

## Language Arts

### Genre

**Trickster Tales** are folk tales, mostly about animals, in which one character tries to trick another. Often, the trickster ends up looking foolish.



### Literary Elements

**Foreshadowing** is the use of clues to hint at what is going to happen.

**Symbolism** is the use of an object to represent an idea, such as sorrow, pride, or strength.

# FLYCATCHER AND COYOTE

by Gillian Reed

Many years ago, Flycatcher visited a lake whose water was a spectacular shade of blue. At that time, Flycatcher's feathers were dull, gray, and ugly, and so the bird loved to look at the beautiful blue water. Coyote hid nearby to watch Flycatcher.

Flycatcher loved the blue of the lake so much that she swooped down from the tree to bathe in the lake. She did this four times every morning for four days in a row. Each time the bird bathed in the water, she sang this song:

*Lovely lake,  
So pure and blue,  
Let me dip myself,  
So I'll be blue, too.*

Coyote appears near the start of the story. This foreshadows the important role that Coyote has in the story.



On the fifth morning that Flycatcher went bathing, something amazing happened. When she flew out of the water, her feathers had become a dazzling blue. Flycatcher was now the same color as the lake.

This whole time, Coyote had been watching the bird. Coyote didn't admire the bird or want to learn more about her. No, Coyote was trying to think of a way to trick the bird and eat her. But Coyote was afraid of the water and could never get close enough to Flycatcher.

On the day that Flycatcher turned blue, Coyote was so impressed that he forgot all about catching it. He called up to Flycatcher, who was perched safely in a tree, "How did your ugly gray feathers turn that wonderful blue? Tell me how you did it, so that I can be blue, too."

Flycatcher was so happy that she was feeling generous. She remained safely on her branch, but she told Coyote, "This is what you must do. Jump in the lake four times every morning for four mornings. Then jump in the lake on the fifth morning, and you will turn blue. You might try singing my song, too." Flycatcher taught Coyote her song and then flew merrily on her way.





Well, Coyote really wanted to be blue. So even though he hated the water, he jumped into the lake four times the next morning.

He sang the bird's song, and he shivered as he sang. He did this for four days. On the fifth morning, Coyote emerged from his lake bath with lovely blue fur. Coyote whistled to himself. "I'm blue and beautiful."

Coyote couldn't wait to show off his new color. He thought his fine blue fur would make him the envy of all the desert creatures. He strolled along, looking left and right for someone to admire him. Coyote walked for hours, but he didn't find

any admirers. He grew impatient. Then Coyote remembered a canyon where many animals and people lived. They would notice him, but he would have to hurry to reach the canyon before sundown.

As Coyote ran, he noticed the late afternoon shadows around him. He wondered if his shadow was as blue as he was. He twisted his blue head around to take a look. Coyote got a good look at his shadow, which was not blue. But he failed to see the big boulder directly ahead of him. Coyote ran smack into the boulder and fell to the ground.



He rolled over and over in the dirt, his blue legs flying. When he finally stopped and stood up, Coyote was the color of the dusty desert earth. Coyote shook himself, but the dusty color stayed on him. To this day, all coyotes are the color of the dusty desert. And to this day, because her intentions were pure, the flycatcher is the color of the beautiful blue lake.

Coyote decided not to go to the canyon after all. No one would be impressed by his color now. He headed for home, stopping only to give the boulder a good, swift kick.

The dull, dusty color of his fur is a symbol of his hurt pride.



## Connect and Compare



1. What event is foreshadowed by the flycatcher's song?  
**Foreshadowing**
2. What do you learn about Coyote's personality in this trickster tale? **Analyze**
3. Compare what happens to Coyote to what happens to Rattlesnake in *Roadrunner's Dance*. Use information from the stories to support your answers.

**Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Find out more about trickster tales at [www.macmillanmh.com](http://www.macmillanmh.com)



# Write Dialogue

## Writer's Craft

### Transition Words

Use **transition words** in sentences to show cause and effect. Words such as "because" and "as a result" can make your writing clearer.



I included the word "since" to explain why Hare thought he should have won.

I used the word "because" to explain why Hare thought he lost.

## Hare and Tortoise Again

by Keisha F.

Hare met Tortoise in the park one day.

"Since I am faster, I should have won that race!" shouted Hare sternly.

Tortoise laughed, "You are not a good loser, Hare."

"Because I was tired that day, I lost," said Hare. "Let's race again!"

"Why don't we invite others to race, too?" suggested Tortoise.

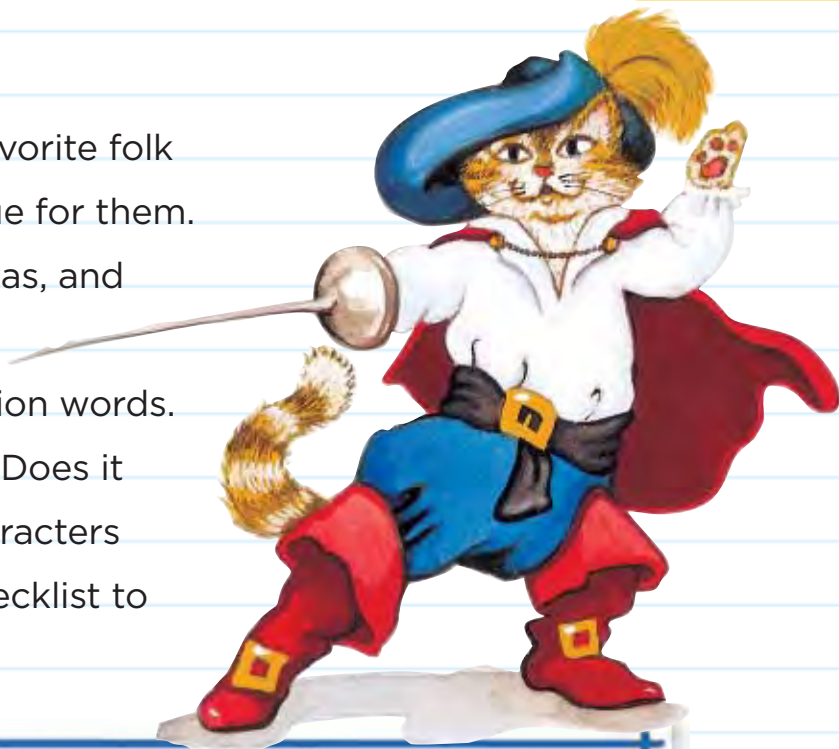
Hare thought for a minute. "We'll challenge Coyote, too. He's new in town."

"I'll see you there!" answered Tortoise.



## Your Turn

Choose characters from your favorite folk tale and write a page of dialogue for them. Include quotation marks, commas, and correct sentence punctuation in the dialogue. Also use transition words. Then read your dialogue aloud. Does it sound like something those characters would say? Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



## Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did my dialogue show what my characters think and feel?
- Organization:** Are my sentences in correct order?
- Voice:** Do the characters' words match their personalities?
- Word Choice:** Do **transition words** help show cause and effect?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did my dialogue sound like a real conversation when I read it out loud?
- Conventions:** Did I use quotation marks and punctuation in the right places? Did I check my spelling?