



STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

CULTUREVERSE – EPISODE 9: THE WISE FOOL

[0:06]

NARRATOR: This is Cultureverse. A place where myths and legends come alive in the modern world.

NARRATOR: I'm your host, Yara Shahidi. Episode 9: The Wise Fool

NARRATOR: Today's story is about a watch like no other.

NARRATOR: Ten-year-old Juan is visiting his Abuela and Uncle Miguel in Puerto Rico with his dad Alberto and Aunt Linda. Linda and Alberto moved to Miami from Puerto Rico together when they were teenagers. Every summer, the whole family heads back to the island to visit Abuelo and Abuela, but this summer is different.

NARRATOR: You see, Abuelo passed away. So the family is coming together to help Abuela move into her new condo.

(SFX BACKGROUND NOISE):

LINDA (yelling): I am the oldest. The watch should be mine!

ALBERTO (yelling): Mira you might be the oldest, but you're definitely not the wisest, Linda!

LINDA (Yelling): Well with your thick skull, I'm surprised you can actually tell time!

*ALBERTO (yelling): I was always Pa's favorite, and as the favorite child, I deserve the-
(gets interrupted).*

MIGUEL (yelling, interrupting Alberto): Acho Alberto, I'm the only child who actually lives in Puerto Rico; ¡el reloj debería ser pa' mí!

CARMEN (yelling the loudest): ¡¡¡SILENCIOOOOOOOOOO!!!

(SFX: All sound stops, including the music)

CARMEN: You are all behaving like children!

[1:35]

LINDA (whining): Pero, Mami! I am the oldest, so I should have the-

CARMEN (interrupting LINDA): Enough!

NARRATOR: Carmen opens her palm to reveal a golden pocket watch that shimmers in the afternoon light pouring through the windows. Juan looks at it curiously.

JUAN: Wooooow, it's beautiful, Abuela! I've never seen a watch like that!

CARMEN: I know you haven't Juan - it's unique! Your Abuelo had a very specific request for deciding who gets to keep his magic pocket watch!

JUAN: Magic?

ALBERTO: Yes mijo, don't you remember the story I used to tell you when you were little?

[2:12]

JUAN: The one about the pocket watch that draws its power from the island?

ALBERTO: That's it, Juanito! (In a funny, exaggerated storyteller voice). He who has possession of it-

LINDA: SHE!

ALBERTO (In a funny, exaggerated storyteller voice): Whoever has possession of it will live a life filled with luck.

JUAN: May I?

MIGUEL: Nephew, you're so clumsy you'll probably drop it and scratch the finish!

JUAN: I will not! Abuela, Please?

[2:36]

LINDA (Laughing): Mami be careful don't give it to him! Don't you remember last summer Juanito destroyed an entire art installation at the museum when he leaned on that statue and knocked over the other eight statues in the exhibit? They fell like dominos jaja!

JUAN: But that artist got a really good review in the Miami Herald for his... innovative use of... What did they say again, Dad?

ALBERTO: Deconstruction!

JUAN(defensively): Yeah, see? He won a bunch of awards all over the world because of my clumsiness.

ALBERTO: You know, he was a starving artist and now he's worth millions!

MIGUEL: Well, then you shoulda asked for a commission!

[3:15]

ALBERTO: Juan isn't greedy like you, Miguel! He was happy to see the guy succeed!

LINDA: All I'm saying is that I love my nephew, but he's always been a little... well, uncoordinated.

JUAN(upset): I'm standing right here, Tía.

MIGUEL: Uncoordinated? Mira, ¡el nene es comiquito! He's a little goofy!

ALBERTO (angrily): If you say one more thing about my son, I swear I'm gonna-

CARMEN (quickly): Bendito, my Juanito's mistakes always seem to work out well for others, so quit making fun of him, all of you! Tiene un corazón grande y eso no se lo despinta nadie. Juan is a good boy with a huge heart.

[3:57]

NARRATOR: Abuela gently places the watch in Juan's palm. He smiles in awe as he rubs his finger over the cover, which is engraved with a pava, or straw hat, and Abuelo's initials. He was very close with his grandfather, so the watch brings up a flood of memories of the time they spent together.

CARMEN: Besides, your Abuelo said years ago that he wanted the watch to go to the youngest male heir in the family when he died.

JUAN: Really????

CARMEN: Your grandfather swore that this lucky watch was responsible for all the blessings in his life. It was the most valuable thing he owned. Take good care of it, mijo.

NARRATOR: Juan takes the watch, and holds it up to the midday sun, then holds it up to his ear.

JUAN: Abuela, It doesn't work!

[4:55]

NARRATOR: Carmen takes the watch back and listens to it.

CARMEN: WHAT? It was just working the other day... Esto ya se volvió un tostón, mira... This just got TOUGH! Where can we fix it? Oh, no, you know what, go to Don LEÓN. He'll be able to fix it.

MIGUEL: That crazy old guy with the bait and tackle shop? How could he fix a watch?

CARMEN: He's not crazy, Miguel - and if he can fix boats, he can fix a watch!

LINDA: He lives out there IN HIS SHOP, all alone!

MIGUEL: You know Juanito, one summer when we were kids, three teenagers estaban jangeando por ahí and disappeared one afternoon. They were last seen buying alcapurrias outside of Don LEÓN's shop!

JUAN: What... what happened to them?

[5:49]

LINDA: No one knows... But people found his fishing rod on the beach with kids' sandals laying around!!!

ALBERTO: Don't listen to them, son. They're just trying to scare you

MIGUEL: Rumor has it that Don LEÓN was making-

CARMEN: STOP! Don León is a sweet old man... he's just a little misunderstood. People have been making up silly stories about him and harassing him for as long as I can remember. Pobrecito. He's just a little grumpy. You would be too if people bothered you all the time!

JUAN: I love the watch, Abuela, but I don't really want to go out to the beach alone to get it fixed.

CARMEN: You are old enough to go on your own. It's your watch. You need to learn how to take care of it.

[6:35]

MIGUEL (Scary voice): Just be back before dark!

NARRATOR: Juan reluctantly makes his way to the beach.

(SFX sounds of the town, cars, people laughing, music playing, etc.)

NARRATOR: It is afternoon, and the town is alive with elders playing domino in the streets and lots and lots of music everywhere.

(SFX: Puerto Rican music, salsa, etc.)

(SFX: In the background)

MR. COLÓN: Hola Juanito, ¿qué es la que hay?

JUAN: ¡Bien aquí, señor Colón! Do you need some help with your groceries?

(SFX River sounds)

NARRATOR: He walks across a bridge that leads to the beach. It is over a freshwater river that spills out to the sea.

(SFX: Goose sounds and splashing in the river)

JUAN: I wonder how deep the water is here...

[7:17]

NARRATOR: He leans over to get a closer look at the geese swimming underneath when all of a sudden...

(SFX car slowing down sound and honking.)

JUAN: (yells) AHHHH!

NARRATOR: A passing car startles Juan, and he drops the watch into the river below.

JUAN (Slow mo): Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

(SFX, STEPS, SHOULDER TAP, BREATH FROM JUAN)

(SFX: Car drives off)

NARRATOR: Juan slides down the embankment towards the river, his heart beating out of control.

JUAN (desperately, almost panicking): C'mon watch! Get back here! You're supposed to be lucky!

(SFX splashing sounds)

JUAN (desperately, almost panicking): Where is it?

(SFX splashing water sounds)(SFX gasping for air)

JUAN (desperately screaming):

No, nonononono it's not here... NOOOO!

(SFX: Scenario goes on for a few more seconds, 'til coquíes start croaking around, indicating night is coming)

NARRATOR: It's dark now, and Juan swims over to the bank with tears in his eyes. He can't believe he lost the watch.

[8:24]

JUAN (crying): I'll have to go home and tell Abuela and everyone now, they're going to be so mad... (SFX splashing)... where are my shirt and shoes? I just left them over--- (Suddenly relieved) oh there!

(SFX twigs breaking interrupt Juan abruptly)

NARRATOR: Juan cautiously takes a step out of the water and stumbles on his shoes... accidentally kicking **them** into the water...

JUAN (desperately, almost panicking): NO WHYNONONONO... COME BACK! I can't lose those TOOO!!

(SFX twigs breaking)

(SFX running sounds and heavy breathing)

NARRATOR: He grabs his things and sprints alongside the shoes as they float down the river straight towards the sea.

(SFX running through brush and palms and then sound of waves). JUAN (breathless): FOUND YOU! Found... you. I am not taking THESE off again! (Regaining his breath) That was close.

[9:10]

Narrator: When he looks up, Juan's eyes are then drawn to the edge of the water, where he sees the silhouette of a man standing as still as a statue...

(SFX ominous music)

JUAN (whispering fearfully): Don León.

NARRATOR: After all his unfortunate luck over the past few hours, he steps back to start heading home. He doesn't want to tell anyone he lost the watch yet.

(SFX footsteps + then JUAN yelling as he falls: AHFFF!)

NARRATOR: Juan trips and falls over a hole in the ground. Lying face down, the voices of his aunt and uncle begin taunting him in his head.

(The following voices are what Juan hears in his head. They can overlap and loop a few times.)

LINDA (making fun of him): Uncoordinated!

MIGUEL (making fun of him): ¡Comiquito! Clumsy fool!

Narrator: The man by the shore turns around and rushes towards Juan who can't escape because his left foot is tangled in some kind of rope.

(SFX heavy breathing and running on the sand)

JUAN (Frantically to himself): I just want to go home! Get off of me!

[10:10]

NARRATOR: Juan is finally able to free himself. He runs straight into Don León, who came to help him.

(SFX: JUAN runs and pants; DON LEÓN runs and grunts, catches up to him, and grabs his arm from behind and Juan tumbles to the ground...)

DON LEÓN (kindly): Mijo! Pa' donde vas? Where are you going?

JUAN (Nervously, anxiously): Don León. I'm sorry, I was just trying to get home and I fell! And my Abuela told me to find you but I lost the watch you were supposed to fix and----

DON LEÓN (kindly but also confused): Chillea niño, estoy viejo, I'm an old man I can't understand when you speak so fast!

JUAN: Oh... right. Sorry. Hola Don LEÓN. My Abuela told me to come find you to help fix a watch. But... I lost it...

DON LEÓN (disappointed): It's okay Juan, I really can't help you anyway. Perdí un bonche de cosas... I lost a lot of my tools in the flood last week. Look.

[11:09]

NARRATOR: The man turns towards the snack shack, and under the moonlight, Juan can now see the devastation of the destruction.

JUAN: I'm sorry señor...

DON LEÓN (sad, frustrated): I never bother a soul. I just have the worst luck... What am I gonna do? I don't have the money to clean up this mess.

JUAN: (Awkwardly) I'm... I'm sorry.

DON LEÓN (suddenly realizing): Wait a minute. You're Carmen's grandson, right?

JUAN: How did you-

DON LEÓN (Excited): I know your family from years ago. (Then sadly) I was really sorry to hear your Abuelo had passed. Éramos panitas, ¿sabes?

(PAUSE)

JUAN: Thank you...

DON LEÓN: So what happened to the watch? I remember your Abuelo carried it with him everywhere!

JUAN: Well, I was actually on my way to you but I accidentally dropped it off the bridge!

[12:02]

DON LEÓN: I'm so sorry mijo.

JUAN: Yeah. It was beautiful. It was engraved with his initials. He left it for me. It's all I have left of my Abuelo or I guess I should say, HAD left of my Abuelo...

DON LEÓN: You know my father built this shack and then passed it onto me. It's all I have left too. He let me take over the family business. (Disappointed) Now it's on its last leg, I'll have to give it up soon too...

JUAN: What um... what will you do?

DON LEÓN (disappointed): I'm probably gonna have to retire and move to New York City and live with my daughter.

JUAN: New York City sounds... nice.

DON LEÓN: I hate the cold, and I hate large groups of people. I need sunshine and the ocean. (Pause) (In Spanish) Llevo a la Isla en mi corazón. (In English) What can I say, Puerto Rico is in my soul.

JUAN: It is beautiful here. Did you know my Abuelo very well?

[13:09]

DON LEÓN: OH yes, I did, we went to school together.

JUAN: Oh... I miss him.

DON LEÓN (smiling slightly): Aww mijo, I'm sorry. But you know what gives me hope?

JUAN: What?

DON LEÓN (smiling slightly): That no matter what happens the Isla will still be here... and that goes for you too---you will always have it and the memories you create here.

NARRATOR: Don León runs inside and retrieves an old photo album that was spared and he points to a photo of Juan's Abuelo as a boy.

(SFX Waves, laughter, and Don León singing casually fragments of this song).

[13:45)

NARRATOR: As they spend more time together Juan can see that Don León is actually a very sweet old man just like his Abuela said, and he even offers to drive Juan home. On the way there, he shares stories about the island:

(SFX: Don LEÓN telling stories about Juan Bobo in the background...)

DON LEÓN: ...y después vistió al cerdo and he took the dressed pig to CHURCH!

JUAN: WHAAAT!

DON LEÓN: And that's not the only time he did that! Another time, he lost a very precious gift he got - and guess what? ¡llegó un ganso y se lo comió!

JUAN: A GOOSE?!

(DON LEÓN AND JUAN laugh)

JUAN: Maybe um... maybe I could come back tomorrow and help you clean up.

DON LEÓN: I would love that.

NARRATOR: When Juan gets back home, he nervously tells his family the truth about what happened to the watch.

LINDA: I told you he would lose it!

MIGUEL: How could you??

[14:44]

ALBERTO: Ay no, mijo!!!!!!

JUAN(about to cry): I'm... I'm so sorry

NARRATOR: Listening to his aunt and uncle brings back all the shame and guilt he has felt for most of his life. They were right, he thought--he was clumsy and things always go wrong when he is in charge. He runs up to his room and slams the door.

(SFX: Door knocks. ABUELA opens the door)

CARMEN: ¿Juanito?

JUAN: Ay Abuela...

CARMEN: ¡No te agites, mijo! Don't feel bad... Your Abuelo's memory is far more valuable than any watch could ever be. Lo importante es que estás aquí y que estamos todos juntos. You are safe and home and we are all together, that's what I care about the most and that's what your abuelo would have cared about as well. Remember how much your Abuelo loved to laugh?

JUAN (quietly): Yes.

[15:49]

CARMEN: Every time you or anyone around you laughs, think about Abuelo. And I promise you his memory will always be near.

NARRATOR: The next week the whole family is gathered around the TV watching the nightly news.

LINDA: Turn it up, turn it up!

MIGUEL: You have the remote!

ALBERTO: Here I got it! Wait... Is that Juan??

CARMEN (yelling happily): ¡¡¡CÁLLENSEEEEE!!! It's on!

SANDY POPLORE This is Sandy Poplore LIVE with Culturverse news. Tonight we bring you a story with a remarkable twist of fate and incredible generosity. Seventy-five-year-old Don León, a legend at Playa in Ponce, Puerto Rico, received the blessing of a lifetime yesterday afternoon. A few weeks ago, the bait and tackle shop that had been in his family since the 1930s was damaged by flooding. The damage was estimated at more than \$50,000. But Don León was out fishing yesterday and while cleaning one of his catches, he found a vintage pocket watch valued at more than one hundred thousand dollars.

LINDA: (In Spanish) ¡Ay Jesucristo bendito!

SANDY POPLORE: The watch belonged to a young man who had recently lost it-- It was a family heirloom and had been in the family for more than 100 years.

[17:03]

MIGUEL: No way...

NARRATOR: The entire family's mouths are open in disbelief and they turn to stare at Juan who is now beaming with joy.

JUAN: Oh yeah! I found it yesterday... look look! Here's my part!

(SFX: TV effects)

JUAN: Well, I told Don León that he could keep the watch because I knew he needed it more than me.

(SFX: In the background, fading out)

ALBERTO: I'm so proud of you, Juanito!

NARRATOR: Don León sold the watch and decided to rebuild a bigger and better shop in the original location. As for Juan--- he agreed to come work with him when he returned to the island the following summer. (Fades out)

[17:52]

NARRATOR: This story is inspired by Juan Bobo, a Puerto Rican folk character. In Spanish, bobo means "fool," and Juan Bobo is a jíbaro -which means "farmer." He's known for always getting into sticky situations, but in the end, Juan's choices always show he is much wiser than expected.

NARRATOR: If you want to learn more about Juan Bobo's adventures and more on Puerto Rican folklore, check out Juan Bobo: Four Folktales from Puerto Rico, by Carmen Bernier-Grand, and Folk Stories from the Hills of Puerto Rico, by Rafael Ocasio.

NARRATOR: This podcast was produced by Studio Ochenta for TRAX on PRX. Juan was voiced by Claudio Venancio. Alberto was voiced by Víctor Emmanuelle Ramos. Aunt Linda was voiced by Alondra Llompарт. Carmen was voiced by Natasha Yannacañedo. Don León was voiced by Israel Tanenbaum.

[19:00]

NARRATOR: Special thanks to our Cultureverse editorial team for this episode: America Lugo, Amanda Cruz, and Charlotte Álvarez, who brought their Puerto Rican experiences to this story.

NARRATOR: The Creative Director and Executive Producer for this series is Lory Martínez, founder of Studio Ochenta. Dr. Kiona is our consulting producer for all things culture.

NARRATOR: Our Senior Fiction Producer is Maru Lombardo. All original opening songs for this series were composed by Gabriel Dalmasso. Sound design and music by Luis Raúl López Levi. And our art is by Steve Aparicio. The Executive Producer for TRAX is Michelle Smawley and our scripts were edited by Nathan Yunglerberg.

NARRATOR: Follow us on TikTok & IG @cultureversepod. Transcripts are available at ochentastudio.com/cultureverse.

NARRATOR: And I'm Yara Shahidi, your host. Thanks for listening!

END OF EPISODE