



PREPARATION MATERIALS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE READ THE BOOK

If you have read the book you will be fairly well prepared to see our play. You must remember, however, that a play and a book are two completely different ways of presenting a story.

We thought that an enjoyable way for you to prepare for our play would be for you to imagine that you, as a class, have to make a play out of the story, “The Tortilla Curtain”, in English. You don’t have to actually perform, you just have to decide how it could be done.



First of all, the whole class should find answers to these questions together:

- What are the most important parts of the novel and what are the most important characters?
- Which parts and which characters would you include in your play?

Now you can divide into two groups.

Group A has to put on the play “The Tortilla Curtain” using a small cast, with only four actors and with a very small budget for costumes, props and stage sets. (This is how we, Platypus Theater, work). You only have use of a small stage.

The other group has to design the same play, “The Tortilla Curtain” but this group has a big budget and can afford to have eight actors, a big stage, big sets and a lot of costumes and props (Requisiten). (This is the way well funded German state theatres work.)

Remember that actors can play more than one character. How many characters do you envisage for your play? How should the characters speak? E.g. only English? English and a bit of Spanish? Discuss and write down your ideas.

How could the different places be shown on stage? E.g. Cándido and América’s camp in the canyon, Kyra and Delaney’s house. Discuss and write down.

How long should the play be? Should there be an interval?

Now divide up the jobs amongst the people in your group.

Two of you have to design the costumes for the actors. What would the characters wear? Discuss and then make some quick drawings.

Two of you have to decide on what music, sound effects and visual effects are used in your play. Discuss and then write down your ideas.

Two of you have to design the set for the play. Discuss and then make some drawings.

Two of you have to write a very short description of the play for the press. What is important for such a press release? Discuss and then write.



Two of you have to design a poster to advertise the play. What image or images would you use to attract attention to your play? What slogan would you use? Discuss and make a quick drawing.

When both groups are ready, come back together in the big group. Group A tells Group B how they plan to present "The Tortilla Curtain" as a play and vice versa.

Don't forget, making plays is about playing, so have fun imagining how to do it.

ALTERNATIVE PREPARATION

Have a debate. Topic: "The Tortilla Curtain is well suited to be made into a play". One team supports this statement. The other team argues against it.

RELEVANCE TO OUR SITUATION IN EUROPE

Our play is set in the U.S.A but the situation of illegal immigrants is similar all over the world. What are the differences or similarities between Candido and America and the people who are trying to survive illegally in Europe.

If you have managed to read and work through all of this you will be very well prepared for our play. We hope you enjoy it. You can send us feedback about the play once you have seen it: mail@platypus-theater.de

THE TORTILLA CURTAIN

Based on the T. C. Boyle novel

Text: Peter Scollin, Director: Anja Scollin, Assistant Director: Fingal Pollock

Actors: Ona Nurkkala, Andrea Pani Laura, Ruben Bravo, Peter Scollin

Music und Sound: Leo Auri

Set: Konrad Schaller

Costumes: Imke Sturm

Props: Emily Scollin

Lights: Marius Adam

Video-Images: Jörg Metzner

We hope you enjoy our version of The Tortilla Curtain when you come to see it.

All the best,
The Platypus Team.



Here is a scene to try out in the classroom

CÁNDIDO WORKS FOR KYRA

Kyra and Cándido are standing apart, both facing the audience. They don't speak with each other. They speak their thoughts out loud.

Cándido I've been waiting here for hours.

Kyra They're all Mexicans.

Cándido I just want work.

Kyra There's too many of them.

Cándido There's no work in Mexico.

Kyra They're death for business.

Cándido In Mexico only the rich have enough to eat.

Kyra They breed like rabbits.

Cándido Is it a crime to want to work?

Kyra My customers see these people, it troubles their consciences.

Cándido These gringos have so much and we have so little.

Kyra Poverty exists but who wants to see it?

Cándido I hate the thought of America working.

Kyra It makes me angry.

Cándido It's me who should be working not America.

Kyra It's like an invasion.

Cándido I don't want to be begging.

Kyra Ironically, it was great for business at first. When the Hispanics moved into L.A. city, the rich people moved out, they bought houses here. I sold a lot of property in this area.

Cándido I'll do any job.

Kyra Now the Mexicans are living here too, in seedy little flats, forming ghettos, they're dragging the prices down.



- Cándido *plays seeing Lopez*
Ah, Senor Lopez, Buenos dias. Trabajo? Hoy Dia? Serio? Cinque dolares?
Yes of course I want a job. I can work just as long as you like Mr. Lopez. You know me, I'm a workhorse.
- Kyra Ah Mr. Lopez, this is the guy you organized, thank you
- Cándido The house has white walls, an orange tiled roof, a double garage, a swimming pool and there's a dog running around in the big garden.
- Kyra He's limping.
- Cándido I'm thinking about the house that América and I can have.
- Kyra His face is bruised.
- Cándido I don't need a house as big as this, just a shelter.
- Kyra Could this be the guy Delaney ran over?
- Cándido The lady's staring at me, I wonder what she's thinking.
- Kyra Suddenly I feel so empty.
- Cándido She's probably thinking she's better go and lock up her doors and windows.
- Kyra I can't talk to him. What would I say? Hey do you want to buy a house? Did you get hit by a car? My husband was driving that car.
- Cándido I'm digging new holes for the fence posts.
- Kyra The fence is not high enough.
- Cándido I love working.
- Kyra The coyotes can get over it, the snakes get under it. I don't want to lose another dog or cat.
- Cándido I'm earning money.
- Kyra I've got to check on the Da Rosa place, make sure everything's okay. *exit*
- Cándido I dig the holes and I make the fence. After this Mr. Lopez picks me up and takes me to a different house. I paint the walls. I finish at ten o'clock. I'm thinking of América, I love her. I want to buy her a present but the shops are closed. I walk home. I look up at the stars. I like living outside. It'll be okay until the rains come. I don't want to live in the city, it's dirty and dangerous.