

# LESSON 8 - SALMON THE LIFE GIVING GIFT



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What combination of factors both natural and manmade is necessary for healthy river restoration and how does this enhance the sustainability of natural and human communities?

## GUIDING QUESTION:

Salmon play a crucial role in the lives of Pacific Northwest Native people. How are salmon truly the “life giving gift” to the Elwha River and the Klallam People that live along its banks?

## LESSON OVERVIEW:

Students will be given a handout to read which includes an Introduction, an account by a Salmon Priest of the Skagit River, and two legends. Students will examine the two stories for the themes of greed, sacrifice and renewal. They will then investigate the relationship of the Klallam Tribe to the salmon of the Elwha River before the dams were built and after the dams were built. Students will organize information into a chart. Using the information they have gathered from the stories and on their chart, students will use the writing process to compose their own story about how the salmon returned to the Elwha River.

## TIME:

Two Block Class Periods

## MATERIALS:

- Reflection Journal pages (printable handout)
- Salmon stories (printable handout)
- Story questions (Printable hanout)
- Student page (printable handout)
- Organizational Chart (printable handout)
- Research materials / Internet Access

## PROCEDURE:

1. Remind students of Essential Question and introduce guiding question.

2. Hand out the first reflection journal page. Have students take a couple of minutes to answer the reflection journal questions. Questions they generate can add to their research.
3. Hand out Story Guide 1 and the stories. Go over the questions and have students complete the handout as they read the two stories *Fish Spear* and *Coyote Spreads Salmon along the Columbia River*.
4. Hand out Story Guide 2. Review theme in literature. A theme is an idea or message about life, society, or human nature. Have students work individually, with a partner or as a class to brainstorm some possible common themes for the two stories. Students should come up with something that approximates greed/selfishness, sacrifice and renewal.
5. Have students look for common examples of greed, sacrifice, and renewal in the stories. The handout will guide them through some literary elements of the two stories.
6. Students will then work individually, in partners, or in groups to research the relationship of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe to the salmon before and after the arrival of the two dams. Student(s) will use charts to cite their sources then organize their information.
7. Once the student(s) has read the handout and gathered information his/her task is to compose a story about the return of the salmon to the Elwha. The story should contain some of the elements of Native American Mythology as well as some themes common to the stories read.
8. Students should take a moment to respond to the final reflection page for the lesson.

### ASSESSMENTS:

- Reflection Pages rubric
- Story Guides handouts
- Chart
- Final story Rubric

### WASHINGTON STATE STANDARDS:

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#### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. **Component 3.2:** Understands human interaction with the environment.**3.2.1** Understands and analyzes how the environment has affected people and how people have affected the environment in Washington State in the past or present.

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#### READING

1. **2.4.1** Analyze literary/narrative text and information/expository text to draw conclusions and develop insights.

- a. Find similarities and differences within and between texts using text-based evidence (e.g., the author’s feelings and the poet’s feelings; descriptions recorded in a science article vs. poetry; perspectives seen in newspaper article, short story).
  - b. Identify and interpret cause and effect relationships within a literary/narrative text or informational/expository text using evidence from the text (e.g., an article and a poem about wolves or a description of the Underground Railroad from a newspaper article, a short story, or a biographical sketch of a leader in the Underground Railroad).
2. **2.4.5** Analyze ideas and concepts to generalize/extend information beyond the text.
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- a. Generalize about processes, concepts, and common themes after reading multiple texts.
3. **3.4.3** Analyze literature from a variety of cultures or historical periods for relationships and recurring themes.
- a. Identify multiple perspectives from a variety of cultures or historical periods as expressed in literary genres (e.g., changes in medical practices from 1800 to the present).

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## WRITING

1. **EALR 1: The student understands and uses a writing process.**
2. **EALR 3: The student writes clearly and effectively.**
3. 4.1.2 Analyzes and evaluates own writing using established criteria.



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**Elwha River Restoration  
Salmon the Life Giving Gift  
Reflection Page 1**

How does reading or hearing stories help you to understand your life and the lives of others?

Write down questions about salmon or stories?



**Elwha River Restoration  
Salmon the Life Giving Gift  
Story Guide 1**

Some elements often present in Native American stories are present in both *Fish Spear* and *Coyote Spreads Salmon Along the Columbia River*.

Fill in the chart with examples of the following common elements:

Fish Spear	Coyote Spreads Salmon along the Columbia River
Magical Beings	Magical Beings
Magical Objects	Magical Objects
Magical Number	Magical Number
Transformations	Transformations
Other common elements you've found	Other common elements you've found

How does Spear change from what he is like at the beginning of the story to what he is like at the end of the story?

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Coyote doesn't "know how to be kind and generous" but he does something for which people are grateful. What does he do and can selfish acts ever be beneficial to others?

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**Elwha River Restoration  
Salmon the Life Giving Gift  
Story Guide 2**

A theme is an idea or message about life, society, or human nature.

After reading the stories, brainstorm some themes you found in both stories.



Create your disturbance here

Three themes common to both stories are selfishness/greed, sacrifice and renewal. If you discovered these themes pat yourself on the back!

Now use the chart to show examples of selfishness/greed, sacrifice and renewal from the stories.

Fish Spear	Coyote Spreads Salmon along the Columbia River
Selfishness/greed	Selfishness/greed
sacrifice	Sacrifice
renewal	Renewal

What do the storytellers want you to know about life?

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## **Elwha River Restoration**

### **Salmon the Life Giving Gift**

Your task:

It's now time to examine the importance of salmon in the life and culture of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. You will conduct some research to find out how the relationship of the Tribe to salmon changed after the dams were built.

Here's a helpful hint: type Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe into your search engine.

Record the web address you used for research here:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ name of author(s) -if known</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ title of the work - in quotes, if known</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ title of the Web page - in italics, if applicable</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ date of last revision</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ URL</li><li>○ Date accessed</li></ul>	

Record additional addresses here using this example for the format:

Ackermann, Ernest. "Writing Your Own Web Pages." *Creating Web Pages*. 23 Oct. 1996.  
<http://people.umw.edu/~ernie/writeweb/writeweb.html>  
10 Feb. 1997.

As you gather information sort it into the chart provided.

Lower Elwha KLallam Tribe's relationship to salmon

Before dams	After dams

What events in the stories *Fish Spear* and *Coyote Spreads Salmon along the Columbia River* have something in common with your research?

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## **Elwha River Restoration**

### **Salmon the Life Giving Gift**

#### **The Return of the Salmon to the Elwha River**

Your next task:

Now that you've read some stories and done some research, you get to write your own story about salmon. The topic of your story will be the return of the salmon to the Elwha River. Your story must contain some of the elements of Native American stories that you've explored as well as a theme or two or three that illustrates an idea or message about life, society, or human nature. Now that you understand the relationship of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe to the salmon, try and imagine how happy the Klallam people will be when the salmon return to the river.

Your story must also contain the elements of literature: characters, setting, conflict, plot, resolution, and possibly metamorphosis (change).

Prewriting;

Use the information you've gathered to help jump start your brain. You may also want to use a story map;

Character ideas here:

Characters Major and minor



## Setting



Where/The Elwha River/ When/The Future

## Conflict/ problem



## Plot/ events



## Resolution/ Tie it all together



This happy guy figured out how the story ends and put on a tie.

Now write a draft of your story.

### **Revising** (Everybody, even the most famous writer, even your teacher, does this)

Check your story with a partner. Make sure it moves clearly from beginning to end. Look and listen for gaps in your thoughts. Does your story, with all its magical elements, make sense? Have you stuck to your topic? Use the grading rubric to make revisions.

### **Proofread** (Everybody does this too!)

Check your story for errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and word usage.

### **Write a Final Draft**

Publish

If you've followed directions and written a stupendous story, don't shove it in your backpack for future excavation, send it to us perhaps we'll publish it on our web site.



**Celebrate**



**Elwha River Restoration  
Salmon the Life Giving Gift  
Reflection Page 2**

How are salmon truly the “life giving gift” to the Elwha River and the Klallam People that live along its banks?

Do you have new questions about Salmon or the restoration of the Elwha River?

## **Reflection Journal Rubric**

### **Outstanding response (4)**

An outstanding reflection journal response is an original, thought-provoking response to the questions raised in the prompt. It contains specific examples from both the student's experiences as well as the classroom material whenever possible. It asks original, provocative, relevant questions. It is also virtually free of grammatical errors.

### **Above-average response (3)**

An above-average journal thoroughly addresses the questions raised in the prompt. It contains specific examples from both personal experiences as well as the classroom material whenever possible. It asks provocative, relevant questions. It may contain some minor grammatical errors.

### **Average response (2)**

An average journal competently addresses the issue raised in the prompt. It contains some examples from both personal experiences as well as the classroom material whenever possible. It asks relevant questions. Grammatical errors may be present, but they will not impede the reader from understanding the context of the sentences.

### **Below-average response (1)**

A below-average journal does not competently address the issue raised in the prompt. It contains few examples from personal experiences or the classroom material. It asks easy questions. Grammatical errors are so rampant that they impede the reader from understanding the context of the sentences.

### **Failure to respond to the assigned prompt (0)**

A failing journal does not address the issue raised in the prompt at a middle school level. It contains very few examples of personal experiences as well as classroom material, or the student fails to respond at all. Grammatical errors are so rampant that they impede the reader from understanding the context of the sentences.

## **Salmon the Life Giving Gift Story Rubric**

### **Outstanding response (4)**

The introduction grabs the reader and makes the reader cry for more. The conflict the main character faces and why it is a problem is clear and interesting to the reader. Strong descriptive words “show” when and where the story took place. An appropriate amount of dialogue is used to bring the characters to life. It is always clear which character is speaking. The story progresses logically. It is clear, and easy to follow. Words are colorful and descriptive. The well-chosen words paint a picture in your mind. Required story elements are all present and the theme or themes are evident. The Story maintains a consistent focus and shows well-developed layers of elaboration. The author went through the entire writing process (brainstorming, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. The first draft and the final draft show big improvement. There are no spelling, punctuation or usage mistakes. The cultural background of the potential audience is respected.

### **Above-average response (3)**

The introduction peaks the reader’s interest. The conflict the main character faces and why it is a problem is clear. Descriptive words “show” when and where the story took place. Dialogue is used to bring the character to life. It is clear who is speaking. The story progresses mostly logically. Words are descriptive. Most required story elements are present and the theme is evident. Story maintains a consistent focus but may not be very elaborate. The author went through most of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing). The first draft and the second draft show some improvement.. There are one or two spelling, punctuation or usage mistakes. The cultural background of the potential audience is respected.

### **Average response (2)**

The beginning is confusing rather than catchy. The conflict the main character faces and why it is a problem is unclear to the reader. The reader can figure out when and where the story took place, but there isn’t much detail.. There is some dialogue in the story but it could have used more to bring the characters to life. It’s unclear at times which character is speaking. The story can be confusing. Some of the words are colorful and descriptive. The writing “tells” rather than “shows”. One or two required story elements are present but the theme is not clear. Story shows some focus but there is no elaboration. The writer went through the writing process but did only enough to get by. The first draft and the final draft show little improvement. There are more than three spelling, punctuation or usage mistakes. The cultural background of the potential audience has been ignored

### **Below-average response (1)**

The beginning shows no effort to grab the reader’s attention. The main character faces no problems in the story. The writer didn’t tell when and where the story took place. No dialogue is used. The story is confusing. Words are not colorful or descriptive. Story elements and theme were ignored; the story has no focus or elaboration. The writer didn’t use the writing process. The first draft and final draft are the same. There are lots of



mistakes (4 or more) in the final draft. The spelling, punctuation and usage errors are distracting. The cultural background of the potential audience has been ignored and/or disrespected.

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**Failure to respond to the assignment (0)**

Only one or two elements were attempted and left unfinished, or no attempt was made at all

## SALMON, THE LIFEGIVING GIFT ESSAY BY JAY MILLER

### INTRODUCTION

Salmon were at the center of life for native peoples living along the Asian and American shores of the north Pacific Ocean. Like a miracle, these five different kinds of fish return to the same streams where they first spawned. They begin and end their lives in fresh water, but they spend most of their lives in the salty sea. Not every species returns every year, since each kind has its own cycles. Every salmon has many different names, depending on local usage and stages in its life cycle. The most common names, however, are chinook (also spring, king), coho (also silver), pink (also humpy, humpback), dog (also chum), and sockeye, which spawns in lakes.

While Atlantic salmon return to spawn repeatedly, Pacific salmon spawn and die, nourishing the meager local soils along with bears, birds, and people living along rivers. Humans developed a complex set of gear and nets to take full advantage of these runs. Traps, fences, baskets, spears, and lures were all used to take fish. Over the winter, however, high water and bad weather usually wiped out all the traps and catchments so they had to be rebuilt every spring. The first fish caught was celebrated with a great ceremony of welcome and thanks. (See also: ["A Further Analysis of the First Salmon Ceremony"](#).)



[William We-ah-lup smoking salmon](#)

Men and women shared the work of preparing salmon for winter food. Men took the fish from the water and women, helped by children, sliced, hung, dried, and smoked this flesh. Sometimes pounded in flour, sometime left as flanks, these dried fish kept everyone fed.

When treaties were signed in the 1850s between the US government and tribes of the Northwest and Plateau, the right to continue taking salmon was written in. (See also: ["Rights of Puget Sound Indians to Fish and Game"](#).) The US wanted to save money by

having native people feed themselves, while the native people did not want to turn into crop farmers or stoop laborers.

For over a hundred years, however, American settlement and sprawling construction have destroyed or polluted salmon habitats, killing these fish and extinguishing whole runs. The development of canned salmon made fishing profitable for the world market, but massive overfishing with devices such as fish wheels led to dwindling supplies that soon brought natives and other commercial fishers into court. Judges upheld the treaty right, allowing natives back into the fishery, but ignorance and bitterness still lurk.

For natives, salmon are a gift that comes to them every year to keep them alive. Similarly, everyone along the coast once ate great whales that were hunted by special men, as among Makahs, or that died and drifted onto beaches. They were truly gifts from the sea.

What stands out clearly from native sources is how much people identified with these underwater beings. Epics told what it was like to be a salmon, where they came from, what they did, and how they live among themselves, looking at home very much like humans. To provide a few of these viewpoints, we will meet a modern day elder, and recount two legends about salmon, one for the interior drained by the Columbia River and one for the coast of Washington.

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## THE SALMON PRIEST OF THE SKAGIT RIVER

Vi Hilbert is an elder of the Upper Skagit tribe. Her people hid out in their homeland for over a hundred years until the US agreed to set up a tiny reservation for them in 1974. Throughout her life, Mrs. Hilbert had worked long and hard to preserve a record of the language and traditions of her own people and the larger group of Coast Salish they belong to, called Lushootseed.

Recently, checking through old records, she found more details about how her own grandfather served as the priest for the salmon fishery along the upper stretches of the Skagit River. Since people now buy gas to run about in motor boats and purchase their nylon fish nets instead of making them from plant fibers, these accounts provide a glimpse of what life was like over a hundred years ago. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the man (sometimes woman) in charge of the fishery was more like a priest than like a manager because the basic attitude toward salmon among all natives was reverence and thanks, not gain for money.

Every spring, when the chinook began to run, two or three fish were caught and cooked in the longhouse of her grandfather. Like Communion, everyone would come there to eat a bit of these fish to give thanks for their return and to show that their remains would be well treated by everyone.

These first fish were taken in a special net that was suspended between two canoes drifting on the river. When a salmon entered the net, a man in the bow pulled up the net with the

fish wrapped inside. Then he took a long thin bone blade, split and shaped from a deer leg bone. He cut the backbone just behind the head to quickly kill the salmon and placed it in the bottom of the canoe. The net was put back into the water to catch more fish. When they had several, they took them to shore for the women to prepare for eating, drying, or smoking. Everyone put in long, hard days during the fish runs, but everyone had a good time being with others and helping out.

## FISH SPEAR

Further down the Washington coast, at Chehalis, Mary Heck and her son Peter told the story of Fish Spear in 1927 to a young woman studying at Columbia University named Thelma Adamson. Peter later became a Bishop of the Indian Shaker Church and a policeman.

A brother and a sister lived by themselves. The boy was named Spear. His sister would go out to dig for fern roots to feed them both. That is the only food that they ate together. But Spear also had his own fishtrap that he kept secret. During their meals together, he ate salmon eggs that were carefully hidden on his wrist. He kept his hand over his mouth so he looked like he was being modest, but he was being greedy. He ate the salmon he caught all by himself. He only brought the cooked eggs to eat with the fern roots.

Trying to think the best of her brother, the sister kept wondering what he was doing behind his hand. When she could no longer stand to trust him, she decided to leave their home and marry an important man, the chief of the Silverside Salmon who lived where earth and sky join. She did not tell her brother. She just left.

That night Spear came home. There was no fire. There was no food. He wondered where his sister was. He followed her track to the river and went in. But soon he turned back, drenched. He went home to wait. He realized she must have left to get married. He took time to dry and smoke salmon for his trek and then he followed her. He was gone a long time.

At the horizon, he saw a large plank-sided house and he went inside. There was his sister and she had a baby. They greeted each other and then fell silent. After a time, an old man got up and went outside. He bellowed, "Come Elk" five times. Spear looked out to see a huge elk walk up to the old man and drop dead at his feet. The old man carefully butchered and skinned it so that the legs and head were left on the hide. Then he stood these up, and the elk ran off, alive and well. The entire elk torso was cooked, placed in a trough platter, and served to Spear, who ate all the meat. World's End, the sister of his own sister's husband, came in with five tiny berry baskets and gave him the smallest, but he was never able to eat all the huckleberries inside this inexhaustible container. He was content.

That night everyone waited anxiously at dark until a howl came from the river. Yells got closer and closer. Then the door burst open and Salmon who lived in this house came inside. They were dancing and waving bits of fish gear. One had a straight roasting stick, others had a forked roasting stick, broken spears, broken cords, or chipped points. They went around the house five times. All these people were Black Salmon. After they were settled, another howl was heard and the Silverside Salmon danced inside. Then, in turn, came the Dog, Spring, and Steelhead Salmons. What seemed to be broken fishing gear were their treasures, their property and wealth gained from going to the earth. They regarded these artifacts as gifts from humans.

These five species of Salmon were the children of the old man and shared his house. After everyone was settled and quiet, they went to sleep. The next day, they were gone before dawn. When Spear woke up, World's End cooked his own sister's son, his own nephew Silverside, for his breakfast, then the old man revived the boy from the bones. On the fifth day of this, however, Spear left a bit of meat on the cheek and the boy died permanently.

Angry and in grief, his sister told Spear to leave, so he returned home through the air instead of along the water. His adventures took him through the sky world. Along the way, inside a big house, he fell in love with a daughter of Thunder and married her. After five days, Thunder tried to teach Spear to use wings and act fierce, but he failed and fled. At another winter house, he briefly married a Pitch woman. Elsewhere, an old man warned him to seek refuge in a dead white fir when attacked by another old man who owned the trail he was traveling. Spear killed and burned up that elder so no one could ever own a trail again. He crossed a river by walking over a fishtrap and married a Giant woman. He killed her father and another person fighting over their fishtraps and decreed that these traps be set far apart in the future so all could share from the closest one.

He restored the sight of a middle-aged woman, who warned him how to kill an old man Cougar with a murderous long tail. He burned the body but modern cougars came from the ashes. In another house, an old woman warned Spear that people were gathering in a prairie to kill him but he changed them into a cluster of wild rhubarb plants. Finally, he looked down and saw his own house. He came down and went inside to find that his own sister had returned home. Instead, of settling there again, however, he decided to become a May flowering plant that children could use as a toy spear. His sister also transformed into something useful, but people disagree on what she became.

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## COYOTE SPREADS SALMON ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER

For the interior of Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia, Coyote's adventures did much to make the world as it is today. One of his greatest feats was freeing the salmon from their original owners.

Five sisters lived at the mouth of the river. They ate well because they had their own trap full of a wonderful fish called salmon. In those days, these were the only salmon in the world.

Every meal time, one of the sisters went down to the trap and selected a fish. Grabbing it by the gills, she hauled it out of the water, clubbed it over the head, and carried it up to the fire where the other sisters were cooking. They ate all of the foods that grew around them. Since they were women, they were skilled at digging up roots, picking berries, and plucking fresh green shoots. When they ate all of these plants, salmon was their meat. Most often, all of these foods were served together in a stew.

Whenever they were eating, however, they were most careful to save all of the fish bones. At the end of dinner, these bones were taken back to the trap and placed into the water so that salmon would reappear, alive and well. If any of the bones were missing, then that salmon was crippled in that part and the sisters looked all over until the missing piece was found and that salmon made whole.

These sisters looked and acted like women, but they were really more like shorebirds, living along the bank between land and water. During these ancient days, animals, spirits, humans, and other people shifted between outer forms. They looked more like humans, but they acted and felt more like the animal, plant, place, or thing that they became when the world changed into the way it is today.

Just as modern shorebirds wander along looking for food, so did these sisters. Every morning they scattered to pick, pluck, and pull up plants. In the fall, they went upland to gather berries. Their lodge was full of food, and their trap was teeming with salmon. They were very content, and well fed. But they got plenty of exercise, so they were lean and trim.

During these early days of the world, there were not many people, and most of them were women. One of the few men, or man-like beings, of this time was a person called Coyote, who was not just one thing. He was a mix-up of many feelings, actions, intentions, and desires. Mostly he was desires, and few of them were good ones. Whenever people hear any mention of Coyote, they know that they will be learning about what not to do, how not to behave, and, certainly, who not to be like. Coyote was mostly a bad example. But because he thought for himself at a time when everything was unsettled and in flux, he managed to stand out from that time onward.

Coyote was always getting in trouble because he would hear about things and then rush off in search of them without taking the time or effort to grasp any dangers that might be involved. He was greedy, selfish, stupid, and very, very wise, sometimes. He also had help, when he called on them. These were his little sisters who lived inside his belly and came out when he was desperate or confused. Then they would tell him what to do, he would ignore them, and he would say that he knew all along what to do and then would do exactly what they had already told him to do.

And so it was that a rumor reached Coyote that he could not resist. It mentioned beautiful women and tasty food. Trying not to show his excitement, Coyote asked where this combination could be found. "At the mouth of the big river," he was told. And so he went. He had been warned that these women would not share what they had. While we know today that it is bad not to share, in those days almost everyone was selfish with whatever they had. It was one of Coyote's greatest gifts that he made everything available to everyone, that he enabled people to share.

As Coyote got near to the sister's lodge, he could feel unwelcome. He slowed, and then stopped to consider. He was baffled. He called upon his little sisters and he squatted down. Soon they were there, and he asked them what to do. They delayed giving an answer because they already knew that their advice would not be credited. While they paused,

Coyote began to mumble loudly about calling the rain to pound down and wash away his little sisters. Finally, they relented and said that Coyote would have to take on some disguise. They told him to look innocent, defenseless, and weak. They told him to become a baby. They told him to appeal to the maternal instincts of the women.

Coyote sniffed and told his little sisters to get back inside. Then he pondered aloud what he would do. He would have to appeal to the women and he would have to look harmless. He decided to be a baby, as if this was a new idea out of the blue. The little sisters inside only sighed.

Coyote changed himself into a baby. In those days, just as today, native babies are carried around laced up into supports with wooden backs and high arching tops. Such a cradleboard protects the baby. In the case of Coyote, it also floated him down the river. He had the body of a baby, but the mind of a schemer. He floated down the river, and began to whimper. But none of the women paid attention. As he got nearer to the fishtrap, he began to wail. He cried just like a very unhappy baby. But no one responded because the sisters were away gathering foods.

Coyote floated and thought. He did not want to waste energy unless he could get attention. After a time, the oldest sister came near the trap and Coyote sensed that it was time to act. He cried out, turning bright red. The woman came close, and her heart went out to the baby. She waded in and rescued the mite. She felt all warm inside. She took the baby home, changed him, and again laced up the cradleboard in time for her other sisters to return. She showed them this cute and happy infant. Most of the sisters welcomed him, but the youngest looked into his eyes and stepped back. She said, "Those are not the eyes of a baby, they are the eyes of someone devious like Coyote. Do we know where he is? At some time he will surely come for our salmon. We had best take care. Maybe it is some monster that will kill us all." But the other sisters called her hard hearted and cooed over their new child. They took turns holding him. Coyote snuggled up to their breasts.

But then one of the women noticed that their baby had teeth. He did not seem old enough to have teeth. They had planned to feed him salmon broth, but they decided to try bits of cooked fish instead. He ate slowly. His eyes got big like he enjoyed the salmon, he even gurgled with pleasure. The women were delighted. They left him in the cradleboard and went to sleep. Coyote debated whether or not to join them, but he decided that getting to eat a whole salmon by himself was worth the wait. But the next morning, he would begin his efforts to free the salmon.

After a cold breakfast, the women changed and cleaned the baby. They left him rocking in the breeze high in a tree and went off to gather food. As soon as they were out of sight, Coyote debated whether to nap or to start working. He napped. At noon, the women returned to check on the baby and have lunch. They found him sleeping, and took him down. By being lazy, he fooled them. After lunch, the women went back to getting food.

Then Coyote changed back into his man form. He found dense round stones and heavy sticks. He set about making five stone bowls and five prybars to use to dismantle the trap.



He worked in a secluded place away from the lodge. By the end of the day, he had roughed out only one bowl.

The next day, Coyote napped all day, and the women suspected nothing. For several days, Coyote only napped. Then he decided to take action. Every morning and afternoon he worked on a bowl or a pick. When he heard his five mothers coming, he turned back into a smiling baby. After ten days, he had five bowl and five prybars. He was ready. But that night the youngest sister changed his diaper and shouted that their baby now seemed to have developed muscles. She became very suspicious, and again warned her sisters to be on guard.

The next morning, Coyote waited anxiously for the women to leave. But the youngest sister did not intend to go far. Coyote gathered up his bowls and picks. He went down to the trap and began to pry it apart. But he was working quickly and made too much noise. The younger sister heard him, yelled to her sisters, and rushed down to the trap. She saw a man that looked like Coyote destroying their trap to free their salmon. She raised her digging stick to pound on him, but he was wearing a helmet made from a stone bowl over his head. After striking many times, the stone crumbled. Each sister attacked him in turn, and each shattered one of the bowls. His picks also broke as he worked, but, finally, at the last possible moment, the trap fell apart and the salmon swam upriver. Coyote left these women and told the fish to follow him upstream.

He was very proud. Now people would know him to be a leader, not a fool. When he got hungry, he called a salmon to jump onto a beach, where he cleaned and cooked it. He put the bones back into the river and the fish became whole again.

But because he was Coyote, he did not know how to be kind and generous. At every village at the mouth of every side river, he swaggered into the center and boasted that he brought a wonderful new food. The catch was, he would determine the quality and size of the fish that would return to that river according to the beauty of the maiden that the village gave him as a wife. Another story explains how salmon came to die, drift downriver, and return from the sea as his wife Mourning Dove sobs along the shore.

The respectable village at Chelan sent him away, but discovered that a waterfall suddenly blocked off their river. Some places tried to compromise and received moderate fish. Kettle Falls, however, far upriver, found a lovely wife for him and so welcomed huge salmon every year until concrete dams blocked off the Columbia River. People hope and pray, even now, that Coyote will return and bust up these dams as he once did the only fish trap to contain salmon at the beginning of the world.

Today, salmon are in danger of extinction, but natives still tell these stories and celebrate their return in rituals and songs addressed to their spirit. Once, in ancient times, the larger order of things was regulated by the arrival and use of the salmon. The Quileute, whose language is unique, found only on the Washington coast, explain why traps were never again built at their river mouth. Selfish men had kept a trap there, preventing salmon from going upstream. People would come down and destroy the trap, but it was always rebuilt.

Finally, a sorcerer made a large salmon out of obnoxious creatures. Its stripes were snakes, its eggs were lizards, its liver was frogs, its eyes were toads, its fat was shark oil, and its heart was salamanders. When the greedy men caught, cooked, and ate this salmon, they died in agony. Their wives, however, were spared since they were out digging roots.

Thus, when times were bad and people were awful, only a greater evil could set things right. Most importantly, people learned a lesson from this and never again blocked the upward run of salmon.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jay Miller, Ph.D., studied at the University of New Mexico, Rutgers, and Princeton, and has researched throughout native North America, particularly among New Mexican Pueblos, Oklahoma Delawares, British Columbia Tsimshians, Washington State Salishans, Nevada Numic, Oklahoma Creeks (Mvskogee), Oklahoma Caddo, Ontario Ojibwa, and Wisconsin Menomini. He has taught at both universities and tribal colleges in the US and western Canada, and is the author of over fifty scholarly articles, a dozen encyclopedia entries, twenty book chapters, ten edited collections, and eight books.