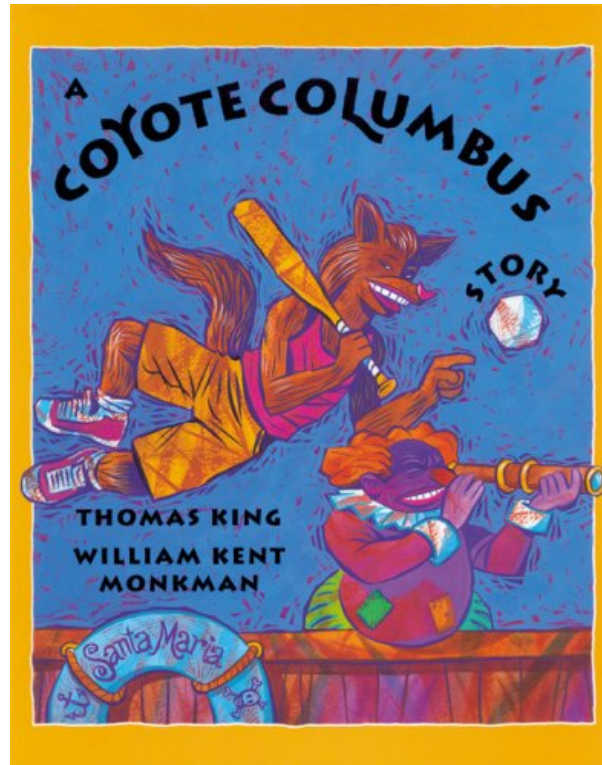
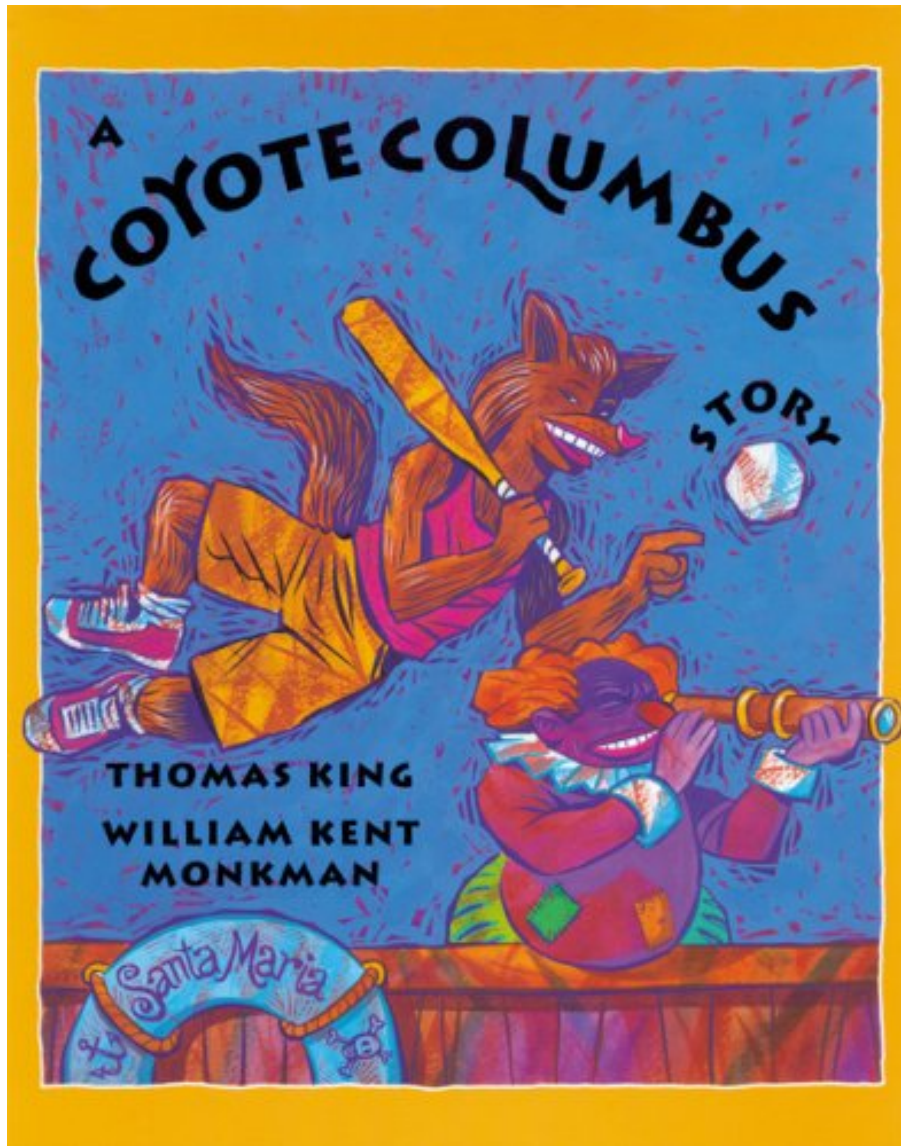


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From School Library Journal

Grade 2-5-Coyote is in her female guise, and King reminds readers immediately that she is responsible for everything in the world-rainbows, rivers, toenail polish, and TV commercials. Her favorite thing of all is playing ball-all positions at once. But she finds it rather boring without a companion. However, the beavers have dams to build, and moose and turtles are also otherwise occupied. The humans will play, but they get rather hostile when Coyote wins every game. (After all she makes up the rules, and changes them as she pleases.) Then, three ships, Christopher Columbus, and a crew of clowns arrive. Will they play ball? No, they say, they've got to find things they can sell. No gold? No computer games? Convinced they're in India, they decide to grab some of the Native people and take them back to sell in Spain. Columbus sails away with his captives, the remaining humans catch the bus to Pentiction, and when Coyote tries to fix things, what does she get? Another bunch of funny-looking clowns, led by Jacques Cartier. Monkman's illustrations are perfect. Brilliant colors are daubed onto screwball figures, and anachronisms abound. What seems a funny romp turns out to have a very sharp edge. This irreverent treatment of Columbus and his fellows may be disquieting to some, but it is long overdue.

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A trickster named Coyote rules her world, until a funny-looking stranger named Columbus changes her plans. Unimpressed by the wealth of moose, turtles, and beavers in Coyote's land, he'd rather figure out how to hunt human beings to sell back in Spain. Thomas King uses a bag of literary tricks to shatter the stereotypes surrounding Columbus's voyages. In doing so, he invites children to laugh with him at the crazy antics of Coyote, who unwittingly allows Columbus to engineer the downfall of his human friends. William Kent Monkman's vibrant illustrations perfectly complement this amusing story with a message.

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## From School Library Journal

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## Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Not the usual European take on Columbus

By Ulyyf

I grew up in Bensonhurst. BIG Italian neighborhood. Right on 18th Avenue - you can believe we knew it when it was Columbus Day! Parades up and down the block!

And this is what we learned in school... let's see... Columbus was a Hero, and very Brave, and he Discovered America, and he Explored, and... oh yeah, and we learned that little ditty about sailing the ocean blue.

This is what we didn't learn: Columbus wasn't just lost on the way to India, he drastically miscalculated the size of the earth - and all the sailors knew it. (The size and shape of the earth had been worked out back in the time of the Ancient Greeks, so this was nothing new.) Oh, yeah, and when he showed up in the Americas he promptly took several "Indians" back with him as slaves. Yippee.

Of course, there are two sides to every story. Columbus didn't believe himself a villain, that's for sure. But if you teach kids a one-sided portrayal of history when they're five and six and seven and eight, it's going to be much harder to teach them that real life is more complicated than that.

It looks like kid biographies nowadays at least mention the whole slavery thing... sorta... but they don't seem to focus on it. A quick perusal of the options will show titles calling Columbus a Hero, an Explorer, a Man of Faith, and an Adventurer. Not "Columbus. He was a dude who messed up" or "Columbus. Did some bad things too".

Oh, and you see this book as well.

This book is great. Fantastically colored illustrations, and a funny way of telling a story. It's full of pointed anachronisms, too, which do help lighten the mood. I mean, it's an uncomfortable subject. It's easier to talk about if you can joke a bit at the same time.

The book is a bit wordy, and with the aforementioned anachronisms and all it may be better to read this to the later end of the 4 - 8 age range.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Back in 1492 Columbus sailed and met his due

By E. R. Bird

I have never ever ever seen a picture book like this one. Never. This book first came to my attention when I heard that it was one of those great "lost" children's books. I mean, roughly 5 bazillion picture books are published every year, so one or two good ones are bound to slip through the cracks here and there. Naturally curious, I plucked it and discovered that it is perhaps one of the most original stories I have ever had the pleasure to see. Though not without its flaws, it gives Columbus the drubbing he so rightfully deserves. I only wish it could be better known.

In this tale, told in an easygoing vernacular, we read that Coyote created the world. She (love it!) created both good (rainbows, flowers, clouds) and bad (prune juice, commercials, Columbus himself) things. But what Coyote loved more than anything else was to play baseball. Most of the animals Coyote creates aren't keen on the idea of playing, but the human beings enjoy the game. Unfortunately, Coyote always cheats and always changes the rules. Pretty soon she has no one to play with again and in her distraction and boredom she doesn't see the things that are created out of her head. Before she knows it the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria are knocking on the door and some funny looking people are coming aboard. Coyote can't get these fellows to play ball either, they're so busy looking for stuff to sell. Next thing you know they've captured the people already living on the land and are selling them for a profit back in Spain. Coyote tries to fix

everything but when she tries to do so (her nose tends to fall off when she's trying hard) suddenly there's Jacques Cartier and a whole new bunch of goons. The native people catch the first train to Penticton and Coyote is left with the new group, trying once again to get them to play ball.

It wasn't the ending I expected in the book. I had thought there'd be some sort of a happy ending or maybe some way in which Columbus is made into a fool for everyone to see. But this book is pretty darn honest about Columbus's intentions, as well as his treatment of the Native Americans. And Coyote has always been a trickster god, neither good or bad. She wouldn't go saving people just because she made a mistake. In fact, it's completely realistic that she's make the problem even worse. The tale is told with a wonderful style of its own. Coyote says things like, "These people I made have no manners. They act as if they've got no relations" (in reference to Columbus & crew). So if you're hoping for a happy ending to this fable, you're barking up the wrong tree. If you're looking for a book with a fabulous take on a variety of different legends, this book is appropos.

And by the way, you've never seen anything to match it. The story's good, sure. But it's William Kent Monkman's illustrations that bring everything fully to life. The book's drawn in what I can only describe as psychedelic woodcuts. Consider them woodcuts on PCP. The native people tend to have pretty normal colors and shades, whereas the Europeans are a gaudy cacophony of violent pinks, greens, oranges, and purples. And as for how everyone looks, Monkman's style becomes even more original. Coyote, for her part, is decked out in a hot pink tank top, shorts, and running shoes at all times. Columbus is a ridiculous clown with a red nose and bright orange hair. His men resemble an odd assortment of gangster/conquistadors. I think one of them is almost Elvis.

When I said this book was absolutely original I meant it. However, there's no denying that some aspects of this tale, most notably Coyote being a baseball fanatic, are remarkably similar to Michael Chabon's recent foray into children's literature in "Summerland". Whether Chabon actually came up with the concept on his own is up to the reader to decide. But of the two, give me my "Coyote Columbus Story" any day. The only book you can honestly compare it to, at this moment in time and in terms of content, is John Marsden's breathtaking "The Rabbits". Holy moley, if you combined the two in a storytime you'd have some of the most ethnically conscientious toddlers alive today. In any case, I'm just gonna say that as modern legends go, Thomas King struck gold when he chose to tell a whole new kind of Columbus story. This next Columbus Day, consider countering that day o' genocide with a reading of this excellent little number. Even if you don't take to it, you'll have to admit that it's an amazing creation to behold.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

The trickster Coyote at her best...now messing up Columbus!

By A Customer

America is the country that it is just because Coyote wanted to find a good baseball team! Or so says Thomas King in this extremely playful take off on both the legendary trickster Coyote and her crazy encounter with Columbus's "discovery" of America. Thomas King has found a hilarious way to poke fun at just about everything he can, from Columbus's mistake to our preoccupation with vacation vehicles. And the dazzlingly colorful illustrations add to the wild and wacky world of turtles, moose, Native Americans and, of course, Coyote, who's nose falls off everytime she laughs.

A quick easy read, King's book deserves a spot near the best

of Dr. Seuss.

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