



The Legend of Pecos Bill and Slue-foot Sue

Characters

Chuck

Gunn Smith

Grammy Coyote

Pecos Bill

Slue-foot Sue

Widowmaker/
Lightning

Setting

This reader's theater takes place on the open plains in the Great State of Texas, sometime in the 1800s.



Act I

Slue-foot Sue: Yooohooo! Neighbors! Anybody home?

Chuck: Well, howdy ma'am! Did I hear you say "neighbor"? Are you new in these parts?

Slue-foot Sue: Ma'am? Save your "ma'ams" for those genteel ladies in town! Me? I don't stand much on formalities. I can ride any critter big enough to hold me and shoot twice as well as any man I have ever met. They call me Slue-foot Sue, and I just moved into that ranch over yonder.

Chuck: Pleased to meet you, Slue-foot Sue. My name is Bob, but most folks call me Chuck, because whenever we are in camp I like to hang around the Chuck Wagon and grab myself an easy snack! My friend here is named . . . well, I can't properly pronounce her name, because I don't speak Coyote. She is old and wise, so we call her Grammy as a sign of respect.

Grammy: Pleased to meet you, human, Sue.

Slue-foot Sue: The pleasure is all mine, Grammy. You two have got my curiosity up, though. A coyote and a cowboy sitting out here like peas in a pod? Now there has to be a good story in that!



Grammy: It is a very good story, indeed, but it is not our own. It is the story of Pecos Bill.

Slue-foot Sue: Pecos Bill? Well, I am always up for an interesting tale. Would you consider recounting it for me?

Chuck: Of course! There once was a family with many children. In fact, there were 18 in all, each more active than the last. And the youngest one was named Bill.

Grammy: I think they must have been part coyote, because as soon as a neighbor moved in 50 miles away, they got to feeling itchy, like someone was looking over their shoulder all the time. So, they decided to gather their whole pack and leave.

Chuck: Bill's family traveled west in a bumping, thumping old covered wagon. The children would sit in the back and play and wrestle so loud their Ma and Pa couldn't even hear thunder rolling! Everyone could tell Bill was special even then. He used a Bowie knife for a teething ring, and, whenever they were in the wilds, he would hop out of the wagon and find grizzly cubs to wrestle with.

Grammy: One day, when Bill was about 4 years old, the wagon hit a rock as the family was crossing the Pecos River in Texas. Bill flew out the back and landed in the water! With so many pups making so much noise, it was a while before anyone noticed that he was gone. By then he had been swept away down river many miles.



Slue-foot Sue: Jumpin' Jehosaphat, how did he ever survive that?

Chuck: He taught himself to swim along the way! But, the current was too swift, and there was no getting back. The family often thought about what happened to poor Bill, and, since he was lost along the Pecos River, they took to calling him "Pecos Bill."

Grammy: I found him: a wet, furless, short-eared pup sitting by the side of the river. At first, I was wary. I had heard tell of strange, mean creatures called "human beings." I didn't want to get caught by one of them.

Slue-foot Sue: No one could blame you for that!

Chuck: Grammy did what any clear-thinking coyote would do. She hopped back and forth, yelping and yipping and testing Bill coyote-style to see if he was friend or foe. So, Bill did the only logical thing a 4 year old boy could do in that situation. He reached out and gave her a big hug! Then he scratched her behind the ears where the fleas had been biting!

Grammy: I knew then that this pup was meant to be a coyote! As leader of the Honorable Coyote Pack 494, I resolved to adopt him and raise him to know the Laws of the Wild. Bill grew strong and learned the ways of all creatures. We taught him how to hunt, how to howl at the moon, how to communicate with all living things, and how to avoid being seen when you don't want to be seen.