

Reader's Theatre: A Note from Book-It Arts Education

Book-It grants permission for *El Cuenco Verde* by Sien Méndez to be used by readers, teachers, and librarians in classrooms or educational settings. If you would like to use this script outside of these settings, please contact Book-It Repertory Theatre at education@book-it.org.

El Cuenco Verde has roles for six readers. Characters are written with she, he, or singular they for specific characters to maintain clarity, but **pronouns can be adjusted as needed to match the pronouns of the readers in your class**. Please do not change the names of the characters.

El Cuenco Verde is about a family that is from Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a small island in the Caribbean about 1,000 miles to the southeast of Miami, Florida. The people of Puerto Rico are racially diverse, mostly Spanish speaking, and living on the native land of the Taino tribe, many of which make up the population of the island today.

In the theatre, we would not want these roles to be played by an actor that is not Latino/a/x, but if ethnically appropriate casting is not possible in your classroom, it is okay for a non-Latinx reader to play any of the family members. These characters are people, just like everyone in your classroom, with a rich history shaped by many different cultures. Consider it an honor to explore the humanity of these characters. We hope this opportunity helps you take a moment to think about how other people live in the beautiful world we share.

When you read the script, try different ways of speaking as your character. Your **character voice** can sound however you want it to but start with your own voice. Imagine the world of the play, listen to

the lines of the other readers, take a deep breath, and speak as if the character is really you.

Lines written (*like this*), in parentheses and italicized, are **stage directions**. They give you information about how a character is feeling or what is happening at that moment in the script. (You can read them out loud, if you want to.) **Use these guidelines to incorporate action, tableaux, or scenic art into your reading.**

This script uses **line numbering**. Use these numbers to help find your spot or to work on a certain part of the script. You can also use a highlighter to highlight your lines or responsibilities.

Happy reading!

EL CUENCO VERDE

by Sien Méndez

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CHARACTERS

ABUELA (she/her): in Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico; Mama’s mama, abuela of Mateo and Luciana

MAMA (she/her): in Miami, Florida; mama of Mateo and Luciana

MATEO (he/him): in Miami, Florida; brother of Luciana

LUCIANA (she/her/they/them): in Miami, Florida; sister of Mateo

ABUELO (he/him): in Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico; mama’s papa, abuelo of Mateo and Luciana

TIO YANIEL (he/him): in San Diego, California; brother of Mama

1 *(In the kitchen in Miami, there is one laptop set up on Zoom for*
2 *Mama, Mateo, and Luciana.*

3 *In the kitchen in Viejo San Juan, Abuela is on her laptop alone,*
4 *Abuelo is napping in the living room.*

5 *In the kitchen in San Diego, Tio Yaniel is alone, joining the call*
6 *on his phone set on top of some books.*

7 *While reading, do your best with the Spanish—take some time*
8 *to look up meaning and pronunciation if you don’t know!*

9 *This family sometimes talks over each other and interrupts*
10 *each other—have fun with this!)*

- 11 **LUCIANA:** When the whole family was stuck in their homes
- 12 **TIO YANIEL:** Some in California,
- 13 **MATEO:** Some in Florida,
- 14 **ABUELA:** And some home on the island—in Puerto Rico,
- 15 **TIO YANIEL:** The only thing to do....
- 16 **ABUELA:** Was make
- 17 **MATEO Y LUCIANA:** Arroz con gandules (!!)
- 18 **MAMA:** On a video call!
- 19 *(She calls through the house)*
- 20 **MATEO!!!!!! GET DOWN HERE, YOUR ABUELA IS ON THE PHONE IT'S**
- 21 **TIME**
- 22 **LUCIANA:** TO MAKE FOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOD!
- 23 **MATEO:** COMING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 24 **TIO YANIEL:** Hey, I'm here too!
- 25 **MATEO:** Hi, Tio Yaniel! Hola, abuela!
- 26 **ABUELA:** Hola, Mateo! Hola, Luciana!
- 27 **LUCIANA:** Hola, Abuela! Hola, Tio Yaniel!
- 28 **TIO YANIEL:** Hola, Luciana! Hola—

- 29 **MAMA:** OKAY! Let's get started!
- 30 **MATEO:** What, where's abuelo?
- 31 **LUCIANA:** Abuelo is sleeping!!
- 32 **MAMA:** He never wants to cook,
- 33 **TIO YANIEL:** And *a*lways wants to eat!
- 34 **MATEO:** Me too....
- 35 **ABUELA:** Primero, go get el cuenco verde, the green bowl—
- 36 **MAMA:** Ma, you know—
- 37 **ABUELA:** Ah, basta—
- 38 **MAMA:** I don't know what that means, el cuenco verde, how *big* is that—
- 39 **TIO YANIEL:** Didn't we figure this out last year—
- 40 **ABUELA:** Mira, look, it's this big
- 41 *(Abuela holds it up to her head)*
- 42 **MAMA:** Ma, that doesn't help, is it 1 cup, a quart—
- 43 *(Tio Yaniel tries holding his various bowls up to his head to*
- 44 *compare)*
- 45 **TIO YANIEL:** Este o este?

46 *(Holding up two different sizes)*

47 **ABUELA:** Ah, the bigger!

48 **MAMA:** Ay..... Yaniel, how big is that one?

49 **TIO YANIEL:** Eh, this big?

50 *(He holds it up to his head again)*

51 **MAMA:** Ay, nevermind. Luciana, grab the red bowl!

52 **LUCIANA:** Okay, máma!

53 **ABUELA:** Now, fill the bowl with everything—

54 **MATEO:** SOFRITO!

55 **ABUELA:** Si, si, si. Or recaito.

56 **MAMA:** Bell pepper. Verde.

57 **TIO YANIEL:** Y onion

58 **LUCIANA:** Y garlic

59 **MATEO:** Y cilantro!

60 **ABUELA:** Y ajies dulces—peppers. Now, in the pan—

61 **MATEO:** TOMATO SAUCE!

62 **MAMA:** Si, si, and broth.

63 **LUCIANA:** Then peas!!!!

64 **TIO YANIEL:** Gandules.

65 **MATEO:** Or, pigeon peas! Why are they called that anyway, abuela?

66 **ABUELA:** The pigeons named them.

67 **MAMA:** Now, Luciana, dump the sofrita in the pot from the red bowl,

68 **TIO YANIEL:** Stir

69 **LUCIANA:** Stir

70 **MATEO:** Stitrrrrrrrrrrring

71 **ABUELA:** Stiriiaiiiiing

72 **MAMA:** Stirred!

73 **TIO YANIEL:** Boy, was it a good idea to chop those onions ahead of time, I
74 *was crying*

75 **MAMA:** Ay, yo tambien!

76 **ABUELA:** And now, we wait for it to boil.

77 **MATEO:** I can't wait I can't wait I can't wait!!!

78 **LUCIANA:** But we have to wait.....

- 79 **ABUELA:** And once it boils
- 80 **MAMA:** We add the rice!
- 81 **TIO YANIEL:** El arroz.
- 82 **ABUELA:** Right! And once it finishes cooking.....
- 83 **MATEO:** WE EAT IT????
- 84 **ABUELA:** Cierto, mi amor.
- 85 **LUCIANA:** Abuela, when we eat will you tell us another story?
- 86 **MAMA:** Ah, one of the folktales from the island.
- 87 **MATEO:** Si, tell us a story, Abuela!
- 88 **ABUELA:** Okay okay, pues, call back when el arroz is done! I have to get
89 into costume!
- 90 **MAMA:** Okay, wake up papa before that!
- 91 **LUCIANA:** I wanna see abuelo!
- 92 **ABUELA:** I will try...
- 93 *Abuelo pokes his head into the screen.*
- 94 **MATEO Y LUCIANA:** ABUELO!!!!
- 95 **ABUELO:** Is it time to eat yet???

96 **ABUELA:** No, no not yet.

97 **ABUELO:** Ah, then what's the point of being up!

98 **ABUELA:** To see your *nietos*, mi amor.

99 **ABUELO:** Eh, bah humbug!

100 **MATEO:** Abuelo!

101 **ABUELO:** Just kidding, just kidding! I love you, te amo! Call me when
102 there's food!

103 *Abuelo leaves again, back to his nap.*

104 **ABUELA:** And, next time.... I will tell you the story of the Goddess and the
105 Coqui!

106 **LUCIANA:** Like the frogs???

107 **ABUELA:** Ah, yes, mi cielo, you have a lot of stories to learn.

108 **MAMA:** Okay, Ma, get into costume for your story, we will call back in 30
109 minutes.

110 **TIO YANIEL:** Adios!

111 **MATEO AND LUCIANA AND MAMA:** Adios!

112 **ABUELA:** Te amo, adios!!

113 *They end the video call, for now, while the arroz continues to boil.....*

114 **—THE END—**