



We're so glad to share this fun musical story with you and your family!
This guide is to help you make the most of your virtual experience.

Explore the story, the music, and the activities by clicking on the boxes below.

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Our Characters

Meet them in [Prezi!](#)



Bernardo - A Spanish brown bear and newest to the Zoo family (Tenor, or the higher male voice)

Polly - A Panda bear who loves to read and studies Spanish (Mezzo, or a middle-high female voice)

Marla - A Koala bear from Australia (Soprano, or the highest female voice)

Zookeeper/Griff - Zookeeper caring for the bears in Scene 1 and Griff the Grizzly in Scenes 4 and 5 (Baritone, or the lowest male voice)

Create your own comic strip!

Explore the summary below and have your child create their own comic strip version of the story! You will need: a sheet of paper with six boxes drawn on it or the worksheet that is linked to below.

Before you get started, here are a few suggestions to help support your young reader:

Emerging readers: Listen to the audio reading of the summary. Readers use their own toys as animal “puppets” to represent each of the characters in their own play that recalls the story. ([Audio reading available here](#))

Readers: Listen to audio and read the captions for the storyboard. Then draw stick figures in the six comic strip boxes to represent the captions. ([Worksheet here](#)) ([Audio here](#))

Confident readers: Read the text independently, match the correct captions to the six boxes, and draw stick figures in the boxes to represent each caption. ([Worksheet here](#))

Challenge: Read the text independently, write their own captions to summarize each box, and draw stick figures in the boxes to represent each caption. ([Worksheet here](#))

Explore the story on the next page!

Explore the story



Listen to the summary [here](#)

The Zookeeper enters the stage while feeding some of his favorite animals including Marla, the koala bear, and Polly the panda bear. He admits that while he loves his job as zookeeper, he's nervous about the grizzly exhibit next door. Grizzly bears are known to eat meat and he feels less than confident.

COMIC BOX 1 Caption: Meet the Zookeeper, Bernardo, and Polly

Polly the panda greets the audience and mentions her love of reading and learning. She hears singing next to her exhibit and meets Bernardo, a very special Spanish brown bear and newest exhibit to the zoo. In fact, the entire zoo is decorated to welcome the newest bear! Bernardo, who has just arrived at the zoo and doesn't speak much English, is nervous and feels lost. He misses his family.

COMIC BOX 2 Caption: Polly meets Bernardo. Bernardo feels lost and alone, Polly wants to help but they don't speak the same language.

Polly distracts him from his loneliness by playing games like charades, trying to understand her new friend. They come across a locked gate. Polly has always wondered what was on the other side of the zoo and her adventurous personality starts the bears on a search for the key and out of their exhibit. The two meet Marla, the zoo's koala bear. Koalas are actually marsupials—that means Marla isn't really a bear at all! Koala bears are generally sleepy and like to eat plants such as eucalyptus. She agrees to help search for the key.

COMIC BOX 3 Caption: Polly and Bernardo meet Marla. They all decide to look for the key to a locked gate.

Marla wonders aloud what could be on the other side of the locked gate and begins to name off scary creatures that could be in wait! Could it be lions, or tigers, or bears? OR tarantula spiders??? Bernardo hears the word "tarántula" and begins to sing an exciting Spanish folk song about tarantulas! According to Bernardo's song, a person must dance to save themselves from a spider bite. The three bears dance and sing of the "tarántula," forgetting momentarily about their search for the key. Marla spots the key that had been dropped in the bushes and holds it up declaring, "¡lave!"

COMIC BOX 4 Caption: The three friends dance to a song about tarantulas. They find the key.

The bears excitedly use the key to open the locked gate. Just then, they hear a scary, low sound and look up to see Griff the grizzly bear looking down on them! Griff chases the bears threatening to eat them! Bernardo has a brilliant idea and runs into the insect exhibit next door. He grabs a real tarantula spider and rushes to Griff. Griff, who is afraid of spiders, begins to run from the three bears. He finally stops and admits to being afraid of not just spiders, but the dark, thunder, and lightning as well!

COMIC BOX 5 Caption: Griff the grizzly chases the three friends. They use the spider to scare Griff.

Marla asks if being mean all of the time makes him lonely. Griff agrees that he pushes other bears and potential friends away because he's different than other grizzlies and doesn't want anyone to know he's actually very sensitive and not scary at all—he even likes writing poems! Polly assures Griff that everyone feels lonely and different sometimes. Bernardo understands how the grizzly feels especially since he's new to the zoo and so far from home. They all decide that though they may look different, be from other countries, and even speak different languages, they are all very much the same where it counts. Our differences make the world a beautiful place and kindness brings us all together. BEAR HUG! ¡ABRAZO DE OSO!

COMIC BOX 6 Caption: They find out Griff is not as scary as he seems, and they all become friends.

Discover the music

Music tells the story in an opera as much as the words do. This opera was created by using music written by many different composers and creating new lyrics that tell our story.

Explore the original music by some these wonderful Spanish opera -called *Zarzuela*-composers!

Make it fun for the whole family with a dance party!

As you listen to the music below, dance along! After the music ends, share with each other:

- why you chose to move the way you did
- how the music made you feel



(Click each sign to listen)



Learn about all of the opera's composers here:

Anna Young (1981–Present) became an opera educator after a career singing with opera companies all over the United States. This is her second opera, and it was first produced for the Nashville Opera. She lives in Atlanta with her husband David who is also an opera singer as well as a doctor. Anna used music written by other composers and combined it and added her own words to create the musical story you will hear! Be sure to check out the other composers.

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) was known for his ability to represent the very spirit of Spain in his music. He took piano lessons from his mother and later went to Madrid to continue studying piano and composition and cultivated his love for early Spanish church music, folk music, and native opera (zarzuela). He showed great creativity which made him an international star as a leading Spanish composer. Falla eventually retired to Granada, where in 1922 he organized a folk music festival (cante hondo) and even composed a puppet opera, *El retablo de Maese Pedro*! Though he never married or had children, his legacy lives on and his picture has even appeared on Spanish money!

Francisco Asenjo Barbieri (1823–1894) is thought of as one of the very best composers of zarzuela. He studied clarinet, piano, voice and composition at the Madrid Conservatory. He started his career by writing Italian opera, but he also founded La España Musical to promote native Spanish opera.

Gerónimo Giménez (1854–1923) was born in Seville and began his musical studies with his father. When he was twelve he played violin at the Teatro Principal, and by the time he was 17 he was already conducting opera and zarzuela performances in the city.

Ruperto Chapí (1851–1909) was involved in band music from an early age, both as a piccolo player as a composer and arranger by the time he was nine! His first zarzuela, *La estrella del bosque*, was written when he was only fifteen. The same year, he conducted the Alicante town band! He enjoyed a successful career until he was taken ill in 1909 during a production of one of his operas that he, himself was conducting. He died two days later.

Amadeo Vives (1871–1932) was born in Collbató, Spain and studied as a child with Felipe Pedrell, one of the most famous composers of 20th Century Spanish music. He wrote over 50 zarzuelas total by the time he died at the age of 67 in Madrid!

Get ready for the Q&A

Be sure to join us after the performance for the **live Q&A** with our artists!

During this time you will be able to ask them any questions you may have about singing, opera, costumes, sets, and more!

Not sure what to ask? Here are some suggestions!



Where did the costumes and background come from?

How long have you been singing or playing piano?



What else do you like to do besides sing?

Do you like the character you play in the opera?

