Under the Bridge



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



Singin' in the Rain

Nina sloshed her paisley rain boots in the stream that formed along the sidewalk on her way to school. She twirled her umbrella at a dainty angle and tried to sing the old-timey song her dad always sang on the rare occasions it rained—something about singing and dancing in the rain. Rain in Los

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Angeles made palm trees dance, cactus plants shimmer, and her heart feel light and free.

At the crosswalk in front of her school, a swift-moving torrent hid the yellow and white safety markings on the pavement and propelled leaves and trash quickly along its path to the ocean. Why did people litter? More than once, she'd ridden a wave at the beach and ended up with a plastic bag clamped to her arm.

She measured the water with her eyes and looked at her boots. Were they high enough to prevent her socks from getting soaked? Definitely not. There was only one thing to do.

SPLASH! She leapt in with both feet, laughing.

"Nina, *¡la lluvia!*" Her best friend Maricela leapt into the stream next to her, splashing both of them. She always spoke Spanish to her, even if there were people around who didn't understand it.

"I see the rain. Do you see the

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rain?" Nina always answered back in English. Her parents wanted her to speak perfect English without any accent at all. Besides, some things were easier to say in English.

They both stood in a stream in the middle of the street, water pouring into their boots. A car honked impatiently at the edge of the crosswalk, and Maricela leapt back in fake alarm, splashing Nina.

Nina screamed in mock protest, stomping to splash Maricela back. Both grabbed hands, twirled their umbrellas, and danced across the crosswalk.

Inside the slick vestibule, both girls squeezed out their socks into a garbage can, pulled out fresh socks from their backpacks, slipped back into their shoes, and walked to class.

"Hey, want to go roller skating Saturday?"

"*¡Fantastico!* I'll tell Alejandro," Nina said.

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CHAPTER TWO



CPR

Nina sauntered into class, got out her journal and favorite pencils, and started sketching. Some students came in with breakfast from the cafeteria. She knew some really needed the food and others just wanted it. Nina's mom always had breakfast for her, and the food the school served didn't compare. Except

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for the coffee cake: that was a pure sugar delight.

Señor Esparza came in, shaking out his umbrella and hanging it in the corner. His sharp eyes scanned the classroom, and his quick smile brightened the room, even in the gloom of the rain.

"*Buenos días*, fifth graders!"

"Good morning, Señor Esparza!" the class sing-songed in unison.

"What time is it?"

"Time to get a watch!" chirped Maricela.



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