

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses (Proverbs 10:12)

A Proverbial Story

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In the little village of Willowbrook, there were two best friends: Milo the rabbit and Tilly the turtle. They had grown up together, sharing carrot pies, exploring the woods, and racing through the fields (well, Milo usually won the races).

One sunny morning, the mayor of Willowbrook announced a contest: whoever could build the tallest tower out of sticks would win a basket of golden apples. Excited, Milo and Tilly decided to enter together.

At first, they worked side by side, laughing and stacking their sticks carefully. But soon, Milo began to get impatient.

"You're too slow, Tilly!" Milo snapped. "Let me just do it myself."

Tilly's feelings were hurt. "I'm trying my best," she mumbled, moving even slower.

Milo huffed and started building the tower alone. He rushed, trying to make it higher and higher. Meanwhile, Tilly sat nearby, feeling upset.

Other villagers noticed the argument and began to whisper.

"Did you hear? Milo yelled at Tilly!"

"Tilly said Milo was mean!"

The whispers grew louder. Soon, even animals who weren't part of the contest started picking sides. The peaceful village of Willowbrook became full of angry muttering and scowling faces. Friends stopped talking. Games were canceled. The fields were empty.

One day, Granny Owl gathered everyone in the village square.

"This has gone far enough," she said, adjusting her spectacles. "Remember the wise saying: *'Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.'*"

Everyone grew quiet. They knew Granny Owl was wise.

She continued, "Anger and hurt feelings have torn our village apart. But love—forgiveness—can mend what's been broken."

Milo's ears drooped. He looked at Tilly, sitting sadly by the fountain.

Slowly, Milo hopped over. "Tilly," he said, his voice shaking, "I'm sorry. I was mean and impatient. You were helping, and I ruined it."

Tilly blinked. She remembered how upset she had been. But then she remembered Granny Owl's words.

"I forgive and love you, my friend, Milo," she said, smiling slowly. "Maybe we can rebuild the tower. Together."

The crowd around them started smiling too. Friends who hadn't spoken for days ran to each other, laughing and apologizing. By sunset, the fields were full of games again. Willowbrook felt alive and happy once more.

Milo and Tilly didn't win the tower contest—their tower was wobbly and small—but they won something even better: the golden prize of true friendship.

And from that day on, whenever someone in Willowbrook got angry with hatred, they would remember Granny Owl's words:

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses."