



Coyote and Duck

A Paiute Tale

Cultural Note

Native American clothing was originally made of animal skins and plants.

Coyote tales are part of the Paiute oral tradition used to teach proper behavior and values from an early age. These stories are only told during the winter time. The Coyote illustrates the mischievous nature in all of us.

Vocabulary

buckskin

dew

drops

flurry

reeds

reflection

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Coyote had a new buckskin suit. His wife had made it for him from leather the color of golden honey. The beading sparkled like morning dewdrops. The new buckskin suit shimmered in the morning sun.



Coyote wrapped the new buckskin suit around himself. He put on the moccasins. He tied on the leggings. "I must look fine in this new buckskin suit. I wish I could see myself," said Coyote. He turned this way and that, trying to get a better view of himself in the new buckskin suit.

"I know what I'll do!" he exclaimed. "I'll go down to the paw'kawduh (lake)! I want to look at my reflection in the clear-blue waters of the lake."

When Coyote arrived at the lake, he walked near the water's edge. He gazed into the water and smiled. "Oh, yes, I do look handsome in my new buckskin suit!"

Duck sat near the edge, paddling quietly among the reeds. But Coyote didn't see him. "What's that crazy Coyote doing?" thought Duck.





Coyote strutted around the outside edge of the lake, passing Duck each time. But Duck covered his head with his wing, and Coyote never saw him. Coyote gazed into the crystal-blue waters of the lake. He smiled when he saw his reflection.

"Oh, how handsome I DO look in my new honey-colored buckskin suit!" exclaimed Coyote

Coyote laughed and sang and danced around the lake. He stretched his arms out wide. He admired his reflection in the crystal-clear waters.

Duck shook his head and chuckled. "That crazy Coyote," he said to himself. "Next time he walks past, I'm going to play a joke on him. I'm going to scare him good!"



Coyote skipped past Duck once more. He still hadn't seen Duck, who had tucked his head under his wing. Coyote swung his arms happily. He sang loudly, "Oh, how handsome I look in my new buckskin suit!"



In a flurry of greens, browns, and silver-whites, Duck flapped his wings and rose up out of his hiding place. Water splashed about everywhere.

"Oo nuu!" he yelled, as loudly as he could.





Coyote stumbled backwards and fell into the waters of the lake with a loud “KER-SPLASH!”

Coyote slapped his fists into the water. Big drops of water streamed down his face. He looked around.

Duck landed back at the water's edge.

"So! It's you, Duck! What did you do that for?" yelled Coyote.

Duck laughed. He paddled to the center of the lake.

Coyote howled. "Duck, what did I do to deserve that? I never did anything to you!"

Duck shrugged and paddled away. "That's what you get for showing off!" he said.





Poor Coyote! He stood up. His new buckskin suit hung heavy with water. It was streaked with thick, black mud. It did not look very honey- colored any more!

Glossary

oo nuu - a Paiute expression of surprise

paw - water

paw'kawduh - lake

too'koochoomputs - duck

Reading Suggestions

Evoke retelling with the following questions:

- What did Coyote's wife make for him?
- Where did Coyote go to see his reflection in his new suit?
- Who was secretly watching Coyote?
- What joke did Duck play on Coyote?
- What happened to Coyote?
- Discuss: What happens to people who show off?

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