

The Village School Children's Book of the Month
The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything
or ***La Viejecita Que No Le Tenía Miedo a Nada***
by Jocelyn Langer, Spanish and Music teacher

The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything (or *La Viejecita Que No Le Tenía Miedo a Nada*) is equally fun to read in both English and Spanish. The Spanish version is a terrific teaching tool, with its catchy rhythms and repetitive phrases. The Village School Spanish classes read this book every October, and each succeeding year, students understand more of Spanish text.

La viejecita (the little old lady) takes a walk in the forest one windy autumn afternoon. She walks and walks for so long that night falls, and she begins to walk home.

Before long, *la viejecita* encounters a pair of *zapatos* (shoes) in her path. *Los zapatos* go "POM POM POM", but *la viejecita* is not afraid. She bravely tells them to get out of her way: "*Apartense de mi camino, zapatos!*" she orders.

La viejecita continues on her way, but behind her she can still hear *dos zapatos que hacían POM POM POM*. Soon she runs into a pair of pants who go "FRU FRU FRU".

By this time in the story, children start to pick up on the rhythm and routine, and have fun repeating old lady's command, substituting the word *pantalones* where they had previously said *zapatos*: "*Apartense de mi camino, pantalones!*"

As the story progresses, and the old lady encounters *una camisa, dos guantes y un sombrero* (a shirt, two gloves and a hat), children enjoy repeating the sounds of each item of clothing, "CHAS CHAS CHAS", "CLAP CLAP CLAP" and "NOD NOD NOD".

Eventually, *la viejecita* is being followed by a whole line of clothing, but she's still not afraid of them! Then, as she approaches her cabin, she is surprised by a huge *cabeza de calabaza* (pumpkin head), and the *cabeza de calabaza* says, "BUU, BUU, BUU".

La viejecita takes off running, and she doesn't stop until she reaches her cabin. (Maybe she is a *little* scared this time!) Soon she hears a knock at her door. She opens it, and what do you think she sees?

Dos zapatos que hacían POM POM POM. Unos pantalones que hacían FRU, FRU, FRU... All of the clothes, plus the *cabeza de calabaza*!

"I'm not afraid of you," she says bravely, "What do you want?" Of course what they want is to scare her, but *la viejecita* is not afraid. The pumpkin head is disappointed, and wonders what to do now. Luckily, *la viejecita* has an idea. She whispers something to the pumpkin head, says "*buenas noches*", and shuts the door.

The next morning, *la viejecita* opens her window to see a scarecrow in her garden, made up of all of the clothing from the night before, with the big orange *cabeza de calabaza* on top!

This beautiful picture book is a great read-aloud for children ages 4-9. The illustrations in the story make it easy for non-Spanish speakers to understand what is going on. At the Village School, we read the book in Spanish in Preschool through 6th grade, and it's still a good challenge for the 12 year-olds!

You can find *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anybody* in English, and *La Viejecita Que No Le Tenía Miedo a Nada*, the Spanish version, at Bruce's Browser in Athol.