

## COYOTE AND BEAR

This story is about Coyote and Coyote, the plateau of Eastern Washington Region in much of the United States, is a very powerful figure, a very powerful creator figure, a changer figure, a trickster figure, a teacher. He just does so many things that sometimes our ability to describe him is kind of, well, it doesn't quite do him justice, because he does so many things, but many, many tribes know his story. And so, this is a coyote story.

A long time ago, Coyote and Bear were talking. And Coyote said, "You know Bear? I've traveled around an awful lot, been to a lot of places and I saw something I think is really interesting and it's called farming. It's when you grow a certain plant in a certain place, and then when the plant is ready, we can pick and eat as much as we need." So, Bear said "Well, that sounds interesting. What do we have to do?" Coyote showed him. He cleared some ground, we'll put some seeds in it and it'll grow a plant, then we'll harvest that plant and when it's ready we'll have all the food we need. So, they agreed that they would do this. Then Bear said, "How are we going to split up these plants and Coyote said, "Well we will split them in half." And Bear said, "How will that work?" And Coyote said, "Well I tell you what. I will take everything under the ground, and you can have what's above the ground. That's how we will split it in half." And Bear said, "That sounds fair." So, they planted the plant and it was potato. And when the potatoes were ready to harvest, Coyote dug up all the potatoes under the ground and Bear was left with the green, bitter leaves that were above the ground; not good for eating at all. And Bear thought, that didn't work. That didn't work at all. He said, "Coyote, we're going to do this again only this time I get what's under the ground and you can have what's above the ground." And Coyote said, "That sounds fair to me." And so, they did. This time they grew corn. And when the corn was ready to harvest, Coyote got all the ears of corn above the ground and Bear was left with the roots under the ground; which are not good for eating at all. So, Bear did get something after all this was done. He realized that he would never, ever make another deal with Coyote. And that is all.