

COYOTE AND CRANE

(Klamath)



Developed by members of the Klamath, Modoc and Paiute Committee

Marc McNair, Coordinator
Carlette Tupper
Cleve Hecocta

Illustrated by Marc McNair

Story told by Cleve Hecocta

Joseph Coburn, Director
Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Developed by the Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language
Development Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory,
300 Southwest Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

Copyright © 1982 by the Klamath Tribe
All rights reserved.

The work upon which this publication is based was performed pursuant to
Contract No. 400-80-0105 with the Educational Equity Group/Multi-
cultural/Bilingual Division of the National Institute of Education. It does
not, however, necessarily reflect the views of that agency.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

COYOTE AND CRANE

(Klamath)

A long, long time ago when all animals were like people there lived Coyote. You may already know that to the Indians and animals Coyote was a trickster. Now Coyote was a somewhat better trickster than his brothers of today, or for that matter, his brothers then. This Coyote was always getting more than his share of anything and everything. It seems some of the other animals invited Coyote over to lunch or dinner, and before Coyote left, the host was sorry for even inviting him. This was how much of a trickster old Coyote was.

On the other hand, there was old Crane. Old Crane was not a bit like Coyote. Crane always asked Coyote, "Why don't you come over to my place tonight for dinner. We'll have crawfish." Coyote always refused Crane's offer. To Coyote, going over to Crane's was degrading. Besides, Coyote already had friends such as squirrel, racoon, bear and others. To Coyote these animals were rich and important friends. Poor old Crane didn't even rate among Coyote's friends.

Later on old Crane again asked Coyote over for a fish dinner. Again Coyote turned down the offer. Coyote said he had more important things to do. Poor old Crane was hurt. He wondered why Coyote hated him so. Old Crane finally sat down and began to figure things out. He saw how Coyote had used all of the other animals in the village. He also saw that all of Coyote's so-called "far better" friends just sat around while Coyote robbed them. They did nothing about it.

Crane became angry. He was mad, not only at Coyote, but at the animals Coyote hurt. They allowed this to happen. That is what really angered him. "I'll get that old Coyote!" vowed the angry Crane.

That night Crane went over to Coyote's house. Crane waited outside until he thought Coyote was asleep. He slipped inside. Once inside, he found Coyote sleeping on the floor of his den. Crane began poking Coyote with a stick and tossing small stones at him to see if he would be wakened easily. This did not wake Coyote. Seeing this, Crane took his knife and carved a section off Coyote's rump. Having completed this without waking Coyote, Crane went home with his prize.

The next day when Crane saw Coyote he invited him and some of his good friends over for a steak dinner. Coyote, hoping to rob Crane, agreed. "We'll be over this evening, so cook plenty!" Coyote said.

Crane, with a twinkle replied, "I'll be ready. Oh, and don't forget your friends." Crane immediately set to his cooking.

Later, when Coyote and his friends arrived, Crane invited them in. Each smelled the meat cooking and thought, "Crane must be a good cook."

Coyote said, "Mr. Crane, that has to be the best roast I've ever smelled!"

To this Crane replied, "Wait until you taste it!"

Soon all sat down to the best dinner ever served in their village. Coyote especially was impressed. He had to remark, "Mr. Crane, all this time I thought of you as a nobody. But now I can see that I was wrong. I think we may be the best of friends." he went on, "By the way, where did you ever find a steak so delicious as this?"

Crane looked at Coyote in amazement and then began to laugh. "I have been watching you steal from everyone else, Coyote. You have lied your way into their homes. You have tricked them into believing good things about you. But," yelled Crane, still laughing, "this time the trick is on you! That delicious steak you have been eating is your own rump."

Hearing this, Coyote became very sick, and all of his "far better" friends began to laugh at him. From that day on, Coyote has been shunned by his animal friends and everybody else. Even today he is considered to be a crook by farmers. Coyote had made quite a name for himself which has lasted throughout history.