

The Diver and the Duck

This is a story told by the Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna) people from the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

A long time ago there were two young blokes, an Ararru (ara-du) and a Mathari (muth-ari).

They ran out of water and so had to go looking for some. So they split up.

The Mathari bloke found some water. When he went back to camp the Ararru (ara-du) bloke hadn't found any and was very distressed and started rubbing fat on his skin. But the Mathari bloke didn't say anything.

Again they split up to look for water and the Mathari (muth-ari) bloke went back to the water he had found and had another drink. He got some mud on himself and tried to rub it off so the other bloke couldn't see he had found water.

Back at the camp the Ararru (ara-du) man noticed some mud on his mate's toe. He didn't say anything but thought to himself: "I'll follow him this time to see where he goes."

When he followed his mate and found him swimming in the big water hole he had found.

At this the Ararru (ara-du) man got real cranky and tried to hit the swimmer with a boomerang. "Why didn't you tell me you had a waterhole? You're my mate and you were making me die."

The Arraru (ara-du) man kept throwing boomerangs at the Mathari (muth-ari) bloke who kept diving under the water so they would miss. When the Arraru (ara-du) man ran out of boomerangs he dived into the water and started swimming around.

The Mathari (muth-ari) man is Unatyirldi (una-chil-di) the Little Grebe a diving water bird while the Arraru (ara-du) bloke is Mararra (mur-a-da) the Black Duck.

Adnyamathanha (Ud-nya-muth-unna) people tell this story to their children to teach some important lessons. What do you think they might be?

- How precious water is.
- Being honest and not hiding things from each other - sharing what we have.

Jesus also teaches us that we should share with others, especially the important things of life.

He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must give one to the man who has none, and whoever has food must share it."

(GNB Lk 3:11)

Permission was given to tell this story by Auntie Denise Champion, from the Congress Church in Port Augusta who is an Adnyamathanha woman from the Flinders Ranges.

(Source: Dorothy Tunbridge, Flinders Ranges Dreaming, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra 1988)