

A BAD BET



Mr. and Mrs. Bates had been married for forty years. In those forty years they had never had a fight, much less an argument. They were a happy couple because they always agreed on everything.

The Bates had many animals, but the ones they prized the most were their two milk cows. They sold the extra milk to their neighbors every day.

One day, one of their neighbors, Mr. Norton, decided to test them to see if he could get them to disagree on something. He thought about what might get them to argue, and then he came up with an idea.

He went to see the Bates, and while he was there, he said to Mr. Bates, “I see that you have two cows. Do you really need two cows? I think you should sell one of them and then you’d have extra money.”

“That’s an excellent idea,” Mr. Bates responded. “I think I’ll tell Mrs. Bates. I think she will agree with me.”

Mr. Bates and his neighbor went to the house.

Mrs. Bates met them at the door.

Mr. Bates informed his wife, “I think we should sell one of our cows. I’m going to take it to town. Mr. Norton seems to think it would be a good idea,”

“Oh, I agree with you! That is a wonderful idea. We don’t need two cows. We’ll have a little calf soon. We don’t need three cows,” Mrs. Bates agreed with a smile.

Mr. Bates fed the cows, brushed them, and then put a rope on the cow he was

going to take to town.

On the way to the village, Mr. Norton joined Mr. Bates.

“I thought I would walk with you to town. I have some business I need to attend to there,” he said to Mr. Bates.

Actually, he was trying to think of something he could make Mr. Bates do to make his wife upset.

On the way to sell the cow, they came upon a man on a horse.

Thinking he could get Mr. Bates to do something that would cause an argument with his wife, suggested, “Why don’t you trade the cow for the horse? Don’t you think you could use a horse?”

“That’s a wonderful idea. If I had a horse, he could help me with the things I have to do on the farm,” Mr. Bates said with excitement.

The owner of the horse agreed to the trade.

Mr. Norton was sure Mrs. Bates would get upset because the horse was old and wasn’t very pretty.

As they walked along, they saw a man with a pig.

“Why don’t you trade the horse for the pig? I’m sure Mrs. Bates would love to have a pig,” Mr. Norton put the idea into Mr. Bates’ head.

“Now that’s an excellent idea. If we had a pig, my wife could fix me pork and bacon for breakfast,” Mr. Bates agreed.

He asked the man with the pig to trade the horse for the pig, and he said, “OK”

Mr. Bates was proud of his pig and wanted to show it to his wife, but soon they passed a man with a rooster.

Mr. Norton spoke up again, “Why don’t you trade the pig for the rooster. Every farm needs a rooster!”

“What a wonderful idea!” Mr. Bates stated. “It can wake us up every morning. We’ll never sleep late again!”

The owner of the rooster was happy to make the trade.

Mr. Norton was sure that Mrs. Bates would be angry with her husband for his silly trades.

On the way home, they passed an inn.

Mr. Norton commented, "I wish you had sold the cow. Then we would have had money to buy some food. Maybe the innkeeper will trade your rooster for some food."

The innkeeper was delighted to have a rooster and made the trade.

Now Mr. Norton was certain that Mrs. Bates would be angry with him.

After having a filling meal, they started to walk back to the farm. Mr. Norton could not keep quiet.

"I think you are about to have your first fight," he said to Mr. Bates.

"Why do you think that?" he answered.

"You took the cow to sell it. You traded it for a horse, and then the horse for a pig, and then the pig for a rooster, but now you have nothing. I'm sure she will be angry with you," Mr. Norton tried not to smile too big.

"I don't think so," was all Mr. Bates would say.

"I'll bet you two hundred dollars your wife will be angry with you," Mr. Norton said to him.

"We'll see," Mr. Bates replied.

When they walked into the house Mrs. Bates was there to greet them.

She asked, "So how did it go today? Did you sell the cow for a good price?"

Mr. Bates replied, "On the way to town to sell our cow, I saw a man with a horse. I asked him to trade with me and he let me have the horse."

"That's wonderful! The horse will help us do so many chores on the farm," Mrs. Bates gave a happy response.

"Well, as we were walking, we passed a man with a pig, so I traded the horse for the pig," Mr. Bates informed her.

"Really! You traded the horse for a pig. Now we'll have pork for a month," Mrs. Bates responded to the news.

“A little later we saw a man with rooster, so I traded the pig for a rooster,” Mr. Bates continued to tell the story of his trip to the town.”

“A rooster! That’s wonderful. He will wake us up every morning and we’ll never sleep late again,” she said excitedly.

“Actually, I don’t have the rooster anymore. On the way home, we were hungry. So, we stopped at the inn. I didn’t have any money, so I traded the rooster for our supper,” Mr. Bates ended the story.

“I’m so happy you were able to eat. Now I don’t have to fix your supper. I’m sure you were very hungry after walking all the way to town. I’m glad you have a full stomach,” Mrs. Bates smiled at her husband.

Mr. Norton realized that he had failed to make the Bates argue.

“I guess I’ve lost our bet,” Mr. Norton said as he gave the two hundred dollars to Mr. Bates.

“What is that for?” Mrs. Bates asked.

“I had a little bet with your husband that you would be angry with him for not selling the cow,” Mr. Norton informed her.

She responded to him, “Why should I be mad? My husband is very clever. He came home with a full stomach and two hundred dollars. That is more than he would have ever gotten for the cow in town.”

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

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|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. couple (n) _____ | a. cute, beautiful |
| 2. argument _____ | b. switch, deal, give and take |
| 3. agree _____ | c. thankful, appreciative |
| 4. calf _____ | d. evening meal |
| 5. trade _____ | e. married, man and wife |
| 6. pretty _____ | f. say hello |
| 7. pork _____ | g. smart, shrewd |
| 8. greet _____ | h. disagreement, fight |
| 9. supper _____ | i. meat from a pig |
| 10. clever _____ | j. baby cow |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. The Bates had two horses. | T / F |
| 2. Mr. Norton told Mr. Bates to sell one of his cows. | T / F |
| 3. Mrs. Bates told him not to sell the cow. | T / F |
| 4. Mr. Bates traded his horse for a pig. | T / F |
| 5. The innkeeper said he would not trade the rooster for a meal. | T / F |
| 6. The horse was big and beautiful. | T / F |
| 7. One of the cows was going to have a calf. | T / F |
| 8. The Bates sold milk to their neighbors. | T / F |
| 9. Mr. Bates paid Mr. Norton two hundred dollars. | T / F |
| 10. Mrs. Bates was happy with Mr. Bates. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. How many cows did the Bates have? _____
 - a) one
 - b) two
 - c) three
 - d) none

2. What did Mr. Bates trade the pig for? _____
 - a) horse
 - b) goat
 - c) supper
 - d) rooster

3. Why did Mr. Norton make the bet? _____
 - a) He wanted the Bates to fight.
 - b) He wanted to make extra money.
 - c) He wanted to buy the cow
 - d) He was hungry

4. How long had the Bates been married? _____
 - a) twenty years
 - b) thirty years
 - c) forty years
 - d) fifty years

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What was the neighbor's name?

2. Why did Mr. Norton want to Mr. Bates to sell his cow?

3. What was the first thing Mr. Bates traded for?

4. Where was Mr. Bates going to sell the cow?

5. What did he trade the horse for?

6. Why did Mr. Bates think a rooster would be a good thing to have?

7. Why did they go into the inn?

8. What did Mrs. Bates say about having a horse?

9. What did Mr. Norton give to Mr. Bates after they arrived at his home?

10. Why did Mr. Norton make the bet?
