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THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE LIZARD

Adapted for Readers Theater by Lois Walker

The Cahuilla are Native Americans with a common culture whose ancestors inhabited inland areas of southern California 2,000 years ago. The traditional Cahuilla territory was near the geographic center of Southern California. It was bounded to the north by the San Bernardino Mountains, to the south by Borrego Springs, and the Chocolate Mountains, to the east by the Colorado Desert, and to the west by the San Jacinto Plain and the eastern slopes of the Palomar Mountains.

Oral legends suggest that when the Cahuilla first moved into the Coachella Valley, a large body of water which geographers call Lake Cahuilla was in existence. Fed by the Colorado River, it dried up sometime before 1700, following one of the repeated shifts in the river's changed course. In 1905 a break in a levee created the much smaller Salton Sea in the same location.

The Cahuilla did not have a writing system, so they learned about the world around them through storytelling. The tribe continues to pass on myths and legends from one generation to the next. The Legend of the Blue Lizards is one of those legends.

This Readers Theater adaptation is formatted for 6 SOLO READERS and a repetitive chorus for ALL READERS.

SAMPLE PAGES. PLEASE DO NOT COPY!

READER 1: There was a great unhappiness in the Cahuilla village.

READER2: The children were sick and many were dying!

READER 3: Nobody knew what to do. None of the charms known to their medicine men could make the Cahuilla children well.

READER 4: The tribe prayed to the "Great Spirit" and it wasn't long before they received an answer.

READER 5: Yes, there was a medicine that could make the children well again!

READER 6: But in all the tents of Heaven, no messenger could be found to deliver the medicine to the Cahuilla.

READER 1: Finally, the "Great Spirit" tore a strip of blue sky from the heavens and rolled it into the shape of a Blue Lizard.

READER 2: Next the "Great Spirit" breathed life into the lizard!

READER 3: And it was then that the "Great Spirit" gave the lizard the magic medicine to take to the Cahuilla.

READER 4: The Blue Lizard traveled down to earth on a sunbeam and...

READER 5: ...The children of the Cahuilla tribe were healed!

READER 6: But sunbeams only travel *toward* the Earth. They don't go the other way.

READER 1: So the Blue Lizard was in big trouble. There was no way for him to get back to his home in the sky.

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READER 2: The poor lizard missed his spirit friends up in Heaven and became very homesick.

READER 3: One day he decided the best way to get home was to climb upward. If he could climb high enough, he might be able to reach the sky and jump right back into Heaven.

READER 4: And so, early one morning, the homesick lizard began climbing up San Jacinto Mountain.

READER 5: But the children saw him climbing and softly called out:

ALL: "Don't go,

 Don't dilly, don't dally.

 Come live with us

 In the Coachella Valley!"

READER 6: And when the Blue Lizard heard the children calling, he looked down at them and softly answered:

ALL: "No, no

 Just leave me alone.

 I miss the "Great Spirit"

 And I want to go home!"

READER 1: Then he turned around and started climbing higher up San Jacinto Mountain.

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READER 2: But the children would not listen. They wanted that blue lizard to live with them on the valley floor!

READER 3: So, again they called out a little louder:

ALL: "Don't go,
 Don't dilly, don't dally.
 Come live with us
 In the Coachella Valley!"

READER 4: And when the Blue Lizard heard the children calling a second time, he became annoyed. He looked down at them and shouted a little louder:

ALL: "No, no
 Just leave me alone.
 I miss the "Great Spirit"
 And I want to go home!"

READER 5: Then he turned around and climbed even higher up San Jacinto Mountain.

READER 6: Again, the children would not listen. They were determined to talk that lizard into coming back and living with them.

READER 1: And so, again they called out very loudly: (*Continued*)

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