

Coyote on Fourth Street

Coyote is a famous character in Native American stories. Some people may believe these stories are myths, but I see Coyote everywhere. If you look hard, you can probably see him too.

“Are you there?” Coyote shouts into the telephone at his wife.

“No,” his wife growls back, “I’m somewhere else.”

“Heh!” Coyote continues in staccato. “I want you to do something for me.” Coyote is always wanting his wife to do something for him.

“Uh, huh,” his wife says, “What is it?”

“There’s a party tonight at Badger’s house. Bring me my best necklace. You know the one with the obsidian arrow, the one that makes me look like a warrior,” he pauses and then shouts, “and my new ribbon shirt too!. Did you get that?” as if he had to shout it across town.

“Where are you?” Coyote’s wife asks patiently.

“I’m downtown here next to the Coyote Bar. You know the one, the one where all my bros hang out.” Coyote’s wife nods to herself. She knows the one. “Oh, yeah,” Coyote shouts again, “are you still there?”

Where else would I be? Coyote’s wife thinks. “What else do you want,” she asks because Coyote always wants something else.

“Bring me some cash too so I can buy a couple of forties.”

“Is that it?” Coyote’s wife knows there is still more.

“What do you have to eat? I’m really hungry. I haven’t eaten all day.”

“What do you want to eat?” Coyote’s wife asks patiently.

“Oh, never mind, I’ll grab something at Taco Bell. When can you get here?” Coyote continues without a pause, still shouting. He always keeps talking. He always shouts.

“I’ll be right there,” Coyote’s wife replies patiently. He always asks, and it always takes the same time. Coyote’s wife picks him up fifteen minutes later. He is wearing his hairnet, a white T-shirt, and his grey work pants down

around his hips. His belt hangs long between his legs.

“What did you bring me?” he shouts and then without waiting for an answer, “Take off! Take off! Go left,”

Coyote shouts. “You know where Badger’s house is.” Coyote’s wife pulls away from the curb. She is a very careful driver.

“Well,” Coyote shouts, “where’s my stuff?”

Coyote’s wife indicates her fanny pack by pointing her lips at it. Coyote grabs it and pours everything out on the seat. He takes his necklace and snaps it around his neck. He takes his new ribbon shirt—black with black and red ribbons—off the hanger and puts it on.

“I look good, don’t I?” he says adjusting the rear view mirror so he can look at himself. “Is that all the money you brought?” he shouts without waiting for a reply. “Damn, woman, am I going to have to beat you?” Coyote laughs, his yellow-brown eyes sparkling and his mouth curling up over his teeth.

Coyote’s wife says nothing. Coyote never actually beats her, but he says that a lot. She re-adjusts the rear view mirror.

“Pull over, pull over here,” Coyote shouts. “I want you to braid my hair.” Coyote has long, thick black hair, and he is very proud of it. Coyote’s wife pulls the pick-up over to the curb. She looks at Coyote’s soft brown eyes and his curling lips. She does think him very handsome, but she never says anything because he is already too vain.

Coyote hands her a brush and turns sideways on the seat. She brushes his beautiful hair and braids it into one long braid down his back. Coyote moves the mirror again to look at himself. He adjusts his six gold earrings. “OK,” he says after they have gone a few blocks, “stop here so I can get some beer.”

Coyote’s wife waits in the truck, avoiding the stares of Dog and Rabbit who are sharing a bottle around the side of the building. Seems like everybody’s doing that these days, she thinks with sadness.

“Let’s go,” he shouts as he hops in the cab, “out Fourth Street—hurry!” Coyote is always in a hurry.

Coyote’s wife looks both ways before pulling onto Menaul Boulevard. They turn right at the light at Fourth Street. “Turn here,” Coyote shouts, sipping one of the forties and pointing to a small street to the left. “Stop,” he shouts after half-a-block. Coyote’s wife stops the truck. “I’ll call you,” he says slipping out a block from Badger’s house. He doesn’t want his bros to see him with his wife, or the bitches, either, Coyote thinks.

“Are you there?” Coyote shouts in the telephone to his wife. It is four in the morning, and there is a light rain falling outside. “Come and get me. I got kicked out. I’m cold and wet. I’m at the car wash on Fourth

Street. You

know the one!” Coyote hangs up without waiting for an answer. He does sound miserable.

Coyote’s wife puts on a jacket, gets into her truck, and heads out into the darkness to pick up Coyote. Coyote’s fur is wet and dripping, his whiskers drooping, his ribbon shirt torn, and his necklace gone.

“What

happened?” Coyote’s wife asks, thinking he does look pitiful. Coyote’s wife is a very kind person.

“They kicked me out,” Coyote answers shivering.

“Why?”

“I pissed on their floor in the living room,” Coyote says, laughing. “But it’s OK because it took four of them to

get me out,“ he says popping the top of another beer. “Damn, and I thought Badger was my friend.”