

**NOT LIKE THE OTHERS**  
**An Appalachian tale**  
**Adapted by Carole L. Cooney**

**Setting:** In a dark forest

**Characters:**

**Narrator**

**Elder fox**

**Shorty fox**

**Narrator:** There was a lot of noise in the dark forest. Bees were buzzing, birds were squawking, snakes were rattling, worms were squirming and ants were digging. In the midst of all this activity were two friendly foxes named Elder and Shorty. As they padded through the soft green grass, they tried to answer a puzzling question.

**Elder:** Are we like all the other animals and insects in the forest?

**Shorty:** I think so. But, we sure don't sound like them, do we?

**Elder:** I'd like to be like everybody.

**Shorty:** Yes, I think I'd like that, too. How do we start?

**Elder:** Well, let's think of what they do.

**Shorty:** I know! We could bite each other. I've seen many animals bite each other when they are angry.

**Elder:** Oh, no! Let's not. I'm much bigger than you and I don't want to hurt you.

**Shorty:** Well, maybe we could get into an argument first and then get angry at each other like everybody else.

**Narrator:** Elder lowered his face toward the little stream that ran through the forest. He spied two white stones sparkling in the water. He picked them up and showed them to Shorty.

**Elder:** (with a loud voice) **THESE STONES ARE MINE! YOU CAN'T HAVE THEM! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?**

**Shorty:** Of course I understand. If those stones are yours, then they are not mine. I don't want them so please keep them.

**Elder:** This is getting us no where. We've got to come up with a different plan.

**Narrator:** Elder and Shorty rested on a rocky slope that overlooked the tall trees. They were quietly thinking when Elder sprang to his feet and lifted his head high.

**Elder:** (loudly) **THIS ENTIRE FOREST BELONGS TO ME AND ME ALONE. YOU HAVE NO PLACE HERE SO LEAVE AT ONCE!**

**Shorty:** If this forest is yours and you want it, I shall go. I really don't want to go because you are my good friend. I like this forest and we've had such good times in it. But now I will have to find another place to live.

**Narrator:** Shorty sadly lowered his head and began to crawl away.

**Elder:** Stop! Shorty. I don't want you to go. Please stay so that we can be friends just like we always have been.

**Shorty:** Are you sure, Elder?

**Elder:** Of course.

**Shorty:** I'm so glad you said that. I didn't want to go.

**Elder:** Are we finished trying to be like the others who always bite and argue and try to be in charge of everything?

**Shorty:** Yes!

**Elder:** So what if we're not like the others.

**Shorty:** That's Okay. We can just be ourselves. Then we can be friends forever.

**Elder:** That's right! We can just be ourselves and friends forever.

**Narrator:** So Elder and Shorty stayed in the forest for the rest of their lives as good friends and never thought again about being like the others.