**7th Language Arts: Learning to identify theme**

**Armadillo's Song**

**A Bolivian Legend**

**retold by S.E. Schlosser**

There once lived an armadillo who loved music more than anything else in the world. After every rainfall, the armadillo would drag his shell over to the large pond filled with frogs and he would listen to the big green frogs singing back and forth, back and forth to each other in the most amazing voices.

"Oh," thought the armadillo, "Oh how I wish I could sing."

The armadillo would creep to the edge of the water and watch the frogs leaping and swimming in a frantic green ballet, and they would call back and forth, back and forth in beautiful, musical tones. He loved to listen to the music they made as they spoke, though he didn't understand their words; which was just as well - for the frogs were laughing at this funny animal that wanted so badly to sing like a frog.

"Don't be ridiculous," sang the frogs as they played. "Armadillos can't sing."

Then one day a family of crickets moved into a new house near the armadillo, and he was amazed to hear them chirp and sing as merrily as the frogs. He would creep next to their house and listen and listen all day, all night for their musical sounds.

"Oh," sighed the armadillo, "Oh how I wish I could sing."

"Don't be ridiculous," sang the crickets in their dulcet tones. "Armadillos can't sing."

But the armadillo could not understand their language, and so he just sighed with longing and listened to their beautiful voices laughing at him.

Then one day a man came down the road carrying a cage full of canaries. They were chirping and flittering and singing songs that were more beautiful even than those of the crickets and the frogs. The armadillo was entranced. He followed the man with the cage down the road as fast as his little legs would carry him, listening to the canaries singing.

"Oh," gasped the armadillo, "Oh how I wish I could sing."

Inside the cage, the canaries twittered and giggled.

"Don't be ridiculous," sang the canaries as they flapped about. "Armadillos can't sing."

The poor tired armadillo couldn't keep up with the man and the cage, and finally he fell exhausted at the door of the great wizard who lived in the area. Realizing where he was, the armadillo decided to beg a boon of the man.

Timidly, the armadillo approached the wizard, who was sitting in front of his house and said: "Great wizard, it is my deepest desire to learn to sing like the frogs and the crickets and the canaries."

The wizard's lips twitched a little in amusement, for who had ever heard of an armadillo that could sing. But he realized that the little animal was serious. He bent low to the ground and looked the creature in the eye.

"I can make you sing, little armadillo," he said. "But you do not want to pay the price, for it will mean your death."

"You mean if I die I will be able to sing?" asked the armadillo in amazement.

"Yes, this is so," said the wizard.

"Then I want to die right now!" said the armadillo. "I would do anything to be able to sing!"

The wizard and the armadillo discussed the matter for many hours, for the wizard was reluctant to take the life of such a fine armadillo. But the creature insisted, and so the wizard finally killed the armadillo, made a wonderful musical instrument from his shell, and gave it to the finest musician in the town to play.

Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the pond where the frogs lived, and they would stare at him with big eyes and say: "Ai! Ai! The armadillo has learned to sing."

Sometimes the musician would play his instrument by the house where the crickets lived, and they would creep outside to stare at him with big eyes and say: "Ai! Ai! The armadillo has learned to sing."

And often the musician would visit the home of his friend who owned the cage full of canaries - who was also a musician - and the two men would play their instruments together while the little birds watched with fluttering wings and twittered in amazement: "Ai! Ai! The armadillo has learned to sing."

And so it was. The armadillo had learned to sing at last, and his voice was the finest in the land. But like the very best musicians in the world, the armadillo sacrificed his Life for his Art.