



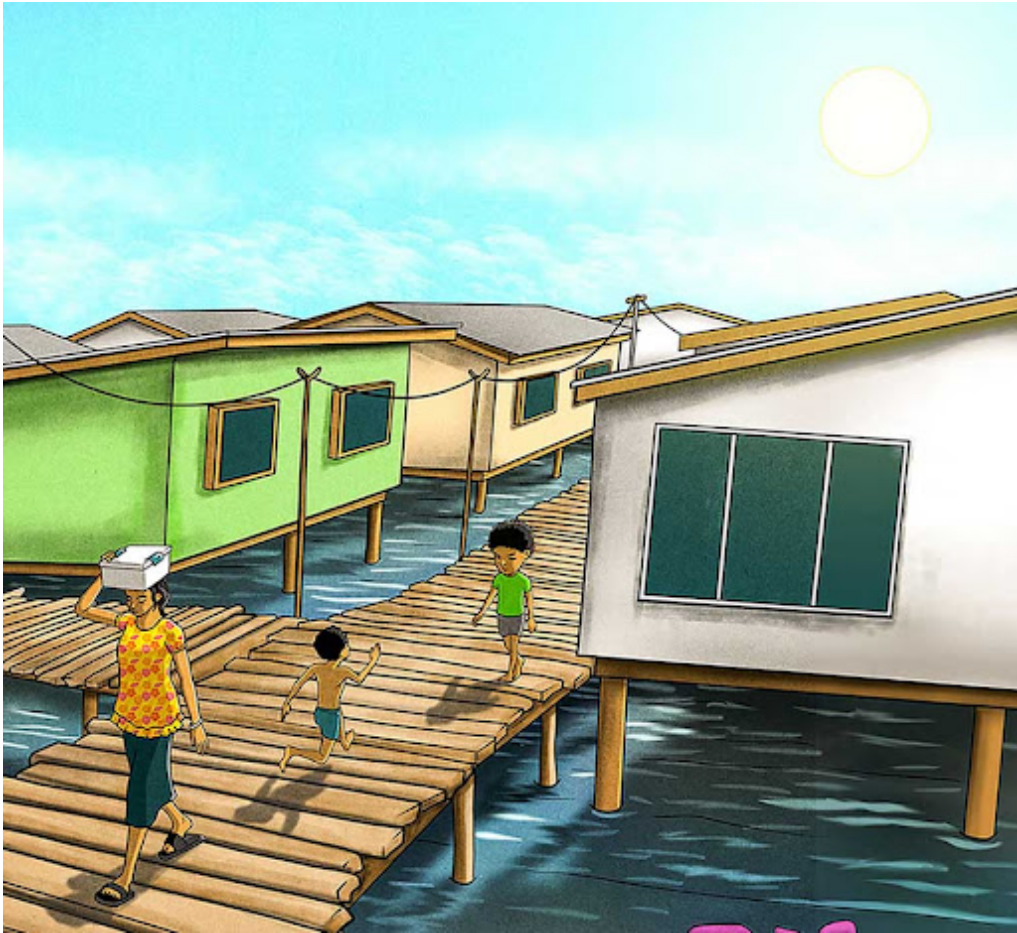
Asiasi

Jason Paisoi

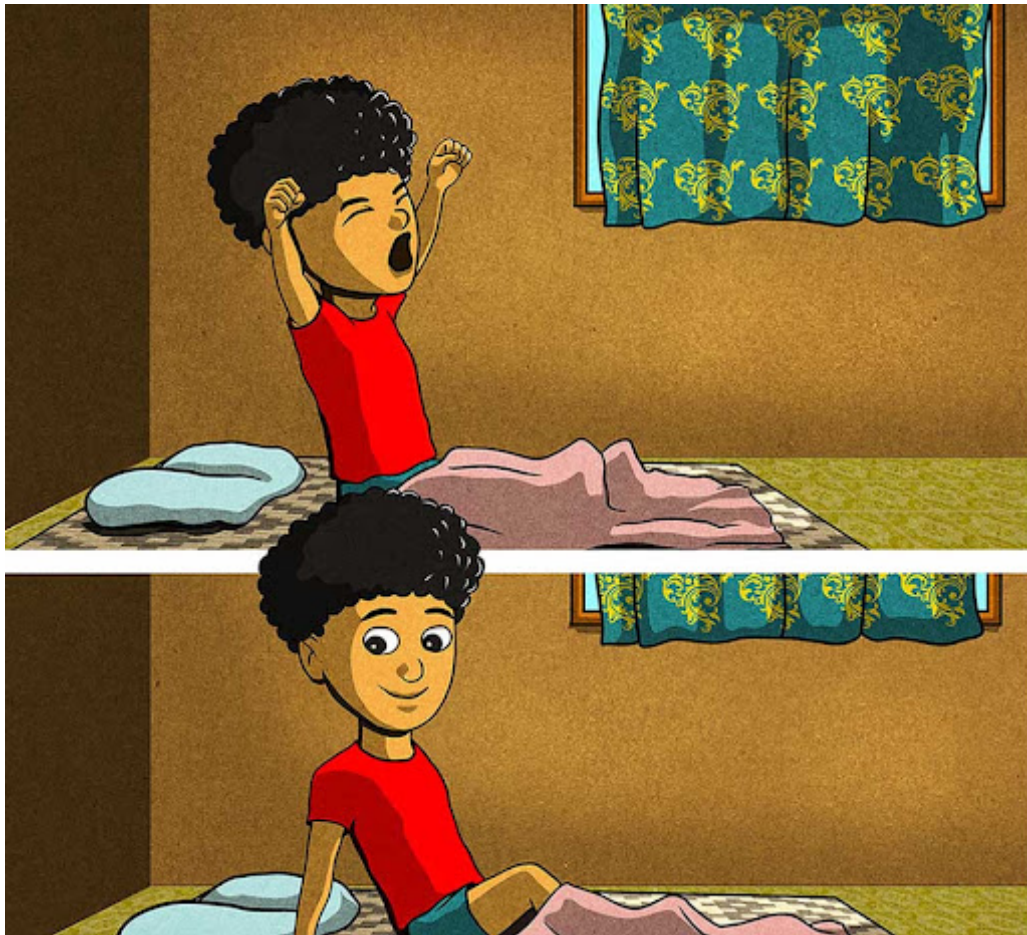
Eskoi Ismael Bogen



 The Asia Foundation



The sun rose bright and warm over the Tubusereia village. Rows of houses stood gently above the sea, held up by strong wooden posts. Below them, the water moved slowly, shining like glass.



In one of the houses, Dean woke up slowly on his woven brown pandanus mat. A smile crept on his face as he remembered that it was Saturday.

That meant no school! Plus, there was a canoe race in the afternoon.

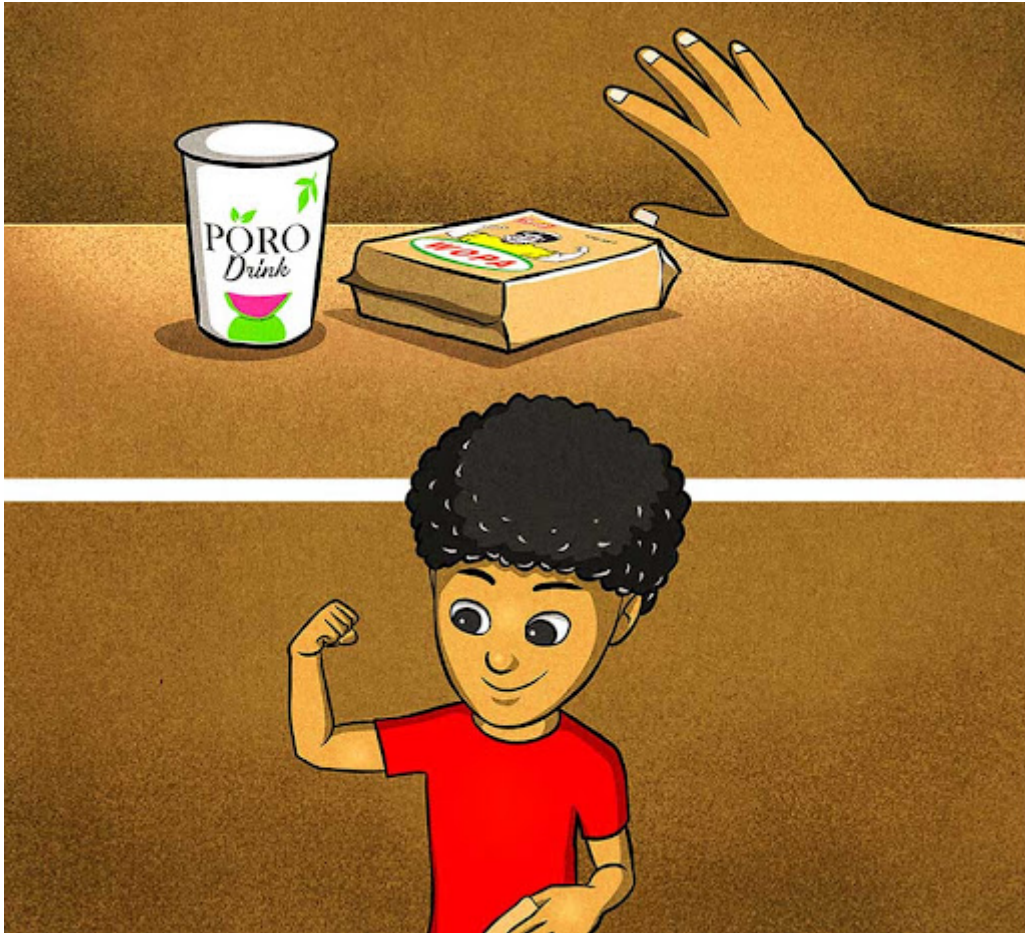


It was quiet in the house. No voices, no footsteps, no cooking sounds. Dean tiptoed carefully to the door and peeped into the living room.

“They’ve all gone,” he whispered happily.

He could finally carry out his plan to visit the mangroves. His parents didn’t like him exploring there. But on his last trip, he had

spotted a treasure! He secretly decided to go back for it.



His stomach grumbled, so he headed to the kitchen table. A wopa biscuit and a packet of poro juice had been left there by his mother. Dean chuckled, looking at the picture on the biscuit packet.

“Strong muscles,” he joked.



He tucked the biscuit into his rice bag and stepped out onto the veranda.

Nearby, he heard a crackling sound. Uncle Lohia from next door was frying fish.

“Ahh... that smells delicious,” Dean sighed.



“Where are you going?” Uncle Lohia asked.

Dean waved a 50-toea coin. “Uncle, I’m just going to the store,” he said as he waved goodbye.



Dean felt bad about lying, but he hoped Uncle Lohia would understand.

To him, the mangrove forest was a magical place of treasures. At high tide, the sea carried many things there like old and new slippers, bottles, toys, brushes, and things people had lost from their homes.

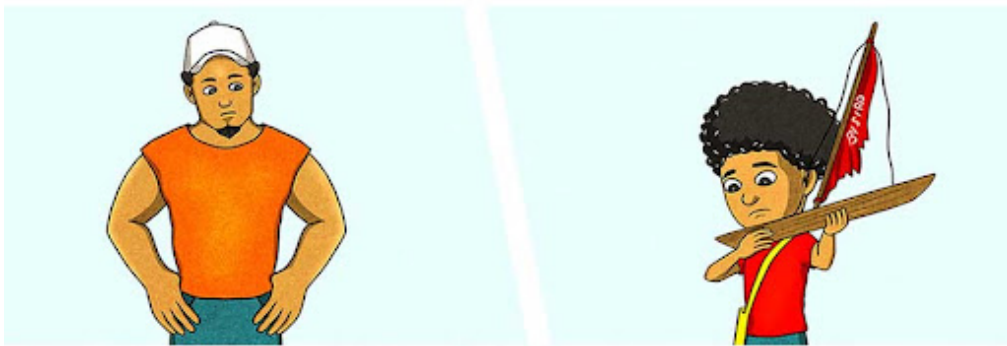


He kept walking until he was surrounded by the huge gnarly roots of the mangroves. Dean stepped carefully through the twisted roots until something big and red caught his eye.



It was an Asiasi, a small racing canoe. It was old, broken, and forgotten.

“But still useful,” Dean said. He had found a way to join the canoe race! This was the plan all along, but he still couldn’t believe his luck.



Dean carried the asiasi home, eager to fix it up in time for the race. Close to home, he spotted Uncle Lohia.

“So you got that at the store, did you?” he asked.

“I’m sorry for not telling the truth, Uncle Lohia,” Dean said earnestly.

Uncle Lohia looked disappointed and walked off.



Dean felt bad, but he didn't have much time. He found some tools at home and got to work.

An older boy called Mea walked by and laughed at him. "That canoe won't work!" Mea said. "Make a new one!"

"It's not so old like you, Mea!" Dean shouted back. He could be quite the teaser, which

always made Mea mad.

By afternoon, the sun rose high above Tubusereia village. The Asiasi race always started at two in the afternoon. Dean panicked a little. He didn't think he'd finish by then.

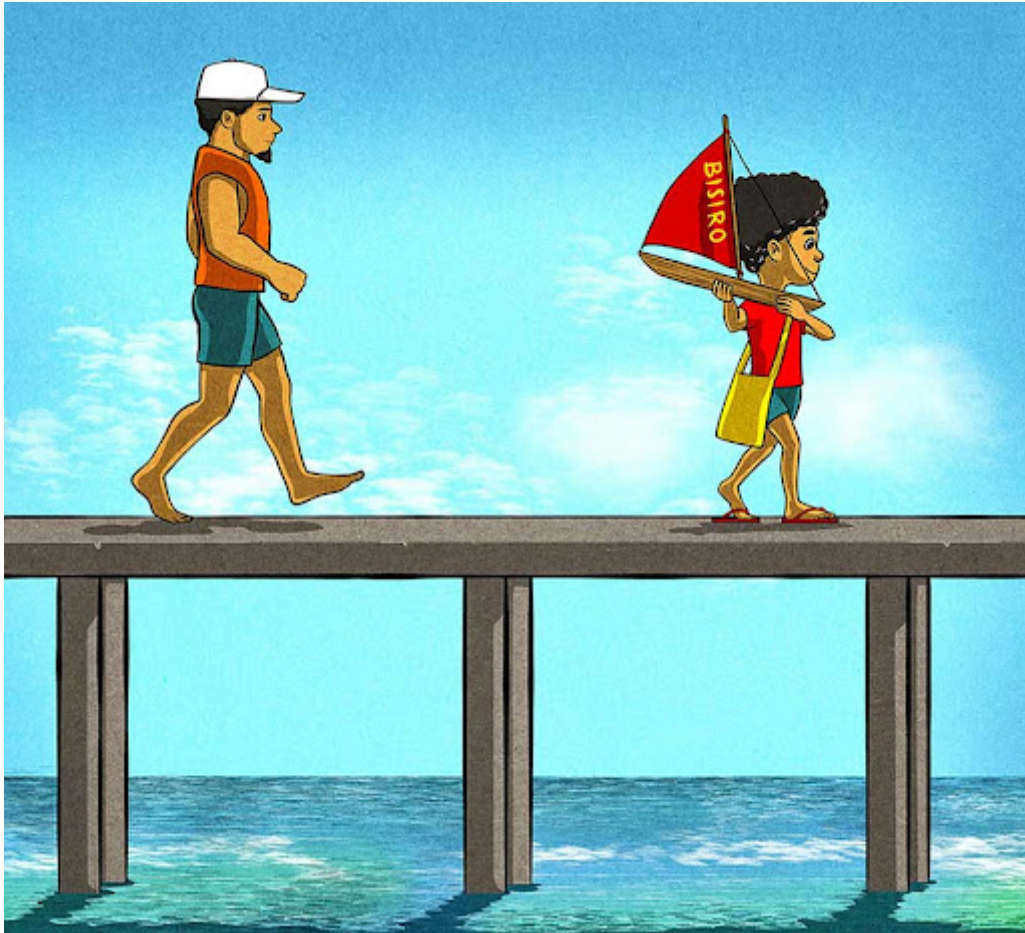


Suddenly, he heard a gentle laugh. “Hey little engineer, you need help?”

Uncle Lohia arrived with tools and supplies! “Next time, don’t tell lies,” he scolded.

Together, they mended the canoe using an old umbrella, pieces of iron, strong string, and glue. When they finished, the canoe stood proud. The sail was yellow, and the

body shone like mahogany.



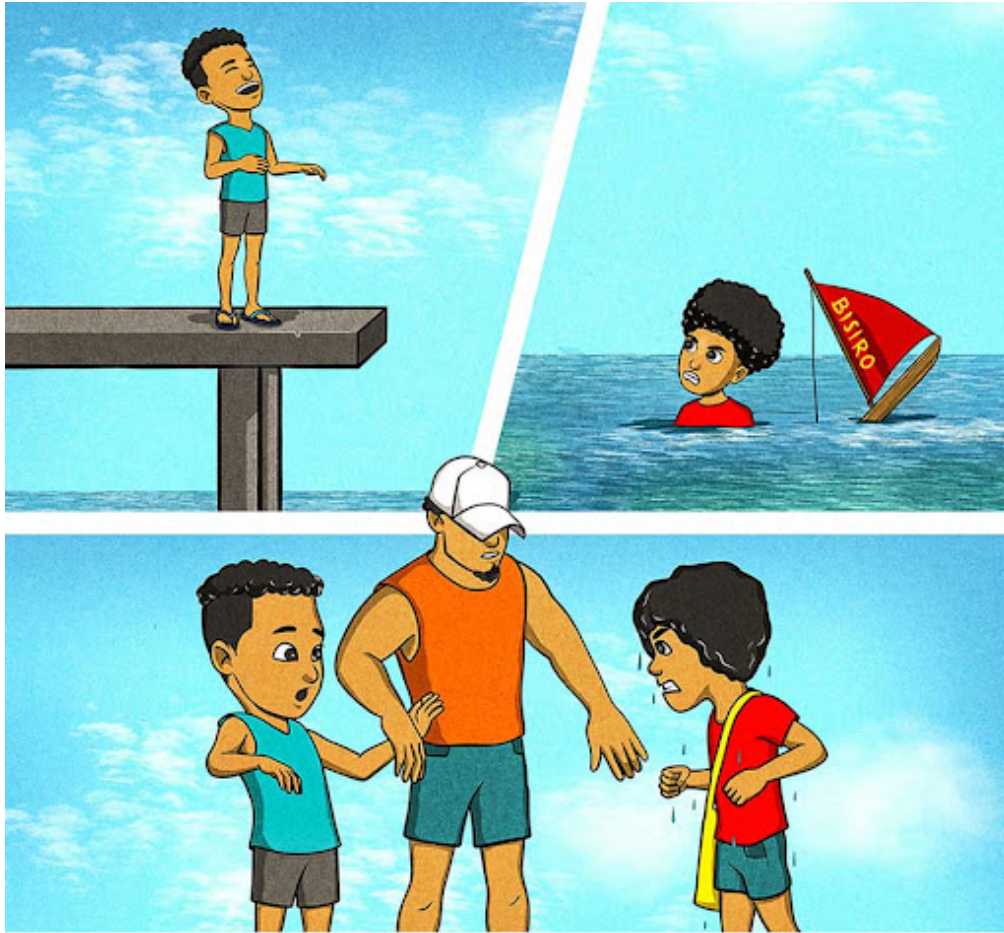
They rushed to the beach as quickly as possible. Dean walked on the bridge carrying the canoe and got there just in the nick of time. Uncle Lohia knew that Dean was a strong swimmer, but he still reminded him to be careful in the water.



At the bridge, Dean met Mea again.

“That canoe is too old!” Mea shouted. “You can’t race with it.”

When they got to the boarding area, Mea suddenly pushed Dean into the sea.



Wet and fiercely angry, Dean swam back up with fists folded.

“Show your strength in the race. Not with your fist!” Uncle Lohia stepped in quickly before a fight could start.



At the reef, the starting whistle blew.
Colourful sails sped across the blue sea.
Dean's heart beat fast. His Asiasi moved
slowly, then faster, then faster still.

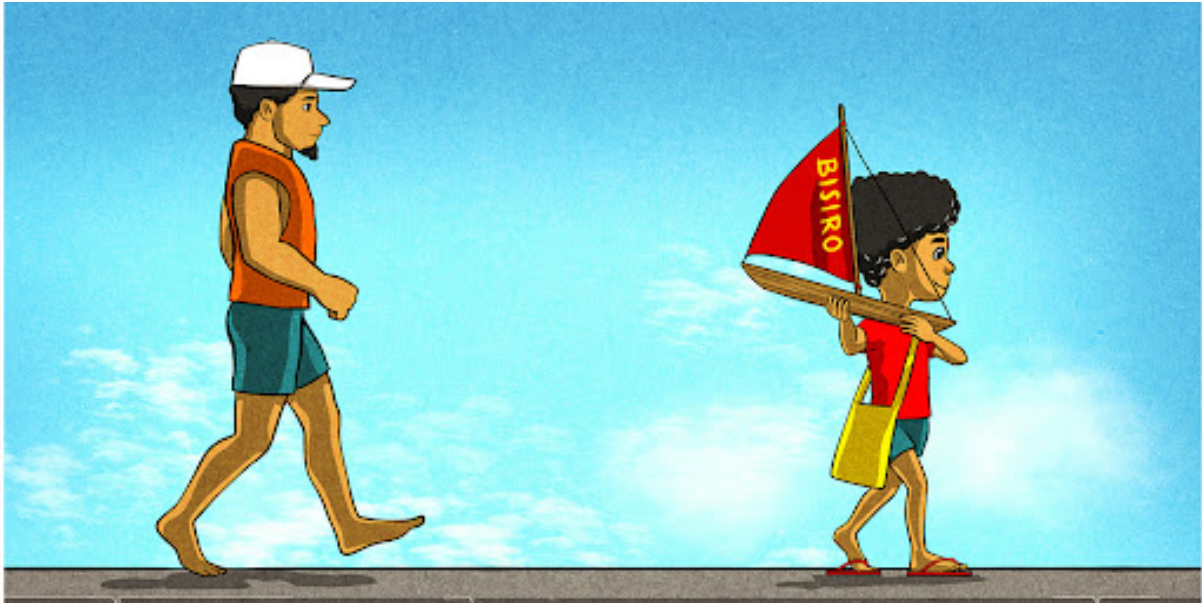
He held his breath. When his canoe reached
the red flag, Dean shouted with joy. As
children from the village cheered loudly, he
saw Mea smile at him.



From that day, Mea became Dean's friend. He learned that true strength comes from respect, not fighting.



As for Dean, he grew up to become a ship's captain, sailing across the ocean, carrying goods and helping people. And it all began with one broken Asiasi, found in the mangroves.



Community Engagement Guide

This guide helps families, teachers, and communities talk about the story together. Use these three questions and activities to spark discussion, reflection, and action.



Question #1: What might have happened if Dean chose to fight Mea?

Sample Answer: “He might have gotten hurt and would not have been able to participate in the race.”

Look-for's: Cause and effect; recognition of the potential negative consequences to violence



Question #2: How did choosing peace help Dean reach his goal?

Sample Answer: “He focused his anger and energy on the race instead, which he won and eventually became the ship captain.”

Look-for’s: Understanding that peaceful choices can lead to success



Question #3: Can you think of a time when walking away was harder than fighting?

Sample Answer: “When my friend did not want to play the same game as me.”

Look-for’s: Personal connection to the story



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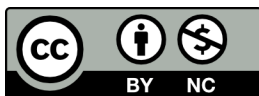
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Original Story

Asiasi. Author: Jason Paisoi. Illustrator: Eskoi Ismael Bogen.

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