

**BUILDING BRIDGES**  
An American Tale  
Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

**Setting:** Two farms in the countryside

**Characters:**

Narrator

Slim

Hap

Joe

**Narrator:** For years and years, Slim and Hap were best of friends. They lived in the country where each had a farm with horses, cows, chickens and pigs. One day, a calf strayed into Slim's field. That brought Hap storming over his field, stomping up Slim's steps and banging on the front door.

**Hap:** Come out here, Slim, and tell me whose calf is in *your* field!

**Slim:** Whoa! There, Hap! What's gotten into you? What calf are you talking about?

**Hap:** (pointing) *That one* out there in your field.

**Slim:** Now, simmer down. That little calf is the young one of my Bessie. Just come with me and I'll prove it.

**Hap:** Aw... I don't need to go looking at markings. I know *my calf* when I see it. *That there calf is mine.*

**Slim:** No, it's NOT!

**Hap:** Yes, it's MINE and NOT yours!

**Narrator:** With those words, the two men turned their backs on each other and stormed back to their houses. For many days, Slim and Hap did not come out of their houses until one morning, Slim looked out his kitchen window, and noticed something very strange going on.

**Slim:** What the...!?! What's going on in *my* field?

**Narrator:** Slim ran out the back door toward his corn rows.

**Slim:** Hap! (shouting) HAP! STOP THAT DARN MACHINE. WHAT'S GOING ON?

**Hap:** Why, I'm just digging a little trench. Don't you worry. It's on *my* side of *my* property. I'll be finished in no time, yes, no time at all.

**Slim:** Do you have to make such a racket? I can't imagine why you've got your big tractor kicking up the dust.

**Hap:** You'll see. (laughing) Yes, you'll see.

**Narrator:** Hap worked all day digging a trench from the well down to his property's end. As soon as it was finished, water began to flow making a big divide between the two

farms. When Slim noticed the digging had stopped, he opened his front door, and stood there scratching his head.

**Slim:** Well, I'll be! Look at that! Dividing up the property! Well, I know what I'll do. I'm going to build a fence so high I won't have to see him or his farm again! Where's the phone number for Joe, that fellow who came by yesterday looking for work. I'll just give him a call.

**Narrator:** Slim called Joe and arranged the job.

**Slim:** Joe, see that farm over there? That's my neighbor, Hap. Why, we've been friends since we were youngsters. Well, now he's done it! He dug that trench and flooded it, just to make sure our properties are divided. Now, I want to do one better. I've got all the supplies you'll need, so build me fence so high I won't have to look at him again!

**Joe:** Are you sure that's what you want?

**Slim:** Ab – so – lute - ly!

**Narrator:** Early the next morning, Slim could hear Joe sawing and hammering. All day long, Joe was busy at work. Then just about sundown, Joe called out to Slim to come look at what he had built. Slim stood in the doorway with a confused look on his face.

**Slim:** What the...? I thought I told you to build a high fence. What I'm looking at is a bridge. Who's that coming over it toward me?

**Narrator:** Slim's face glowed with a big smile as he saw his friend, Hap, admiring the bridge. They walked toward each other, stood still for a moment, smiled, then gave each other a big hug.

**Slim:** Are we still friends?

**Hap:** Sure! Friends forever!

**Slim:** That's more like it! By the way, that calf *was* yours. I knew it all the time. I was just joking with you. Some joke, hum? Look where it got us?

**Hap:** Well, it got us a bridge and we can stand on it and go fishing in my new creek. That's pretty nifty! Say, where's that guy who built the bridge?

**Narrator:** Slim and Hap looked around. Joe was nowhere to be found. Then, they heard some singing drifting on the breeze. They followed that music and saw Joe in the distance walking down the old Pine Road.

**Slim:** (shouting) Hey! Joe! We've got more work for you.

**Hap:** (shouting) Come on, Joe. Stay with us awhile.

**Narrator:** But Joe kept on walking and the words of his song became very clear. "I can't stay too long, 'cause I've got more bridges to build. Yes, more bridges to build today."