

COYOTE MEETS SNEUT (WIND)

by Clara Covington



Late one morning, Coyote grew restless and he said to Mole, "I am planning a trip and I will ask our friend Ewheewhootshun (Badger), to keep in touch with you and the children while I am away." Coyote packed a bag and left home. He stopped by Badger's house, and Coyote asked him to contact his family, and he also handed over a small buckskin bag to Badger saying, "I will travel and explore the unknown. Here is my sack with my heart string in it, hang it on your teepee frame. If I am alright, the little sack will hang. If I am in trouble, it will fall."

Coyote left and Badger did as Coyote wished. He carefully hung the sack on his teepee frame. Days passed, and Coyote explored strange territories. He was walking in a wide open prairie, passing by lakes here and there, and he came upon a stone mound. He saw faint wisps of steam escaping from a hole, and he became curious. He bent over the hole, cautiously smelling the wisps of steam, and he became afraid. He grunted "Yee"! He put his hands over the hole to feel if it was hot steam. Again he felt scared, and grunted "Yee"! He raised one foot to feel the steam, again he became scared and let out another "Yee"! He began to wonder exactly what caused the faint wisps of steam. Then he heard a song within the mound. Observing carefully he said, "Ah! it's a sweat lodge of stone." He didn't know who was within the stone sweat lodge, so he hollered, "What do you say?" Coyote walked all the way around the sweatlodge, and he found a nice white buckskin costume. He felt like picking it up and running away, but he couldn't leave without meeting the stranger within.

Again he hollered, "Friend, may I join you?" The stranger

answered, "Fetch your own water for the steam purification. The stranger was Sen-nuet, the Wind himself. Coyote fetched some water, and decided to trick the stranger out of the sweat lodge. Coyote would raise the entrance cover and pour his cup of water into the rock pit. The stranger would dash out because of the heat inside. Coyote did his evil deed, and Sen-nuet expired. Wicked Coyote laughed, and picked up the buckskin outfit and put it on proudly, and continued on his way.

Coyote couldn't get his mind off of being a proud owner of a buckskin outfit, and he'd prance and dance. Then he wished for a soft breeze so the shell ornaments would rattle, and there was a soft breeze. Coyote said, "Blow a little more," and there were high winds, making him stagger about. Then the wind increased in velocity, and Coyote was blown off the ground. Coyote's wish revived Sen-nuet's spirit. Coyote was blown through

space and finally landed in some strange territory, on the edge of a high bank of a big river. He grabbed any bush he could, and he grabbed hold of Sparzen (Hemp). Hemp seeing how Coyote's costume seemed to be pulling and blowing, tore the costume off. Then there stood a man in space off the solid ground, and asked, "Where is that joker with the big ears and the beady eyes?" Hemp said, "I had him but accidentally dropped him below the high bank here. He must be dead, Coyote must have drowned. Back home in Badger's place, the little sack fell to the ground. In the meantime, Hemp and his family sat on Coyote, hiding him. They finally let him up, and Coyote said that he must be on his say. Hemp told him, "We need your help. Coyote still in a daze asked, "What is it?" Hemp said, "We need water to live." Coyote went below to the big river and splashed water toward Hemp's home. Immediately Hemp's yard became moist forever.

Coyote forgetting his problems, began his journey again. Days passed and he came upon a teepee village by a lake, most likely the Kalispel's. Coyote saw some beached canoes. One of his foolish spells prompted him to run and dash into one of the teepees. He was all excited and yelled, "Enemies! Enemies are coming!" The whole village was informed to prepare for an attack. The whole village put the teepee fires out to black out for the attack. Coyote waited when all was quiet, and then he sneaked into one of the canoes and left. Thinking he would not be found, he went ashore and beached the canoe. He laid down and slept.

In the meantime, the people got up. They missed some things, and decided to look for the strange intruder and destroy him. Coyote in his sleep saw them taking to the waters to look for him. He called for his spirit to make fog. The villagers in the canoes could not see because the visibility was poor due to the fog.

But the frogs could see clearly, so they led the canoes, and the villagers caught up with Coyote. They killed him and left him there.

Many moons later, Semya-oo (Cougar) was out scouting around and came upon his relative's hide and bones. Cougar decided to revive Coyote, so he stepped over him slowly. Coyote stretched and yawned, saying, "I slept too long." Cougar told him, "Slept?, you died?" Coyote rose to his feet, looked at Cougar and asked, "May I go with you Big Teeth?" Cougar said, "You know me. I am a loner." Coyote said, "If it's my sense of humor that bothers you, I shall be calm and serious." Cougar said, "Let's go." Eventually they were at a small mountain brook. Cougar told Coyote, "Let's rest and have a bite of food." Cougar took out a little sack, made of fawnhide, the leg skin. Coyote was starved and thought what a tiny food sack. Cougar told him, "There's plenty for both of us." They chatted and ate. Coyote was filled, then he couldn't believe his eyes. Cougar tied the sack, with plenty of food left. They travelled on and spent the night together.

The next day Cougar pointed to a high peak in the distance, telling Coyote, "There is my home, and so I must return. You go your own way."

Bye and bye Coyote was nearing home. Arriving at Badger's teepee he peeked in. Coyote's little one was there, and saw him and yelled, "La-awoo! Father!" Coyote entered, and Badger snorted, "You are alive? Why the little sack fell long ago." Coyote said, "Yes, I was destroyed once, but my powerful relative Semya-oo, the Cougar, revived me."