

HOW COYOTE MADE THE MILKY WAY

In the Beginning,
Great Spirit
had an important job
for one of
The People
to do.
So he picked a
responsible person --
Rabbit --
to do it.

Rabbit was to put
all the stars
in their places in
the sky.
He had a blanket
full of them.
The purpose of the stars
was to show the
Laws
that
The People
were supposed to obey.

Once a star was put in place
it was stuck there
forever.
So Rabbit had to be
very careful
to get each one right
the first time.

So here is Rabbit
picking a star from
the blanket
one by one,
holding it carefully
near its place in the sky,
double-checking to be sure
it is right,
and finally
pressing it into place.

Pick -- check -- press.

Pick -- check -- press.

Here comes Coyote.
"What're you doing?"
And Rabbit explains.

Coyote says
"Can I help?"
and Rabbit has
a problem.

Coyote is powerful,
a good bit crazy,
and not always friendly.
Nobody wants to be his
enemy.
Nobody smart, at least.

But if you have coyote
for a friend,
You don't want him
too close.

So Rabbit has
a problem:
He wants to do what
Great Spirit
says, but
Coyote,
he is right there, so
what is Rabbit going to do?

"Ho-kaaay", says Rabbit,
hoping for the best.
Poor Rabbit.
Poor, poor Rabbit.

So for a while:
Rabbit -- Pick -- check -- press.
Coyote -- Pick -- check -- press.
Rabbit -- Pick -- check -- press.
Coyote -- Pick -- check -- press.

Then Coyote says
"This takin' too long."
And Rabbit says,

"Got to do what
Great Spirit says!"

Rabbit is looking
a little nervous.

So:

Rabbit -- Pick -- check -- press.
Coyote -- Pick -- check -- press.
Rabbit -- Pick -- check -- press.
Coyote -- Pick -- check -- press.

Then Coyote says
"This takin' waaay too long."

And Rabbit, he is too nervous to
say anything,
just opens his eyes wide till
white shows all around.

Rabbit -- Pick -- check -- press.
Coyote -- Pick -- check -- press.

Then Coyote says
"Let's do it THIS WAY!!"

And he picks up blanket
and shakes it hard
and strews stream of stars
all across sky!

They stick in place.
Forever.
Right where they fall.
All in big mess.
Rabbit has failed
Great Spirit.
Coyote has made
Milky Way.

And Coyote says
"Waaay cool!!"
And runs away
laughing.
And nobody there
to explain to

Great Spirit
What has gone wrong
but Rabbit.

Poor, poor Rabbit.

But Great Spirit
Knows about Coyote, so
Great Spirit
does not punish Rabbit too much.

That is end of story, but
there is moral:
Actually, two moral,
maybe even three.

First, story is told by
mothers of The People
today, to young children,
and they say,

"If grown-up Person trying
to do something important,
you not mess up!!
Or
Great Spirit
will be angry!"

And children of The People,
their eyes get
big and round.

But there is more.
For when Coyote make
Milky Way,
he make thing of
great Beauty.

More still, because
thanks to Coyote,
Laws
For the People to obey,
not written in sky,
fixed forever.

So the People

can make their own
Laws
as they see fit,
and change them
when necessary.

So Coyote gave
The People
two valuable gifts:
Beauty
and
Freedom.

And it is sometimes
good to have
Chaos
on your side.

This is a true tale of
The People
told by a white-eyes
who is not People
but who is
almost as conceited as
Coyote
so does not care.

-- Jay Reynolds Freeman