ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Moon over the Mountain: Luna sobre la montana
Keith Polette
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Michael Kress-Russik, illustrator
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You've heard this tale before, no doubt you'll hear it again, but that's the beauty of it—the story's got good bones. And it's got legs too, as the original came from Asia, and the version here takes place in a desert, like the US southwest or northern Mexico.

A poor stonecutter with the rather giggle-producing name of Agipito wishes for a life of less chipping and hacking, less trudge and toil. One night, before he goes to sleep, he says, "Oh, how I wish I was a comerciante rico!" Low and behold, the Spirit of the Desert grants his wish and he wakes up the rich owner of a gigantic market. Soon, Agipito realizes, however, that being a comerciante rico doesn't stop the sun from spoiling his wares. One night, before he goes to sleep, he says, "Oh, how I wish I was el sol."

Author Polette is a specialist in children's literacy, and the idea of *Moon Over the Mountain / Luna sobre la montaña* is that by mixing in Spanish nouns throughout the story (and highlighting them in red), both Spanish and English native speakers will not only be able to follow the narrative, but they'll learn each other's vocabulary. This reviewer, who is also the parent of bilingual children, thinks it's a great idea.

Powerfully illustrated by first-timer Michael Kress, *Moon Over the Mountain/ Luna sobre la montaña* ingeniously translates this ancient cautionary tale for American audiences—just when you think you know where the story's going next, it surprises you and trots away on its long, long legs.