Isabel and the Hungry Coyote / Isabel y el coyote hambriento

Story by Keith Polette, Illustrated by Esther Szegedy
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Bilingual Puppet Play Adapted with permission from the publisher
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Characters:
Coyote (Leila)
Isabel (Sogol)
Grandmother (Abuelita) (Hannah)

Coyote: *(Clutching belly / swooning and stumbling around as if from hunger)* Oh, I am going to *die* if I don't get something to eat. ¡Ay, me muero de hambre!

Isabel, dressed in her red hooded jacket or coat and carrying a covered basket filled with red chile peppers (& tamales??), comes on stage, singing happily to herself, stopping to pick flowers.

Isabel: (*Singing)* La la la la la. La la la la la la.

Coyote stops and stares at Isabel.

Coyote: Yum yum. *(Laughing to himself softly).* ¡Qué rica! What a *delicious* looking morsel. I think I know what's for lunch today. *(Chuckles softly)* Ya encontré mi comida.

*Coyote then slowly and stealthily creeps closer to Isabel, who continues to hum softly to herself, picking flowers. As he gets close to the girl and prepares to pounce**, his stomach rumbles and gurgles (sound effect??).*** *Isabel whirls around at the noise.*

Isabel: ¡Señor Coyote! *(In a stern tone)* ¿Qué desea? What do you want?

Coyote: *(Bows head or body respectfully)*
Ah, ah…nada más quería darte los buenos días. I just wanted to say good morning.

Isabel: Pues, buenos días. Good morning to you, too. My name is Isabel.

Coyote: Mucho gusto, Isabel. What a beautiful red hood you are wearing.¡Qué caperucita más bonita tienes!

Coyote edges a little closer to Isabel.

Isabel: Gracias, señor Coyote. This caperucita keeps the sun from my face. *(Isabel points to/touches her red hood as she speaks, and takes a step backward in response to Coyote's step forward.)*

Coyote: Ah, sí. ¿Y adónde vas esta mañana? And where might you be going this morning?
Coyote again inches a little closer to Isabel.

Isabel: Ah, voy a visitar a mi abuelita. I'm going to visit my grandmother. *(Isabel moves backward again in response to Coyote's forward movement.)*

Coyote: And where does your abuelita live?

Isabel: Vive cerca del arroyo. She lives near the stream in that *casa* over there.

Isabel points to an adobe house in the distance. Coyote looks in the direction Isabel is pointing and then back at Isabel before speaking in an aside to the audience.

Coyote: Esta niña would make a fine lunch… sí, esta niña sería una comida *riquísima*. *(Coyote begins to nod to himself in a self-satisfied fashion.)* But, if I wait just a little – si me espero un ratitito – ¡puedo almorzarla y su abuela también! Yes, oh, yes, if I am just a little bit patient, I can have both the little girl *and* her grandmother for lunch!

Coyote sniffs the air.

Mmmm…¿Qué hay en la canasta? What do have in your basket this morning?

Isabel: Unos tamales con chiles picantes. Would you like to try one of my tamales with a hot pepper?

Coyote: *(In a horrified, almost angry tone)* ¡Ay, no! Nunca como tamales con salsa picante. I *never* eat tamales with hot peppers… The chiles – pues, son como un fuego – Chile peppers are like fire in my mouth. ¡Me pican la lengua! *(Blows out as though his mouth is on fire.)*

And you *know* what a delicate tongue I have… tengo una lengua muy delicada... I'm not just *any* coyote, you know. *(Points snout up in the air in a superior fashion)*

(Looking down the road at Isabel's grandmother's house)
Pues, tengo que irme. I must be off. ¡Adiós!

Isabel: Adiós, señor Coyote.

Isabel goes off down the "path" and exits puppet stage. At the same time, Coyote runs off down the road to the grandmother's house, where he finds the door open. He creeps slowly and silently into the quiet house. He looks around, but does not see Isabel's grandmother. Suddenly he hears a ***noise outside, where Isabel is opening the gate latch (sound effect – latch opening).*** *He quickly throws on the grandmother's nightgown and jumps into her bed, pulling the covers up over her chin.*

Isabel: *(Isabel looks around)*
Buenos días, Abuelita. ¿Estás en casa?

Coyote: *(Trying to sound like the grandmother)*
Sí, sí, aquí estoy, mi corazón. Here I am, dear, in my bed. I haven't been feeling too well.

Isabel enters the house and approaches her grandmother's bed.

It is so good to see you, my dear! ¡Qué gusto de verte, mi amor! Come closer…acércate.

Isabel: *(Isabel stops suddenly when she sees her "grandmother's" strange appearance.)*

'Uelita, ¡qué ojos más grandes tienes!

Coyote: Ah yes, my eyes are huge, it is true…sí, bien grandes. All the better to see you, querida.

Isabel: Pero 'Uelita, ¡qué orejas más grandes tienes!

Coyote: Ah yes, my ears *are* big, my dear – all the better to hear you, mija. Así te oigo mejor.

Isabel: But Grandmother, what big arms you have!

Coyote: O sí, mis brazos son grandes para darte un abrazo, mija…yes, my arms *are* big and strong, querida…all the better to hug you!

Isabel: Ay, Abuelita, ¡que boca más grande tienes!

Coyote: *(Snarling)* Yes, you are right, my dear…My mouth is so big so that I can eat you quickly, mija! ¡Tengo una boca grande para almorzarte!

Coyote lets out a terrible growl as he leaps from the bed. He grabs Isabel with his powerful forearms and opens his mouth to swallow her. Isabel trembles and struggles to free herself, but Coyote is very strong. As Coyote opens his mouth even wider, Isabel flings the chiles in her basket into his mouth. As Coyote bites down on the chiles, he howls:

¡Aiiieeee! ¡Chiles! Red hot chiles! Ay, ¡que picantes! ¡Aiiieeee! ¡Fuego! ¡Fuego! My mouth is on fire! My boca is burning! ¡Aiiieeee!

Coyote drops Isabel and races out of the house. He runs off stage howling all the way. Isabel listens as his howls fade away.

*Then a door opens (**sound of door opening**), and from offstage, a voice is heard:*

Abuela: Buenos días, mi amor. ¡Qué gusto de verte!

Isabel *(Running to her grandmother and giving her a hug)*
¡O, ‘Uelita! It is so good to see you, too!

Abuela: I was taking my siesta in the backyard when I heard a terrible howl… oi un aullido horrible cuando dormía la siesta.

Isabel: Fue Coyote. Yes, that old Coyote wanted to have *me* for his lunch, but I fed him the chiles I had brought for you. *(Grinning)* Yo le di de comer los chiles.

Abuela: Ay, qué niña más valiente… y mañosa. Yes, mija, you are both brave **and** clever. And now, let us go enjoy some of your delicious tamales for lunch! ¡Vamos a comer!

Isabel and Grandmother exit the stage together.