



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEY EDUCATION @Home
presented by **citi**

What We're Watching



Greetings from The Paley Center for

Media's Education Department!

Welcome to the latest installment of “What We’re Watching,” a weekly Paley Education@Home guide. During this unprecedented time, we are continuing to reach out to our community with tips and ideas for consuming media with kids! We know that screen time has increased and so we’re here to help. Each week we are highlighting a different theme that connects to selected programs for younger and older viewers, with related activities and resources.

Consuming media with your kids is a perfect jumping-off point to making media literacy a part of your everyday lives. Familiarizing yourself with the basics is a great first step. In case you missed it, you can view [our first edition about media literacy best practices](#). We also recommend the National Association for Media Literacy Education’s Parents Guide—it’s a terrific introduction!

Weekly Zoom Meet-ups

Thursdays, 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET

Students Grades 3+ can join us for a weekly Zoom Meet-up, Thursdays from 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET, to chat about the week’s theme and engage in some hands-on learning led by a Paley Educator. Parents and teachers are welcome to join as well!

For connection details, please RSVP to eduny@paleycenter.org.

Hispanic Heritage Month Continues with Fantasy and Magical Realism!!

As part of The Paley Center for Media’s Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, we are focusing our recommendations on Hispanic culture for four weeks. This week we are exploring fantasy and magical realism. Although most kids are familiar with fantasy they are probably less able to define magical realism, a distinct genre whose most celebrated storytellers, (e.g. Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, etc.), come from Latin America. A magical realism story is usually set in a realistic environment with magical elements. Unlike in fantasy stories, magical realism storytellers withhold information about the magic in their created worlds in order to present magical events as ordinary

occurrences, and portray the incredible as normal, every-day life. The inspiration for this week's theme comes from one of our favorite Mexican directors, Guillermo del Toro, who works in both the fantasy and magical realism genres producing some of the most beautiful and creative visual storytelling in film. Award winning films like *Pan's Labyrinth* and *The Shape of Water*, and the three epic *Tales of Arcadia* cartoon series, include perhaps the most complex and likeable creatures and monster characters ever created. We hope that you like fairy tales, trolls, monsters, quests and creepy stories as much as we do!

Para leer en español, haga [clic aquí](#).

This Week's Recommendations for Younger Viewers

Legend Quest (Las Leyendas): “The Prophecy” (S1, E1)

Recommended for Grades 3+

Available to stream on Netflix

Set in the early 1800s in Puebla, New Spain, this fantasy comedy-horror cartoon series is about a teenager named Leo San Juan, who can see and talk to ghosts. In the first episode, the souls of his fellow townsfolk are stolen by ghoulish Aztec monkeys, creating a zombie apocalypse that brings their master, Quetzalcoatl, into the mortal plane. With the help of his traveling companions: the ghosts Don Andrés (a conquistador), and Teodora Vicenta de la Purísima Concepción de la Inmaculada Trinidad Villavicencio (a teenage girl), as well as the mythological rainbow beast Alebrije, Leo manages to avoid a divine apocalypse.

Viewing Questions

- Describe where this story takes place.
- Who is the main character and what is special about Leo?
- What sport is he trying to invent at the beginning of the episode?
- Who are his friends? What is different about them? How does Alebrije appear to other people?
- What happens in the village overnight and who are the only people not affected?
- Who is the villain of the story? What do you know about Mesoamerican mythology?
- How do they fight the zombies? How do they save the village? What

happens to the village after that anyway? How do they escape?

Trollhunters: Tales of Arcadia: “Becoming Parts 1 & 2”

Recommended for Grades 4+

Available to stream on Netflix

Trollhunters is an animated fantasy adventure series created by Guillermo del Toro. The series begins when an ordinary teenager named Jim Lake finds a magic amulet that chooses him to be a Trollhunter, a guardian that defends the world of humans and the secret world of trolls. Adventure, quests and high school drama follow. Unlike del Toro’s films which can be terrifying for kids, this one is geared towards them, but we think adults will also love the nostalgic references and humor sprinkled throughout as well.

Viewing Questions

- How do you know right away that this is a fantasy genre series?
- Describe the main character. What kind of person is he and how do you know? What is his life like? Who does he live with? Who are his friends?
- What does Jim find on his bike ride to school?
- What happens as a result of finding the amulet?
- How do Blinkey and Argh try to help Jim? What job is Jim invited/required to do in the troll world?
- What is the troll world like?
- Why do you think Jim decides to accept the role of trollhunter? Does he have a choice?
- What is the incantation he must learn to say?
- Why do you think the amulet chose him?



This Week's Recommendations for Older Viewers

Blancanieves, directed by Pablo Berger (2012)

Recommended for Grades 8+

Available to rent on Amazon

This beautiful black-and-white silent film is a twist on the classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale Snow White, and is set in 1920s Spain. A band of bullfighting dwarfs save the life of a young woman with amnesia, who is unaware that her father was a famous matador and her mother a flamenco dancer. They end up taking her under their wing where they find out that she has natural skills as a bullfighter, upon which they can capitalize not only for their act but for her own personal gain. As she does not know her name or background, the dwarfs call her Blancanieves, after the famed fairy tale. As you watch, the wonderful musical score makes it easy to forget there is no dialogue. People who shy away from silent films might change their minds after watching this one!

Viewing questions

- Compare this movie to the classic Snow White fairy tale.
- What is the same and what is different? What fairy tale tropes are used in the storytelling?
- What changes to characters, setting and plot are the most fun?
- What is the dwarfs house like? How many are there?
- How does already knowing some of the story help keep us interested?
- How does the director use music to help us understand what is going on, or to indicate a mood shift? For example, how does the director film the scenes with flamenco music and what effect does it have on the viewer?
- What feeling do you think the director is trying to create when the camera spins in circles (dancing with her grandmother and later for her father, and then again in the bullring)?
- What kinds of things trigger Carmencita's memory in the second half of the film?
- Which dwarf falls in love with her and how do we know? Is he her true love?
- How does the story end? What did you think of the ending? Do all fairy tales end happily?

Pan's Labyrinth (El laberinto del fauno), directed by Guillermo del Toro (2006)

Recommended for Grades 10+

Available to stream on Netflix

This Academy Award–winning dark fable is set five years after the end of the Spanish Civil War. Eleven-year-old Ofelia comes face to face with the horrors of fascism when she and her mother are uprooted and go to the countryside to live with her new stepfather, an evil captain in General Francisco Franco’s army. The violent reality in which Ofelia lives merges seamlessly with her fantastical interior world when she meets a faun in a decaying labyrinth and is set on a strange, mythical journey that is both terrifying and beautiful. We are recommending this film for teenagers who are comfortable with fantasy and horror. If you are not in the mood for something dark and scary then we would suggest watching our other pick for older viewers!

Viewing Questions

- Describe the setting of the film.
- Describe the main character, Ofelia. What is the significance of her name? (think Shakespeare.)
- Is Ofelia possibly insane, and thereby imagining everything in her fairy tale world?
- How would the film be different if she was older? Why make her so young?
- Two big themes of the film are “rebellion” and “choices”, how does Ofelia rebel and choose her destiny? How do other characters rebel and make choices that affect the plot as well?
- Why do you think Captain Vidal is so invested in time and watch repair? How is it important to the plot?
- In Spanish, faun is fauno; why do you think the English film title insisted on making the faun into Pan himself? Who was Pan? Why include the god of forests and nature?
- Does Ofelia’s mother encourage or discourage a love of fairy tales for her daughter and what is the impact?
- What do you think the symbolism behind the Pale Man’s lair is? The buffet line of untouchable delights, the pile of children’s shoes, his eyes in his hands and his extreme skinniness?
- Is this a typical Hollywood movie? What is different about it? What elements of the film fall into magical realism territory?
- What message does the film ultimately send to the viewer?

Extension Activities: Get Creative!

[Make your own TP Roll Creatures](#)

[Painted Rock Trolls](#)

[Write a Fractured Fairy Tale](#)

Additional Resources

Read

Picture books for younger students:

Feathered Serpent and the Fire Suns: A Mesoamerican Creation Myth by Duncan Tonatiuh

The Princess and the Warrior: A Tale of two Volcanos by Duncan Tonatiuh

Classic magical realism novels:

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Ficciones by Jorge Luis Borges

House of Mist by Maria Luisa Bombal

The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende

The Savage Detectives by Roberto Bolaño

More about magical realism from Vox and the New Yorker:

[11 questions you're too embarrassed to ask about magical realism](#)

[Magical Realism: The Force Behind Latin American Art](#)

[Show the Monster: Guillermo del Toro's quest to get amazing creatures onscreen](#)

Watch

3 Below: Tales of Arcadia, on Netflix, Grades 2+

La Leyenda de la Llorona (2011) on Netflix, Grades 2+

Tigers are not Afraid (Vuelven) (2017), available for rent / streaming on Shudder, Grades 11+

Listen

[Tribeca Talks: Guillermo Del Toro and Alec Baldwin](#)

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org.

Happy viewing,

Rebekah Fisk, Director of Education

Caroline Quigley, Senior Manager of School & Family Programs

Photos—*Trollhunters*: Netflix/Dreamworks; *Pan*: Warner Bros.

Support The Paley Center for Media

We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home! The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would deeply appreciate your support. Please consider making a donation:

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$250



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