

Crossing the Creek



Story adapted from an African folktale

In an ancient African land, where people farmed for many generations, there lived two boys, Osaze and Adisa. They came from different tribes, which had sometimes been at war, but they were the best of friends.

Osaze lived across a creek from Adisa. The boys walked by the creek tending goats and cattle, and they traded vegetables for their families. After chores, they crossed the creek to play together. Over the years, they dragged big stones into the creek to create a bridge.

One day, a boy named Madu, who was jealous of their close friendship, decided to test them. He made an incredible robe that was green on one side and red on the other. Then he strolled along the creek as Osaze and Adisa were tending crops, each on his own side. Madu whistled loudly off-key, so that both boys noticed him.

A few minutes later, Osaze and Adisa met at the creek. “*E pele o*, Adisa! Madu can’t whistle, but he sure has a beautiful green robe.”

“Green? His robe was red,” Adisa replied firmly.

“Red? You’re blind from the sun. It was as green as the sprouts of maize,” Osaze said with a laugh.

“I’m not blind! You are!”

“Don’t get so mad. I’m telling the truth!” Osaze started to cross the creek.

Adisa also crossed the creek halfway. “You’re lying. I thought you were my best friend!”

“You’re calling me a liar? It’s no wonder our tribes have been at war.” Osaze was so angry that he shoved Adisa. Adisa fell and hit his head on a stone.



Osaze was suddenly filled with regret. But before he could do anything, Madu returned, laughing. Both boys stared at him in surprise. Now that they saw Madu from the front, they realized that he had a robe of two colors—green on one side and red on the other!

Adisa, rubbing his head and dripping with mud, shouted, “What? You did this on purpose to make us fight!”

Madu answered, “*Beeko*. I did not make you fight. You made yourselves fight. You were both right and both wrong. Real friends see things from both points of view.” With a smug smile, he ran off.

Osaze reached down to help Adisa up. “I’m so very sorry.”

Adisa and Osaze’s friendship grew as resilient as the acacia tree. Whenever they disagreed, they crossed the creek—and took a look at things from the other’s point of view.

