

The Creator and Coyote

A Ute Mountain Ute Tale

Cultural Note

Coyote is a trickster. He tries to trick the people, but they already know what he is capable of doing and how far he will go to get his way.

He has a bag full of tricks.

This story should only be told during the winter months.

Vocabulary

slunk

task

tongues

tramped

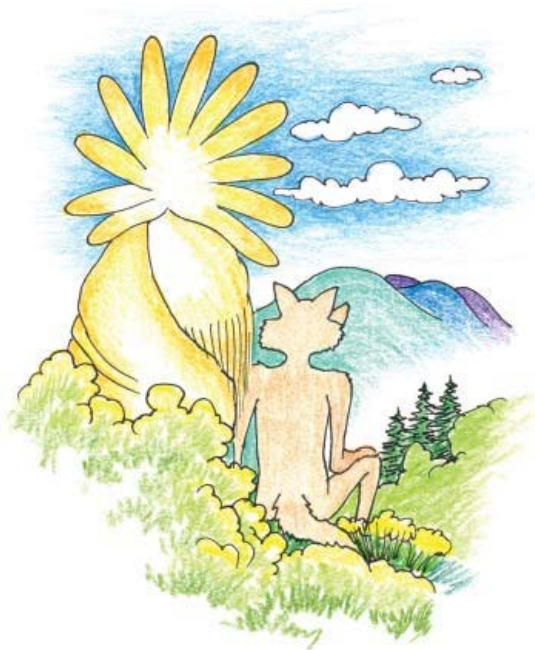
valiant

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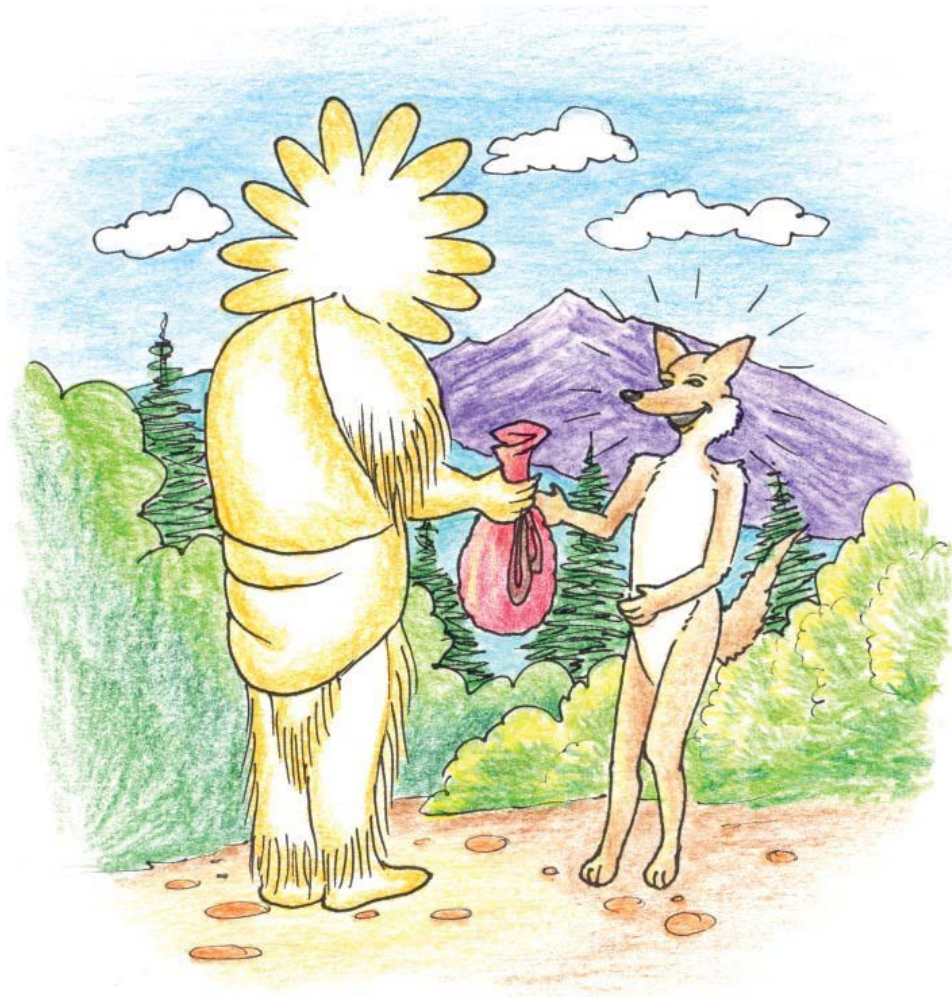
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In the days even before the ancient times, only *Sinawaf*, the Creator, and *Yogwówuch*, Coyote, lived on the earth. They had come out of the light so long ago that no one remembered when or how.



The Creator wanted to form more people on the earth, so he gave Coyote a bag of sticks and said, "Carry these over the far hills to the valleys beyond. This is a great responsibility. You must not open the bag for any reason until you reach the sacred grounds."

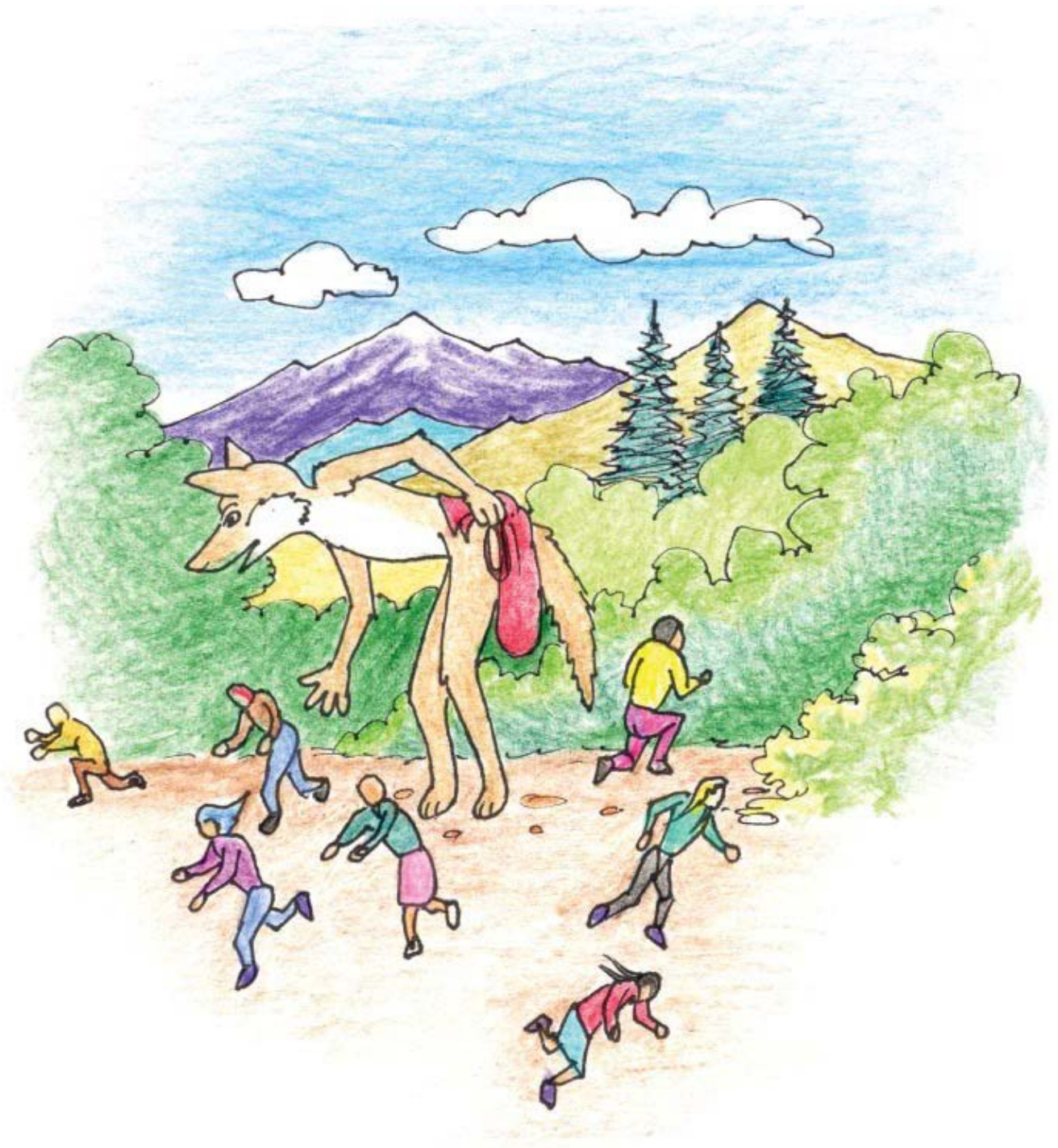
"What am I carrying?" ask Coyote.

"I will say no more," the Creator answered. "Now be about your task."

Coyote was young and foolish and very, very curious. As soon as he walked over the first hill, out of sight from the Creator, he stopped. "It won't hurt to peek inside the bag," he thought.

As he loosened the string, people rushed for the opening of the bag and burst out. They yelled in strange languages of every kind.



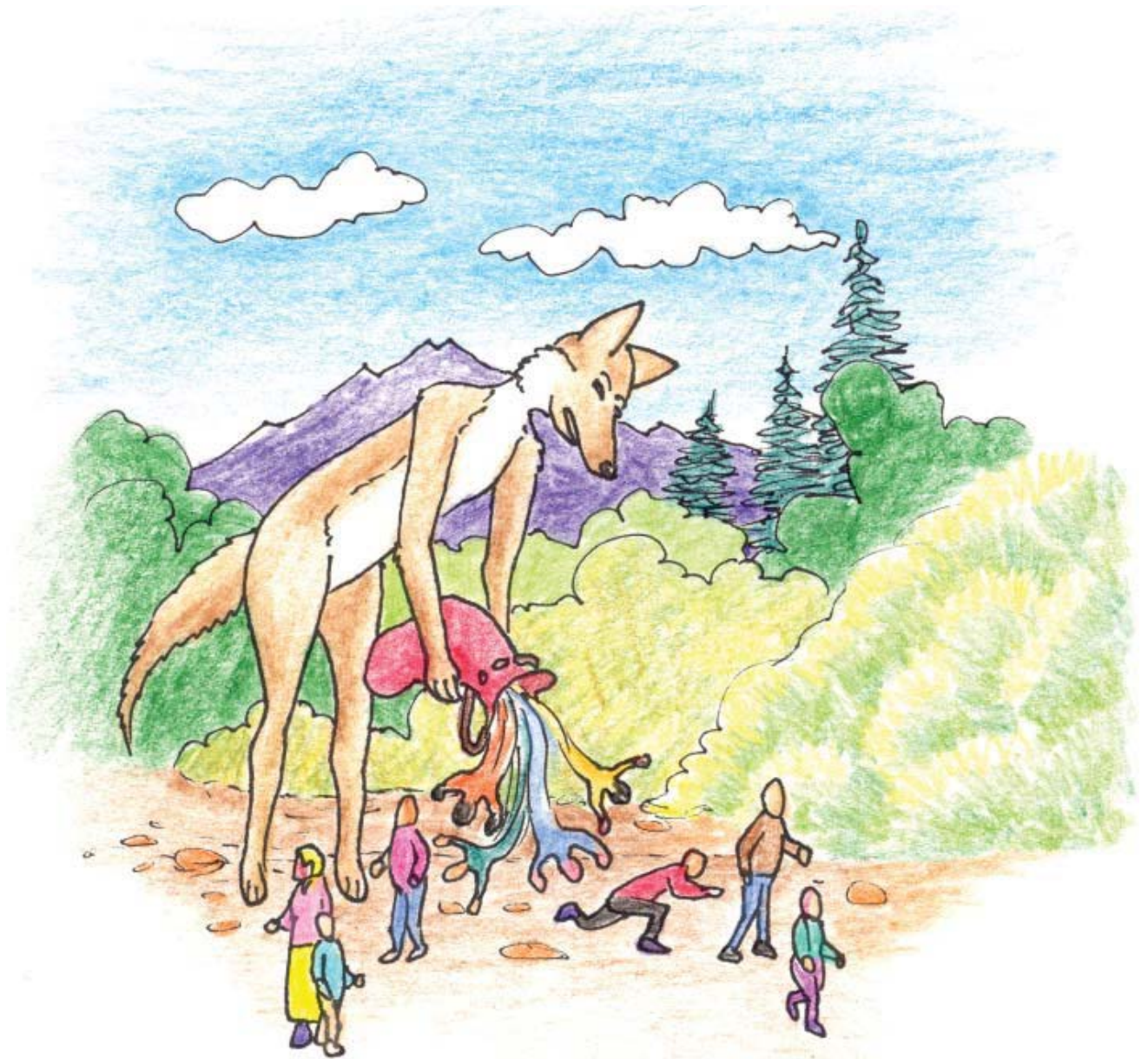


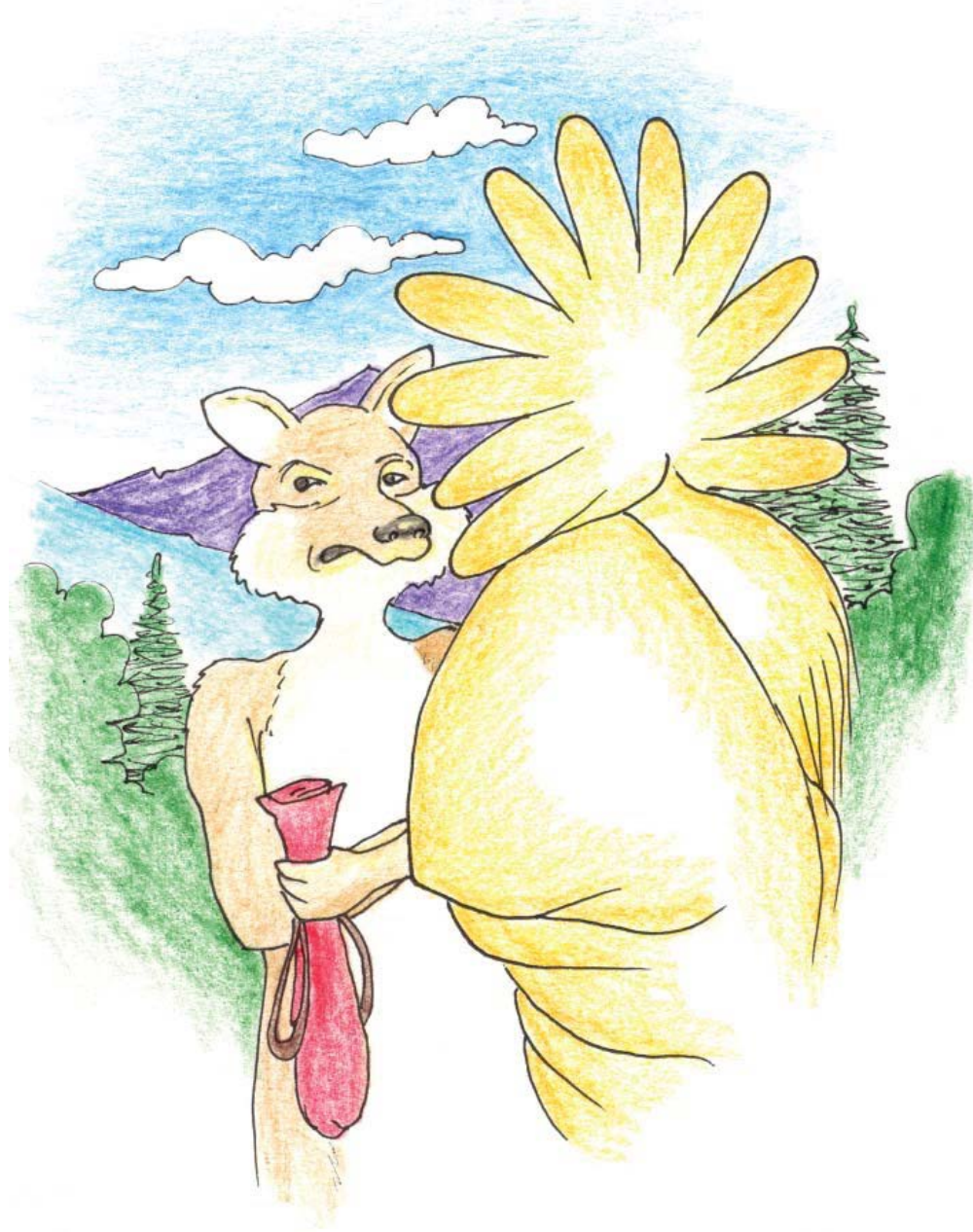
Coyote tried to catch the people, but they ran away in many different directions.

By the time he got the string tied again, he had lost many of the people.



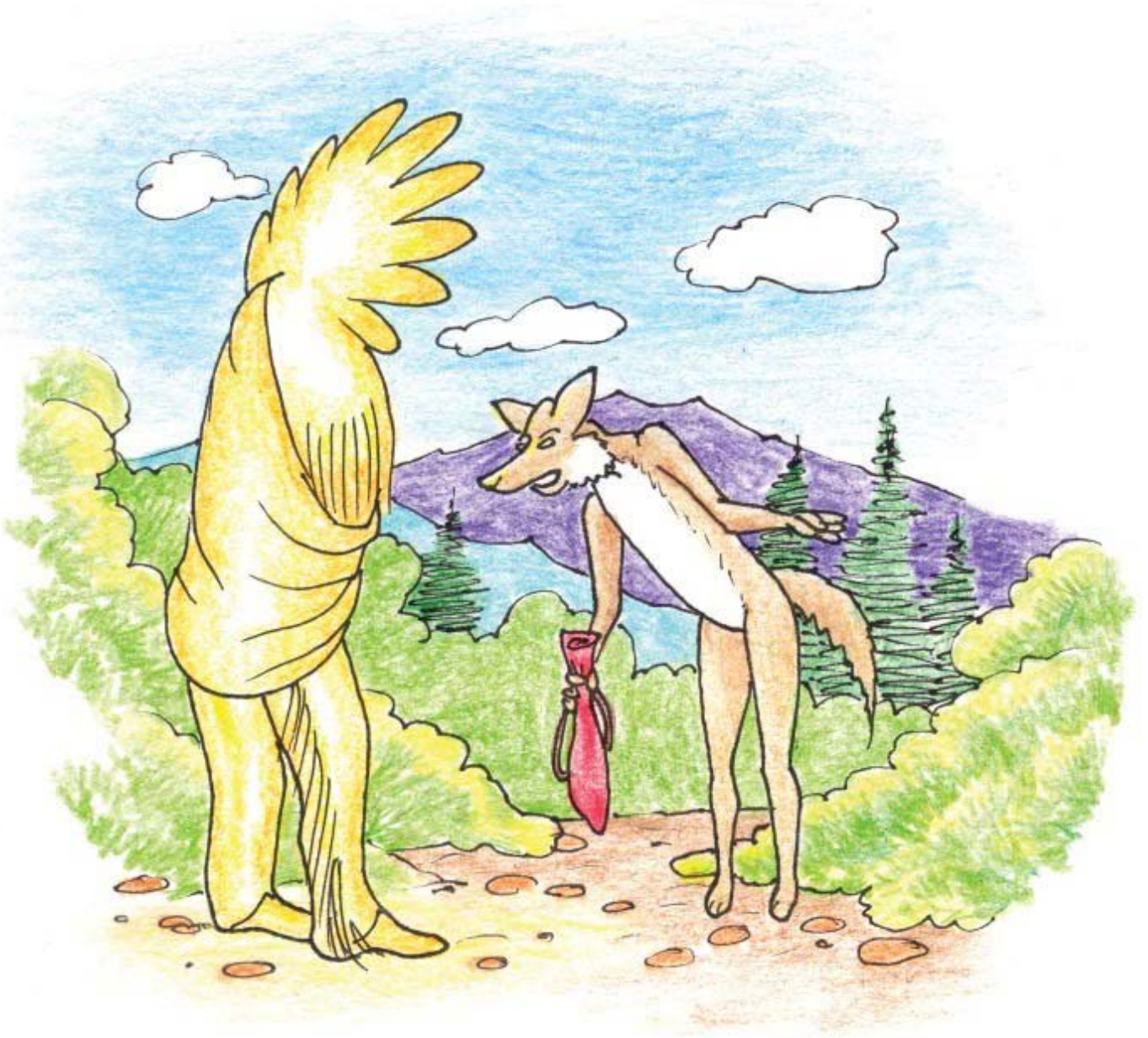
Worried about what he had done, Coyote tramped to the sacred valley and dumped out the few remaining people.





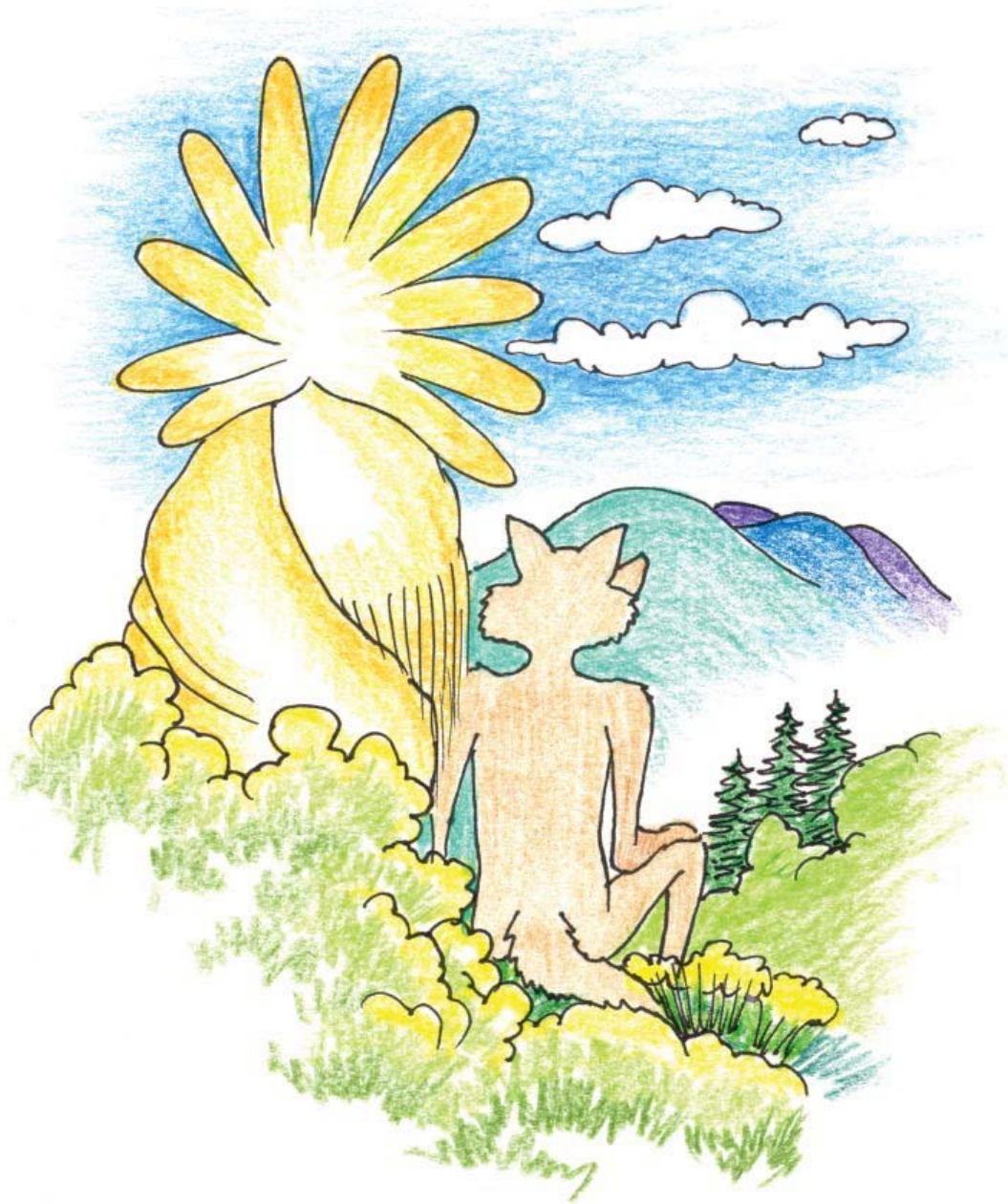
Coyote returned to the Creator. "I have finished my task," he said, but he could not look the Creator in the eyes.

"I know," the Creator said, searching his face. "You do not understand the terrible thing you have done."



"I tried to catch them," Coyote whined, hanging his head, "but they scared me. They spoke in strange tongues which I could not understand."

“Those you let escape will forever war with the Utes,” the Creator said, looking toward the distant hills. “They will be a thorn in the side of the chosen ones. The Utes, however, will always remain the mightiest and most valiant of heart.”





The Creator turned back to the Coyote. "You are irresponsible," he said, shaking his finger at him. "From this time on, you are doomed to wander the earth on all fours as a night prowler."

Glossary

apagai - languages

kumánuch - other Indian people

'*Noochew*' - Ute

núchiu – people

Sinawaf – Creator

yogwówuch - coyote

Reading Suggestions

- Have you tried learning another language? Get involved. What does your school or community offer? Try learning American Sign Language.
- This story is about being responsible. Brainstorm a list of what responsibility means to you. Begin "Responsibility is..."
- Responsible citizens work hard and follow directions. Write in a journal about what you will do to be more responsible.

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