them like one story more than another. Is it the action? Do they like some character that is funny? Does it have a really good ending? Ask them if they prefer serious stories to funny ones, happy ones to sad ones, action-filled ones to more thoughtful ones. Ask each student who answers why they prefer one type of story to another. Lead up to the question: What elements must every story have? The answer is, of course, that every story needs a plot, characters, setting, and theme. But don't use those terms. See if you can elicit these story elements from them in their own words.

After this discussion, read two paragraphs to them. One will be a "non-story," because it will lack some story elements, the other will be a mini-story. We provide you with a sample of each, though you may prefer to make up your own.



The Jar of Tassai 3

“Carlos! How are you?” It was his friend, Tomie, calling. “Want to search for buried treasure?”

“Sure,” Carlos shouted back. Their favorite game was hunting for treasure. They had always heard stories that something valuable was buried in the Andes. They imagined finding treasure and being heroes. Then they could both go to art school. They would be famous artists! They had talked about this many times.

“You know, Tomie, I’ve been thinking. The legend says the treasure is where the earth is like a mirror or a sheet of glass. Well, Lake Titicaca is so calm. It really looks like a sheet of glass!”

They headed for the lake with their llama, Isabella. She wore her bright pink collar and ear tassels. Their spades were set in the pack that she wore.

Carlos and Tomie were near the edge of the lake. Suddenly, Carlos tripped on a rock and fell. “Are you all right?” cried Tomie.

“My hands are scraped, but I’m okay. It was just a big rock!”

“Hey, wait,” Tomie exclaimed, as he helped his friend to his feet. “Look at that!” he said. “That’s no rock. See, it’s shiny—just the way the lake is shiny.” They set to digging with their spades, excited. But Carlos worried.

What if it were nothing special? Then there would be no art school.

Little by little they uncovered an old and heavy silver urn. “It’s just like what we saw at the museum in the city,” Tomie said. They attached the urn to Isabella’s pack with rope. They wanted to get home quickly, but Isabella had a heavy load.

Soon they saw their mamas working in the field. The boys untied the urn. Together, they held it up for their mamas to see.

“Look!” the boys exclaimed. “We found the treasure of the Andes!”

At first their mothers laughed. “Are you certain it belongs to no one else?”

“Mama,” Carlos cried. “How could something so old belong to someone else?”

The two women looked at each other.

“Do you know what this means for our families?” Tomie’s mama said to the boys.

Carlos’ mama nodded. “We have not told either of you how Tomie’s little sister needs medicine, or how little food we have had to get by on. We save the food for the children.”

“Thank you so much,” Tomie’s mama said quietly. “You are both heroes.”

Target Skill: Understanding that a story needs a plot, character, setting, and a theme

Learning Strategy: Prior knowledge

Common Core Curriculum: RL.3.1; RL.3.2; RL.3.3

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Related Vocabulary

agriculture (AG ruh KUL chur) *n.*: farming

arid (AIR id) *adj.*: dry and desert-like

compete (kum PEET) *v.*: to try to be the winner in a contest

craft (KRAFT) *n.*: work that requires special skill, like weaving or pottery making

feast (FEEST) *n.*: a rich, joyous meal for many guests

kiln (KILL) *n.*: an oven for baking clay pottery

pottery (POT uh ree) *n.*: bowls and other vessels made of clay that is shaped, then baked

rural (RUH rul) *adj.*: areas where there are farms and fields, not streets and buildings

Workbook

Related Pages: 2-7

Answer Key Pages: 2-3

got to the building, they heard a huge crash, as a tree blew down. “Whew,” they said. “We’re glad we got off the beach.”

Discussion

Ask your class which of the two paragraphs is a little story. When they choose the second paragraph, ask them how it is different from the first. The second paragraph has characters. The first does not. The second paragraph has a plot—something changes, a problem arises and is solved—the first does not. Both paragraphs have a setting, but a setting alone does not make a story. Do not accept “action” or the lack thereof as a story element. Action that is not part of a problem and resolution, or action that does not lead to change, is not a story element. One can describe an auto race or a rodeo, but those would simply be descriptions of action, not stories.

Non-Story

Our beach is a wonderful place to be. The sand is clean, the water is clear, there are seagulls flying above, and the skies are usually blue and bright. The beach is open during the summer months and is usually crowded, unless you come early in the morning. There are stands where you can buy ice cream and rent umbrellas. There are a couple of brick buildings where you can change into your swimsuit. The bus goes right to the beach, so it is convenient and easy to reach.

Story

Brian and Joseph loved the beach because the sand was clean, the water was clear, and the skies above it were usually sunny. Unfortunately, today was not one of those bright days. When they got there, the seagulls were circling and crying their loud cries. The wind was gusting and sand was blowing into everyone’s eyes. “Look!” said Brian, “A funnel cloud is coming our way! We’ve got to find shelter.” Everyone was crowding down the steps of one of the buildings that were usually used for changing. Just as the boys

The Jar of Tassai

Into . . . *The Jar of Tassai*

The theme of *The Jar of Tassai* is sacrifice and making choices. Tassai must sacrifice her cherished jar to save another human being. And she must decide to do so in a split second. These ideas can only be discussed after the children have read the story, since the whole question of sacrifice does not appear until near the very end of the story. To discuss it beforehand would ruin the surprise climax.

Before reading the story, however, several peripheral ideas may be introduced. Tassai is a Pueblo Indian. She lives a simple life, working all day and having few possessions. Yet, she is happy and contented. Spend some time describing what Tassai's life was like. Explain that her house probably had only one or two rooms. She probably had none of our modern conveniences. Most of her day was spent out of doors working in the fields. Ask your students if they think they would enjoy that kind of a life. It will be interesting to see their varying responses.

Another topic you may wish to explore with your class is designing and crafting. Ask your students whether they have ever done anything like making pottery, painting, woodworking, or the like. Tassai loved every moment spent working on her jar. Understanding the thrill of creating something beautiful is key to appreciating how hard it was for her to sacrifice her jar.

A third topic is "secrets." When should secrets be kept and when should they not? Tell your students that if a secret is something of which their parents would disapprove, it should not be kept a secret. If the secret is something their parents would like, but they want to surprise them, like a birthday present or teaching the dog a trick, they may keep the secret. If they are not sure, they should tell their parents, even if it might spoil a surprise. That is always the safest bet.

Eyes On: Story Elements

In *Getting Started*, we asked you to encourage the students to talk about literary elements in their own words. It is now time to identify these elements with the proper terms. Tassai is a character, as are the Governor, the little girl, and her father. As you read the story, repeat the term so that the children become familiar with it. The mesa, the open area for the feast, and Tassai's house are all settings. Use the term when referring to them.

Identifying plot and theme are more difficult. Here is where the learning strategy, *using prior*

Blueprint for Reading

INTO . . . *The Jar of Tassai*

Tassai was a Pueblo Indian girl whose family lived and farmed near the desert. Like many children, Tassai had a secret. Slowly and carefully, in a secret place, Tassai was making a jar from clay. She had discovered the clay near the desert. Tassai dreamed of the day when she would surprise everyone with the beauty of the jar. Just as that day arrived, something happened! Her precious jar was endangered, but so was something even more precious. Tassai had to choose between the two in a split second. As you read *The Jar of Tassai*, ask yourself what choice *you* would have made.



Story Elements

What makes a story? You would probably agree that, in a story, something has to *happen*. What happens is called the **plot**. You might add that a story must have *people*, or animals, or maybe even robots! These are the **characters**. The characters live at a certain *time* in a certain *place*, which are the story's **setting**. Finally, if the story is a good one, it will have an *idea*, or **theme**. As you read *The Jar of Tassai*, see if you can identify the plot, characters, setting, and theme.

4 Unit 1

knowledge, comes in. Every child knows instinctively that a story has a plot. Verbalizing what constitutes a plot, though, is something even most adults could not readily do. The easiest way to start teaching about plot is by saying that a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Ask your students to think of some story they know. Ask them to tell you how it began and how it ended. Then, ask them what changed in the story between the beginning and the end. A character may have changed, a situation may have changed, or a setting may have changed. If nothing has changed, the piece of writing is not a story. As the students read *The Jar of Tassai*, keep a list of changes. At the beginning, Tassai is making the jar. In the middle, Tassai has finished the jar. At the end, the jar is broken. A somewhat more sophisticated discussion would be: At the beginning Tassai is a sweet girl with a secret; in the middle, she is mature enough to compete at the feast with adults; at the end she is a heroine who has saved a life.

Theme is the hardest element to identify. Drawing on our strategy of *using prior knowledge*, ask your students to identify the theme of a story known to all of them. Here's a simple example: In the book *If You Give a*

The Jar of Tassai

Grace Moon

Tassai¹ lived on the top of a mesa² that looked far out over the Painted Desert.³ The air was as clear as thin ice. It even made the faraway mountains and blue hills look nearer than they really were. Tassai was a Pueblo Indian⁴ girl. She was as brown as a nut that has dried in the sun. She liked to lie on the edge of the mesa. She would look over the desert and dream long dreams.

But Tassai did not often have time for dreams. There was too much work for her to do. Tassai worked with her mother in the little fields at the foot of the mesa. It was not hard work, and it had magic in it. It had the magic of watching green things spring up out of the ground where only brown earth had been before.

1. *Tassai* (TASS EYE)
2. A *mesa* (MAY suh) is a flat area at the top of steep mountainsides.
3. The *Painted Desert* is a desert in Arizona, east of the Colorado River.
4. The *Pueblo* (PWEB lo) *Indians* are Native Americans who live in the American Southwest. The stone or adobe houses they live in are also called *pueblos*.

The Jar of Tassai 5

Mouse a Cookie, the theme is that sometimes, if you do someone one little favor, they will keep asking for more and more. Choose a book or story that has an obvious theme and that is known to most of the students.

In this story, the theme is not really evident until the end. When the children have finished reading the story, ask them what the story's main idea is. You may have to guide them with leading questions. Have them think about the story's climax (don't use the term—it's far too much detail at this point). Discuss how much Tassai loved her jar and yet, how instantly she chose to break it. Ask your class how they know that she made the right choice. Point out that choosing to sacrifice something that is precious for something far more important—in this case, saving a life—is the story's theme. It goes without saying that you must express this in grade-appropriate language.

Literary Components

- 1 **Exposition:** The first few sentences introduce us to Tassai. They tell us she is a young Pueblo girl who lives in a rural area.
- 2 **Simile:** Although it is too early to use terms like *simile*, you may want to talk about how we often compare a new thing to a familiar one to help us picture what the new thing is like.
- 3 **Characterization:** Tassai is a dreamer. She has ideas about life. As we will see, most of her day is spent doing things; yet, her simple life has not robbed her of imagination.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

- Q:** Where did Tassai live?
A: Tassai lived on a mesa near the Painted Desert.
- Q:** What is a mesa?
A: A mesa is a flat area at the top of a steep mountainside.
- Q:** When Tassai went outdoors each day, what view did she see?
A: She saw faraway mountains and blue hills. The air was clear and the sun was warm. Below the mesa was the desert.
- Q:** What did Tassai do each day?
A: She worked with her mother in the fields.

Analytical

- Q:** Did Tassai like living on the mesa? Why or why not?
A: Tassai loved the beautiful area in which she lived. She enjoyed working in the fields and watching things grow.

The Jar of Tassai

Literary Components

4 Sensory Images: Notice how colorful Tassai's world is. The blue hills, her brown skin, the green plants, the brown earth, the red and blue and yellow corn. Soon, we will read of the rich earth tones of her jar.

5 Simile; Sensory Image: Again, the author compares one thing to another: the feel of the clay is as smooth as honey.

6 Exposition: Here is where the story really begins: with Tassai's secret.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: What work did Tassai do in addition to her work in the field?

A: Tassai brought water from the spring. She ground corn. She helped her mother cook and weave baskets.

Q: What was the one thing Tassai did that no one knew about?

A: She was making a jar from clay.

Analytical

Q: What is the one thing that most American children do that Tassai did not do?

A: Tassai did not go to school.

Tassai brought water, too, from the spring at the foot of the mesa. She carried it up the steep trail in jars. For **4** hours each day she ground the red and blue and yellow grains of corn. She cooked when her mother needed her help. She also knew where to find the grass that her mother wove into baskets.

There was one thing Tassai did that no one knew about. This was because she did it only at times when no eyes were watching. She was making a jar from clay that she had found in a secret place. There the earth was

5 smooth as honey to the touch and dark in color. Not even

6 her mother knew that Tassai was working at this jar. It was Tassai's secret.



She shaped it and smoothed it. She knew how to do this from watching her mother. The most beautiful jar of all started to form itself in her hands. She painted fine black lines on it and baked it a golden brown. Tassai thought that there had never been a jar as lovely as this one. She carefully wrapped it in a blanket and put it away in a safe place.

All through the hours while she worked in the fields, Tassai thought of her jar. In her thoughts a little song sang itself over and over again until her feet danced to the music of it:

It is so beautiful,
My big, round jar!
So round and beautiful!
Only the Moon,
When it walks on the edge of the world
Is like my jar.
Round and smooth it is,
And has a shine that sings!
Maybe the Moon has come to me
To be my jar!

7

8

9

10

11

Literary Components

7 Characterization: We get the sense that Tassai is a good girl who wants to learn everything she can from her mother. The only reason she would keep a secret from her mother is in order to surprise her.

8 Poetic Language: When someone is a skilled craftsman, the object being crafted seems to take shape on its own. This is a beautiful way to impart the magical feeling Tassai had as she made her jar.

9 Foreshadowing: The reader feels that this blanket-wrapped jar will play a part in the story.

10 Characterization; Poetic Language: Once again the author uses the device of things happening on their own. Tassai is portrayed as a sensitive, happy girl who is carefree enough to find herself dancing to a tune without actually intending to do so.

11 Characterization: Tassai's world is the great outdoors. The images that fill her thoughts are drawn from the natural world, not the modern technology-filled world in which we live.

Analytical

Q: Why do you think Tassai loved the jar so much?

A: Several answers are possible. She loved it because she herself had made it; because she apparently had very few possessions and each one was precious to her; because she loved having her own secret; because it was a “grown-up” type of object; because it was truly beautiful.

Q: Do you think it was okay to keep this secret from her mother?

A: Yes. Tassai was not keeping the jar a secret because she was afraid her mother would disapprove. She knew her mother would be pleased and wanted to surprise her. That kind of secret is okay to keep.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: How did Tassai know how to make a jar?

A: She had watched her mother making jars.

Q: Was Tassai happy with the result of her work on the jar?

A: Yes, she thought it was the most beautiful jar she had ever seen.

Q: What did Tassai do with the finished jar?

A: She wrapped it in a blanket and put it away in a safe place.

Q: Did Tassai forget about her jar after it was completed?

A: No. She thought about it all the time and even made up a little song about it.

The Jar of Tassai 7

The Jar of Tassai

Literary Components

12 Rising Action: The story is beginning to take shape. A new, important character is introduced and the reader understands that something will soon happen.

13 Foreshadowing: The reader knows about Tassai's jar and understands it will be brought to the feast. What will happen to it there?

14 Sensory Images: The fair is alive with color. The sights and sounds are dazzling to a girl who is used to silent, open spaces.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: Who called the people of the town together?

A: The Governor of the Pueblo called the people together.

Q: What was his announcement?

A: There would be a feast for the people of three towns.

Q: What did he ask of the people?

A: He asked each person to bring something he or she had made.

Q: What would be done with each of these things?

A: They would be displayed and the best ones would win a prize.

Q: Did the people want to attend the feast?

A: Yes. They were very excited by the prospect.

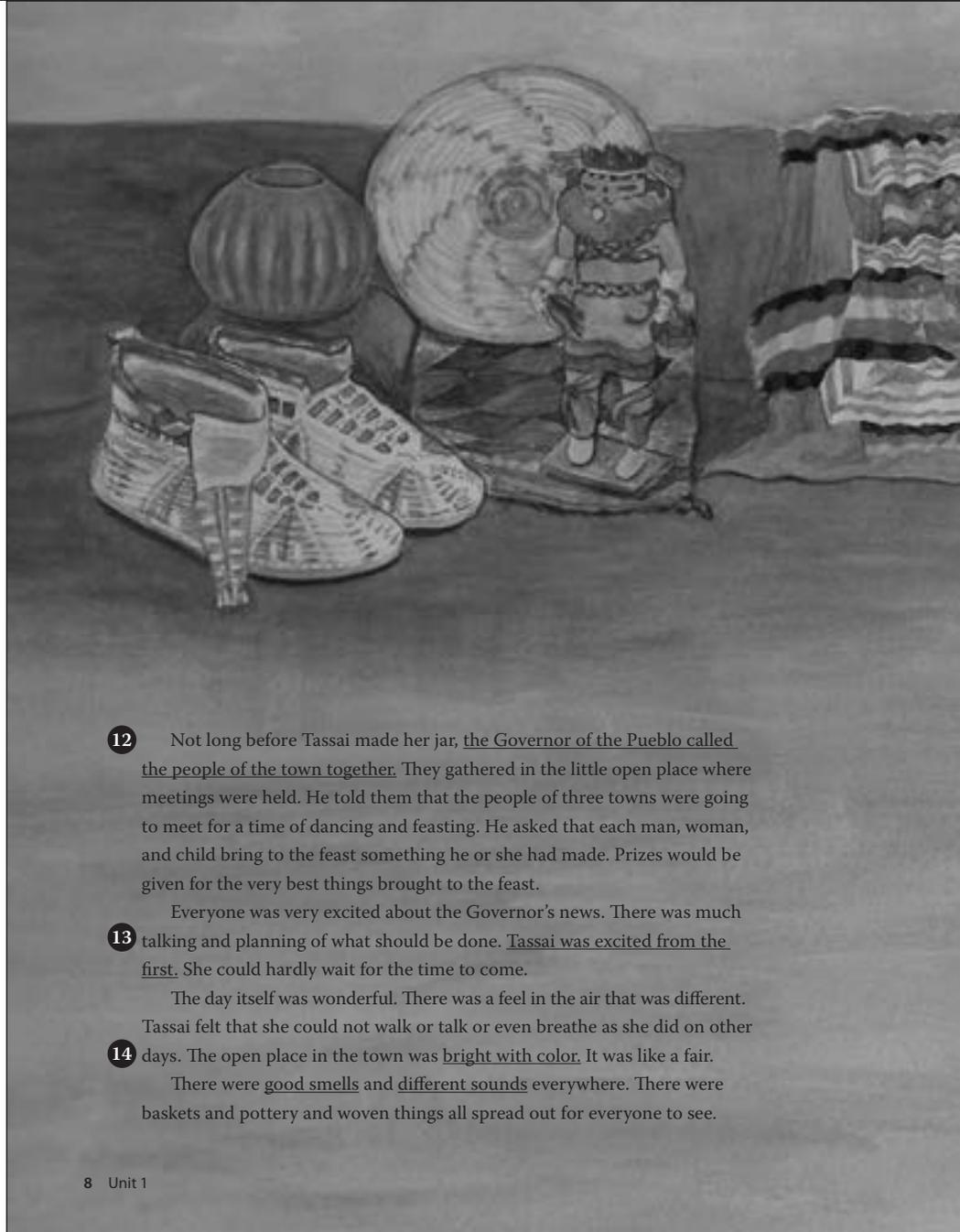
Q: How did Tassai feel on the day of the feast?

A: She was so excited she could hardly breathe.

Analytical

Q: Do you think the Governor's idea was a good one?

A: Yes. It would give people a chance to mingle and get to know new people. It would encourage trade and business. It gave the people something exciting to which to look forward.



12 Not long before Tassai made her jar, the Governor of the Pueblo called the people of the town together. They gathered in the little open place where meetings were held. He told them that the people of three towns were going to meet for a time of dancing and feasting. He asked that each man, woman, and child bring to the feast something he or she had made. Prizes would be given for the very best things brought to the feast.

Everyone was very excited about the Governor's news. There was much talking and planning of what should be done. **13** Tassai was excited from the first. She could hardly wait for the time to come.

The day itself was wonderful. There was a feel in the air that was different. Tassai felt that she could not walk or talk or even breathe as she did on other **14** days. The open place in the town was bright with color. It was like a fair.

There were good smells and different sounds everywhere. There were baskets and pottery and woven things all spread out for everyone to see.



There were silver bracelets and rings and belts. There were bright blankets and things of leather and wood. There were ears of corn that were bigger than any Tassai had ever seen before. There were beaded shoes and nets for carrying things. There were little cakes made of pine nuts and seeds. There was good food cooking in pots.

Tassai was one of the very last to come into the open place on that big day. She had been busy since sunup, helping her mother. At last she was free. She picked up the blanket in which her jar was wrapped and ran to the open place. There she stood, holding the blanket close to her side. **15**

The Governor of the Pueblo moved from place to place with some elderly people. They looked long and closely at each of the many things that had been brought. With them was a visitor from a nearby town. He had come with his little daughter to see the dancing and feasting.

The little girl danced ahead of them as they walked. She looked at everything with bright eyes. **16**

The Jar of Tassai 9

Literary Components

15 Rising Action; Foreshadowing: Tassai is about to enter her precious jar into the competition. As we imagine her holding the blanket, we are edgy. Will the jar drop out of the blanket? Will the blanket hold some surprise? We won't feel safe until we see the jar firmly on the display table.

16 Characterization; Foreshadowing: This little girl seems a bit too lively. Why is she mentioned? Will something happen?

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: Describe what Tassai saw as she entered the area of the feast.

A: There were good smells and nice sounds. There were baskets, pottery, woven things, jewelry, blankets, leather goods, beaded shoes, baked goods, good food, and more.

Q: Why was Tassai late to the feast?

A: She had been helping her mother.

Q: What did she bring with her?

A: She brought the blanket in which her jar was wrapped.

Q: Who was the judge of the competition?

A: The judges were the Governor and some elderly people.

Q: Who walked along with them as they viewed all the objects?

A: A visitor from a nearby town and his little daughter walked along with them.

The Jar of Tassai

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: Why was Tassai nervous when the judges started walking towards her?

A: She was afraid they would not like her jar.

When the people had seen everything else, they started walking up to Tassai. She was nervous now. Maybe they would not think her jar was beautiful. Others began to gather around. They had not known that Tassai would have anything to show.

“Maybe it is not very good,” she said in a voice that was so low no one heard her. “Maybe it—” Then her words would not come at all.



When she opened the blanket, the beautiful jar was not there. She had not noticed that there were two piles of blankets in the room of her home. The one she had picked up in her hurry held only an old corncob doll.

17

There was a big laugh from those who stood near. The words of Tassai, explaining what she had done, were lost. Quickly she pushed her way through the laughing people and ran home. She did not know that the little girl had wanted to see that doll again and was following her.

18

19



The Jar of Tassai 11

Literary Components

17 Surprise; Rising Action; Tension

Increases: From being mildly tense that they won't like her jar, Tassai is seriously distressed that she has brought the wrong blanket.

18 Foreshadowing: This is a skillful piece of foreshadowing. Although to the reader this small detail goes almost unnoticed, it will play a role in the climax of the story.

19 Foreshadowing; Action is Approaching

Climax: The little girl innocently follows Tassai home. The reader does not realize how important a detail this is.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: What happened when Tassai opened the blanket?

A: She discovered that all it held was a corncob doll.

Q: What did Tassai do when she saw the corncob doll?

A: She began to run home to get the jar.

Q: Who was the one person who was actually interested in the doll Tassai had brought by mistake?

A: The little girl was interested in the doll.

Q: What did the little girl do?

A: She followed Tassai home, when Tassai went to get the jar.

Analytical

Q: Why do you think Tassai brought the wrong blanket?

A: She had helped her mother all day and in her hurry to come to the feast, had grabbed the wrong blanket.

Q: Do you think it was kind of the people to laugh at her?

A: No, they were unfeeling.

The Jar of Tassai

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: Why did the little girl stop suddenly when she got to Tassai's doorway?

A: She saw a rattlesnake pick up its head and begin to slide towards her.

The house of Tassai was the last one in the little town. It was on the very edge of the mesa top. She ran into the door. She did not notice that the little girl who had followed her had stopped suddenly just outside the doorway. The child was watching, with wide eyes full of fear, a snake that picked up its head from behind a big stone. It was a rattlesnake. It moved its flat head



12 Unit 1

closer and closer to the little girl. She gave one loud cry as Tassai came out of the door with the jar in her arms. Tassai had thrown off the blanket and held just the jar in her arms.

There was no time to think. There was no time to call for help. Tassai did the only thing she could do. With all her might she threw the jar at the rattlesnake. It broke into many pieces on the rock, and the snake lay flat and still.

The little girl did not make another sound. Her father, who had heard her first cry, came running. He held her in his arms.

For the first second, Tassai thought only that the rattlesnake was dead. Then she thought of her jar. No one would call it beautiful now. She picked up a little broken piece. As she was looking at it, the father of the little girl took it from her hand.



The Jar of Tassai 13

Literary Components

20 Turning Point: The story has reached its climax. The reader is suspended in time as the snake, the little girl, Tassai, and the jar are flash-frozen in the moment.

21 Climax; Resolution: The scene unfreezes and in a flash, the snake is dead.

22 Falling Action: Although the snake is dead, the story is not over. There are still a lot of mixed emotions with which to deal.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: What did the little girl do when she saw the snake moving toward her?

A: She gave one loud cry.

Q: By now, what was Tassai holding?

A: She was holding the jar.

Q: What did she do?

A: She threw the jar at the rattlesnake's head with all her might.

Analytical

Q: When Tassai saw the rattlesnake she had no time to think. Do you think that helped her save the girl?

A: Yes. If she had started to think, she might have been too afraid to move, or she might have been too concerned about the jar.

The Jar of Tassai

Literary Components

23 Theme: Part of the theme is that deeds are as beautiful as objects.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: What did the girl's father say to Tassai?

A: He said that the jar was beautiful and asked her if she had made it.

Q: What did he say when she said she had made the jar?

A: He thanked her for saving his daughter and said that the jar would have won a prize.

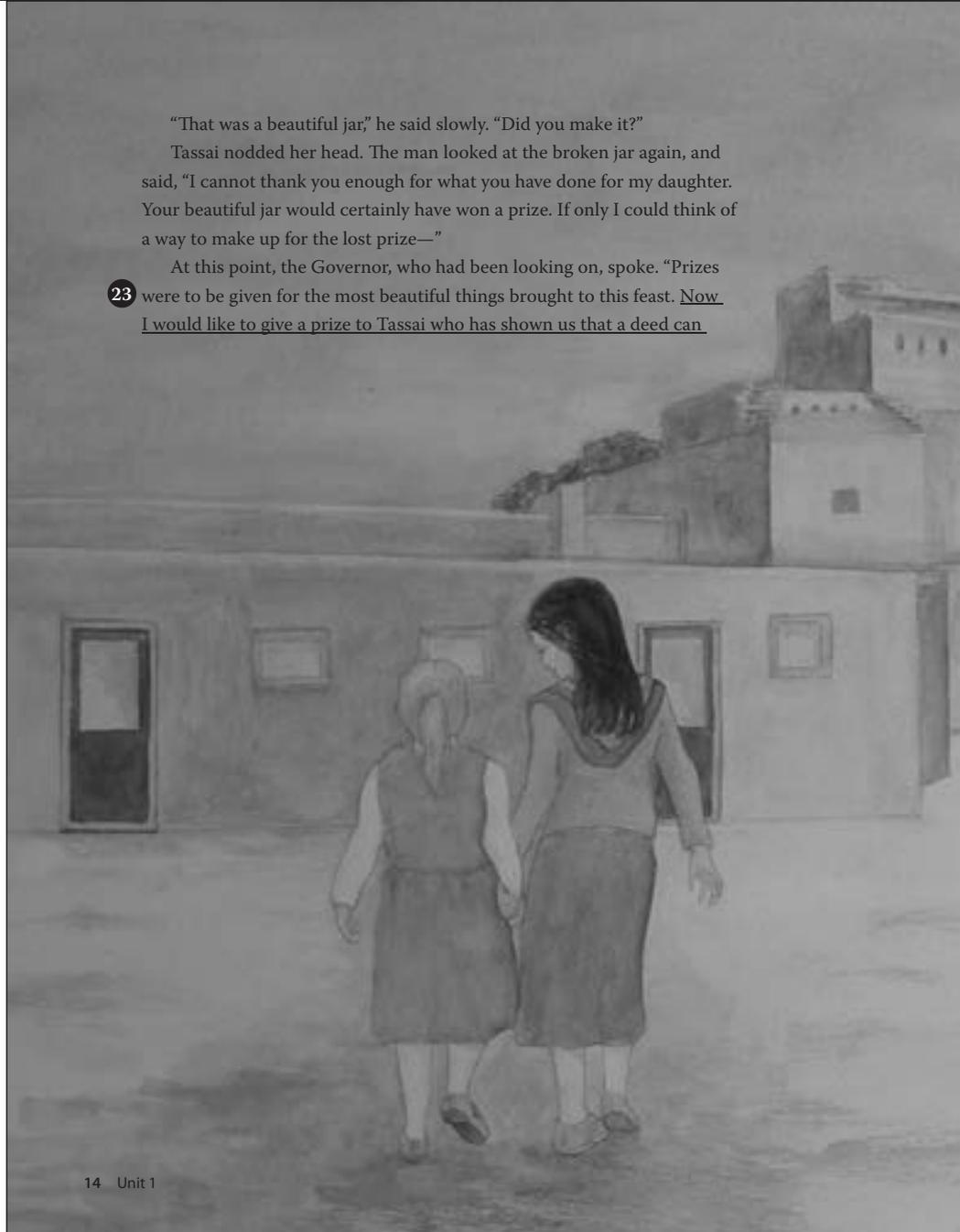
Q: What idea did the Governor have?

A: He said Tassai would win a prize for her beautiful deed.

"That was a beautiful jar," he said slowly. "Did you make it?"

Tassai nodded her head. The man looked at the broken jar again, and said, "I cannot thank you enough for what you have done for my daughter. Your beautiful jar would certainly have won a prize. If only I could think of a way to make up for the lost prize—"

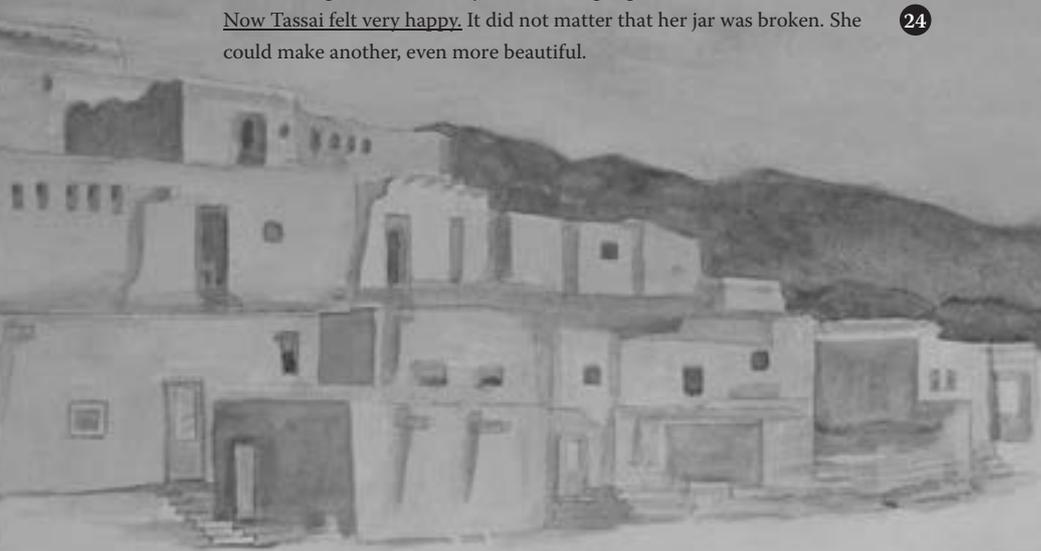
23 At this point, the Governor, who had been looking on, spoke. "Prizes were to be given for the most beautiful things brought to this feast. Now I would like to give a prize to Tassai who has shown us that a deed can



be very beautiful, too.” With this he handed her a prize. The elderly people nodded their heads with pride. The children who were gathered around clapped and cheered.

The little girl whom Tassai saved came up and smiled at Tassai. She asked, “Can I see your pretty corncob doll again?” Tassai held out her hand to the little girl and soon they were walking together toward Tassai’s house. Now Tassai felt very happy. It did not matter that her jar was broken. She could make another, even more beautiful.

24



About the Author

Grace Purdie Moon always loved Indians. When she was a little girl, she thought she actually was an Indian since she was born in Indianapolis, Indiana! She and her husband, Carl Moon, who was an artist, spent years traveling in Indian Country, living with different tribes and gathering material for their work. Grace Moon is famous for her paintings of Indian children. She wrote 19 books, and her husband illustrated all of them. They even authored some of these books together.

The Jar of Tassai 15

Literary Components

24 Characterization; Theme: Tassai knows her priorities. She is happy about what she has done and has no second thoughts. Practically speaking, she knows she can make a second jar.

Guiding the Reading

Literal

Q: How did Tassai feel about the prize the Governor gave her?

A: She felt very happy.

Analytical

Q: Why do you think Tassai felt happy? After all, her jar was broken.

A: Tassai was old enough to know that saving a person’s life is more important than anything else. It helped that she had been given a prize, but even if she hadn’t, the enormously good deed that she had done would make her feel happy and proud for the rest of her life.

The Jar of Tassai

The Secret

Poem tie-in for *The Jar of Tassai*

In *The Secret*, the narrator takes delight in her secret knowledge of the existence of a robin's nest. Her playful way of not stating the secret injects secrecy right into the lines themselves. There is something about secret knowledge—if it is knowledge of something pleasant and good—that most people relish, and this poem shares that feeling with the reader.

Here are some questions that you may use to discuss *The Secret*.

- Q:** Do you like secrets?
- Q:** Do you find it hard to keep a secret? Why or why not?
- Q:** Some secrets are happy and some are sad. Some are between you and a friend, some are between you and a parent, and some are between you and yourself. Can you give examples of each?
- Q:** What secret does the poet have here?
- A:** The poet has seen the robin build a nest and lay four eggs in it.
- Q:** What does the poet do that makes you feel the secret even more?
- A:** The poet leaves out the words that tell us what the secret is and makes us guess what they are. By not using the words, she is keeping the secret.
- Q:** When will the secret be revealed?
- A:** The secret will be revealed when the baby robins are hatched.

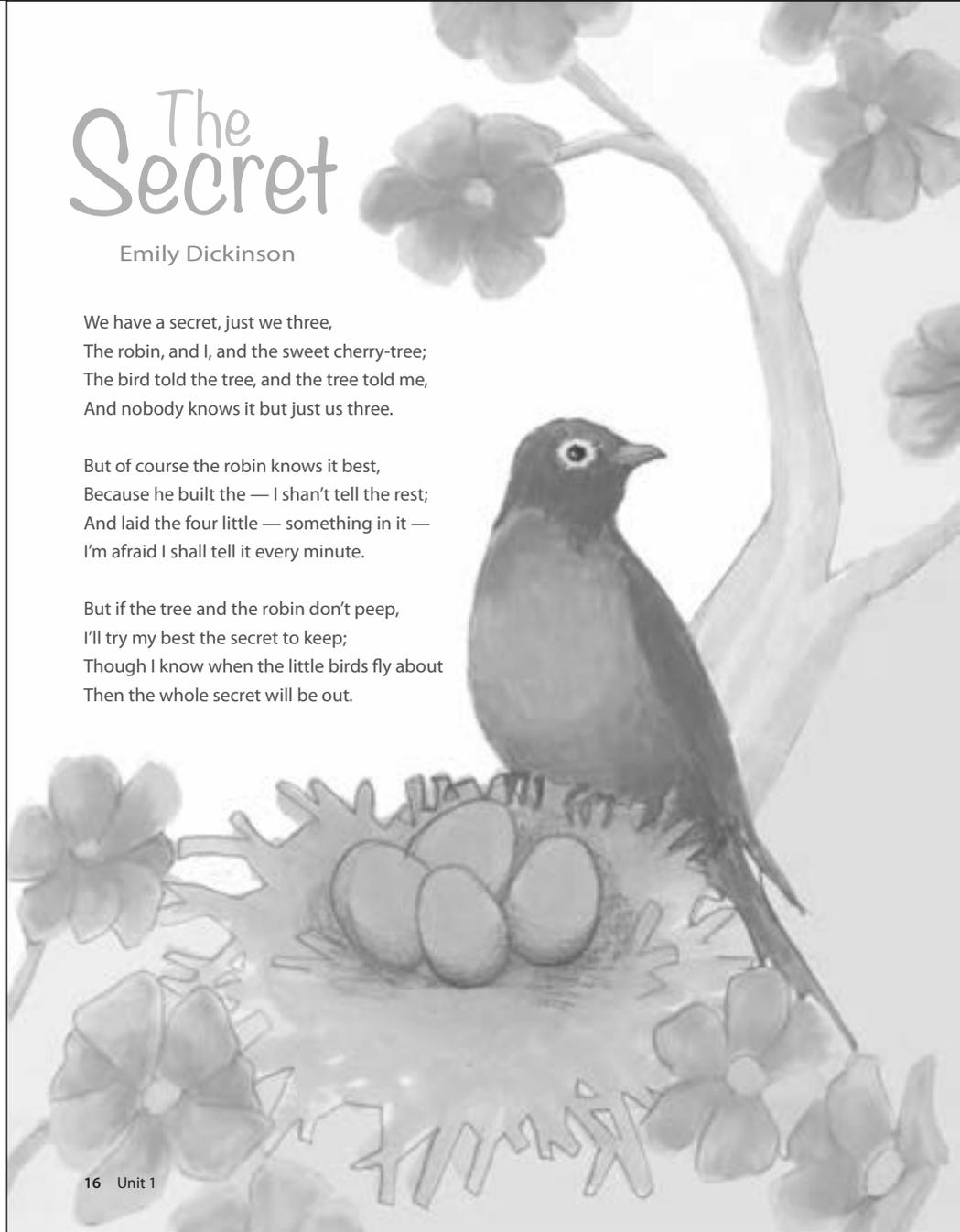
The Secret

Emily Dickinson

We have a secret, just we three,
The robin, and I, and the sweet cherry-tree;
The bird told the tree, and the tree told me,
And nobody knows it but just us three.

But of course the robin knows it best,
Because he built the — I shan't tell the rest;
And laid the four little — something in it —
I'm afraid I shall tell it every minute.

But if the tree and the robin don't peep,
I'll try my best the secret to keep;
Though I know when the little birds fly about
Then the whole secret will be out.



Studying the Selection

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Would you have been able to think as quickly as Tassai did?

QUICK REVIEW

1. What work did Tassai do secretly?
2. What did Tassai hope to do with her jar?
3. Why did Tassai leave the feast and run home?
4. How did Tassai's jar get broken?

FOCUS

5. At the end of the story, Tassai felt very happy, even though her jar was broken. Why did she feel this way?
6. Every story has a plot, characters, a setting, and a theme, or main idea. Copy the chart below onto a piece of paper and fill in the empty boxes.

List three characters	1. 2. 3.
List two settings	1. 2.
List two important things that happen in the story	1. 2.

CREATING AND WRITING

7. In the story, the Governor gave Tassai a prize for doing a good deed. What do you think it was? Imagine that you are the Governor, and write a letter to Tassai that describes the prize and thanks her for her brave deed.
8. Tassai loved making her jar. At home, find an empty jar. Clean it well and decorate it. Fill it with something you like, such as candy or small pieces of a game.

The Jar of Tassai 17

Quick Review

1. Tassai was secretly making a jar out of clay.
2. Tassai hoped to bring her jar to the feast and enter it in the competition for a prize.
3. When Tassai opened the blanket in which she thought she had wrapped the jar, she saw that it held a doll, not her jar. She then ran home to get the jar.
4. A little girl had followed Tassai home. Just as Tassai took the jar in her hands, she saw that a rattlesnake was preparing to strike at the little girl. Tassai raised the jar and hurled it down on the snake's head.

Focus

5. Tassai felt happy that she had saved the little girl's life. (Perhaps she felt very happy that she had instinctively done the right thing.)
6. Characters: Tassai, the Governor, the little girl, the little girl's father.

Settings: the mesa, the fields, Tassai's house, the place where the feast was held.

Two important events can include the announcing of the feast, Tassai opening the blanket and finding the jar is missing, Tassai running home, the rattlesnake getting ready to strike, Tassai smashing the jar.

Creating and Writing

7. Answers will vary. Encourage the students to think about a prize that would reflect the good deed in some way, like a miniature jar, or a heart necklace. The letter should be written to Tassai and signed by the Governor. If you like, you can have the students design the Governor's seal, or bring in some gold paper and have them cut out a "seal" that they can glue to the letter. They may enjoy "signing" the letter in the handwriting of the Governor.
8. If the children are decorating the jars in school, bring in materials and desert clay-tone colors that were favored by the Pueblo Indians. It would be nice to bring in some photographs of jars that were made by them.

Studying the Selection

First Impressions

Answers will vary. Some confident students will be sure that they would have acted just as she did. The less confident, or more thoughtful, ones will wonder what they would have done. Some may think they would have frozen in fear, others may feel they would have fled. Some students may offer solutions other than breaking the jar on the snake's head. (These will probably range from the creative to the fantastic!) Point out that it is difficult to know what one will do in a moment of crisis. However, training oneself to think of others, and learning to take action rather than watch passively, are two ways to prepare for a crisis like the one in the story. Ask the students to share some split-second decisions they have made.