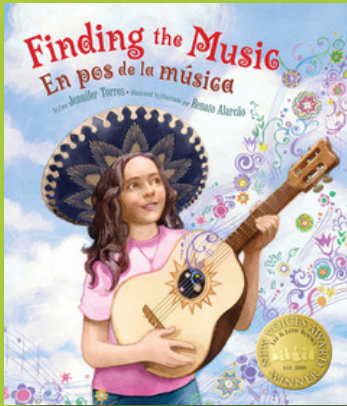


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

# Finding the Music/ En pos de la música

written by Jennifer Torres

illustrated by Renato Alarcão

## About the Book

Genre: Realistic Fiction

\*Reading Level: Grades 3–4

Interest Level: Grades 1–5

Guided Reading Level: O

Accelerated Reader® Level/  
Points: 3.5/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD660L

\*Reading level based on the Spache  
Readability Formula

**Themes:** Music (vihuela),  
Childhood Experiences and  
Memories, Community,  
Conflict Resolution, Families,  
Grandparents, Holidays  
and Traditions, Overcoming  
Obstacles, Persistence and  
Grit, Responsibility, Self-  
esteem and Confidence,  
Making Mistakes, Latino/  
Hispanic/Mexican Interest

## SYNOPSIS

Above Reyna's favorite booth in her family's restaurant hangs the old vihuela, a small guitar-like instrument, that belonged to her abuelito when he was in a mariachi band. Reyna has never heard the vihuela played, but her mamá treasures the instrument as a reminder of Abuelito and his music.

One noisy day in the restaurant, Reyna accidentally damages the vihuela. Determined to get it repaired before Mamá notices, Reyna ventures out into the neighborhood to find someone who can help her repair the instrument.

No one can fix the vihuela, but along the way Reyna gathers stories and mementos of Abuelito and his music. Still determined, Reyna visits the music store, where the owner gives her a recording of Abuelito's music and promises that they can fix the vihuela together. Reyna realizes how much she's learned about Abuelito, his influence in the community, and the power of his music. She returns to her family's restaurant to share Abuelito's gifts with Mamá and is happier still finally to hear the sweet sounds of Abuelito's music for herself.

With lively illustrations by Renato Alarcão, the tradition of mariachi music comes to life in this bilingual story. Winner of Lee & Low's New Voices Award, *Finding the Music* is a heartwarming tale of family, community, and the music that brings them all together.



## BACKGROUND

**Mariachi music and the vihuela (excerpted from the author's note):** More than two hundred years ago, musicians in Mexico began blending indigenous and Spanish musical traditions to create the mariachi sound. As Mexicans moved to the United States, they brought this style of folk music with them, and the art of mariachi continues to thrive in both Mexico and the US... Sometimes described as the “musical voice of the people,” mariachi music embodies the spirit of community. It is played at weddings, birthdays, funerals, baptisms, and other special moments in the lives of families and neighbors... Today, a mariachi ensemble usually includes violins, trumpets, a guitar, a bass called a guitarrón, and a vihuela. The vihuela, a small, five-stringed guitar with a rounded back, has a high pitch and gives mariachi music its lively rhythm.

Photos of the instruments traditionally found in a mariachi ensemble can be found here ([http://cityheightsmusicschool.com/?attachment\\_id=195](http://cityheightsmusicschool.com/?attachment_id=195)). More information about each instrument is contained in this lesson plan (<https://www.teachervision.com/mexico/introduction-mariachi-music>).

**“Cielito Lindo”(From the author):** The restaurant in this story is named after a song. Written around 1882 by Quirino Mendoza y Cortes, “Cielito Lindo” is one of the most popular pieces of mariachi music. The title translates into English as “Beautiful Heaven,” an expression similar in meaning to “sweetheart” or “darling.” The most common English translation of the song’s famous refrain is below.

*Ay, ay, ay, ay*

*Sing and don't cry,*

*Because, Little Heavenly One,*

*Singing makes the heart happy.*

Find a video of a mariachi ensemble performing “Cielito Lindo” here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTd3xPzhO8o>).

### Awards and honors for *Finding the Music* include:

**New Voices Award Winner**, Lee & Low Books

**Junior Library Guild Selection**, Junior Library Guild (JLG)

**Tejas Star Reading List**, Texas Library Association

**Américas Award Commended Titles**, Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP)

**Best Books of the Year**, *The Huffington Post*

**“Choices,”** Cooperatives Children’s Book Center (CCBC)



## VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### Content Specific

booth, vihuela, abuelito, mariachi band, jangled, tortillas, record player, hardware store, pliers, sombrero, record, volume dial

### Academic

concentrate, complained, ignore, ruckus, hollered, flinging, gasped, stunned, silence, examined, drooped, described, repaired, sagging, recognized, interrupted, handsome

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Does your family have any special possessions or heirlooms that belonged to someone who died? How might a family take care of a special possession? How can a possession remind you of someone important?
2. Have you ever eaten at a restaurant? What might a popular restaurant be like on the weekend?
3. Have you ever done something when you were frustrated or angry that you later regretted? How did you feel afterwards?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrator's dedications, glossary and pronunciation guide, illustrations, and author's note. Point out how the text is in both English and Spanish.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out about:

- what special possession Reyna and her family have of her grandfather's and what happens to it
- how a mistake helps Reyna learn more about her grandfather and her community

Encourage students to consider why the author, Jennifer Torres, would want to share this story with young people.



## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses.

**To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What hangs on the wall at the Cielito Lindo restaurant? Where did it come from? What does it make Mamá wish?
2. What does Reyna like to do at the restaurant? Why is it hard to concentrate?
3. What's it like at the restaurant on Saturday? What is Mamá doing? What is Reyna doing?
4. What do the Sandoval twins do? How does Reyna react?
5. What does Reyna see when she examines the vihuela?
6. Why does Reyna think Don Antonio might be able to fix the vihuela? Can he? What does Reyna notice as she's leaving?
7. Who does Reyna see across the street? What does Miss Ana tell her? What does she give Reyna? Why?
8. Where does Reyna go next? What does she remember about Señor Marcos? What does she hope to be able to do? What does Señor Marcos say about the broken vihuela?
9. What does Mamá ask Reyna when she gets back to the restaurant? What does she do with the picture and the sombrero?
10. What does Reyna do with the record? What does she say to Mamá?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. How do Reyna's and Mamá's points of view about noise level in the restaurant differ?
2. What does Reyna's reaction to the vihuela falling tell you about how she feels?
3. Why does Reyna know "she had to get the vihuela fixed somehow?"
4. What information do the photo and the story behind it give about Reyna's abuelito? Why do you think Don Antonio gives it to Reyna?
5. Why does Miss Ana tell Reyna not to worry? Why do you think she says Mamá will understand?
6. How would you describe Señor Marcos, based on his actions when Mamá bought Reyna's trumpet and when Reyna brings him the vihuela?
7. How is Reyna both relieved and disappointed at the same time?
8. Why does Señor Marcos say he's giving Reyna the record? Do you think he has any other unspoken reasons?
9. How does Mamá react when Reyna finally tells her about the broken vihuela? What do you think is most important to her about the instrument?
10. Why is it significant that Reyna turns on the record? Why do you think the author chose to end the book with "... Reyna didn't mind at all?"



“Bright colors and warm faces create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere. An uplifting celebration of family, community, and culture.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

“[A] charming bilingual story that showcases the power of music. . . . VERDICT A rich addition for those who enjoy music and its influence in community and family unity.”

–*School Library Journal*

“Written in both English and Spanish, Torres presents a warm, inspiring story of family and community; it’s also an informative music lesson, as well.”

– *Smithsonian APA BookDragon Blog*

### Reader’s Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader’s response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Based on the comments and stories shared by Mamá, Don Antonio, Miss Ana and Señor Marcos, describe Reyna’s abuelito.
2. Describe Reyna as a character based on her actions and responses to challenges.
3. What do you think bothered Reyna most about damaging the vihuela? Have you ever damaged or broken something special by mistake? How did you feel?
4. Why do you think the author chose the title *Finding the Music*? How did Reyna “find the music” in this story?
5. How can music impact a community? Share an example from your own life.
6. How does this book demonstrate the power of family? How does it demonstrate the power of community?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk explaining a mistake or problem and how they dealt with it. Or, ask them to talk about kinds of music they or their families enjoy.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students.





Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

- Help students keep track of the plot in this book with a story map. Arrange pictures and/or cards on a chart showing the setting, problem, and how each character contributed to the resolution. Or, use this story map worksheet provided by the author, Jennifer Torres (<https://jenntorres.com/books/the-book/activities-for-the-classroom/story-map/>).
- In Question 6 of this interview, the author, Jennifer Torres, talks about how pleased she was that the Spanish and English versions of the story “each bring a different layer of meaning and experience to the book” (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica/interviews>). Have Spanish speakers choose a section of the story and compare the two versions. What does Torres mean?

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

*(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)*

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

*(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 6)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purposes, Strands 2 and 3 and Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)*

- Have your students perform this story as improvised Readers Theater, taking on the parts of Reyna, Mamá, the restaurant guests, and the various business-owners. Use the illustrations to discuss the body language, facial expressions and tone students might use to bring the various characters to life.
- The story ends before the vihuela is fixed. Have students brainstorm possible places to find out about fixing a broken instrument (e.g., the school music teacher, websites, videos, etc.) and then seek out information from these sources. Create a list of possible ways Señor Marcos might fix the vihuela.
- The first writing Jennifer Torres had published was a newspaper article about making tamales with her family (<http://articles.latimes.com/1997/dec/25/news/ls-1994>). On her website she writes, “I think that’s when I started to understand how precious and powerful stories can be.” Discuss how Finding the Music is a “precious and powerful” story. Ask students to write “precious and powerful” stories about their families.

### Art and Music

*(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)*

- Discuss the illustrations that depict how the Cielito Lindo restaurant is decorated with family memorabilia and cultural artifacts. Why do people often choose to display such items? Have students create collages using images of items that are significant to their families, cultures and communities.
- Study the illustrations that show the crowds at the Cielito Lindo restaurant. How do these pictures depict the idea of “community?” Have students create drawings or paintings that depict their own communities.
- View videos of mariachi ensembles performing on YouTube. Then review the information about instruments used for mariachi music in this lesson plan (<https://www.teachervision.com/mexico/introduction-mariachi-music>). Have students try to identify the various instruments in a video and talk about the sounds they make.



### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. Set up a Mexican restaurant in your classroom using Cielito Lindo as inspiration. Play mariachi music and sample Mexican cuisine (the author provides a recipe for tortillas on her website: <https://jenntorres.com/books/the-book/activities-for-home/homemade-tortillas/>). The author also provides directions for making traditional paper flowers that could be used to decorate the “tables” (<https://jenntorres.com/books/the-book/activities-for-home/paper-flowers/>).
2. Discuss the author’s comparison of the vihuela, which provides the rhythm in a mariachi ensemble to Abuelito, who she calls the “pulse” of his community (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica/interviews>). Brainstorm examples of those who serve as a “pulse” for your school community and students’ communities. What characteristics do these individuals share? If possible, invite individuals to come to your class to discuss their beliefs about what makes a strong community.

### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. In the author’s note, Jennifer Torres describes how music can instantly transport a listener to a memory from the past. Have students interview family members or other adults about cherished music and what memories it evokes. Listen to examples of some of the music in class.
2. Invite family members to share treasured artifacts with the class that tell stories from their family history.
3. Discover more activities for *Finding the Music* from author Jennifer Torres: <https://jenntorres.com/books/the-book/>.

### Additional titles to teach about community and working together:

**Rent Party Jazz** written by William Miller, illustrated by Charlotte Riley-Webb  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2440>

**Auntie Yang’s Great Soybean Picnic** written by Ginnie Lo, illustrated by Beth Lo  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2768>

**Xochitl and the Flowers/ Xóchitl, la Niña de las Flores** written by Jorge Argueta, illustrated by Carl Angel  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2829>

**Sweet Music in Harlem** written by Debbie Taylor, illustrated by Frank Morrison  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2458>

**Sweet Potato Pie** written by Kathleen D. Lindsey, illustrated by Charlotte Riley-Webb  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2459>

**Under the Lemon Moon** written by Edith Hope Fine, illustrated by René King Moreno  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2463>

**Armando and the Blue Tarp School** written by Edith Hope Fine and Judith Pinkerton Josephson, illustrated by Hernán Sosa  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2354>

**Lend a Hand: Poems About Giving** written by John Frank, illustrated by London Ladd  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/lend-a-hand>

**The Birthday Swap** written and illustrated by Loretta Lopez  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-birthday-swap>

**Young Cornrows Callin Out the Moon** written by Ruth Forman, illustrated by Cbabi Bayoc  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/young-cornrows-callin-out-the-moon>

**Growing Peace** written and photographed by Richard Sobol  
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/growing-peace>



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Jennifer Torres** is a first time picture book author and freelance journalist. She grew up listening to mariachi music, and as a reporter, she met mariachi musicians who were responsible for popularizing the genre in California. Torres was inspired to write *Finding the Music*, for which she won Lee & Low's New Voices Award, by her own neighborhood and the tradition of neighbors coming together to support one another. She lives in Stockton, California, with her husband and their two children. Find her online at <https://jenntorres.com>.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Renato Alarcão** was born in Rio de Janeiro, is an illustrator and a visual arts teacher. He studied illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York City and has illustrated many children's books both in the United States and his native Brazil. Alarcão was inspired to become an illustrator by the amazing illustrated covers on his brother's record album collection. He lives in Niterói, Brazil, with his wife and their two sons. Visit his website at <http://www.renatoalarcao.com.br/site.htm>.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)  
[www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica)

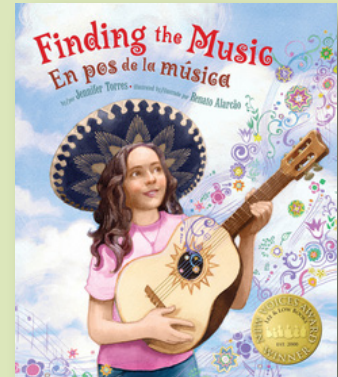
(secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for *Finding the Music*



\$18.95, HARDCOVER

978-0-89239-291-9

40 pages, 8-3/4 x 10-1/4

\*Reading Level: Grades 3–4

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 1–5

Guided Reading Level: N

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 3.5/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD660L

**THEMES:** Music (vihuela), Childhood Experiences and Memories, Community, Conflict Resolution, Families, Grandparents, Holidays and Traditions, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence and Grit, Responsibility, Self-esteem and Confidence, Making Mistakes, Latino/Hispanic/Mexican Interest

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/finding-the-music-en-pos-de-la-musica>

*All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.*