



# The Circuit

by Francisco Jiménez

## Teacher's Guide

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## Synopsis

### Chapter 1: Under the Wire

As a young boy, Francisco travels with his family from El Rancho Blanco to California to find a better life. He is excited and filled with many illusions about what life will be like in California, since he is told that it will be better than what they have at home. Along the way the kids are warned about the dangers of being caught by *la migra* (immigration officers) and have to adjust to a difficult life while waiting for work on the other side of the border.

### Chapter 2: Soledad (Loneliness)

Francisco's family finds temporary work as migrant workers picking cotton. While his mother, father, and brother are working in the fields, Francisco is forced to watch his baby brother Trampita. Francisco reflects on his loneliness and decides to help his family by picking cotton even though he is not supposed to. Unfortunately, the cotton he picks is not picked correctly as he weights the bolls with dirt clods. His father is angry because the entire family could have gotten fired because of the mishap. He is consoled by his older brother, Roberto, who listens to Francisco say that he just wants to pick cotton with his family and not be left alone.

### Chapter 3: Inside Out

Francisco goes to school for the first time with his brother Roberto. Roberto tells Francisco that school was difficult because he was always punished for not following directions. He did not follow directions because he did not understand English. Roberto uses broken English to enroll Francisco in the first grade. He meets his first grade teacher Mrs. Scalapino and then describes a strange world around him as he listens to the teacher and the principal speak to each other in English. His attention is immediately captured by a caterpillar that is residing in a jar in the classroom.

Francisco laments about not being able to speak Spanish at school, being poor, and confused about the world around him.

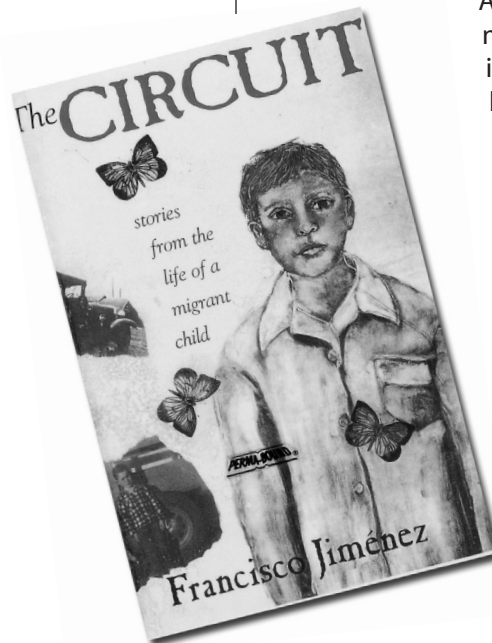
He is given a coat by Mr. Sims because the principal notices that he is cold. The coat is taken from him by Curtis, the most popular boy in the first grade, who claims that the coat was his, he had lost it at the beginning of the year. Shaken but not broken, Francisco returns to school the next week and is awarded a blue ribbon for his drawing of a butterfly. As he goes to the caterpillar's jar he notices that the caterpillar is gone and in its place is a butterfly. This cocoon brings Francisco great joy and excitement! Francisco ends up giving his award-winning drawing to Curtis after school because he likes it.

### Chapter 4: Mirade in Tent City

The family moves to rural Santa Maria to a town with no address, known locally as Tent City. Francisco describes it as a barren place full of strawberry farms and Japanese share-croppers. All of the families in Tent City are Mexican and many of them illegal immigrants like Francisco's family. During this time, Francisco's mom gives birth to his younger brother, Torito (Juan Manuel).

Francisco's family prepares for the arrival of the new baby as they make their humble surroundings suitable. Luxuries like a floor, to keep out snakes and other animals, made out of scrap from a local dump make the meager tent more agreeable for the baby. Because she was expecting within the month, Mamá is unable to work in the strawberry fields and takes on work cooking tacos for twenty farm workers, a laborious task that consumes a great deal of the day.

A sense of foreboding encroaches, as the baby becomes very sick with a fever that will not subside. Torito stops breathing several times as his condition worsens and the family is left with only the consolation of prayer and a local *curandera* (healer). The baby is rushed to the hospital when there seems to be no other recourse; the



family is forced to prepare for what will be an almost certain death. Miraculously the baby survives and the family attributes his recovery to a promise they made to the *Santo Niño de Atocha* (The baby Jesus).

## Chapter 5: El Angel de Oro (The Golden Angel)

### Dedicated to Francisco's friend Miguelito

During the rainy season, when it is impossible to pick grapes or cotton, the family is forced to dwell in their meager surroundings with only ghost stories and the neighbor's goldfish to pass their time. During these times Papá suffers from great anxiety caused by the lack of work and consoles himself with chain smoking and aspirin. Miguelito, a friend of Francisco's, helps enroll him in the third grade. They pass time together playing and make plans one day to go fishing. Miguelito made him a rod from a branch of a pepper bush and Francisco waits anxiously to see Miguelito the following day. When Miguelito does not show up, Francisco goes to his cabin and realizes that Miguelito and his family have moved away. Francisco rescues a small dying fish from a puddle by putting in a coffee can, and leaving it at the neighbor's cabin. The next day, when Francisco peers through his neighbor's window, he sees the little fish swimming with the goldfish. The salvation of the fish seems to ease Francisco's mind from the loss of his friend.

## Chapter 6: Christmas Gift

The family moves from rainy Corocan to a labor camp Francisco describes as an "army" camp. Before the move, another laborer and his expectant wife pass through trying to sell their meager possessions. When Papá sympathetically declines, saying "we're broke too," Francisco is crestfallen. The family moves into the labor camp a few days before Christmas. Francisco is desperately hoping for a ball of his own to play with this Christmas and is dreading receiving another bag of candy like the year before. Francisco wakes up early to find his mother weeping silently while wrapping presents. Unable to see what she is wrapping, he falls back asleep but later understands when he sees the disappointment on his sibling's faces as they open their bags of candy.

## Chapter 7: Death Forgiven

Francisco recounts the death of a family friend, El Perico the parrot. The bird was a pet that had become very close to the family and amused them by saying "*periquito bonito*" (pretty little bird) as Francisco had trained him to. The parrot became very attached to a black cat named Catarina which belonged to another undocumented couple. The parrot got upset one day when they came

over without the cat and threw a tantrum. Francisco's father, already frustrated by the impending lack of work, became irate and swung at the parrot with a broom, killing it instantly. Francisco and his mother screamed, Papá demanded they stop, and Francisco ran out of the garage to a storage shed where he prayed for the parrot and for his father. Francisco and his brothers buried the bird in a cigar box they found. He visited the grave daily, until the family moved back to Corocan to pick cotton.

## Chapter 8: Cotton Sack

In late October after grape season had ended, the family went back to picking cotton. Francisco describes how Papá earnestly mended the family's cotton-picking sacks during a rainy spell and their lifestyle in the cabin as fall turns to winter. By this point the family has grown by two as a brother, Ruben, and a sister, Rorra are introduced. Francisco describes how the *contratista* (contractor) drives around the camp in a red truck honking his horn, alerting the workers he's ready to begin picking after the cotton has dried. Papá has been irritable waiting for the chance to work, but that sound is like tonic to him. Francisco describes a day's back-breaking work picking cotton, how he helps his mother and father by alternating between their rows picking ahead of them, so that they could move up and down the rows together. Even the *contratista* marvels at how strong Roberto is to carry the family's sacks a half mile down the field to be weighed and then to climb the ladder and dump the contents in the trailer. By Thanksgiving, the family is looking for work among the surrounding farms. Papá is elated to find a field being picked; even though it is still freezing in the early morning, he starts in to work immediately. Francisco, eager to be a help on the break from school, jumps out of the car and begins picking too. Within minutes his hands and feet are numb, and he has to relieve himself. To warm his hands, he catches the urine, but the stinging sensation quickly turns to a feeling of needles poking him because of the cold, and feeling humiliated, he's unable to go on picking.

## Chapter 9: The Circuit

Picking strawberries again, Francisco and his family are preparing to leave Ito, the Japanese sharecropper. Dreading the uncertainty ahead, the family packs their belongings into *Carcachita* (Papá's used Plymouth) and move to Fresno where Mamá finds work from a man named Sullivan, who allows them to live for the season in a garage by his crop. On the way to work one day, Papá warns Roberto and Francisco to hide from a school bus so they do not get in trouble for not going to

school. Finally in November, Francisco returns to school but Roberto can not until the end of the cotton season. By this point Francisco is already in sixth grade, and he meets his favorite teacher, Mr. Lema, who teaches him English during recess. One day, he offers to teach Francisco how to play the trumpet. Francisco leaves school ecstatic to tell his parents that he will be learning to play the trumpet, but by the time he gets home he realizes that all of their belongings are packed and he is moving once again.

**Chapter 10: Learning the Game**

By this point it is the end Francisco's seventh grade year and he is miserable at the thought of working all summer. He calculates how long it will be before he returns to school, about four and a half months--- with 10 weeks picking strawberries in Santa Ana and the 8 weeks picking grapes and cotton in Fresno. A neighbor, Carlos, calls Francisco to join him in an impromptu game of kick the can, but refuses to let Manuelito play. One day at work with his father, Francisco witnesses a *bracero* (laborer) known as Don Gabriel (don is Spanish term of courtesy preceding a man's first name) refuse to till the field because he believes that tilling is an animal's job and he will not be relegated to the status of an animal. The contractor, Díaz, tells Gabriel he will be fired, and Gabriel pleads for his family's sake. The *contratista* grabs and pushes him to the ground, then kicks him out of spite. Angry but not injured, Gabriel jumps up and lunges at Díaz, who though frightened, later retaliates by having Gabriel deported. Francisco goes home and forces Carlos to let the younger boy play kick the can with them. The injustice of the situation upsets Francisco so much that Papá has to help him pick some berries to make up a crate, but he consoles him by saying, "What Díaz did was wrong, and someday he'll pay for it, if not in this life, in the next one...Gabriel did what he had to do."

**Chapter 11: To Have and to Hold**

In this chapter, Francisco continues to deal with his difficult life, and although he loses his most prized possessions, by the end he is both more mature and optimistic. The family heads for Orosi, a small rural community close to Fresno. The kids are filled with anticipation because they had never been there before. Francisco reveals his hobby of collecting coins. His coin collection includes two special pennies, one that is a 1910 Lincoln Head penny that belonged to his father, the other an 1865 Indian Head penny given to him in the fifth grade by a friend of his named Carl. He and Carl had become best friends, and just when Francisco was going to show him his collection, the family moved and they never saw

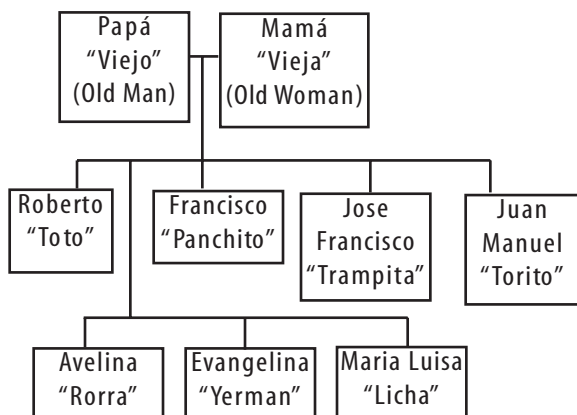
each other again. The pennies were not to last, as his little sister Rorra spent them on gumballs one day while he was in school.

Back in school in Orosi, and behind in English, Francisco tells of his adventures with Miss Martin who loved to teach English. Miss Martin used to give out stars and points for the kids that could look up a word the fastest and tell the class what it meant. Although Francisco never got a star, he got the idea of writing terms and their meanings in his *librito* (little notebook) so that he learns and memorizes a new one every day. Soon after school was over, Francisco begins writing all kinds of things he wants to learn and memorize in his notebook, until he realizes that he had memorized everything in the book. The family suffers a major catastrophe one day when the garage they were staying in catches fire. Much to Francisco's chagrin, his notebook with all of his information burned. A furious Francisco is comforted by his mother who reminds him that even though the book is gone all is not lost. Once Francisco realizes that he had memorized the whole book, he feels better.

**Chapter 12: Moving Still**

Papá is not working because his back had succumbed to the strain of years of strenuous labor. Immigration officers sweep through the camp and take many undocumented workers back to Mexico, and the Jimenez family is relieved that they escape the attention of the border patrol. Roberto, Francisco, and the family are well instructed on what to say if questioned by immigration about where they were born. The family leaves Corocan and returns to Santa Maria, where they usually spend eight months out of the year. Mr. Sims, the elementary school principal who had given Francisco a jacket in first grade, tries to help Roberto secure a year-round job at a shoe store in town, and Francisco studies math, English, and social studies in the eighth grade. Roberto does not get that job, but eventually Mr. Sims gives him a janitorial job at Main Street School. Francisco's teacher makes him memorize the part of the Declaration of Independence, and he dedicates a lot of his time to memorizing so that he can execute it perfectly. Sitting in his desk anxiously awaiting a turn to recite the text, a man in a green uniform interrupts the class and takes Francisco with him. He has been apprehended by Immigration, and they go to pick up Roberto at his new job.

## Jiménez Family Genealogy



## Author Sketch

Francisco Jiménez's life is a description of the American Dream. From humble beginnings as a poor migrant farmworker, Jimenez rose to Vice President for Academic Affairs at Santa Clara University. Jimenez's life is a testament to all of those who strive for a better life.



At the young age of four, Jimenez and his ever-growing family traveled across the border to work as migrant farm laborers in California. All Jimenez heard about as a child was that the other side of the border offered him many opportunities and a better life. After reading Jimenez's compilation of short stories, *The Circuit* (1997), one can see that the better life that awaited his family in the United States was going to take a while to come to fruition. Struggling as migrant farmworkers, the author and his family moved around looking for back-breaking work that would pay the family the meager wage of \$15-\$20 a day. Jimenez recounts the few pleasures and many arduous difficulties that the family endured as they made the circuit. Readers learn through Jimenez's autobiography, *Breaking Through* (2001), how he overcame the limitations of poverty and difficulties immigrants face.

Equally powerful and compelling, both books have been translated in several languages. Other works by the author including *La Mariposa*, and *The Christmas Gift (El Regalo)*, both children's books, have also won awards.

Jimenez is currently a professor at Santa Clara University in the department of Modern Languages, and Director of Ethnic Studies. He sits on several boards in the state of California, and in 2002 Dr. Jimenez was named Professor of the Year by CASE and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *Harvest of Hope: The Life of a Migrant Child* will soon be published by the University of New Mexico Press.

## Timeline

Note: It is difficult to construct a timeline because the book is a series of interconnected short stories. Included is a list of historical dates of significance to migrant workers and Mexican-Americans and a list of places Francisco lived, what they did there, and notable events that occurred while they were there.

<b>1927</b>	Cesar Chavez is born.
<b>1929</b>	Great Depression begins.
<b>1942</b>	Francisco Jimenez is born in El Rancho Blanco, a Mexican village just a few miles north of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco.
<b>1945</b>	WWII ends.
<b>1946-1956</b>	The Jimenez family crosses the border for the first time, and moves from community to community harvesting crops.
<b>Guadalupe, CA</b>	strawberries
<b>Corcoran, CA</b>	cotton
<b>Tent City</b>	Sheehy Strawberry farms 10 miles east of Santa Maria, CA Torito is born. Francisco starts school.
<b>Corcoran</b>	cotton Francisco saves the fish in the puddles
<b>Mr. Jacobson's Vineyard (Fresno)</b>	grapes <i>El Perico</i> is killed.
<b>Corocan</b>	cotton
<b>Ito's Strawberries</b>	(Fresno)
<b>Santa Maria</b>	strawberries
<b>Bonetti Ranch</b>	Francisco is in Miss Martin's class where he grows attached to his <i>librito</i>
<b>Orosi, CA</b>	grapes Francisco's penny collection spent by his sister. Fire destroys the garage the family lives in and Francisco's <i>librito</i> .
<b>San Joaquin Valley</b>	grapes
<b>Bonetti Ranch</b>	Francisco is in 8th grade, Roberto in 10th and gets a job. Jiménez family is deported.

- 1967** Rodolfo Gonzalez publishes the poem *Yo Soy Joaquin* stressing the importance of Mexican cultural awareness. Cesar Chavez organizes a nation-wide boycott of companies that exploit migrant farm workers.
- 1972** Francisco becomes a teacher in Santa Clara.
- 1975** California passes a law calling for collective bargaining rights for migrant workers.
- 1993** Cesar Chavez dies.
- 1999** *The Circuit* is published.
- 2000** *The Christmas Gift* and *La Mariposa* are published.
- 2001** *Breaking Through* is published.
- 2002** Spanish editions of both *The Circuit* and *Breaking Through* are published.

## Critic's Corner

Roger Sutton mentions in his review of Francisco Jimenez's *The Circuit* that he never even heard of Jimenez or the book, and he should have. He makes his confession and justifies it by mentioning that Jimenez is primarily a children's author. This is what makes Jimenez's various awards and accomplishments in literature (not to mention his remarkable life) so significant. Many critics note that it is rare for a children's book of short stories to have such broad appeal to vastly diverse audiences. *The Circuit* is written through the eyes of a child and speaks to the dreamer in all of us.

Jimenez's work offers hope to those trapped in the circuit and to those who lack faith in a better tomorrow. Duly so, Francisco Jimenez has won several awards including: *The Boston-Horn Book Award for Fiction*, Booklist Editor's Choice, America's Award Winner for Children's and Young adult Literature, Jane Addams Children's Honor Book, California Association's John and Patricia Beatty Award, New York Library's Book for the Teen-Age 1999, American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, and the Los Angeles Public Library FOCAL Award. Jimenez has also won awards for his other titles and the Volvo For Life Award.

## Other Works By The Author

- The Christmas Gift*, 2000  
*La Mariposa*, 2000  
*Breaking Through*, 2001  
*Senderos Fronterizos*, 2002  
*Cajas de Carton*, 2002

## Bibliography

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- Huerta, Jorge, ed. *Necessary Theater: Six Plays About the Chicano Experience*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1989.
- <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1983/5/83.05.06.x.html>
- Sutton, Roger. "On *The Circuit*," *The Horn Book Magazine* (Sept-Oct 1998).
- [www.scu.edu/fjimenez/](http://www.scu.edu/fjimenez/)

## Related Reading

- Gary Soto, *Buried Onions, Taking Sides, and Baseball in April and other Stories*
- Pam Muñoz Ryan, *Esperanza Rising*
- Esmeralda Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*
- Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*
- Bev Atkin, *Voices From The Field: Children of Migrant Farm Workers Tell Their Story*
- Victor Martinez, *Parrot In The Oven: Mi Vida*
- Cynthia Kadohata, *Kira-Kira*
- An Na, *A Step From Heaven*
- Lori Carlson, *Cool Salsa*
- Angela Johnson, *The First Part Last*
- Tomas Rivera, . . . *And The Earth Did Not Part*
- Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me, Ultima*
- John Steinbeck, *Tortilla Flat* and *The Grapes of Wrath*
- Elva Treviño Hart, *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child*
- Helena Maria Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus*
- Jose Antonio Villarreal, *Pocho*
- Victor Villaseñor, *Burro Genius*

## General Objectives

1. To understand the challenges faced by many people who immigrate to the United States
2. To explore life in poverty
3. To analyze the importance of education
4. To explain the possible effects of constant moving on a family
5. To describe the economic conditions that takes advantage of low skill workers
6. To evaluate the importance of family in the lives of children
7. To analyze the meaning of the "American Dream" and discuss whether it still exists
8. Discuss the importance of hope in people's lives
9. To identify cities on the west coast, particularly in California
10. To analyze the influence culture has on people's economic perspective

## Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the reasons why the Jimenez family leaves Mexico to come to the United States
2. To explain the significance of the title
3. To account for the deep sense of pride that Gabriel felt when he refused to pull the plow
4. To discuss why the simplest presents are the most heart-felt
5. To contrast the children's profound respect for their parents with that of an average American family
6. To analyze the effects of religion and superstition on the Jiménez family
7. To evaluate the symbolism of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly
8. To understand what causes Francisco's feelings of loneliness
9. To summarize the significance of the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and Francisco and his family being deported at the end of the book
10. To infer what will happen in the sequel *Breaking Through* based on what we know about the character of Francisco and his family

## Literary Terms And Applications

For a better understanding of Jimenez's style, present the following terms and applications to the book:

**Short Story:** a form of writing different from a novel in that the characters in a novel are revealed as a result of actions and in the short story the true nature of the character is revealed through their actions. Each "chapter" in *The Circuit*, for example, intertwine to give the reader an impression of the character of the Jimenez family and relies more on themes than plot to get the essential message across.

**Sociological Criticism:** a study of literature that studies the dynamics of a given society. Jimenez's work raises questions as to the exploitation of workers in the migrant circuit as well as ethical issues involving the treatment of immigrants and racial attitudes towards Mexicans/Chicanos specifically.

## The Importance of Setting

From their home in El Rancho Blanco, Mexico the Jiménez family takes the train from Guadalajara to Mexicali, a border town to begin their emigration. Although Papá has a valid visa, the rest of the family do not, so they sneak across the border at night outside of town, where they are met by a woman who drives them to Guadalupe, California to begin working as migrant laborers. Thus begins the family's circuit, from Corcoran, California to Tent City, to Fresno, to Santa Maria, to Orosi, to Corocan again. Such was life growing up in the migrant circuit where the author and his family would move regularly in search of work, better living conditions, all the while trying to evade *la migra*. Francisco goes from being angry and lonely because he cannot pick cotton with his parents to counting down until the time of year he can go back to school.

From the tents in Tent City, to Mr. Jacobson's dilapidated garage, Francisco is given few joys in life and each seems to be unfairly taken away: his pet parrot his father kills in a fit of frustration, the jacket given to him by a teacher, is torn and taken away by another student who accuses him of stealing it, highly regarded pennies from his collection are innocently spent on candy by his little sister; his notebook, his *librito*, which contains everything he wants to learn and remember is consumed in a fire, friends that come and go, and Christmases with few presents are among his personal losses. The culmination of this pattern is in Santa Maria when Francisco and his family are deported just as his brother Roberto finds a permanent job and Francisco finds satisfaction in school.



According to Wikipedia, in the United States, 60% of illegal aliens are illegal border crossers, while 40% are visa overstayers. Many Mexican and Central American immigrants cross the border illegally with the aid of smugglers in order to work, most individually supporting their families who remain in their home countries. In fewer cases, whole families attempt the dangerous journey, but as in the case of the four youngest children of the Jiménez family, the children born in the United States automatically have citizenship. The issues of border security and illegal immigration are contentious; currently the U.S. Congress is debating how to reform immigration laws to address the problems. While immigrants contribute to the economy by working in mostly low-wage, difficult or dirty jobs, opponents claim immigrants place an undue burden on social systems, such as public schools, healthcare, etc.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about immigration, migrant workers in the U.S., Chicano literature, poverty, superstitions, migrant education, contributions of Mexican-American immigrants to the United States, and Mexican culture consult these sources:

### Articles

Borjas, George J. "The Economics of Immigration," *Journal of Economic Literature* (December 1994): 1667-1717.

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Bryan R. Roberts, Reanne Frank, Fernando Lozano-Ascencio. "Transnational Migrant Communities and Mexican Migration to the US," Volume 22, Number 2 *Routledge*: March 1, 1999

"Immigrant War Heroes" *Wall Street Journal-Eastern Edition* (11 November 1996): A16.

Palerm JV. "A Season in the Life of a Migrant Farm Worker in California." *Western Journal of Medicine*. 1992 Sep;157(3):362-366.

## Books

*Hispanic American Literature*, McGraw Hill.

*La Chicana: The Mexican American Woman*, University of Chicago Press.

*The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*, University of Minnesota Press.

*To Be American*, New York University Press.

## CD

*Grandes Corridos*, Sony Discos Inc.

## Internet

Corridos

[http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score\\_lessons/corridos/](http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/corridos/)

## Plays

*A Solid Home*, Elena Garro

*El Jardín*, Carlos Morton

*La Raza Pura*, Rubén Sierra

*Los Vendidos*, Luis M. Valdez

## Video

*El Norte*

*A Day without Mexicans*

*500 Nations*

*Lo Que Importa es Vivir*

*The Children of Sanchez*

## Media Versions

### Audiocassette

*The Circuit*, Audio Bookshelf, 2000

### CD

*The Circuit*, Audio Bookshelf, 2000

## Themes and Motifs

The following is a list of the central ideas and situations that make *The Circuit* come to life.

### Themes

- hope
- faith
- hard work
- perseverance
- loyalty
- opportunity
- migrant labor
- Mexican culture

### Motifs

- breaking language barriers
- surviving in poverty
- the importance of education
- family values

## Meaning Study

Below are important words, phrases, and sentences from the book. Explain each in context. The name of the story and the page number will guide your search when you go back to re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. "When can we start work?" Papá asked rubbing his hands. (Under the Wire, p. 6)  
*(Jimenez describes the scene in which his family arrives full of hope in Guadalupe, a town close to a migrant labor tent camp. The trip across the border has gone relatively smoothly thus far, and the family has been lucky to receive one of the last tents on the strawberry farm. Francisco's father is excited to work and when he asks when they can start, he is disappointed with the answer that work won't come for two weeks. It is the first of many labor-related setbacks the family will endure in the book. The family has to survive eating wild vegetables and animals until picking begins.)*
2. After checking on Trampita to make sure he was still asleep, I quietly walked over to the row nearest the car and picked cotton for the first time. (Soledad, p. 11)  
*(As a young boy, Francisco is in charge of watching Trampita, his little brother, in the car while his parents and older brother work in the field. Frustrated because he can not help pick and lonely because he is left alone with his little brother all day, Francisco goes out to help his family by picking cotton that is near the car. He does not realize that he is not picking the cotton correctly. Excited to show his family what he has done, he shows his*



*father the pile of cotton he has picked. His father is initially proud, but when he inspects Francisco's pile, he realizes that there is dirt in the cotton and that it is not acceptable. He yells at his son for picking the cotton incorrectly and tells him that they could get fired for his actions. Roberto is left to console Francisco with a hug and a nod.)*

3. But when I spoke with Arthur in Spanish and Miss Scalapino heard me, she said "NO!" with body and soul. (Inside Out, p. 19)

*(Jimenez is having a good time with a friend and for one of the first times in school he feels normal. Miss Scalapino would not allow them to speak Spanish as she insists they only speak English. Jimenez goes on to explain the frustration of not being able to be himself and speak in his own language. A powerful example is when he is looking at a book about something that he is interested in (butterflies) and he glances at the pages of the book lost as to what the words mean.)*

4. Mama always prayed to him when one of us got sick because she said the Holy Child Jesus took care of poor and sick people, especially children. (Miracle In Tent City, p. 41)

*(This passage shows the deep faith and superstition of the Jimenez family and Chicano culture as a whole. The newest baby in the family, Torito, is very sick and the family goes through a variety of treatment options to heal the baby ranging from curanderas, to prayers, to finally taking the baby to the hospital. The hospital was the last resort because of fears of not having enough money and being deported. When the baby is finally taken to the hospita, the doctor gives a grim prognosis and predicts that the baby will not survive. Due to the faith of the family and the strength of the baby, Torito miraculously survives.)*

5. The goldfish swam peacefully alongside the little gray fish. I sighed and smiled to myself. (El Angelito de Oro, p. 50)

*(Francisco spends a lot of his time gazing through the window at a little goldfish that belongs to his neighbor. His mother calls the fish the "little golden angel". The image of the golden angel stays in his head as his father complains about the lack of work in Corcoran due to the rain. The rain got so bad that eventually the creek in town flooded leaving little fish in puddles throughout the neighborhood. Francisco runs around desperately trying to save all of the fish he can by dumping them back into the creek as the sun begins to dry the puddles. The last fish Francisco sees is the one he leaves at the door of his neighbor who owns the goldfish. Satisfied and happy that the fish has been saved, Francisco gazes at it swimming next to the goldfish.)*

6. Papa who was sitting next to her on the mattress

lifted its corner and pulled out from underneath the white embroidered handkerchief. He tenderly handed it to Mamá, saying "Feliz Navidad, vieja."

(Christmas Gift, p. 56)

*(It is Christmas time and Francisco is dreaming of getting a ball of his own to play with. He is worried that he and his brothers will only get a bag of candy like every Christmas. Another poor couple came by trying to sell a handkerchief and a wallet. Francisco's father felt bad because he could not help the couple out. Another rainy cotton season had taken its toll on many of the poor migrant families. Francisco wakes up one night and sees Mamá wrapping presents. His mother is crying because she can't provide better things for her family. When the children are opening their gifts, Francisco's father pulls out the handkerchief that he secretly bought from the other poor couple. This passage is a heartbreaking testament to the struggles the poor must endure and how there is always that consummate hope for better times to come, no matter how bleak the situation appears.)*

7. The shouting, screaming, and crying from our home chased me. I wanted to escape, to die. I finally reached the shed, dragged myself in, and closed the door behind me. It was dark and quiet. I fell on my knees and prayed and prayed for *El Perico*. (A Death Forgiven, p. 59-60)

*(Francisco's pet parrot is killed one day by his father in a fit of rage because the parrot would not be quiet. The family is hysterical and Francisco's father screams at all of them. Francisco runs to a shed where he prays for the bird and eventually prays for his father. He eventually realizes that his father did not mean to kill the parrot.)*

8. The workers, warming themselves by the fire were too far away to see me. I cupped my left hand and caught the warm, yellowish stream in it and rubbed my hands together. (Cotton Sack, p. 72)

*(Francisco once again is attempting to prove that he is old enough for his own cotton sack. This time, the challenge he faces is the extreme cold. He tries to make it as long as he can in the fields with his father and Roberto. His body quickly succumbs to the cold as his extremities begin turning purple, and he urinates on his hands to warm them, not realizing that the cuts on his hands will sting. Dejectedly he walked over to his father who saw what he had done, and sent him to stand by the fire to keep warm. Once again Francisco feels the disappointment of not being able to work to help out his family.)*

9. "In my country, oxen pull plows, not men." (Learning The Game, p. 91)

*(Gabriel and Francisco are loaned to another sharecropper by Ito as the season winds down. Gabriel is outraged when the boss wants him pull the plow, and he refuses because he does not want to be treated like an animal. In response to the quote*

above, the boss tells Gabriel that this is not his country and he is fired for being insubordinate. The passage is significant because it depicts the tension between the workers even though they are of the same race. It also shows how the integrity of a man is more important than anything else and should never be compromised regardless of the consequence.)

10. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness..." I checked the text in my note pad to make sure I had not forgotten anything. (Moving Still, p. 133-134)

(Francisco is working alongside Roberto, cleaning his old elementary school, memorizing the Declaration of Independence for recitation the next day in class. While the teacher takes attendance, the class is interrupted by the principal and a man from Immigration. Francisco and his family were being deported, just as they had begun to establish some sense of permanence to their lives.)

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. Be prepared to use passages from the book to defend your answer. There is not always a right answer, as long as you can logically defend it with textual evidence, your answer will be correct.

### Motivation

1. Why does Francisco begin to enjoy school and look forward to the times of the year where he can enroll?  
(At first Francisco does not like school because it is so alien to him, struggling against the insurmountable language barrier. Slowly and although few in number, he makes friends that help make the experience more rewarding. Even more than friends, his teachers play an essential role in his increasing desire to study. Miss Scalapino, in the first grade, gives him a first place ribbon for his drawing of a butterfly. Miss Martin inspired him to write down all of the new English words he was learning. Mr. Lema helped him improve his reading skills over recess and offered to teach him how to play the trumpet. Mr. Milo boosted his confidence by teaching him math and helping him excel in it. Francisco enjoyed school so much that he became a teacher himself.)

### Theme

2. Why is hope a central theme?  
(Hope is a central theme in the book because the family never gives up despite the setbacks life presents them with. In "To Have And To Hold," we see Francisco lose both his penny collec-

tion and his treasured notebook which was a collection of all of his collective knowledge and thoughts. In both instances the initial feeling of helplessness is diminished and replaced by hope through his mother's encouragement. He closes the story by saying all was not lost. Time and again when Francisco's father is frustrated with work, or lack thereof, he manages to bounce back and find another option. In "The Christmas Gift" we see Francisco's mother talk hopefully when, in despair, she says it can not always be like this, referring to their lack of money. Hope is what brings the Jiménez family into the circuit, and it is what propels Francisco to break through these stories and in the sequel.)

### Symbolism

3. What is the symbolism in the title *The Circuit*?  
(Like a circuit of electricity this book flows together continuously. Twelve independent stories flow together as if it were a novel: the family is forced to endure moving again and again; as soon as things start going well for Francisco he suffers a setback; as soon as Francisco makes a friend, they are separated by one of them moving; as soon as he starts doing well in school he has to go back to work; as soon as things start looking up, the family has another child; Roberto finds a job, and then they are all deported; as they move from cotton to strawberries, to grapes, to cotton again, the family keeps moving along the circuit. The book leaves the reader with the impression that they will never break the circuit.)

### Character Responses

4. How does Francisco respond to the various difficulties he faces throughout the book?  
(Francisco responds to setbacks consistently throughout the stories, usually with a deep sense of faith and forgiveness. A good example is when his parrot is killed by his father; he runs from the immediate situation and reflects on it through prayer, praying for both the soul of the parrot and for his father. Francisco's deep sense of reflection is also apparent when he heeds his mother's words and realizes that just because his notebook was lost, the information in it was not because he carried it with him in his mind. The encouragement from his mother is very important to the way he reacts to things. Because his mother called the goldfish across the street an "angel," he felt pity for all of the little gray fish that were washed out of the stream during the storm and he rushed to save them all. After Curtis takes his jacket and he fights with him at school, by the end of the story, Francisco has forgiven him and gives him the drawing of the butterfly for which he won his first award.)

### Conflict

5. How does Mr. Diaz's attitude towards Gabriel reveal the tension that can arise between people, even of the same racial background, in a harsh world?

*(The author gives the impression that Diaz thinks he is better than all of the other workers because he runs the fields. When Diaz orders Gabriel to pull the plow, Gabriel is outraged. He refuses politely, but Diaz does not respond in kind. Gabriel is pushed to the ground, kicked and then fired despite Gabriel's pleas. The next day we learn that Gabriel has been deported because of Diaz's anger. Francisco cannot stop thinking about what happened but then learns from it when he stands up to Carlos, insisting that Manuelito be allowed to play kick the can. Out of these conflicts, Francisco learns that he can stand up for what is right and bear the consequences.)*

**Character**

6. What is the role of Francisco's oldest brother, Roberto, in the Jiménez family?  
*(Roberto plays an important role in the book for several reasons. First, he is the oldest male in a Mexican family, which gives him a very strict set of responsibilities. We see Roberto throughout the book treated as an adult although he is only a few years older than Francisco. He is expected to work as hard as his father, and oftentimes, he is the one that consoles the children as much as his mother. He serves as a bridge between the adults and the children. He is the patient one when his parents can't take it anymore and is always there for Francisco, to console and explain things. School is never much of a priority to Roberto, as he seems much more willing to accept his fate as a worker and provider. It is hard not to feel a sense of pity for him when he is proud to become a janitor at a local school, for so brief a time.)*

**Structure**

7. Why is this book written as a series of short stories, rather than in a novel format?  
*(The short story naturally lends itself to the rich tradition of Chicano storytelling. Lessons about every aspect of life from love to superstitions, to heroes, and politics have been passed down orally among the Chicano people for centuries. This short story collection is a perfect compliment to the Chicano oral tradition because it is comprised of what appears to be twelve separate stories that become one. The book would not be as effective as a novel because of the way the characters are revealed to the reader. We get a better sense of the nature of a character from a short story as opposed to the novel which presents character development as a result of actions throughout the story.)*

**Comparative Literature**

8. How does *The Circuit* compare to other books about migrant or immigrant families?  
*(The Circuit is similar to other books about immigrant families in that the struggles they face are almost universal. In Esmeralda Santiago's When I Was Puerto Rican, Esmeralda's family had to move from rural Macun to urban*

*Santurce and then to New York, where several more moves await them. The Santiago family, as well, is forced to deal with a cultural and language barrier as they endured the challenges of life. In both instances the authors broke through the cycle of poverty and became highly educated and successful people. Julia Alvarez's How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent recounts the story of sisters fleeing the Dominican Republic to New York City. Very different from The Circuit, it is written with humor and much conflict within the family, but with the same connection and loyalty of Latino families throughout the world. Other stories tend to offer more of a historical or political perspective, but most include a tremendous sense of loyalty to family which places this institution above everything else. The characters are always rich and alive, introspective, and faithful.)*

**Interpretation**

9. Why do you think Jiménez ends the book with the family getting deported?  
*(It is hard to see Francisco in the INS officer's car on the way to pick up Roberto from work. It leaves the reader feeling like all hope is lost and that the family is finally defeated. The author does this to leave the reader wanting to know more and what happens next. Through the courageous nature of the family (and the fact that there is a sequel) however, we can guess that they will not be kept down for long. The ending also does an excellent job of reinforcing the suffering and the challenges the family was forced to endure.)*

**Setting**

10. How do the various places Francisco is forced to live in contribute to the dynamics of the Jiménez family?  
*(Close quarters will certainly bring people together. Imagine ten people living together in a broken-down garage, a tent, or a car. When Francisco's mother was pregnant, Francisco's father made a floor to cover up the dirt floor of their dwelling out of supplies they found in a junk yard. The poverty and the meager surroundings influence the family profoundly. Everyone has their job to do to keep the family going, and the children are forced to grow up quickly. In one part of the book Francisco goes to visit his friend Carl to see his penny collection and it is the first time he is ever inside a house. Francisco recalls that the carpet felt like "a sack of cotton under his feet," the color of the light in the house, and heating which he was never accustomed to. It is clear that the dwellings the Jiménez family lived in motivated Francisco to ultimately break the circuit.)*

**How Language Works**

In *The Circuit* Francisco Jimenez writes in a combination of Spanish and English to give the reader a sense of a native culture being combined with another. Here are just a few examples:

1. Francisco describing his father every time he talked about California: (Chap. 1, p. 1)  
"Once we cross *la frontera*, we'll make a good living in California."
2. Francisco speaking with Arturo and Curtis before he gives Curtis the drawing of a butterfly: (Chap. 3, p. 26)  
"Como se dice 'es tuyo' en inglés?" I asked.  
"It's yours," answered Arthur.  
"It's yours," I repeated, handing the drawing to Curtis.
3. Francisco's mother asking Roberto and him to clean and cook the beans, when their mother is tired and worried sick over Torito's illness: (Chap 4., p. 35)  
"That's all we have tonight, she said apologetically, "frijoles de la olla. I hope the boarder's won't mind."
4. Francisco's father deciding to risk immigration, and take the baby to the hospital: (Chap. 4, p. 37)  
Papá quickly picked up Torito, wrapped him in a blanket, and yelled "*Vieja, vámonos al hospital!*" He and Mamá ran out and took off in the *Carcachita*.
5. Mama talking to a poor pregnant couple trying to sell them a handkerchief and a wallet, saying, "May God bless you: (Chap. 6, p. 53)  
"It's beautiful," Mama said, gently placing her hand on the woman's fragile shoulder, "*Qué Dios los bendiga*," she added.
6. Francisco talking about his little notebook: (Chap. 11, p. 103)  
I took my *librito* with me wherever I went.

## Across The Curriculum

### Religion

1. Explain why the Virgin of Guadalupe is so significant to Catholics, especially those of Mexican origin.
2. Draw parallels between Latino superstitions and mysticism with traditional Roman Catholic doctrine, e.g., *curanderos*, *Santeria*, etc.

### Math And Computers

1. Using desktop publishing software, create a website or a newsletter that uses these terms and ideas from the book: *contratistas*, labor camps, migrant workers, *la frontera*, immigration, *la migra*, sharecropper, vineyard, Fresno, Corcoran, Orsi,

Santa Maria, *Virgen de Guadalupe*, *Carcachita*, *olla*, the circuit, the Mexican revolution, penny collections, teachers, caterpillars, butterflies.

2. Find a website that lists the average cost of items from the 1940s and '50s and calculate how and what you would buy to support a family of ten.
3. Using a map of California and Mexico, calculate approximately how many miles the family traveled in the book.

### Research

1. Outline various methods and programs that are available to educate migrant children and other social services available to migrant families.
2. Create a list of successful people that came from humble and meager beginnings. Compare and contrast their stories and explain how each one achieved success.
3. Summarize living conditions in Mexico and other developing nations and compare the poverty there to poverty in the United States.

### Journalism

1. Compile a list of important questions you would ask Francisco Jiménez in an interview and write a feature article for a newspaper that would highlight the life of Mr. Jiménez.
2. Investigate information about migrant workers in the U.S. and write a cover story about the trials and tribulations they must endure.

### Sociology and Economics

1. Create a poster that highlights reasons and behaviors that contribute to the poverty of migrant workers.
2. Compare factors that contribute to living standards among the middle class and the poor. Create a table that highlights your findings.

### Geography

1. Using map software, create a map that traces the movement of migrant workers within and out of the U.S.

### History

1. Write a brief report on the life of Cesar Chavez and how it has influenced the lives of migrant families like Francisco's.

2. Create a slide presentation that explains the history of migrant labor in the U.S. or other parts of the world.
3. Compare sharecroppers during Reconstruction after the U.S. Civil War to Ito the Japanese sharecropper after World War II.

#### Law

1. Research the legal procedures for becoming a U.S. citizen and make a pamphlet that highlights the process.
2. Discuss or debate a legal issue or problem with immigration in the U.S. today. Use legal precedents and court cases to support your argument.

#### Cinema

1. Imagine that you are a director casting a film version of *The Circuit*. Make a list of actors you would like to play each role.
2. Read or see one of the plays listed in the Cross-Curricular Sources section of the teacher's guide and write a review of how it compares to *The Circuit*.

#### Science and Health

1. Research the health risks people in poverty and migrant workers face because of their socio-economic status.
2. Investigate the sexual behaviors of migrant workers and people in poverty, explaining what risks are posed, and how it affects the family size and structure.
3. Study the process in which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly and write a brief paper explaining it.
4. Discuss the way diseases are spread by people who live without running water or plumbing and the effect on global health.

#### Language

1. Choose a line from each short story that you feel contains the central idea of each story and explain it in context.
2. In a group, re-create a short story from the book and act it out in class. Include a transcript for your play.
3. Create a Spanish-English dictionary of words you feel are important for newcomers to the U.S. to know.

#### Art, Costume Design, And Music

1. Create a puppet of an important character in the book and write a brief biography of the person.
2. Draw a picture that depicts the meanings of one of the short stories from the book. Write a short summary of your work.
3. Listen to music that Mexican migrant workers would listen to, translate the lyrics, and explain their meanings to the class.

#### Education

1. Write a lesson plan that explains the literary devices in the book and present it to the class. Include a short activity and an assessment.

#### Literature

1. Suggest books from your childhood that you think Francisco would have enjoyed. Include beginner's books, adventure stories, biographies, and classic novels.
2. Read aloud from other books about immigrant families like: *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, *Tortilla Flats*, *Burro Genius*, and *Buried Onions*.
3. Write a poem that summarizes the story of the Jimenez family or an aspect from the book which you found interesting.

### Alternate Assessment

1. Create a chart titled *The Circuit* that illustrates the different places the family lived, and what work they did there. Use pictures from the Internet or a magazine to show the family and the product they were picking from the field.
2. Make a list of all the products we enjoy today that come from the produce migrant workers pick. Create a poster that shows all of the steps involved for those items to go from field to table.
3. Compose a short story about an event in your childhood that has influenced your life today and then re-read one of the stories from the book so that you can get an idea of the style to employ in your work.
4. List all of Francisco's teachers and what they did to become memorable in Francisco's life. How did each one influence him? Was it positive or negative? Compare one of the teachers he had to one you have had or have currently.

## Vocabulary

Complete each of the following sentences with the words listed below.

*Carcachita*  
burlap  
furrows  
tone

*corridos*  
*la bola*  
Morelos  
repenting

*El Perico*  
*contratista*  
Jalisco  
migrant

sharecroppers  
chanting  
prongs  
*librito*

timidly  
mound  
void  
*coche*

1. "Si, Papá," I answered \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I pretended to be a Mexican movie star, like Jorge Negrete or Pedro Infante, riding a horse and singing \_\_\_\_\_ we so often heard on the car radio.
3. Every three days, he went into town to buy a large block of ice, which he wrapped in \_\_\_\_\_ and placed inside of a hole he dug in the ground by the entrance of our tent.
4. I buried \_\_\_\_\_ in a cigar box we found in Mr. Jacobson's garbage can.
5. Ito, the strawberry \_\_\_\_\_ did not smile. It was natural.
6. That cold, early morning, Papa, parked the \_\_\_\_\_, our old jalopy, at one end of the cotton field.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ told Papa that we could pick cotton for other ranchers until *la bola* would start, which was in two or three weeks.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ was messy and dirty. It involved harvesting everything left over on the plants after the first picking, including cotton bulbs, shells, and leaves.
9. Then in an angry \_\_\_\_\_ of voice he added, "Diaz is a crook, he overcharges for everything."
10. I hurried inside when I heard Dona Maria \_\_\_\_\_ next door.
11. "Here, tie this around your waist. I want you to till the \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Roberto made a small cross from sticks and laid it on the \_\_\_\_\_.
13. He was as proud of being from the state of \_\_\_\_\_ as my father was about being from Jalisco.
14. The shells' sharp \_\_\_\_\_ scratched my hands like cat's claws and, sometimes, dug into the corners of my fingernails and made them bleed.
15. I took my \_\_\_\_\_ with me wherever I went.

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Identification (20 points)

Identify the following characters.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. fights Francisco over a jacket
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. will not let Manuelito play kick the can
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. was fired by Mr. Diaz
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. got a job as a janitor
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. was very sick in Tent City
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. had a penny collection that Francisco was in awe of
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. was killed by Papá
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. often chain smoked when he was worried
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. the Japanese sharecropper
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. the owner of a vineyard

### True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T or F.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Francisco drops out of school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Papá was an alcoholic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Mamá worked in the fields, too.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The *Carcachita* was a black Plymouth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mr. Díaz was a nice man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Curtis and Francisco never reconciled their differences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Miguel wanted to go fishing with Francisco.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. *El Perico's* best friend was a black cat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Francisco preferred math to government.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Santa Maria was both Roberto's and Francisco's favorite place of to live, work and go to school.

## Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

### Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Name the character who speaks each of the following lines. Under it, write the significance of the line.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Let's stay in the barn tonight. Tomorrow we'll look for another place.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. "But last year I picked without a sack!"

---

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. "Come on Panchito, we are starting the game."

---

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. "Please God, don't take him away, please."

---

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. "*periquito bonito*"

---

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two of the following and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe Tent City.
2. Explain why Francisco liked Mr. Lema so much.
3. Discuss how Mr. Sims helps Roberto get a job.
4. Account for possible reasons why the Jiménez family got deported.
5. Summarize the characteristics of Francisco's relationships with his friends.



## Comprehension Test B

### Part 1: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Choose the best answer to each of the questions below. Place the letter of your response in the blank to the left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Because of his teacher, Francisco:
- drops out
  - spends more time studying
  - writes all new words in a little notebook
  - decides to go to college
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Rorra is
- Francisco's long lost aunt
  - a relative
  - Francisco's little sister
  - a family pet
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Papá spends
- most of his money on cigarettes
  - most of his time working
  - time singing
  - avoiding the family
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The fight with Curtis is due to/because of
- a misunderstanding
  - a reason for Francisco to quit school
  - Francisco stole his coat
  - he was set up by the principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. *Carcachita* is
- a pet name for Mamá
  - a state in Mexico
  - a black truck
  - a black Plymouth
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. *El Angelito de oro* is
- a goldfish
  - a myth
  - a lie told to the children
  - a miracle in Tent City
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Torito is
- a dog
  - Francisco's little brother
  - Francisco's older brother
  - Rorra's younger brother
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. All of the children have
- learning disabilities
  - anger issues
  - black hair
  - nicknames
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Gabriel is fired because
- he refuses to do demeaning work
  - he is angry
  - because he is lazy
  - because he is rich
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Which of the following is a town that Francisco lived in
- Amarillo
  - Orosi
  - Orzo
  - Guadalajara
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Which of the following is a friend of Francisco?
- Mike
  - Carl
  - Jose
  - Guillermo
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. A *curandera* is
- a gypsy
  - a nun
  - a healer
  - a bad person
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Miss Scalapino is important because
- she is a bad teacher
  - she is racist
  - she gives Francisco an award
  - she is Papa's boss
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Ito's crop of choice was
- cotton
  - strawberries
  - corn
  - grapes
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. The Jiménez family is from
- Jalisco
  - Cuerna Vaca
  - Morelos
  - Mexico

## Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with the names of characters and places below. Write the corresponding letter on the line to the left.

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. place where Torito got critically sick              | A. Torito             |
| _____ 2. wanted to go fishing with Francisco                 | B. Roberto            |
| _____ 3. nickname for Francisco                              | C. Mamá               |
| _____ 4. stole Francisco's pennies                           | D. Papá               |
| _____ 5. a nickname for Papá                                 | E. Panchito           |
| _____ 6. where the Jiménez family picked cotton              | F. Carl               |
| _____ 7. an ill baby boy                                     | G. Rorra              |
| _____ 8. a good friend                                       | H. Trampita           |
| _____ 9. suffered injuries from work                         | I. Don Pancho         |
| _____ 10. a vineyard owner                                   | J. Miguelito          |
| _____ 11. a strawberry sharecropper                          | K. Ito                |
| _____ 12. was proud of an <i>olla</i>                        | L. Mr. Sullivan       |
| _____ 13. a caring older brother                             | M. <i>contratista</i> |
| _____ 14. a foreman in the fields                            | N. Corcoran           |
| _____ 15. Francisco always had to care for him, as an infant | O. Tent City          |

### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Use a brief word or phrase to answer each of the questions.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Where does the Jimenez family last stop before crossing the border?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Where were all the little fish stranded at?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which was the favorite place of both Roberto and Francisco?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Who is Rubén?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Francisco's favorite food
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Mamá often made these
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Something Mamá did for extra money
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What instrument did Mr. Lema play?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What did Francisco want for Christmas?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Something Francisco grew to love.

### Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two of the following and answer in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. Explain why the family cannot go to the hospital as soon as Torito is sick.
2. Compare and contrast the Jimenez children. How are they alike? How are they different?
3. Why do you think Francisco had a deep sense of religious faith? Why do many people in his position share the same trait?
4. What would you be thinking if you were in Francisco's place when he was deported. Explain your feelings.
5. Explain possible reasons for Francisco's family being so big despite having so little money?

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY

- |                     |                       |                    |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. timidly          | 6. <i>Carcachita</i>  | 11. furrows        |
| 2. corridos         | 7. <i>contratista</i> | 12. mound          |
| 3. burlap           | 8. <i>la bola</i>     | 13. Morelos        |
| 4. <i>El Perico</i> | 9. tone               | 14. prongs         |
| 5. sharecropper     | 10. chanting          | 15. <i>librito</i> |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Character Identification (20 points)

- |            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| 1. Curtis  | 6. Carl             |
| 2. Carlos  | 7. <i>El Perico</i> |
| 3. Gabriel | 8. Papá             |
| 4. Roberto | 9. Ito              |
| 5. Torito  | 10. Mr. Sullivan    |

#### Part II: True or False (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F  |
| 2. F | 7. T  |
| 3. T | 8. T  |
| 4. T | 9. T  |
| 5. F | 10. T |

#### Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

1. Papá
2. Francisco
3. Carlos
4. Mamá
5. *El Perico*

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A  | 11. B |
| 2. C | 7. B  | 12. C |
| 3. B | 8. D  | 13. C |
| 4. A | 9. A  | 14. B |
| 5. D | 10. D | 15. A |

#### Part II: Matching (30 points)

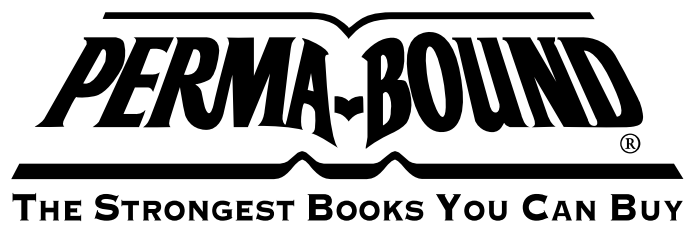
- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. O | 6. N  | 11. L |
| 2. J | 7. A  | 12. C |
| 3. E | 8. F  | 13. B |
| 4. G | 9. D  | 14. N |
| 5. I | 10. L | 15. H |

#### Part III: Short Answer (10 points)

1. Mexicali
2. puddles
3. Santa Maria
4. one of Francisco's brothers
5. *carne con chile*
6. tortillas
7. make lunches for the workers
8. trumpet
9. ball
10. school

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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