

*When Julia Danced Bomba / Cuando Julia bailaba bomba*

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GENRE: Fiction

CULTURE: Puerto Rican

THEME: learning to be brave and be present

READERS: 10 or more

READER AGES: 6–10

LENGTH: 10 - 15 minutes

ROLES: Narrators 1–4, Julia, Cheito, Drummers, Yamaris, Maestra, Singers

NOTES: This play has Spanish words and a song in Spanish. It's best to practice the words and the lyrics to the song before reading the play. Also, having a *maraca*, *cuás* and a *barril* would add greatly to the play. Please find a link to the *bomba* song in this play here: [https://youtu.be/Pi\\_RqCSfsFY](https://youtu.be/Pi_RqCSfsFY)

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SCENE I - Cultural Center

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NARRATOR 1: Early Saturday morning Julia and Cheito pushed open the doors to the cultural center and were greeted by a loud:

DRUMMERS: **Tan tantan TAN**

CHEITO: *¡Avanza Julia!* They're already warming up. Do I have to drag you up the stairs? Hurry!

NARRATOR 2: Cheito sat down in front of one of the *barriles* and began pounding on the drum, making beautiful music.

DRUMMERS: **Tan tantan TAN**

JULIA: (*sadly*) Cheito is a natural. He bangs on things all week long.

DRUMMERS: **Tan tantan TAN**

JULIA: He practices his beats on chairs

DRUMMERS: **Tan tantan TAN**

JULIA: and tables

DRUMMERS: **Tan tantan TAN**

JULIA: and even walls.

DRUM: **Tan tantan TAN**

JULIA: Cheito loves *bomba* class. (*pauses*) But not **me**. I don't want to practice dancing.

NARRATOR 3: Julia l-o-v-e-d to play make believe. She liked to daydream about becoming an astronaut.

SCENE 2 - Mirrors

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CHEITO: Come on Julia. *Todos están listos*. Everyone's ready to dance *bomba*.

JULIA: Everybody but **me**.

YAMARIS: *¡Avanza Julia!* Hurry. Come, stand behind me. Watch me and try to do what I do.

MAESTRA: *A la derecha. A la izquierda. A la derecha. A la izquierda.*

YAMARIS: To the right. To the left. To the right. To the left.

JULIA: (*frustrated*) I can't follow Yamaris. I just can't focus on the beat of the drum. I'm totally lost. *Estoy súper perdida*.

MAESTRA: *Una vuelta a la derecha.*

JULIA: My right turn is too slow.

MAESTRA: *Un pasito a lado.*

JULIA: My side step is too big.

MAESTRA: *Y, brinca!*

JULIA: And, my jumps are enormous! (*throws her arms over her face.*) I just don't think I **should** dance *bomba*.

- YAMARIS: We practiced and practiced for a very long time.
- MAESTRA: —*Muy bien, ahora prepárense para un bombazo.*
- YAMARIS: Let's get ready for a *bombazo*, Julia.
- JULIA: (*excited*) A *bombazo*? A *bombazo*! This is my **favorite** part of dance class.
- YAMARIS: Come on Julia. The musicians will play, everybody sings, and each of the big boys and girls gets to dance a solo.
- JULIA: I love to watch the dancers as I sing.
- MAESTRA: — *Como un regalo especial, todos los niños menores podrán participar en el bombazo de hoy.*
- YAMARIS: Listen Julia, all of the younger dancers will also dance a solo in the *bombazo*, as a special treat.
- JULIA: I'm going to have to dance - in front of everybody - ALL BY MYSELF! Oh, no!

### SCENE 3 - Musicians

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- NARRATOR 4: Julia could barely pay attention to any of the other dancers. Instead of concentrating on her little cousin Carla's terrific turn Julia was wondering how her own twirl would turn out.
- JULIA: Can I twirl with grace? Or, will I fall on my face?
- NARRATOR 1: Julia did **not** notice Natalia's special spin. She was too busy reminding herself to take little hops and not bounce like a donkey.
- JULIA: I have to remember, teeny, tiny hops. NO debo brincar como un burro.
- NARRATOR 2: Julia missed absolutely **all** of Yamaris' fancy footwork. She was caught up in her own thoughts, thinking about taking her time. She needed to stroll, *not* stumble.
- JULIA: I have to take my time. *No quiero tropezar a nada y a nadie.*
- NARRATOR 3: Finally, it was Julia's turn to dance. Head held high, Julia slowly

strolled into the circle.

NARRATOR 4: Julia stopped in the middle of the circle and paused for a moment. Then, she looked at the drummer of the *barril primo*, the main drum.

JULIA: The main drummer is smiling at me. He just nodded at me. (*deep inhalation*) I'm just going to close my eyes and try my best.

NARRATOR 1: Holding onto the edge of her skirt, Julia moved her right arm in the shape of a half circle.

DRUMMERS: **TAN**

JULIA: (*whispering*) Neat! Right on the drum beat!

NARRATOR 2: Now, eyes wide open and a bit braver, Julia focused on the *barril primo* and made the same movement with her left arm.

DRUMMERS: **TAN**

JULIA: Wow, the drum is talking to me!

NARRATOR 3: Julia began twirling in a circle, raising and lowering left arm, right arm, left arm, right arm as the *tambor principal* sang out:

DRUMMERS: **Tantantantan**

NARRATOR 4: Julia stopped worrying. She took a break from trying so hard. Instead, Julia heard, and felt, the rhythm of the *bomba* drums.

CHEITO: (*singing*) MAMÁ, CUÍDAME A BELÉN CUÍDAME A BELÉN, MAMÁ

ALL: (*singing*) MAMÁ, CUÍDAME A BELÉN CUÍDAME A BELÉN, MAMÁ

CHEITO: (*singing*) REPÍQUEME LA BOMBA, REPÍQUEME LA CUÁ.

ALL: (*singing*) REPÍQUEME LA BOMBA, REPÍQUEME LA CUÁ.

CHEITO: (*singing*) HAY, BÁILAME LA BOMBA HASTA LA MADRUGA'.

NARRATOR 1: The song finished, and Julia's dance came to an end. As Julia left the circle, she looked over at the musicians and spotted Cheíto.

JULIA: There's my big brother! He's sitting in the front row, happily pounding on a *barril*.

NARRATOR 2: Cheito looked at Julia and played a special beat just for her.

DRUMMERS: **Tantantantan Tantantantan Tantantantan Tantantantan**

NARRATOR 3: Julia took her place next to Yamaris. Yamaris hugged Julia.

YAMARIS: *(whispering)* That was great, Julia! I am soooooo proud of you!

JULIA: Thanks Yamaris. Now I'm a natural, too!