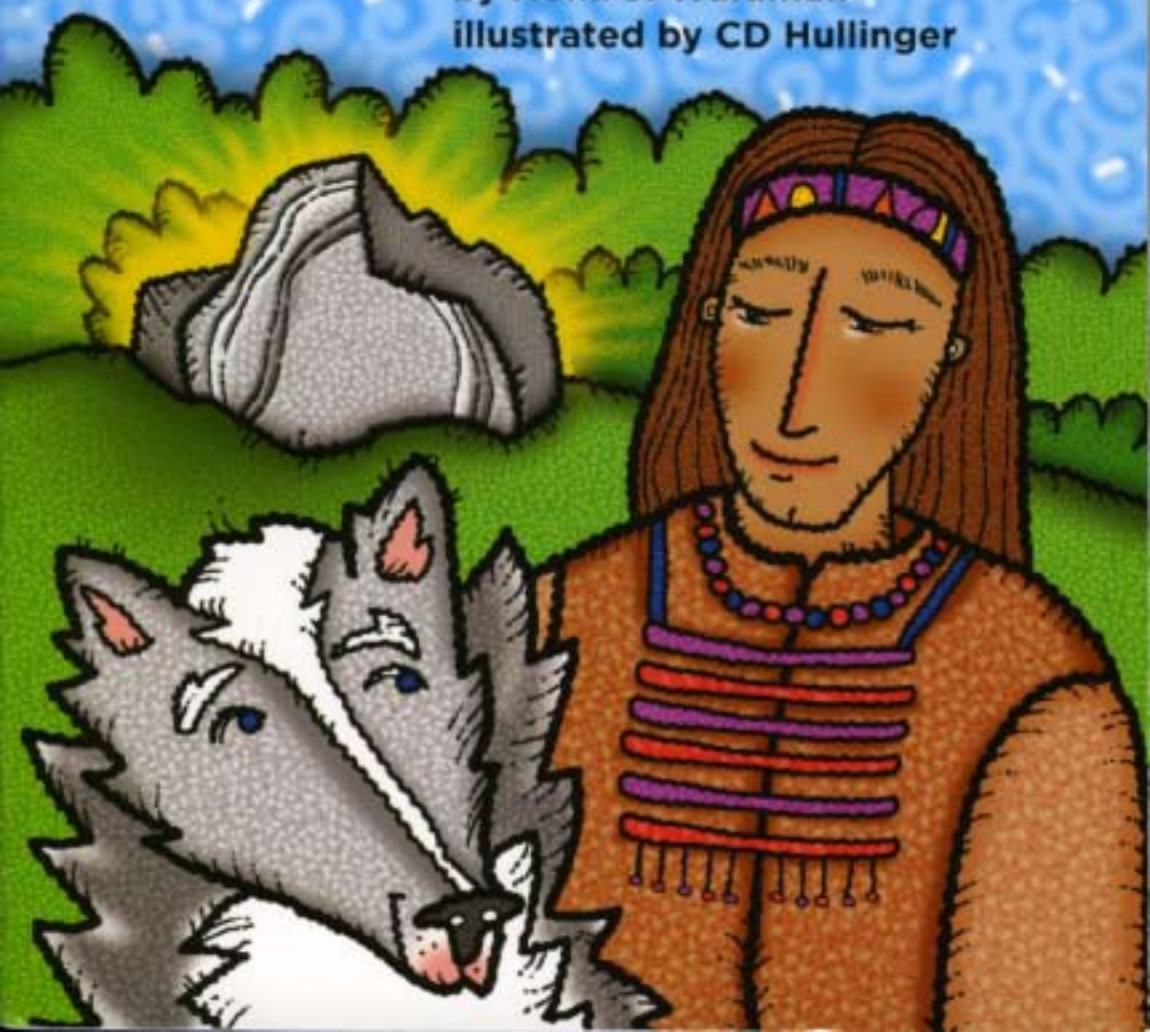


Play

COYOTE and the ROCK

A Play Based upon a White River Sioux Legend

by Nomi J. Waldman
illustrated by CD Hullinger



Read to Find Out

How does the author teach a lesson in this play?

STRATEGIES & SKILLS AT A GLANCE Comprehension

- Strategy: Evaluate
- Skill: Evaluate Author's Purpose

Vocabulary

- appreciation, burden, educate, merchandise, riverbank, treasurer, unfortunate, wares

Vocabulary Strategy

- Analogies: Relationships

Word count: 1,806

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CHARACTERS

Coyote, an animal who loves to play tricks

Iktome, a spider who is Coyote's friend (He can also take the shape of a human.)

Iyo, a rock who has great power

Narrators 1-2

Noisemakers 1-4

Setting: *The place is a trail that follows a riverbank. A forest is on the other side of the river. A large rock (Iyo) sits alongside the trail. Beyond Iyo is a cave. The time is long ago.*

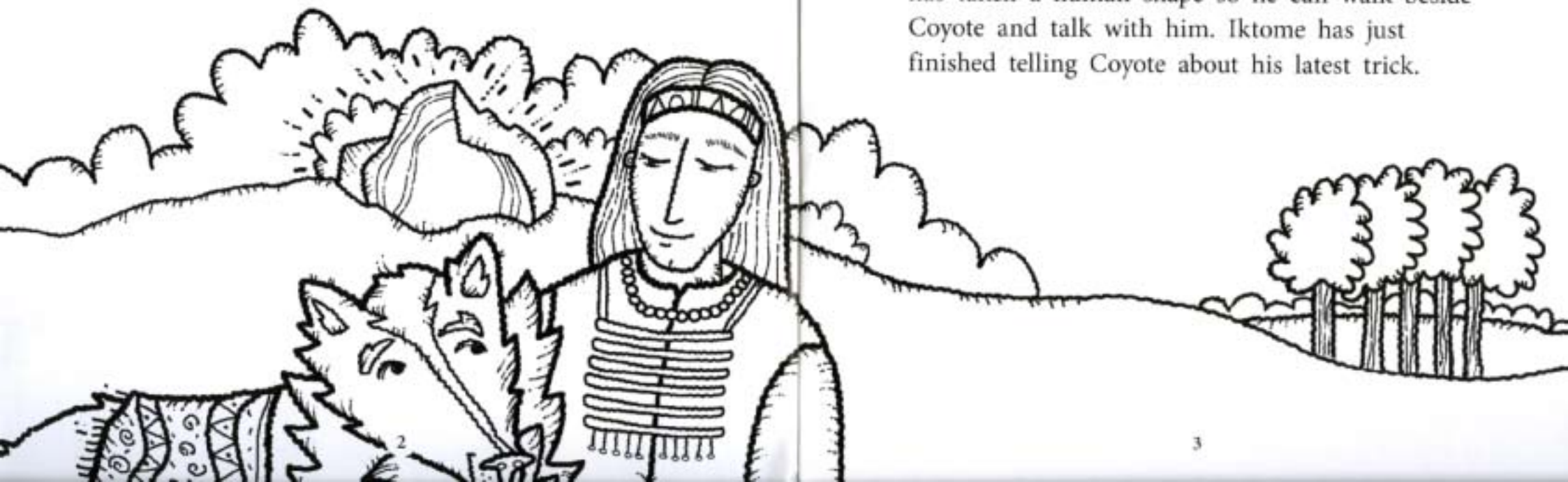
Act 1

THE WALK AND THE TALK

(As the Narrators address the audience, Coyote and Iktome walk along the trail, stopping every now and then to exchange boasts.)

Narrator 1: It's a cold day in November, and the sun seems too tired to shine brightly. Two friends decide to go for a morning walk. These two friends are both well-known tricksters. Who is the better trickster, you ask? Whoever is talking, that's who—because he's sure to be bragging about how clever he is.

Narrator 2: This morning, Iktome the Spider has taken a human shape so he can walk beside Coyote and talk with him. Iktome has just finished telling Coyote about his latest trick.



Iktome: (*laughing*) Well, Brother Coyote, try to top that trick if you can. You must admit that I did well, didn't I?

Coyote: I wouldn't say you did well. I wouldn't say you did badly. What I must say, though, is that your tricks aren't as tricky as mine are.

Iktome: You surprise me, my friend.

Coyote: Really, how can your little trick compare to the time I stole the Sun and the Moon?

Iktome: (*frowning*) As I remember, that didn't turn out too well, did it? Isn't it your fault that the day is so cold and we're shivering? If it weren't for you, the sun and the moon would still be in a box, and we would have summer all year long.

Coyote: That was Eagle's fault! He shouldn't have given me the box! He should have known I would open it! It's his fault Sun and Moon escaped to the sky.

Iktome: Eagle didn't open the box—you did. Isn't that why we now have cold in the world?

Coyote: (*clearing his throat*) Well, I might have had something to do with . . . accidentally bringing cold into the world, yes. But how about the time I killed the giant who swallowed me and all those other people?

Iktome: Hmm, yes, that was a good trick. Tell me, my clever friend, has anyone ever put one over on you?

Coyote: Are you kidding? You know I'm far too clever for that.

Narrator 1: Let me quickly interrupt this boasting to tell you that as famous as Coyote is for his tricks, he's also very well known for having told the first lie—

Narrator 2: —and about a million more lies since that first one.

Iktome: I seem to remember a few times when—

Coyote: (*quickly changing the subject*) Oh look, isn't that an interesting rock?



Coyote: Why, this is no ordinary rock! This is Iyo. Do you see the lines of moss that grow on him? For those who understand them, these lines tell a story. If you listen carefully, Iyo will teach you many, many wise lessons. Of course, I've already learned so many lessons.

Iktome: *(backing away)* That's all the more reason for you to be very careful, Coyote. I hope you're not thinking of stirring up some trouble. That would be most unfortunate.

Coyote: *(smiling and shaking his head)* Why, Iktome, you are such a worrier.

(Coyote and Iktome begin to walk away.)

Coyote: Now, as I was saying, I only wish you had had the chance to learn as much as I have.

Iktome: But Coyote, my friend, I have learned much from you! I have learned not to enter huge caves in the middle of a path.

Coyote: If you had been walking down that path, you would have gone into the giant's mouth, too. I'm sure you would have thought that it was a cave.

Iktome: What about the trick you and Eagle played? I would have talked Eagle out of stealing the box holding the Sun and the Moon.

Coyote: I can't help it! It's in my nature to play tricks!

Iktome: The problem is that sometimes your tricks make life hard for the rest of us.

Coyote: Well, you'll be happy to know that I've learned my lesson. I won't play any more tricks—unless I have to.

Act 2

THE GIFT

Narrator 1: So, what do you think Coyote will do? Let's watch him.

Coyote walks back to Iyo and studies him for a moment. Then he removes the colorful—and warm—blanket from around his shoulders and lays it over Iyo.

Coyote: Here, friend rock, please accept this blanket as a gift from me. You must be very cold on a day like this. The blanket will keep you warm. To me, it is truly a burden. It is an extra weight I must carry.

Narrator 1: Now, as you can imagine, Iyo isn't a great talker. He doesn't say anything to show his appreciation for the gift.

Narrator 2: But he doesn't refuse it, either.

Iktome: Are you sure you know what you're doing, Coyote? Do you really want to give away your blanket like that?

Coyote: Of course I'm sure. Why, I've always been a generous fellow. Besides, don't you think Iyo looks nice in my blanket? See how the green in my blanket matches the green of his moss?

Iktome: But it's Iyo's blanket now, isn't it? And it's still cold, with many months of winter ahead.

(Iktome chuckles and walks away.)

Coyote: *(hurrying after Iktome)* So long, Iyo! I hope you enjoy the blanket.

Narrator 1: Remember what I said earlier about the weather in November?

Narrator 2: Coyote and Iktome don't walk very far before the sky opens up like a bank treasurer emptying a cash drawer onto the floor. Suddenly it's pouring, it's hailing, and it's getting colder by the minute.

Coyote: There's a cave over there! Let's wait out the storm inside.

Iktome: Are you sure that's a cave?

(Iktome follows Coyote into the cave.)

Narrator 1: Iktome decides that being in the cave is better than being outside. And it really was a cave and not a giant's mouth. That means it was cold and wet inside, too.

Narrator 2: Coyote, who's given away his blanket, is soaked. He is shivering. His teeth are chattering like a flock of birds perched in a tree.

Coyote: *(shivering)* Oh, what a fool I was to give away my blanket!

Iktome: *(nodding)* I told you not to give it away.

Coyote: Yes, Iktome, but you told me that after I had already done it. I must get it back. I'm freezing, Iktome! Please, go back to Iyo, and ask him to return my blanket.

Iktome: You want me to be the one to go back and get it? It's not my blanket. I'm not the one who gave it away.

Coyote: *(pleading)* I'm so cold, Iktome, and wet through and through. If I go, I'll only get wetter and colder. I'll probably get sick, too. I might even get so sick that I might die. And you have your nice, warm robe—

Iktome: *(interrupting)* All right, all right, I'll go, stop whining.

(Iktome leaves the cave as Coyote sits and shivers.)

Coyote: *(shouting)* Iktome—tell Iyo that I'll bring him an even thicker and warmer blanket tomorrow. I promise!



Act 3

NOT QUITE THE END

Narrator 1: You wouldn't think it would be hard to get a blanket away from a rock. But remember, this is no ordinary rock.

Narrator 2: Anyway, Iktome isn't gone long before he returns to the cave empty-handed.

Coyote: Well, where's my blanket?

Iktome: *(sitting down)* I asked Iyo for it, and I asked very politely.

Coyote: Then I don't understand why you aren't holding my blanket. Did someone steal it? Who would do such a terrible thing!

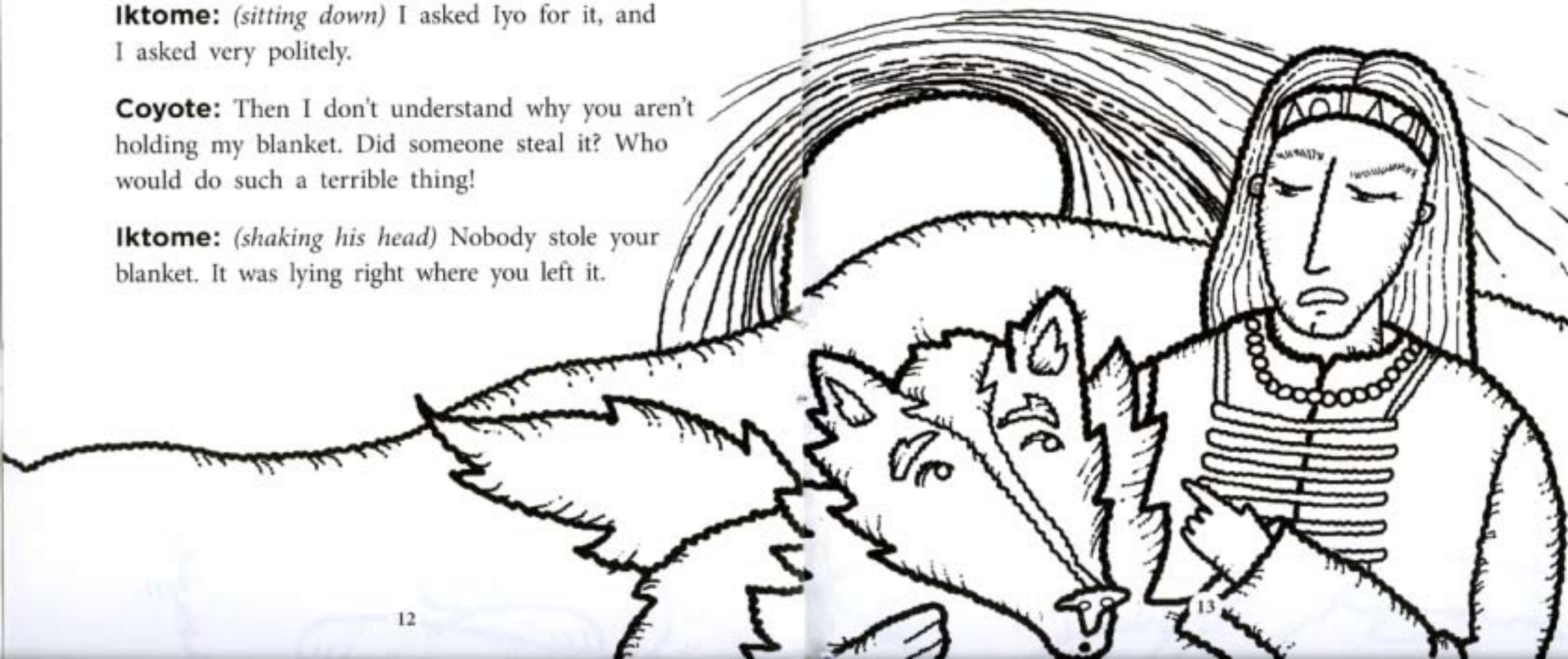
Iktome: *(shaking his head)* Nobody stole your blanket. It was lying right where you left it.

Coyote: Then I repeat: Where is my blanket?

Iktome: When I asked for the blanket, all Iyo would say is, "What is given is given."

Coyote: What's that supposed to mean?

Iktome: *(getting angry)* What does it mean? What does it mean? It means no! It means you're not getting the blanket back because what is given is given!



Coyote: This is why you should never, ever listen to what a rock says! They are not to be trusted!

Iktome: Coyote, you're like a shopkeeper who shows up at a customer's door to ask for his merchandise back. You can't just go back and collect your wares now. It's too late.

Coyote: Listen, I didn't mean to give my blanket to Iyo! It was a loan! I was lending it to him for a few minutes, that's all.

Iktome: I don't want to hear any more about it.

Narrator 1: Coyote says nothing, but Iktome can see him getting angrier and angrier.

Narrator 2: As a matter of fact, Coyote gets so hot about losing his blanket that he even forgets to shiver.

Coyote: *(getting to his feet)* That's it! I'm going to get my blanket back, and that's all there is to it.

(Coyote leaves the cave and heads toward Iyo.)

Narrator 1: Iktome doesn't try to stop his friend because it's very hard to stop Coyote once he starts anything.

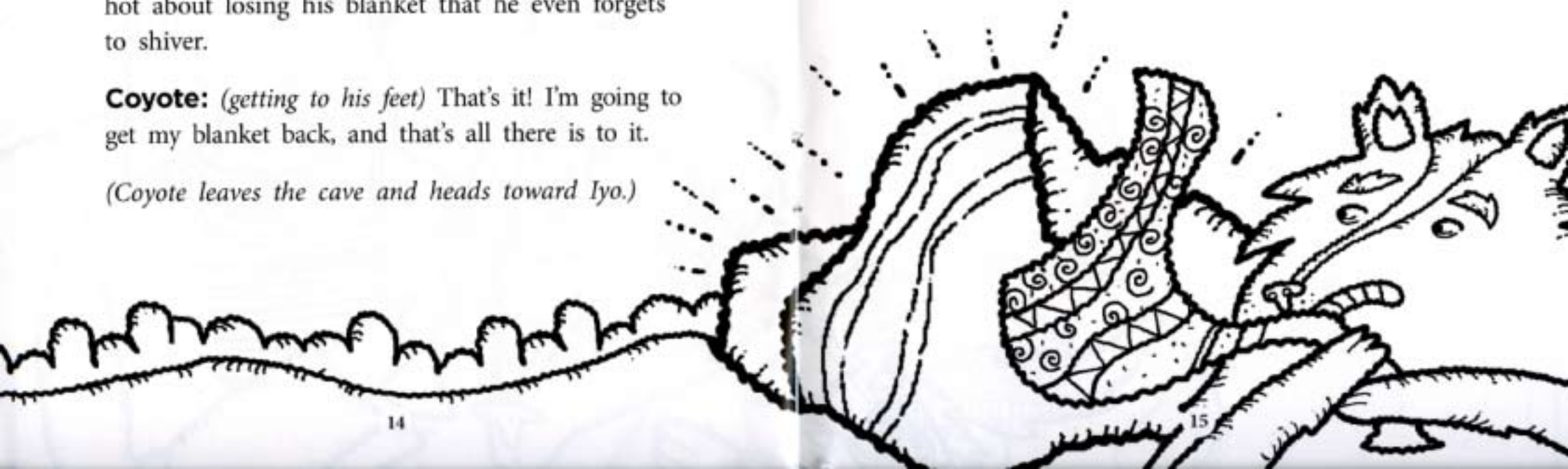
(Coyote tiptoes over to Iyo.)

Coyote: *(in his most polite voice)* Excuse me, friend rock, but I really do need my blanket. As you can see, I'm wet and cold. I need the blanket far more than you do.

Iyo: *(in a flat voice)* What is given is given.

Coyote: *(angrily)* What is given can be taken back. *(He yanks the blanket off the rock.)*

Iyo: This is not the end.



Act 4

PAYING THE PRICE

Narrator 1: The rain and hail have stopped, and the sun is out again.

Narrator 2: Coyote and Iktome find a place outside the cave to eat the food they've brought with them.

Coyote: How I missed my blanket! It's even more beautiful than I remembered it was.

(Noisemakers begin to make rumbling sound by repeating the word rumble over and over.)

Coyote: I'm so glad I have my blanket back. Iyo will forget all about this blanket business. Maybe I should go back and leave him a little food. What do you think, Iktome?

Iktome: *(looking around and listening)* What's that rumbling sound?

Coyote: *(still eating)* What are you talking about? I don't hear anything.

(The Noisemakers get louder and closer.)

Iktome: There it is again! Do you hear it now?

Coyote: *(looking around)* I wonder what it is?

Iktome: *(beginning to rise)* I think I know. It's Iyo, and he means to roll over us! Run for the river, Coyote, run!



(Iktome and Coyote leap into the river and swim across.)

Iktome: *(making swimming motions)* The rock is too heavy to follow us! He'd sink to the bottom!

Narrator 1: But Iktome's wrong.

Iktome: *(looking over his shoulder, he sees Iyo in the river.)* He's coming after us!

Coyote: *(gasping for breath)* Run for the woods! He's too large to get through the thick trees.

Narrator 2: Ouch—then Iyo rolls over Coyote and flattens him.

Iyo: *(taking back the blanket)* I told you that was not the end of it.

Iktome: It might take my poor friend Coyote a while to puff himself up again, so I'll speak for him. I hope this tale will educate you about an important lesson. If you have something to give, give it forever.



Comprehension Check

Summarize the Story

Use an Evaluate Author's Purpose Chart to help you retell *Coyote and the Rock*. Tell what the author's purpose was in writing this play.

Clues	Author's Purpose

Think and Compare

1. Turn to page 18. What lesson does the author want you to learn from this story? Do you agree with the author? Explain your answer. (**Evaluate Author's Purpose**)
2. Write about a time when you regretted giving a present to someone. (**Analyze**)
3. Do you think the lesson of the story is a good one? What would happen if people always took back the things they gave? (**Evaluate**)

Literacy Activities



WRITE A LETTER

Suppose you're a friend of Coyote's. You hear about what happened to him when he met Iyo the rock. Write a letter to Coyote to give advice for him to follow in the future.



COMPLETE ANALOGIES

Analogies are comparisons between two different things. They are used to show the relationship between things. Analogies can have the following form:

_____ is to _____ as _____ is to _____

moss is to Iyo as hair is to Coyote.

Complete these analogies.

1. educate is to teacher as _____ is to _____
to _____ author _____.
2. riverbank is to river as sidewalk is to _____.
3. money is to treasurer as merchandise is to _____.

COYOTE and the ROCK

Coyote's friend, Iktome, warns him not to give away his blanket to the rock Iyo. Will Coyote regret giving this gift?



5.4 Week 5

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