

Pepita Talks Twice

by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman

Narrator 1	Pepita	*Miguel	*Mr. Hobbs
Narrator 2	Mother	*Aunt Rosa	*Mrs. Garcia
Narrator 3	Papa	Juan	*People

Narrator 1 Pepita was a little girl who spoke Spanish and English.

People Come, Pepita, please help us.

Narrator 2 Everybody called on Pepita to talk for them in Spanish and English. And she did what they asked without a fumble.

Narrator 3 Until today. Today she didn't want to help anyone. She wanted to get home before her brother Juan.

Narrator 1 She wanted to teach their dog Lobo a new trick. She wanted to teach him to fetch a ball. But if she didn't hurry, Juan would teach Lobo first.

Narrator 2 She ducked behind the fence as she went by her neighbors' house,

Narrator 3 but not low enough.

Miguel Pepita, my mother wants you to talk on the telephone in English. Please tell her what the man wants.

Narrator 1 Pepita did what Miguel asked.

Narrator 2 But deep inside of her the grumble grew larger.

Narrator 1 And when she went into her own yard and found her brother Juan teaching Lobo to return a ball,

Narrator 2 the grumble grew so big that it exploded.

Pepita If I didn't speak Spanish and English. I would have been here first!

Narrator 1 Pepita raced by the grocery store that belonged to Mr. Hobbs,

Narrator 3 but not fast enough.

Mr. Hobbs Pepita, come speak to this lady in Spanish. Tell me what she wants!

Narrator 1 Pepita did what Mr. Hobbs asked.

Narrator 2 But deep inside of her a grumble began.

Narrator 1 She tiptoed by the house where her Aunt Rosa lived,

Narrator 3 but not softly enough.

Aunt Pepita, come talk to the delivery man in English. Tell me what he wants!

Narrator 1 Pepita did what Aunt Rosa asked.

Narrator 2 But deep inside of her the grumble grew.

Narrator 1 That night as Pepita lay in bed, she thought and thought. By morning she had decided what she would do.

Narrator 3 She slipped out of bed and tiptoed by Lobo, who was sleeping on the floor.

Narrator 2 She hurried into the kitchen, where her mother was cooking breakfast and Juan was eating.

Pepita I am never, ever going to speak Spanish anymore.

Juan That's pretty dumb.

Mother My, oh my, Pepita. Why?

Pepita Because I'm tired of talking twice.

Mother Twice?

Pepita Yes! Once in Spanish and once in English. So I'm never going to speak Spanish anymore.

Narrator 1 Juan took a bite of tortilla and grinned.

Juan How will you ask for enchiladas and tamales. . . and tacos with salsa? They are all Spanish words, you know.

Pepita I will find a way.

Narrator 3 She hadn't thought about that before.

Narrator 1 After breakfast, Pepita kissed her mother,

Narrator 2 picked up her lunch box,

Narrator 3 and started to school.

Narrator 1 Outside, she put her lunch box down and closed the gate to the fence,

Narrator 3 but not tight enough.

Narrator 2 Lobo pushed the gate open and followed at her heels.

Pepita Wolf, Go home!

Narrator 1 But Lobo just wagged his tail and followed her to the Corner.

Pepita Mr. Jones, will you please keep Wolf for me? If I take him back home, I'll be late for school.

Mr. Jones I'll walk him home when I'm through. But I thought his name was Lobo?

Pepita No. His name is Wolf now. I don't speak Spanish anymore.

Mr. Jones That's too bad.

Narrator 1 He picked up his red stop sign.

Mr. Jones I thought it was a good thing to speak two languages.

Pepita It's not a good thing at all, Mr. Jones. Not when you have to speak twice!

Narrator 2 At school her teacher, Miss Garcia, smiled.

Mrs. Garcia We have a new student starting today. Her name is Carmen and she speaks no English. We must all be as helpful as we can.

Narrator 3 Miss Garcia looked at Pepita.

Mrs. Garcia Pepita, please tell Carmen where to put her lunch and show her where everything is.

Narrator 1 Carmen smiled at Pepita and Pepita just wanted to run away and hide. Instead, she stood up.

Pepita I'm sorry, Miss Garcia, but I can't. I don't speak Spanish anymore.

Mrs. Garcia That is really too bad. It's such a wonderful thing to speak two languages.

Pepita It is not a wonderful thing at all, not when you have to speak twice!

Narrator 2 When Pepita walked into her yard after school, she found Lobo sleeping on the front porch.

Pepita Wolf, come here! Wolf, wake up!

Narrator 3 But he didn't open an eye or even wiggle an ear.

Narrator 1 Juan walked up on the sidewalk behind her.

Juan ¡Lobo! ¡Ven acá!

Narrator 2 Like a streak, Lobo raced to the gate and barked. Juan laughed.

Juan Hey, Pepita, how are you going to teach old Lobo tricks if you don't speak Spanish?

Pepita I'll find a way.

Narrator 3 She had not thought about this either.

Narrator 1 Pepita's neighbor Miguel was on the sidewalk bouncing a rubber ball. His brothers and sisters were sitting on their front porch singing.

Miguel Come, Pepita! Sing with us!

Pepita I can't. All of your songs are in Spanish, and I don't speak Spanish anymore.

Miguel Too bad. How will you help us sing at the birthday parties?

Pepita I'll find a way.

Narrator 3 This was something else she had not thought about.

Narrator 1 At the supper table, Pepita's mother told everyone that Abuelita, their grandmother, was coming the next day.

Mother Abuelita says she has a new story for Pepita.

Juan Abuelita tells all her stories in Spanish. What are you going to do now?

Pepita Nothing. I can listen in Spanish.

Papa Que pasa? ¿Que pasa? What is going on?

Narrator 2 Pepita swallowed hard.

Pepita I don't speak Spanish anymore, Papa.

Papa Too bad. It's a fine thing to know two languages.

Pepita It's not a fine thing at all.

Narrator 2 Her father frowned at her.

Juan She even calls Lobo Wolf!

Papa Wolf?

Narrator 2 His frown grew deeper.

Papa Well then, Pepita, we'll have to find a new name for you, won't we? How will you answer to Pepita if that is no longer your name?

Pepita I'll find a way.

Narrator 3 This was something she had never ever thought about before.

Narrator 1 That night when she went to bed, Pepita pulled the blankets up to her chin and made a stubborn face.

Pepita I'll find a way. If I have to, I can call myself Pete. I can listen in Spanish. I can hum with the singing. I can call a taco a crispy, crunchy, folded-over, round corn sandwich! And Wolf will have to learn his name!

Narrator 2 With that she turned over and went to sleep.

Narrator 3 In the morning, when Pepita was leaving for school, her friend Miguel threw his ball into her yard. Lobo fetched it and dropped it at Pepita's feet.

Pepita You're a good dog, Wolf.

Narrator 1 She put her lunch box down and threw the ball back to Miguel. The little boy laughed and clapped his hands. Just as she was opening the gate, he threw the ball again.

Narrator 2 This time it went into the street.

Narrator 3 Like a flash, Lobo ran after it.

Pepita Wolf!

Narrator 1 Lobo didn't listen and went through the gate.

Pepita Wolf! Come here!

Narrator 2 But Lobo darted right into the street.

All Narr. A car was coming!

Narrator 2 Pepita closed her eyes.

Pepita Lobo! Lobo! ¡Ven acá

Narrator 3 Lobo turned back just before a loud screech of the car's brakes.

Narrator 1 Pepita opened her eyes in time to see the ball roll to the other side of the street.

Narrator 2 A red-faced man shouted out the window of the car, and Lobo raced back into the yard!

Narrator 3 Pepita shut the gate firmly behind Lobo and hugged him.

Pepita Lobo, oh, Lobo, you came when I called in Spanish!

Narrator 1 She nuzzled her face in his warm fur.

Pepita I'll never call you Wolf again. Your name is Lobo. Just like mine is Pepita. And, oh, Lobo, I'm glad I talked twice! It's great to speak two languages!