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Coyote and Mouse Make Snow

A Goshute Tale

Cultural Note

According to Goshute tradition, Coyote tales should only be told during the winter time.

The Goshute people ate wild carrots, which are found in the mountains on and near their reservation. The carrots have a sweet, earthy taste. They also made deer jerky with deer fat added, another delicious treat.

Vocabulary

bolted

leftovers

scampered

snowshoes

starving

Glossary

isappe - coyote

ponai - mouse

tabu - cottontail

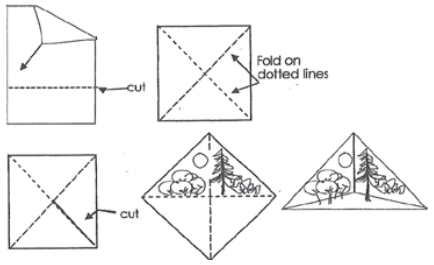
taka - snow

kamu wiika - rabbit skin blanket

Reading Suggestions

Make a triarama:

- Using any size paper, make a square by folding the right-hand corner down until the left top corner makes a triangle.
- Fold the paper into fourths by folding corner to corner.Open and cut one folded line to center of the square.
- Draw a scene for the background of the picture on the top half of the square. Overlapping the two bottom triangles, glue together.
- Add ground or floor and any stand-up pieces such as trees, animals, etc.





The next day, Coyote called for more meat, but none dropped over the ledge. He howled and hollered, but nothing happened.

Coyote waited a long time. He pictured Mouse holed up in a warm cave. "If I ever catch that sneaky little brother of mine," Coyote promised himself, "he'll be sorry he ate the rest of the meat by himself." Nearly starving, Coyote stumbled down the mountain, looking for snowshoe tracks.

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The booklets are available on a CD from the USOE. You may print the booklets off the CD, free of charge, for educational purposes. If you would like to purchase printed copies of the booklets, contact San Juan School District Media Center at (435) 678-1229.

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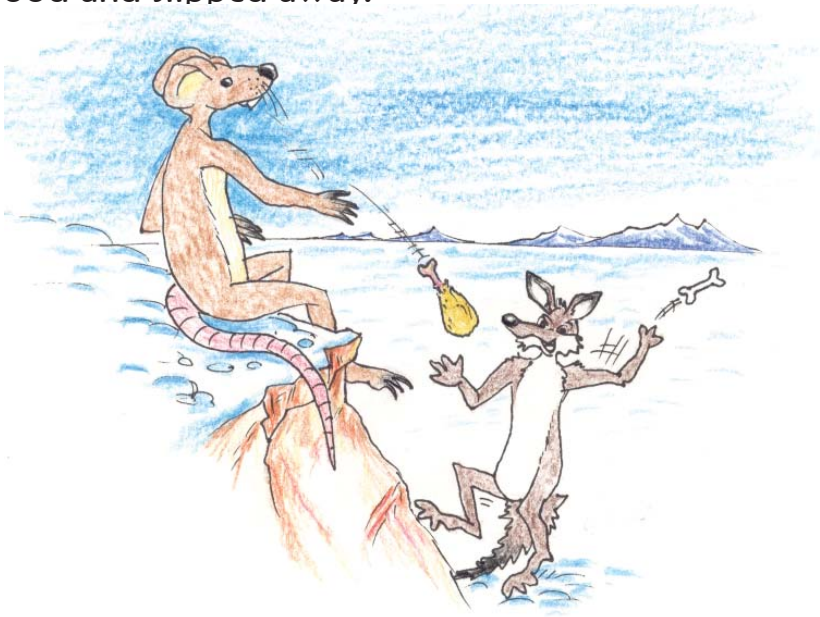
Coyote spotted smoke billowing up from the mountain, "My wonderful little brother has killed the mountain sheep," he said. "The fire is his way of telling me to come and eat. What a great and loving brother he is!"

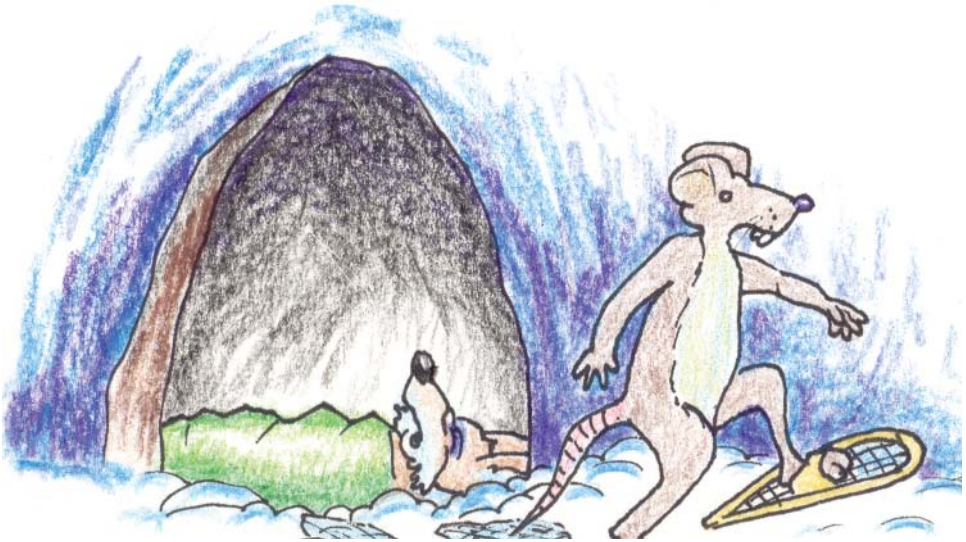
Without snowshoes, Coyote's journey took many days, but at last he clambered up beneath the ledge where the fire was roaring. "Brother, I'm starving," he called to Mouse. "Please throw me down some meat."

Mouse flung down some food.

After Coyote ate it, he called again, "Brother, I'm still hungry. Please throw me some meat."

Mouse tossed down more food, and Coyote gobbled it up. He ate all day and all night. Finally, Mouse grew tired, so he packed up the rest of the food and slipped away.



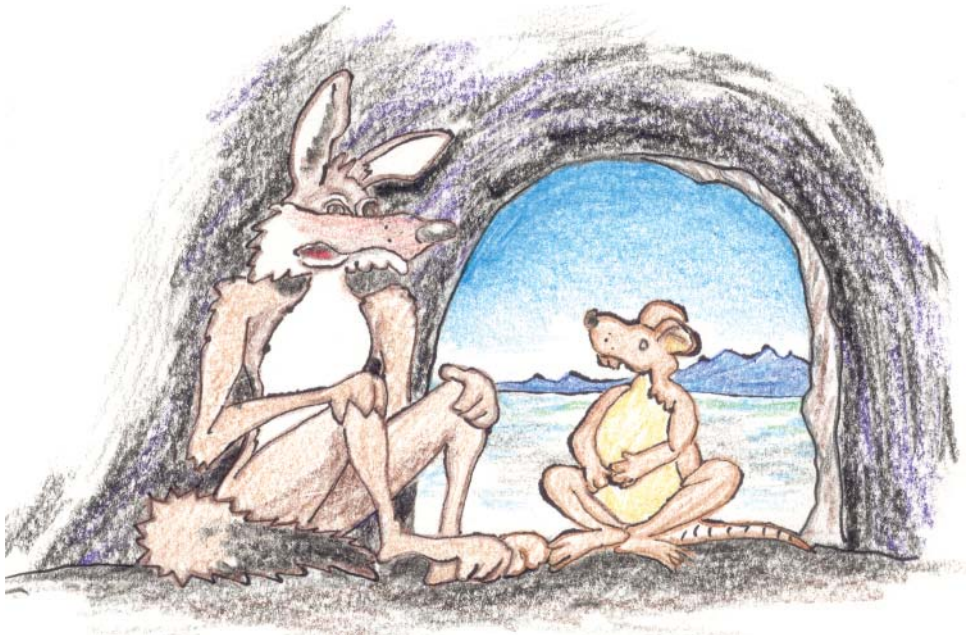


After he had eaten the leftovers, Mouse made some snowshoes. Not much food remained, so he needed to find some.

Early the next morning, Mouse put on the snowshoes and tromped across the snow toward the mountains.

When Coyote woke up, he searched for Mouse. He saw tracks leading toward the mountains. "My brother has gone where the mountain sheep winter," he said. "I'll follow him because I need food."

He searched again to make sure Mouse had really left. Then, he started clearing the snow away.



Mouse felt hungry, so he said to Coyote, "We ought to catch Cottontail and make us some cottontail stew!"

Coyote stared out the door and pictured how fast Cottontail could run. "We should ask the snow to come," he told Mouse. "Then it would be easy to track Cottontail and grab him."

"Great idea," Mouse said, "but how do we make snow?"

"I know the songs," Coyote answered, getting out his rabbit skin blanket.



After Coyote crawled under the blanket, he sang the snow songs. The wind began howling, and snow started falling.

When Coyote grew hoarse, he said, "Little Brother, go outside and see how deep the snow is."

Mouse scampered outside. The snow was piling up, but Mouse was so light he didn't even sink into the snow. He told Coyote, "The snow isn't even as deep as my big toe."



Every night the same thing happened. Coyote always saved his leftovers, but the next morning they were gone.

One night, Coyote pretended to fall asleep. He waited and waited, but no Mouse appeared. Coyote grew very sleepy. Soon, he fell asleep.

Mouse tiptoed out of his hole, grabbed the food, and scrambled to safety.

Finally, Coyote gave up and began to cook supper. He ground up some dried meat and made gravy.

As he ate, he smacked his lips. "This is delicious," he called, knowing Mouse had nothing to eat.

When Coyote had eaten all that he could, he wrapped up the leftovers.

The next morning, he woke up early. He washed his hands and picked up his dish, but it was empty.

"Does Mouse think he's going to live?" he thought. "One of these days, I'm going to kill him and eat him."



Coyote felt disappointed, but he said, "Let's try again." He crawled back under the rabbit skin. He sang in his best voice and moved his legs to the beat of the songs.

After a long time, he told Mouse, "Little Brother, go see how deep the snow is now."

Mouse ran outside again, but he still didn't sink because he was so light. "Big Brother," he called, "I don't know what's wrong with your singing, but the snow is only up to my ankle."





Coyote threw off the rabbit skin and jumped up. He could not understand why the songs were not working. He opened the door, ran outside, and plunged into deep snow.

When he finally pulled himself out, he was furious. He muttered, "I'm going to kill Mouse and eat him."

He stumbled back inside.

"Oh, Little Brother," he called in his sweetest tone, "plenty of snow has fallen, so I need to clear a path. Please bring me the snow tool."

Mouse tossed him the snow tool and prepared to run.

Coyote tried to hit him with a stick, but Mouse fled into a hole in the wall. Coyote poked the stick into the hole, but Mouse just moved farther back.

