

**AMIGO**

**A READERS THEATRE by Byrd Baylor**

**PROPS:**

Guitar

Table and chairs

Dishes set on table

Stuffed prairie dog or a similar animal

Corn on cob

Sun drawn on board

**CHARACTERS:**

1. **Mother \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
2. **Father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
3. **Francisco \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
4. **Narrator #1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
5. **Narrator #2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
6. **Narrator #3 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
7. **Narrator #4 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
8. **Amigo \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
9. **Mother Prairie Dog \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
10. **Father Prairie Dog \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
11. **Group of 3-4 Older Prairie Dogs**

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**SCENE 1**

**Family is sitting around the dining table after a meal.**

1 - Come Francisco, my son, Tell me why your eyes are sad, my little one.

2 - (Playing on guitar) How quiet you are. Let me play you a tune on my old guitar.

Troubles run. Fast and far. . . Past the mountains, behind a star.

3 - You know I want a dog. Any dog. A hound. A dog I'll call Amigo and he'll follow me around. Wherever I go. Whenever I go. He'll be there. Someday I'll follow him Just to make it fair.

1 - (Sighing) No, Francisco. It's all we can do just trying to feed your brother and you.

*(Father leaves the room.)*

4 - Francisco seldom thought about the things he had to do without, because he thought about the things he had. In his mind he tried to add them up!

3 - -So many brothers, so many jokes, so many miles of desert all around.

So many cactuses. So many mountains--

So many places caves can be found.

AND plenty of wishes to wish on a star.

Plenty of songs in that guitar, but not enough money in my father's pocket--

that's the way things are.

5 - Francisco's father mines for gold. He know he'll find it before he's old, but he hasn't found it yet.

2 - No, Francisco, another mouth to feed is one more than I need. You just forget about a pet.

1 - What's small and wild and can feel itself? We'll have that my child. You could tame a bird, a bright wild bird with the sweetest song you ever heard.

3 - (Frowning) No, No, I can't fly. He could go much higher than I.

1- Up in the mountains there are wildcats. You can catch one if you are bold.

Here in the valley there are tortoises, one hundred years old.

3 - A tortoise is too slow for my fast feet. And wild cats won't play in the desert heat.

1- How about a lizard? How about a quail? How about a coyote with a yellow tail?

3 - NO, No, No! And I don't want a frog. (Shaking head) I WANT TO HAVE A DOG!

4 - Suddenly his mother whirled around. Her voice came out with a laughing sound.

1 - Ah, Francisco, my son! A PRAIRIE DOG! Could that be the one?

5 - They all laughed. A PRAIRIE DOG! It seemed so funny-- he's more like a ground squirrel or a mouse or a bunny than a dog. . . a strange little creature with fast little feet, who doesn't mind the desert heat.

3 - A Prairie dog would be easy to find. Of course, I had a *REAL* dog in my mind,

but if I try I think that I could love a prairie dog. . .

a tiny black-eyed,

run-around,

hole-in-the-ground

squeak-a-dry- sound Prairie dog.

A very merry prairie dog.

2 - *(Father re-enters room)* You'd have to win his love before you tame him.

3 - *(Excited and clapping hands)* Yes, I will win his love. Then I will name him Amigo. That's the name I was saving for some big hound--but I think it will do for a little run- around.

1 *- (Mother gathering dishes from table stops to say)* How do you tame a prairie dog, a thing that's wild? How do you make him walk beside a human child?

3 - (*Picks up cob of corn and holds it out)* I'll give him presents like water and seeds, and tall sweet weeds. I'll give him love and whatever he needs.

**SCENE 2**

**At a desert Prairie Dog Town**

4 - Francisco hurried to Prairie-Dog Town. Very quietly he sat down on a rocky slope to watch and wish and dream and hope.

5 - Prairie-Dog Town is a town underground, all tunnel and burrow and hilly mound. . . The busiest town for miles around. Ten little heads popped out of the earth and looked around curiously and jabbered furiously, and frowned at Francisco

for all they were worth.

4 - He wanted them to know that he was a friend, a brother, wanted them to see him simply as another desert creature who meant no harm. So he lay down with his head on his arm. And then, Francisco fell asleep.

5 - When he opened his eyes there wasn't a sound. He sat up and looked around and found one prairie dog still sitting in his place. He seemed to be studying Francisco's face.

3 - Can that be Amigo? Does he read my mind? Does he know he's the one

that I came to find?

3 - (Very gently whisper) Amigo. . .

4 - The word was so soft it could only be heard by one prairie dog and one low flying bird.

3 - (Very gently whisper) Amigo. . .

**SCENE 3**

**At a desert Prairie Dog Town**

4 - That day wherever Francisco went he went with his dreams and he went content. And he went with a hop and he went with a hope

And he jumped over rocks like an antelope.

5 - Now you know Francisco and the way he planned to tame him a friend in that desert land. But you still don't know--what creature was hiding behind that hill. . .

Look toward the mountain, there toward the sun. See that brown speck dart and run? That is Amigo.

6 - Yes, this is Amigo. . . always full of ideas, saying summer is HIS--and maybe it is--to run through. But should he be running so fast and so far? Why isn't he home where his brothers are? Below the surface of Prairie-Dog Town? There old prairie dogs sit in the sun keeping watch through the summer day while the little ones dodge in and out like children at play.

7- But Amigo isn't there. He's EVERYWHERE, following every path he knows. He doesn't worry, he only GOES. . . And where is he going? What does he seek? why does he gaze at the mountain peak?

*(Amigo enters stage.)*

6 - Amigo runs to a certain hill. There he stops and waits until he hears the sound of a boy's easy laughter, then he knows he's found what he came after: THAT BOY!

7 - Amigo sits, quiet as a stone, and sees the boy walking alone and carrying a heavy pail of water down the rocky trail and singing. Ah what a sound! Amigo found it going around his head all day. It would not go away.

8 - I know every sound for miles around,

every small and quiet sound--like earthworms walking underground

and the whisper of quail and the wet creaking wail of baby toads after a rain

and the rustle of grass where a deer has lain.

Yes, I think there's many a sound pleasant enough to have around.

But human boys make the finest kind of noise I ever heard--

Better than water of wind or bird.

6 - This boy was a little thing--only so high. But he seemed to Amigo to reach the sky, tall as a mountain, brown and strong. Amigo followed him all day long.

He heard his whistle and he heard his song carried by the wind, light as a feather.

**SCENE 4**

**At Amigo's burrow**

8 - I wonder whether he ever saw me peeping from under that mesquite tree and popping up from clumps of grass along the way to see him pass.

9 - Be careful my child. A human boy is very wild.

8- I'll tame him if it takes a year. The sound of that boy is all I want to hear!

9 - You can't mean that! Better go play with the old pack rat. Better learn from those who are wise, little one. Mountain is your friend, Wind is your toy. Let's stop this talk about a human boy.

6 - A hundred aunts, uncles and cousins agreed. And they wiggled their whiskers and nodded their heads.

11- Oh yes, that's right, that's right, that's right!

8 - He doesn't look wild. I know if I try I can tame that child.

9 - How about an ant?

8- An ant? I can't love an ant. I just can't.

9 - How about a bee with a lazy buzz?

8 - No, I don't like honey and he does.

10- Play with a cricket. Play with a quail. Tame you a lizard with a sandy tail.

8 - They're all good friends but they're just not boys and they can't make that fine boy- noise.

7 - Amigo tried to make them understand. He told his parents, the boy is a desert thing like any other, and sometimes he thinks he is his brother.

9 *- (Nodding her head*) Taming a boy seems odd, It's never been done, as far as I know, but no one ever loved one so--and that makes all the difference. You may be the one who will do it, my son.

8 - The thing to do now is tame him. But how? What can I give him? I wish I knew. I have no treasures, not even a few.

10 - Just give him something that pleases you.

8 - Like silvery sand to hold in his hand? Or the blue jay feather that floated down straight from the sky to Prairie-Dog Town? Or that cool green shadowy grass which grows so tall at the mountain pass and tastes of mountain water?

9 - These would surely please a boy. *(Place sun on board.)*

6 - So Amigo scampered and ran and hopped. The sun was high before he stopped--at the very top of the mountain pass, where all the grass was sweet as honey and tall enough to hide in. Amigo took great pride in his work that day.

7 - He sniffed a thousand blades of grass before he found the one that smelled the most like mountain water--and shone like mountain sun. He took the green blade tenderly down into the valley near Prairie-Dog Town

and beside the path where the boy often came,

He placed the grass on a small white stone--

which he always thought of as his own.

8 - As he waited he made a kind of game of dreaming the boy was already tame and knew his name--and said, "Amigo"

7 -But it was no game, for the boy came along trailing his song in the windy air.

8 - And it was no dream, for he saw Amigo there. He did not speak. He only sat very quietly gazing at the world of sun and sand.

7- And when he left, a blade of grass was clutched in his brown hand.

And Amigo ran home bounding with joy!

9- Listen I've just about tamed me a boy!

6- At the same time on the same day you could hear Francisco say:

3-- Mama, I know that he's just about mine! Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that fine?

**SCENE 5**

**In the desert**

4 - That was the way it happened that day. Francisco came singing to the desert town. Amigo ran close to the sound. Francisco smiled turned around--and met Amigo.

5 - Francisco went back to the stone every day. He was a friend in every way. He brought wild cherries gathered in the mountain and fat dark berries that grew on sandy banks. To see Amigo eat them, was all the thanks he needed.

6 - When the summer sun beat fiercely down and the heat lay heavy on Prairie-Dog town, Francisco found a rock shaped like a cup and every morning he filled it up with water.

7 - And he kept one eye on the sky to war Amigo when hawks flew by. And every day Amigo came closer to the place where Francisco sat--as near as that. The boy was taming Amigo. Oh, yes, that's so. And if you were watching Amigo you'd know that he was taming Francisco.

4 - Francisco took the presents Amigo left here and there. He even stuck that blue jay feather in his hair. Many a time the boy would lie down in the tall wispy grass near Prairie-Dog Town. Amigo liked knowing that the boy was near. He listened for his whistle in the summer air-- and sure enough the whistle was there!

5- Amigo ran close to the sound. Francisco smiled, turned around and met Amigo. That was the way it happened that day.

6- First they climbed a hill. They followed a bee.

Then they stopped to rest by a mesquite tree.

7- They didn't talk much for the wind was shrill

8- They sat there quietly, as good friends will, admiring the view from that rocky hill.

***3- I've tamed me a prairie dog. He's my greatest joy!***

***8- Mine is the best pet. I've tamed me a boy! (Amigo squeaks a happy sound.)***

***3--Yes, I think so too!***