



Coyote and the Turtle's Dream

Chapter Synopsis

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Based on the original characters by Georgia Perez

This book is the first in a series being developed by the CDC's Native Diabetes Wellness Program.

Chapter 1

The Animals of Stories

On the Medicine Cave Indian Reservation, the rivers and wells have mysteriously run dry. Sky Heart, the eagle, and Thistle, the rabbit, are warned by Grandmother, an old box turtle, that the cause of the drought and other troubles on the reservation is the looting of the resting place of an ancient sea turtle. Sky Heart decides to seek the help of Rain that Dances.

Chapter 2

The Disappearing Water

Sky Heart watches Rain that Dances (Rain/RD) and Thunder Cloud (Boomer) walk home from the school bus stop. The boys get rowdy and Rain shows Boomer a football block that Coach Brown has taught him. Later, Rain follows the creek to his house, noticing that the creek is running low. Once home, he is greeted by his brothers (Del and Danny) and sister (Margie). As he checks out the nutritional value of the supper his mother (Roberta) is preparing, she reflects on the mysterious nature of Rain and his friends' zeal for preventing diabetes in their community. At supper Rain questions his father, Gerald, about the creek, and tells him about his first school assignment

(an interview with a family member) and upcoming Native language lessons. His great-grandmother, Granma Hettie, offers to teach him words in the Tribe's language.

Chapter 3

The Cigar Box

Rain and Boomer go to the playground for a few rounds of basketball before doing their homework. They witness Jimmy, a lonely boy, throw something in a trash bin and run away. When Rain and Boomer investigate, they discover a cigar box in the bin that contains two mysterious "rocks." Under the watchful eye of Sky Heart, the boys return to Rain's house with the cigar box.



Sky Heart twice circled the upturned faces of the rabbit and turtle.

Chapter 4

The Dream

The boys do their homework together, and later Roberta and Rain watch a program about sharks on TV. Roberta tells Rain about hunting for shark's teeth at Shell Ridge when she was a child. Shell Ridge is a fossil-rich mountainous area on the reservation. Rain becomes excited about hunting shark's teeth at the Ridge. After the family goes to bed, Sky Heart reaches out to Rain in a dream, singing to him that "a boy must help us," and providing him with clues about an ancient turtle, the water's disappearance, and a mysterious cave.

Chapter 5

A Boy Disappears

Rain is eager to show the "rocks" to Hummingbird and Simon. He also wants to share the eagle's dream with Hummingbird, his confidant. Luckily, before he leaves for school (Rain attends Thunder Rock Middle School in the town of Thunder Rock), Granma Hettie volunteers to tell him a story for his interview assignment. At lunch, Hummingbird and Simon examine the "rocks" and suggest that they are fossils. The fossils take on deeper meaning when the kids find out that Jimmy has disappeared and his family is looking for him. The kids realize that the fossils may be related to Jimmy's disappearance. Hummingbird suggests that they seek help from Miss Swallow, the 8th grade science teacher. Unknown to the kids, a shadowy figure is watching the school, also looking for Jimmy.

Chapter 6

How Do You Say "Water?"

Rain meets Hummingbird in the library and tells her about the dream. She is overjoyed that the eagle is talking to them again but thinks the dream is involving them in serious matters. Hummingbird thinks the dream deserves a meeting at the stump where the eagle first talked to them. She has news for Rain, too. Arianna, a girl with type 1 diabetes, will soon be living with her family. Rain understands he



The Dream

has more to learn about diabetes when Hummingbird informs him that type 1 cannot be prevented. In English class, Rain and Simon team up as reporters for the family interview, and Joe Red Crane, their Native language instructor, makes his first visit to the class. Rain asks him how to say "water" and "turtle" in the Tribe's language.

Chapter 7

Science Lessons

The kids meet at Miss Swallow's room after school. She agrees that the contents of the cigar box are fossils and suggests that they visit Dr. Bamsey, a biology professor at the local tribal college, to get his advice about their identity. On the way to the college, Miss Swallow tells the kids about her work with the Bison Project, a study which uses Native science to restore ecosystems. Miss Swallow is impressed that



Simon bit into his tuna sandwich, swallowed, and solemnly pronounced, “This is a fossil— not a rock.”

the kids recognize that harmony in nature promotes the health of ecosystems, just as harmony in the body promotes health. Dr. Bamsey examines the fossils and warns the kids about poachers who sell fossils for money and destroy knowledge about the earth’s history. Dr. Bamsey photographs the fossilized bones and sends the photos to the state university for identification.

Chapter 8

Boo

After leaving the college, the kids convince Miss Swallow to stop at Boo’s Convenience Store. Boo, the owner, is their friend who was not having much business success until he teamed up with the health-conscious foursome. Following the eagle’s messages, they worked with Boo to organize the store’s aisles into “sometime” and “everyday” snacks. Boo also has begun to sell fresh lunches and traditional foods. Marketing healthy foods has allowed Boo to compete successfully with Big Weasel’s Jif Mart, where lunches are “heart attacks in a sack.” Miss Swallow is greatly impressed by the store. When the boys inquire about their favorite comic, *Mammoth Boy*, Boo tells them he is expecting delivery the following Tuesday. On the way home, Miss Swallow drives past the Jif Mart where the kids are delighted to see that Big Weasel is losing money on his junk food. Miss Swallow drops them off at the Tribal offices to hitch a ride home with Gerald. He informs Rain that they have no water at the house.

Chapter 9

Health Nuts

Arriving home, Gerald and Rain discover Roberta fussing with her sister, Sissy, who stays with Margie and Granma when Roberta, a community health representative, is making home visits with patients. Roberta is disturbed because Sissy is giving Margie candy to keep her quiet while she watches soap operas. Sissy is annoyed by the family’s commitment to healthy eating and proclaims that they need more excitement in their lives than a bunch of carrots. After supper, Rain asks Roberta for more information about type 1 diabetes. His mother reminds him to tell Granma that he and Simon will interview her in the morning. When Simon arrives after breakfast on Saturday morning, Granma goes looking for a valentine box which contains something much more exciting than carrots.



Delbert and the Coyote

Chapter 10

Granma Tells a Story

In her interview, Granma tells about the day, long ago, when she and her brother, Delbert, followed a coyote to a cave at Shell Ridge. Granma wouldn't go into the cave, but Delbert did. When he came bursting from the cave, running for his life, Granma chased him all the way home. Once safe, he told her a scary tale about the bones of giant creatures embedded in the cave wall. Her brother said that when he picked up a bone from the cave floor, the creatures suddenly began to twist and turn. As he ran from the cave in terror, Delbert was doubly frightened to see the coyote raise himself up and stand on his back legs. As the boys become suspicious of Coyote's tricks, Granma takes an object from the valentine box and presses it into Rain's hand—it is the bone that Delbert took from the cave.



*Converging at their meeting place,
the kids put down their backpacks...*

Chapter 11

The Tree Stump

Rain and Simon excitedly compare Delbert's bone to the ones in the cigar box. They are identical. The boys hurry to their rendezvous with Hummingbird and Boomer at the tree stump. Arriving early, they write up their report of Granma's interview. To make sense of the mystery, Rain and Simon share Granma's story with Hummingbird and Boomer. Rain and



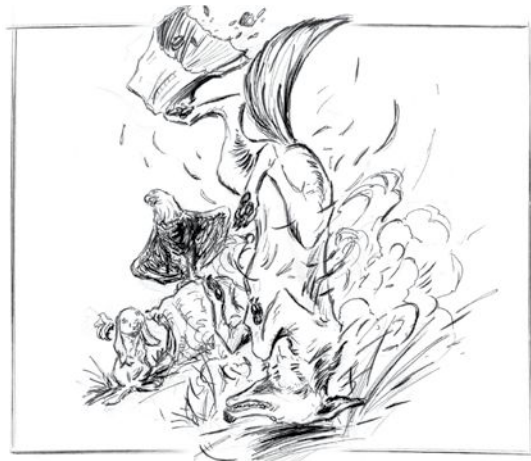
*Then Granma reached down beside her chair and
picked up the valentine candy box.*

Hummingbird then tell Boomer and Simon about the eagle's dream. Putting together the clues from the story and dream, the kids are now convinced that the coyote is responsible for the vanishing water and Jimmy's disappearance. They also resolve to go exploring at Shell Ridge to see if they can find any evidence of Jimmy.

Chapter 12

Coyote's Powwow

The four friends don't know that Thistle, the rabbit, has been listening to their conversation. When the kids leave the meadow, Sky Heart arrives and Coyote appears, curious about what the kids have been saying about him. Thistle accuses Coyote of



*Finally Coyote bounded out of his minicyclone and landed upside
down, his behind exposed in a most undignified manner.*



The Water Buffalo

causing the drought. He admits his trickery but does not take responsibility for the outcome. Rather, he claims that humans fall victim to his tricks because of their own shortcomings—and mistakes are the only way they learn. Coyote chastises Thistle for losing her own powers as a trickster but also tries to amuse her. Coyote performs a woman's shawl dance, revealing his clown nature. To appease Sky Heart, he promises not to turn his powers against Rain that Dances.

Chapter 13

Big Weasel Gets the Message

On Sunday, the boys prepare for a trip to Shell Ridge and some fossil collecting. Hummingbird does not go because of Arianna's arrival. On the way to "the Ridge," Roberta stops at the Jif Mart where they discover that Frank Big Weasel is also offering healthy lunches. It is obvious to the boys that he has

"stolen" Boo's new business strategy, but Roberta cautions them that they don't "own" healthy food. They also notice a flyer on the Jif Mart bulletin board advertising jobs for fossil collectors. The boys are suspicious and remember Dr. Bamsey's warning about "fossil poachers." They take one of the flyers which lists a local telephone number.

Chapter 14

Shell Ridge

Roberta drops off the boys at Shell Ridge. They immediately begin to fill sacks with marine fossils lying exposed and crumbling on the ground. Working their way down to the flats, an ancient seabed, the boys each find a shark's tooth. Suddenly, they spot the dust of a Range Rover heading toward them. They hide and watch a man dump some heavy bags behind some brush. After the Rover departs, the boys run to see what the bags contain. They suspect fossil poachers but are disappointed to find only bags of Plaster of Paris. When Simon warns the others that it is almost time for Roberta to pick them up, Rain stops briefly to fix the location in his memory.

Chapter 15

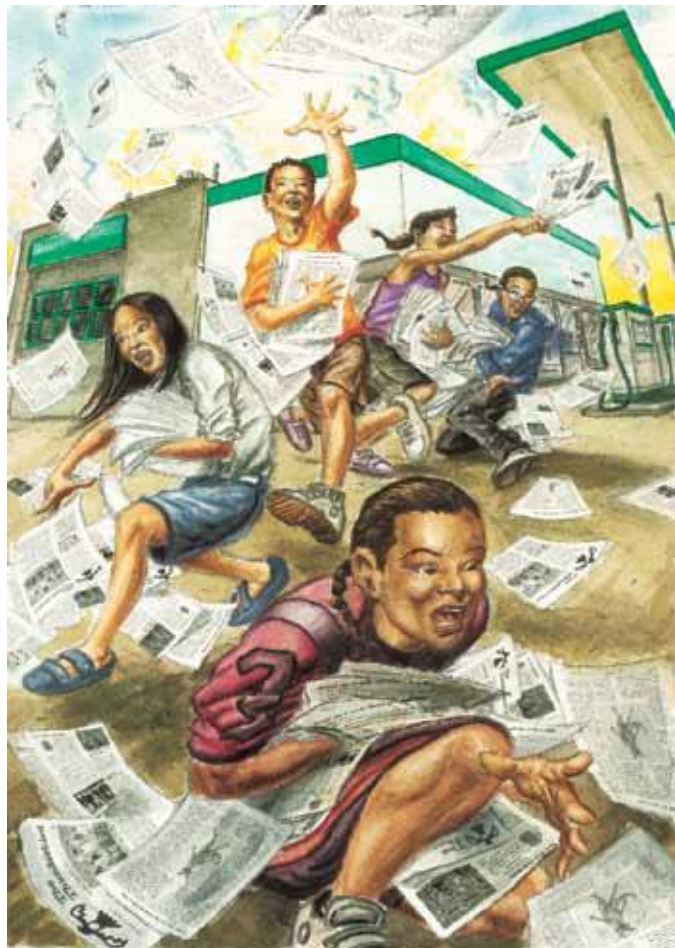
Buffalo and Sharks

On their return from "the Ridge," the boys join their families at a water buffalo that is dispensing drinking water to the community. Rain meets Hummingbird's new friend, Arianna, who impresses the crowd by assisting the volunteers in operating the tanker pump. Later, at home, he shows Gerald the shark's tooth he found on the flats. At school on Monday morning, Simon gives Rain a copy of Granma's interview that he has recopied, having carefully excluded any references to the location of the cave at Shell Ridge. Simon has titled the story "When Coyote Stood Up like a Man." Boomer calls the phone number on the flyer from the school office and discovers that it dials Nelson's Rock and Smoke Shop, the same shop that is advertised on Jimmy's cigar box.

Chapter 16

Turtle Revelations

At lunch, the boys ask Arianna how she knew about the pump on the water tanker. They are impressed when she reveals that she has type 1 diabetes and knows about pumps because she wears an insulin pump. Miss Swallow locates the kids in the lunchroom and shares the report from the university that identifies the fossils as the flipper bones of *Archelon ischyrios*, a giant turtle that lived 65 million years ago. Hummingbird and Rain tell Miss Swallow about the Plaster of Paris dumped at Shell Ridge. She suspects fossil poachers and promises to follow up with Dr. Bamsey. Simon is eager to make friends with Arianna and invites her to read Granma's story. Later, trying to impress her, he adds a sentence to the interview, identifying the bones in the story as those of *Archelon ischyrios*. He hopes the interview will be chosen to print in the school newspaper.



The Paper Chase

Chapter 17

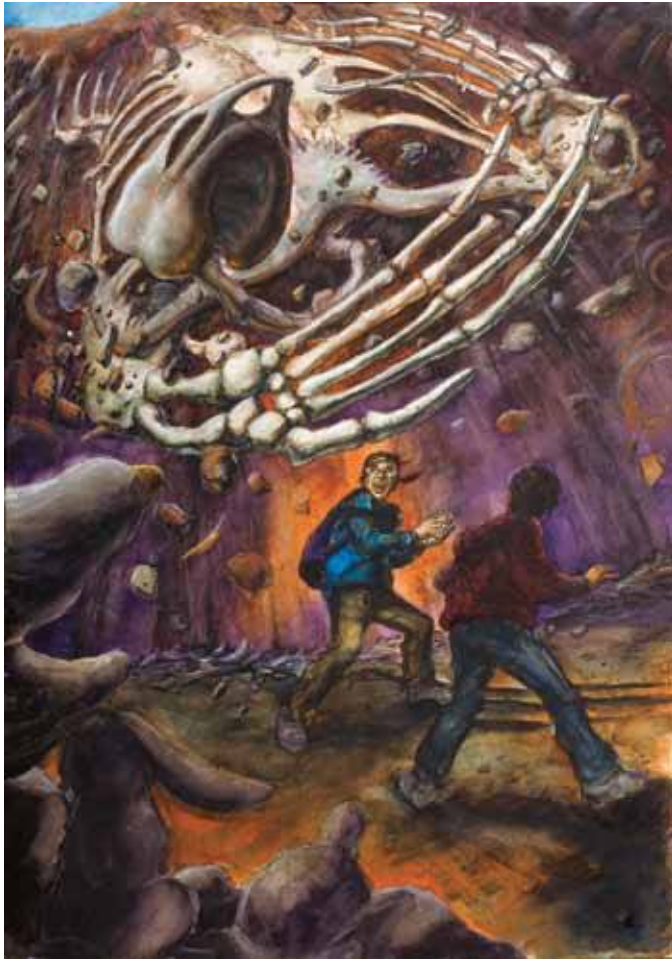
A Boy Returns

Rain and Boomer head to the playground after school. Boomer shows Rain a self-defense move (“Boomer’s Magic Move”) he learned from his brother. The boys have fun alternately playing the “good guy” and “bad guy.” Suddenly, Boomer spots Jimmy—hiding in the concession stand. Jimmy warns the boys about the bones, telling them that they are from a turtle’s skeleton worth thousands of dollars. He reveals that Vernon Smeed, a man he sold rocks to at Nelson’s Rock and Smoke Shop, is threatening his life if he does not reveal the skeleton’s whereabouts. Fearing for his family, Jimmy has encouraged his mother to move in with his uncle in another community. He makes the boys promise that they will keep quiet about the poacher.

Chapter 18

The Fossil Poacher

The next morning, the boys head to Boo’s store to buy the long-awaited copy of *Mammoth Boy*. In the store, Rain and Boomer come face to face with Smeed, who is posing as a travel writer. Simon hears Smeed on his cell phone arranging for the theft of the Great Turtle. In a panic, the boys run to school, anxious to tell Hummingbird and Arianna about the fossil poacher. But, before they can lay a plan, the newspaper staff surrounds Rain and Simon, congratulating them on having Granma’s interview published in the school newspaper. Rain becomes very angry when he discovers that Simon has announced to readers that Granma’s story is about the Great Turtle. Hummingbird declares that they must get back all copies of the paper before the fossil poacher can read the story. Fearing that Rain and Simon are in danger, Boomer gets a note from a teacher that allows the kids to round up the newspapers distributed off the school grounds. They successfully locate the newspapers, but, in their haste, drop them and must chase them down.



It was the Great Turtle!

Chapter 19 The Poacher Strikes

When they dump the newspapers at Boo's store, they find out that Smeed bought a paper that morning. Rain suddenly realizes that it is Granma who is in danger—Smeed will think she can lead him to the cave. While Rain unsuccessfully tries to call his parents, Boo drives the kids to Rain's house. Boo and Rain discover that Smeed has tied up Aunt Sissy and kidnapped Granma. Boo orders Boomer and Simon to call the police and direct them to the area at Shell Ridge where they spotted the Range Rover on Sunday. Rain convinces Boo to drive him out to Shell Ridge. Rain prepares himself mentally for the challenge ahead: he must save Granma and return the bones to the Great Turtle.

Chapter 20 Return to Shell Ridge

Boo drives to Shell Ridge. Noticing that Rain is looking a bit puny, Boo offers him some of the traditional foods he is selling in the store. Rain wolfs down the nutritional snacks. Suddenly, their journey is stopped by a boulder blocking the bumpy road into the flats. When Boo halts the truck, Rain jumps out and disappears into the hilly terrain. Frantic to find Granma, he spots the Range Rover. Nearby, Smeed is dragging Granma in the hot dust. Rain winds his way downward, until he finds himself in a gully near Smeed and Granma. Suddenly, he is shocked to see Coyote trot out onto the flats. Granma points to the coyote and Smeed follows him. Rain is stunned when the trickster changes direction and leads the poacher directly toward him. Understanding that the coyote is setting up a confrontation, Rain is ready to defend his great-grandmother.

Chapter 21 The Taker and the Giver

Fortified by the nutrients in his blood, Rain bravely confronts the fossil poacher. Smeed attacks and Rain knocks him down with Coach Brown's football block. Repositioning himself, Smeed attacks again. Rain protects himself with "Boomer's Magic Move," and has flattened Smeed when the police arrive. Fearing for Granma, he is relieved to see that she is not injured. While the police deal with Smeed, Rain



When the man drew nearer, Coyote started walking slowly; turning frequently to make sure he was being followed.



The eagle ruffled his feathers, but offered no advice.

checks out the Range Rover and spots the bones that Jimmy sold to the poacher. The police chief, Roberta's cousin, refuses to let Rain have the bones, but Granma intercedes. When paramedics arrive to take Granma to the hospital, Simon accompanies them. Rain is happy to see Simon. The boys prepare to return the bones to the Great Turtle. Boo promises to wait for them.

Chapter 22

A Boy Must Help Us

The boys return to the place where Rain last saw the coyote. The trickster is waiting for them and leads them to the cave. They discover what Delbert and Jimmy saw—a gallery of gigantic fossilized creatures. The eagle and the coyote are there, but do not help them. As the boys search for the Great Turtle, Simon picks up a bone from the cave floor. Immediately, the creatures begin to swirl in protest—the Great Turtle among them. When Simon drops the bone, the creatures and the Great Turtle freeze in the rock wall once again. Rain despairs that he does not know how to replace the bones in the turtle's flippers.

Chapter 23

The Blessing

Rain's plea for help is heard by Thistle, the rabbit, and Grandmother Turtle who are also at the cave. The little turtle guides Rain in the placement of the Great Turtle's missing flipper bones. Once the flippers are complete, she sings a sacred song and the Great Turtle returns to her dreams. Water begins to flow once more, filling the aquifer beneath the reservation lands. The animals vanish, and the boys begin their trek back to the flats. When Boo spots them in the distance, he runs to greet them and later returns them safely to their homes. The coyote, who has remained at the cave, chooses to end this game. He blows the cave full of sand, hiding it forever. The trickster then sets a steady pace back to Thunder Rock but stops when he discovers a patch of sweetgrass on a creek bank. Coyote makes a twist of the dry grass, ignites it with his power, and fans the smoke into the night sky. It falls as a blessing on the land.



Coyote closed his eyes and was satisfied.

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