

Creation and Separation Myth of Man and the Elephant

God created man and an elephant. These he put in a beautiful garden, and he walked with them every day. There was pure drinking water in a flowing river. But the elephant started muddying the waters. He would listen to neither God nor man who told him not to. In the end, man killed the elephant. God, though, was upset at this act and drove man out of the garden. Hence the Borana now live in a ceaseless search for water in drought-stricken lands, semi-nomads in a semi-desert.

(Borana-Oromo, Ethiopia/ Kenya Myth)



How the Monkeys Saved the Fish

The rainy season that year had been the strongest ever and the river had broken its banks. There were floods everywhere and the animals were all running up into the hills. The floods came so fast that many drowned except the lucky monkeys who used their proverbial agility to climb up into the treetops. They looked down on the surface of the water where the fish were swimming and gracefully jumping out of the water as if they were the only ones enjoying the devastating flood.

One of the monkeys saw the fish and shouted to his companion: "Look down, my friend, look at those poor creatures. They are going to drown. Do you see how they struggle in the water?" "Yes," said the other monkey. "What a pity! Probably they were late in escaping to the hills because they seem to have no legs. How can we save them?" "I think we must do something. Let's go close to the edge of the flood where the water is not deep enough to cover us, and we can help them to get out."



So the monkeys did just that. They started catching the fish, but not without difficulty. One by one, they brought them out of the water and put them carefully on the dry land. After a short time there was a pile of fish lying on the grass motionless. One of the monkeys said, "Do you see? They were tired, but now they are just sleeping and resting. Had it

not been for us, my friend, all these poor people without legs would have drowned."

The other monkey said: "They were trying to escape from us because they could not understand our good intentions. But when they wake up they will be very grateful because we have brought them salvation."

(Traditional Tanzanian Folktale)

The Poor Man Without Work

Once upon a time there was a poor man who did not have a job or a place to stay. Finally, he went with his dog to the palace of the Sukuma chief. The chief warmly received the man with his dog. The poor man was accepted as part of the royal family. The chief fed both him and his dog. Later on enemies came to kill the chief. The dog barked, the alarm was sounded, the chief escaped, and his life was saved.

(Traditional Sukuma, Tanzania Story)

