From the very beginning, Coyote was traveling around all over the earth. He did many wonderful things when he went along. He killed the monsters and the evil spirits that preyed on the people. He made the Indians, and put them out in tribes all over the world because Old Man Above wanted the earth to be inhabited all over, not just in one or two places.

He gave all the people different names and taught them different languages. This is why Indians live all over the country now and speak in different ways.

He taught the people how to eat and how to hunt the buffalo and catch eagles. He taught them what roots to eat and how to make a good lodge and what to wear. He taught them how to dance. Sometimes he made mistakes, and even though he was wise and powerful, he did many foolish things. But that was his way.

Coyote liked to play tricks. He thought about himself all the time, and told everyone he was a great warrior, but he was not.
Sometimes he would go too far with some trick and get someone killed. Other times, he would have a trick played on himself by someone else. He got killed this way so many times that Fox and the birds got tired of bringing him back to life. A Another way he got in trouble was trying to do what someone else did. This is how he came to be called Imitator.

Coyote was ugly too. The girls did not like him. But he was smart. He could change himself around and trick the women. Coyote got the girls when he wanted. B C

One time, Coyote had done everything he could think of and was traveling from one place to another place, looking for other things that needed to be done. Old Man saw him going along and said to himself, “Coyote has now done almost everything he is capable of doing. His work is almost done. It is time to bring him back to the place where he started.”

So Great Spirit came down and traveled in the shape of an old man. He met Coyote. Coyote said, “I am Coyote. Who are you?”

Old Man said, “I am Chief of the earth. It was I who sent you to set the world right.”

“No,” Coyote said, “you never sent me. I don’t know you. If you are the Chief, take that lake over there and move it to the side of that mountain.”

“No. If you are Coyote, let me see you do it.”

Coyote did it.

“Now, move it back.”

Coyote tried, but he could not do it. He thought this was strange. He tried again, but he could not do it.

Chief moved the lake back.

Coyote said, “Now I know you are the Chief.”

Old Man said, “Your work is finished, Coyote. You have traveled far and done much good. Now you will go to where I have prepared a home for you.”

Then Coyote disappeared. Now no one knows where he is anymore.
Old Man got ready to leave, too. He said to the Indians, “I will send messages to the earth by the spirits of the people who reach me but whose time to die has not yet come. They will carry messages to you from time to time. When their spirits come back into their bodies, they will revive and tell you their experiences.

“Coyote and myself, we will not be seen again until Earthwoman is very old. Then we shall return to earth, for it will require a change by that time. Coyote will come along first, and when you see him, you will know I am coming. When I come along, all the spirits of the dead will be with me. There will be no more Other Side Camp. All the people will live together. Earthmother will go back to her first shape and live as a mother among her children. Then things will be made right.”

Now they are waiting for Coyote.