

Coyote vs. Duck

Coyote became disturbed because he had a sick daughter. He thought Duck had done something against his children in order to make them sick. So Coyote determined to bring harm to Duck. He met Duck at a certain place and ordered that Duck should run to a point with his eyes closed. This Duck did. When he opened them again, he found himself in the hole of a big rock, a little cave high on the face of a cliff. There was no way out for Duck.

Coyote took Duck's wife and children, whom he treated badly. In time, Coyote had more children from this woman, and these he took good care of.

Duck tried constantly to get out of the cave, without success. At last Bat camped nearby, and every day, when he went to hunt rabbits, his children could hear someone crying. They told Bat, and he flew upward to look. On his way he killed rabbits and hung them on his belt. Finally he found Duck, who was very weak from lack of food.

"Who is there?" asked Bat. "I am Duck." Bat asked, "How did you come up here?" Duck said, "Coyote caused me to lose my way with my eyes closed. He got rid of me in order to steal my wife." Then Bat said "Throw yourself down." Duck was afraid to try. So Bat told him, "Throw down a small rock." This Duck did and Bat caught it on his back. He said, "That is exactly the way I will catch you. You will not be hurt."

Duck still feared that Bat would not catch him. Bat continued to urge him to let himself fall. Several times Duck almost let himself go, but drew back. At least he thought, "Suppose I am killed; I shall die here anyway; I am as good as dead now."

Duck closed his eyes as Bat commanded, and let himself fall. Bat caught him gently and put Duck safely on the ground. Bat then took Duck to his home and said, "Do not use the fire-sticks that are near my fireplace, but use those stuck behind the tent poles, at the sides of the tent."

Then he entered, and Duck saw the sticks at the sides of the tent, but only thought them to be fine canes, too handsome for stirring the fire. He saw a number of sticks laying around that were charred on the ends. He took one of these and stirred the embers. Oh, how the sticks cried. All the other sticks called out, "Duck has burned our younger brother."

These sticks were Bat's children, and they all ran away. Duck became frightened at what he had done, and went out and hid in the brush. Bat came and called to him, "Come back! You have done no harm."

For a long time Duck seemed afraid that Bat would punish him. Then he thought, "I've already been as good as dead, so I have nothing more to fear, even if they should kill me." Duck went back into the tent. But Bat did not hurt him and gave him plenty of rabbit meat to eat. Soon Duck was strong again.

Duck said to Bat, "Coyote took my wife and children; I think I shall go and look for them." Believing him to be strong enough, Bat encouraged him to go. Duck went to his old camp, but he found it deserted. He followed tracks leading from it, and after a while found some tracks other than his own children's.

"I think Coyote has got children from my wife," he thought, and he became very angry. Coyote came along with Duck's wife. She was carrying a very large basket. Inside were Coyote's children, well kept; but Duck's children sat on the outer edge of the basket. Nearly falling off. These were dirty and miserable.

Duck caught the basket with a finger and pulled it back. "What are you doing, children?" the woman said. "Don't do that; you must not catch hold of something and hold me back." Duck continued to pull at the basket. At last she turned to look at the children and saw Duck. He said to her, "Why do you take care of Coyote's children, while my children are dirty and uncared for? Why do you not treat my children properly?"

The woman was ashamed and did not answer. Then he asked her, "Where will you camp now?" When she told him, he said to her, "Go to the place where Coyote told you to camp, but when you put up the shelter, make the grass very thin on one side and very thick on the side on which you are, so I can reach Coyote."

The woman arrived at the camping place. Coyote asked, "To whom have you been talking now?" She replied, "I have not met nor talked with anyone. Why do you always ask me that?" She then put up the shelter as Duck had directed her. Immediately Duck began to blow. He blew softly, but again, again, and again, until he made it freezing cold.

Coyote could not sleep. He thrust his spear through the sides of the shelter in all directions and nearly speared the Duck. Coyote said to his wife, "I knew that you met someone. It must have been Duck, who is making it so cold." Duck continued to blow and blow. At last Coyote burrowed himself down into the fireplace ashes, hoping to warm himself there. But it was of no use. Coyote froze to death before morning.

Duck let all of Coyote's children go free where they wished. Then he took his wife and his children back to their old home, where they had lived before all of the disruption began.