



### The Tale of the Wolf and the Coyote - A Parable for the Not So Young

Once upon a time, in a far northern land, there lived a wolf and a coyote. While both could claim membership in the canine family, there was little else of similarity between the two.

Wolf lived in the as yet untouched mountain wilderness with his mate. He led a life full of hard work and simple pleasures, but he loved his wild home - the gentle blush of freshness in the spring, the warm winds of summer, the crackly fall of leaves in autumn, the sharp clear winter dawns. Sometimes, at the end of day, when the night sky was clear, he and his family would howl with the joy of life.

Coyote, on the other hand, enjoyed the cultured pleasures of the city, where he lived with his cousins, aunts, and uncles. Coyote loved the night life, and was nocturnal by habit, feasting on the discarded riches of the city's inhabitants. He lived for the moment and loved for the day.

Every so often, Wolf would come down out of his mountain fastness to the edge of the forest where he could look out over the city. This strange place fascinated and repelled him at the same time. It was big and noisy, it smelt bad, and what was worse, it was gradually expanding, eating the forest and chewing up the land. Wolf feared his world would be consumed by this monster.

One day, when Wolf was watching the city at the edge of dawn, Coyote came strolling by, taking a little fresh air before retiring for the day. Wolf saw Coyote, and asked, in curiosity, "Do you live down there?"

"Of course," Coyote replied. "Where else?"

"What is it like in the city?" wondered Wolf.

"Oh, it's a grand place! Everyday something new, something fun," said Coyote with a laugh. "The city is always growing, always changing."

"What do you eat? Surely there can be no game down there to hunt." Food was always a priority in Wolf's mind.

"Who needs to hunt? Delicacies of every imaginable kind are served each night behind all the buildings where the city dwellers eat during the day. Why, I don't even know how to hunt! And the bigger the city gets, the more great food there is! So may it ever grow!" Coyote crowed, thinking of his full belly.

"Hrrmmph!" snorted Wolf. "The city is a disease. It eats trees. It kills wild things. Some distant kin of mine once went to the city because they heard the pickings were good. They feasted in garbage cans and snacked on the small defenseless animals that the city dwellers keep, and one day they were hunted down and killed for their brashness."

"No wonder!" exclaimed Coyote. "They went about it completely the wrong way! You must be canny, and enjoy the repast with stealth in the small hours of the night. If you always vary your dining locations, your habits remain known to none. Just keep your head down and stay quiet, and you'll do fine in the city."

"Don't you ever enjoy a sunny day, or have a family sing-along?" Wolf asked, remembering such moments with joy.

"Sing? Never! Why would you give your location away in the city? Only the country boors ever yip and yodel," Coyote declared with a sniff of disdain.

"Hrrmmph!" snorted Wolf again, and then he turned and faded back into the wilderness.

That winter was particularly cold and stormy. Snow fell heavy and deep, and hunting was difficult for Wolf. In spite of the hardship, there was great beauty in the cold, clear crystal nights when the snow stopped falling, and Wolf found time to take joy in the fact that life was still good and his land was still beautiful.

Early in spring, just as the first violets dotted the forest floor, Wolf returned to the edge of the city. It had grown even more, and was now belching smoke from several large stacks. Surprisingly, he met Coyote again. Coyote was as smug as ever, and

just as sleek and fat. He looked Wolf over with a contemptuous smile, taking in Wolf's rough woolly coat. "Cold winter, I see," he said.

"A bit snowy, alright," Wolf replied non-comittally.

Coyote was in a mood to brag. "The groundskeeper down at the new plant likes me. He leaves me special treats every evening. What a life!"

Wolf looked down at the city and saw how much farther it had eaten into the forest. "What will you eat when the city has devoured everything?" he asked Coyote.

"Oh, that will never happen. The city will grow forever. Besides, why worry about tomorrow? Live for today!" With that, Coyote laughed and leapt off down the hill back to the city.

Wolf pondered this thoughtfully, then walked slowly back through the forest, soaking in the beauty of an early spring day. That evening, he howled joyously at the clear night sky with his mate. He still worried about the city, but while his wilderness remained, he would take joy in the simple things of life.

**Let the moral from this story be as you make it.**

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My apologies for anthropomorphizing wolves and coyotes for the sake of the tale. Behaviour patterns of Wolf and Coyote are loosely based on wild animals I have observed. While coyote is a common character in First Nations stories, my inspiration for this story came from Aesop's fables ("The Dog and the Wolf") and Celtic legends and lore learned as a child.

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