



The Coyote and the Fox

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Native American

Easy
5 min read

O-way-way-ham-by-yoh, which means long time ago, a fox felt very hungry, so he went down into prairie-dog town and caught a fine fat prairie dog. Then he built a fire of dry rabbit brush. When the brush had all burned up and left a pile of coals, Mr. Fox took his prairie dog and covered him all up with the hot ashes. That was the way he always roasted meat for his dinner. It required some time for the prairie dog to roast, so Mr. Fox lay down and went to sleep.

Very soon Mr. Coyote came along. Sniff! sniff! he could smell meat roasting and it smelt very delicious. He saw Mr. Fox fast asleep; so he slipped quietly over to the pile of ashes, stuck his paw in and pulled out the prairie dog. He ran behind a bush and ate all of the meat off, but he left the bones. Then he took a bone and greased the fox's mouth all around with a greasy end of it. After that he put the bones back under the hot ashes and ran away.

When Mr. Fox awoke, he could smell prairie dog grease. He licked his tongue out and tasted grease all around his mouth. "Surely I have not eaten the prairie dog while I was asleep. No, I feel too hungry; but where did this grease come from on my mouth, if I did not eat him?" Mr. Fox was very much puzzled. He went over to the ashes and caught hold of a prairie dog foot and pulled. Out came a long leg bone without any meat on it. "This is funny," thought he.

Just then he spied some tracks in the sand. "Oho!" said he, "Now I understand it all. Coyote-man has played a

trick on me and eaten my prairie dog. I'll catch him and kill him for this.”

So Mr. Fox trotted off following the coyote tracks. He found the coyote by a high cliff. Mr. Coyote saw Mr. Fox coming and he knew he was angry. He did not have time to run away, so he just leaned against the cliff and called, “Oh, Fox-man, come here quick and help me! Look up there, this cliff is falling! It will kill us both!” Mr. Fox looked up. The clouds were passing over the cliff and made the cliff look as if it were really falling. Mr. Fox jumped quickly over by Mr. Coyote and leaned against the cliff just as hard as he could to hold it up. As soon as Mr. Fox leaned on the cliff, Mr. Coyote jumped away. He made a big jump, just as if the cliff might really fall on him.

“Hold the cliff up, Fox-man, while I go get a stick to prop it with.”

Then Mr. Coyote ran away and left Mr. Fox leaning hard against the cliff.

Mr. Fox stayed there all day waiting for Mr. Coyote to come with the stick. Late that evening he looked up and there were no clouds passing, so he could see that the cliff was not falling. He knew that the coyote had played another trick on him, so he was angrier than ever.

Again he followed the coyote tracks and found the coyote down by the river.

When Mr. Coyote saw Mr. Fox coming, he called:

“Oh, Fox-man, come quick and see what I have for you. I found a cheese and I saved half of it for you; but it has fallen into the river. Look!”

And Mr. Fox looked down into the water. There was the reflection of the half-moon in the water. It looked just like the half of a round cheese and Mr. Fox's mouth began to water for a taste of it. He was very hungry.

“I wonder how I can get that cheese!” he said.

“I'll tell you how. Let me tie the end of this rope” – for Mr. Coyote had a rope all ready – “around your tail and tie the other end to this big stone. Then you can jump into the river and get the cheese. When you have got hold of it, call me and I will pull you out.”

Mr. Fox thought that was a good scheme, so he let Mr. Coyote tie the rope around his tail and around the stone. Then Mr. Fox jumped into the river with a big splash.

As soon as he did, Mr. Coyote threw the stone in after him, and if the rope had not slipped off of Mr. Fox's tail when it got wet, that would have been the end of poor old Mr. Fox.

Author Note: San Juan Pueblo

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