

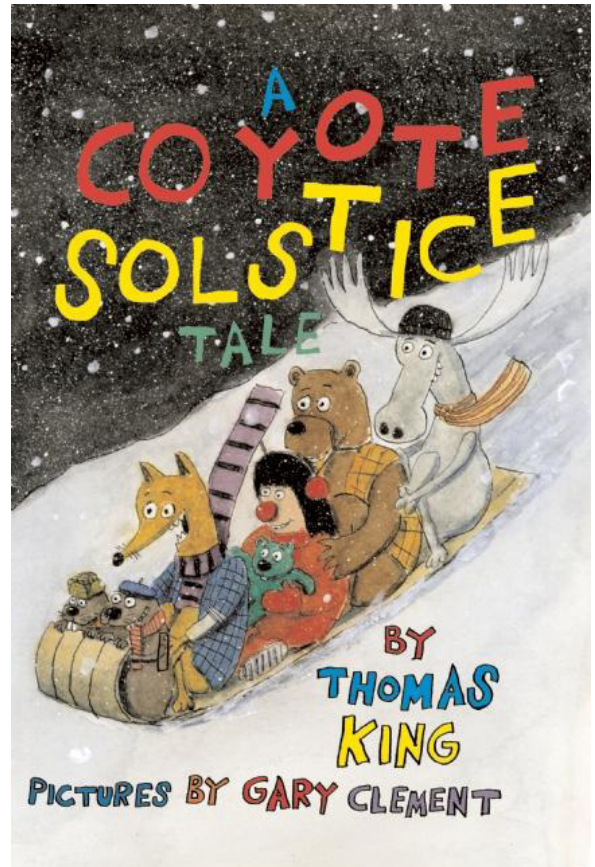
A TEACHERS' GUIDE TO A COYOTE SOLSTICE

Written by Thomas King and illustrated by Gary Clement

ABOUT THE BOOK

Trickster Coyote is having his friends over for a festive solstice get-together in the woods when a little girl comes by unexpectedly. She leads the party-goers through the snowy woods to a shopping mall — a place they have never seen before. Coyote gleefully shops with abandon, only to discover that filling your shopping cart with goodies is not quite the same thing as actually paying for them. The trickster is tricked and goes back to his cabin in the woods — somewhat subdued — though nothing can keep Coyote down for long.

This story highlights the importance of relationships with the community, the self and others. The story also shares the significance of feasting together and expressing gratitude for the gifts we receive from Mother Earth. The cross-curricular connections include Social Studies, Science, Outdoor Education and Health.



A Coyote Solstice

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JUVENILE FICTION

Reading Ages 5 to 8

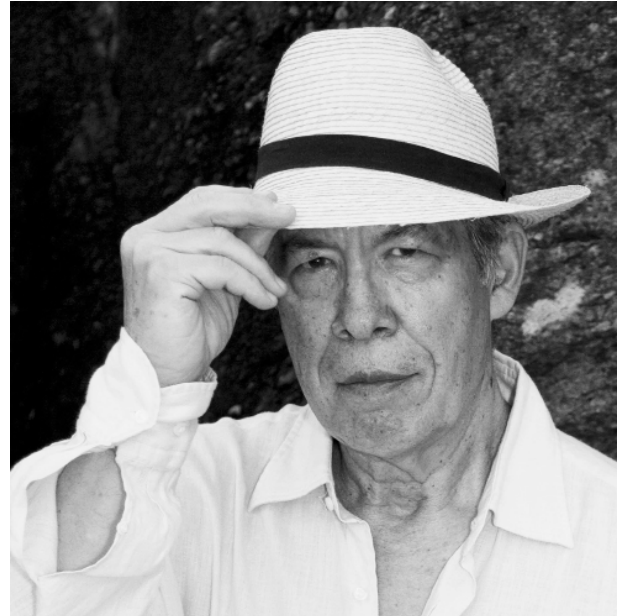
9780888999290

Hardcover with jacket

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas King has written several highly acclaimed children's books, including *A Coyote Columbus Story*, illustrated by William Kent Monkman, which was a Governor General's Award finalist. He has also written *Coyote Tales*, illustrated by Byron Eggen-schwiler. King, who is of Cherokee and Greek descent, was a Professor of English at the University of Guelph for many years, where he taught Native Literature and Creative Writing. He won the RBC Taylor Prize and the British Columbia National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction for *The Inconvenient Indian*, and the Governor General's Award for his adult novel, *The Back of the Turtle*.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Gary Clement is an award-winning author and illustrator. He has won the Governor General's Award (Illustration) for *The Great Poochini* and was a finalist for the Governor General's Award (Illustration) for *Just Stay Put*, and *Oy, Feh, So* by Cary Fagan. He has also illustrated *Stories from Adam and Eve to Ezekiel* by Celia Barker Lottridge. He is the editorial cartoonist for the *National Post*, and his work has appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Gary lives in Toronto where he regularly exhibits his drawings and paintings.



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BEFORE READING

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to consider:

- Winter Solstice
- Feast
- Relationships
- Goodwill

Research

Research “Coyote” and the connection to tricksters. What other tricksters can you find in Indigenous storytelling? Have students build a Word Wall of the different tricksters in Indigenous cultures and associated vocabulary. Include the terms listed above, which appear in the text and may be new to young readers.

Seven Teachings

Activate student thinking around the Seven Teachings:

- Respect
- Truth
- Humility
- Honesty
- Love
- Wisdom
- Bravery

Supporting resource: Ojibwe Teachings, <http://ojibweresources.weebly.com/ojibwe-teachings--the-7-grandfathers.html>

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BEFORE READING

Shared Activity

Create a T-Chart with the Seven Grandfather Teachings on one side. Leave the other side blank with the title “Examples of the Teachings.” Ask students to turn to a partner and complete a Think/Pair/Share in which students think about examples of each of the Teachings that they have observed in their experiences. From the students’ ideas, create a shared Anchor Chart for the class.

Art Activity

Ask students to choose one of the Seven Teachings and think of an animal they believe symbolizes the character or spirit of the teaching. Have students provide some personal examples. Have students create a mini-poster of their animal and the Teaching. Students should leave room at the bottom of their painting/drawing for the name of the Teaching and a brief description of why/how they feel the animal exemplifies that Teaching.

Character Education Extension

Ask students to create a Class Code of Conduct that is based on the Seven Teachings. Students may work in small groups to come up with rules and values and then co-construct a Class Code of Conduct from the group work.

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BEFORE READING

Discussion Questions

Prior to beginning the story, have students activate their thinking by considering: What are characteristics needed to build healthy relationships? Have students brainstorm their thinking in small groups. Record their ideas. Ask students to link these characteristics to the Seven Teachings.

Engage in a Storywalk

Use some of the photos in the story and post them around the classroom. Number each photo so students can discuss them in a chronological way. Have the students infer what the story could be about.

Supporting resource:

http://www.parentresource.ca/en/ot-tawaprc/Story_Walk_p4067.html



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DURING READING

Outdoor Walk

Students can participate in an outdoor walk of the text. Teachers would need two copies of the text to build the text walk.



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AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

What do you think the girl meant when she said, “I’ve come to the woods to find friendship and goodwill and peace”?

Consider this quote “‘Good grief,’ said Coyote quite shaken for he knew as everyone knows that people and creatures stopped talking a couple of eons ago.” Thinking about relationships Indigenous people have with the land and animals, what do you think Coyote is referring to?

Links about Indigenous People’s Relationship with Land and Animals

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/meaning-of-land-to-aboriginal-people>

<https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/environment/our-brothers-and-sisters-5-sacred-animals-and-what-they-mean-in-native-cultures/>

<http://www.resilience.org/stories/2014-01-17/the-indigenous-and-modern-relationship-between-people-and-animals/>

Coyote and his friends demonstrate the Seven Teachings in how they welcome and help the young girl who visits. Have the students find specific examples from the story and connect them to a Teaching. There may be more than one teaching in your example.

Consider the image of Coyote dreaming of buying goodwill and peace. What is goodwill and peace? Do you think this is something that can be purchased? How do you find goodwill and peace?

Extended Learning Opportunities

Explore kindness for example: Project of Heart: <http://projectofheart.ca/>

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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social Studies

Grade 1: Our changing roles and responsibilities; The Local Community

Grade 2: Changing Family and Community traditions

Grade 3: Communities in Canada 1780-1850

Grade 5: First Nations and Europeans in New France and Early Canada

Geography

Grade 7: Natural Resources Around the world: Use and Sustainability

Grade 8: Global Settlement: Patterns and Sustainability

Physical Education and Health: Healthy Relationships

Science:

Grade 1: Air and Water in the Environment: Sustainability and Stewardship

Grade 2: Properties of Liquids and Solids; Air and Water in the Environment

Science Activity

Consider this excerpt:

“Everybody went out into the cold
To sing as the light filled the heavens
To welcome a splendid new day
And offer a prayer for clean water and air
Then they parted, and went their own way.”

Considerations for Inquiry:

Does everyone have access to clean water?

Give some examples of actions that have been taken to protect water. What action(s) can you take to protect the water?

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supporting Texts

Climate Change by Shelley Tanaka

<https://houseofanansi.com/collections/imprint-groundwood/products/climate-change-revised-edition>

The Water Walker written and illustrated by Joanne Robertson

<https://secondstorypress.ca/kids/the-water-walker>

Online Resources

Coyote: A Native American Trickster

<http://www.ancientpages.com/2017/04/28/coyote-native-american-trickster-creator-sacred-animal-can-deceive-also-give-wisdom/>

Nanabozho

<http://www.native-languages.org/nanabozho.htm>

