

# *A BAD BET*

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

The Bates have many animals, but the ones they love the most are their two milk cows. They sell the extra milk to their neighbors every day.

One of their friends, Mr. Norton, decides to test them to see if he can get them to disagree on something. He thinks about what he might get them to argue about, and then he has an idea.

He goes to see Mr. Bates. He meets him in the garden, and while he is there, he says to Mr. Bates, "I see 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 responds. "I'll talk to Mrs. Bates about it. I think she will agree with me."

Mr. Bates and Mr. Norton then go to the house.

Mrs. Bates meets them at the door.

Mr. Bates says to 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 thing for us to do,"

"Oh, I agree with you! That's a wonderful idea. We'll have a little calf soon, so we

don't need three cows," Mrs. Bates agrees with a smile.

Mr. Bates goes to feed the cows, brushes them, and then puts a rope on the cow he is going to take to town.

On the way to sell the cow, Mr. Norton joins Mr. Bates.

"I thought I would walk with you to town. I have some business I need to take care of there," he says to Mr. Bates.

Actually, he is trying to think of something he might suggest to Mr. Bates that would upset his wife.

While walking to the town, they come upon a man with a horse.

Thinking he could get Mr. Bates to do something that would cause an argument with his wife, he suggests, "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, it would help me with the things I have to do on the farm," Mr. Bates said with excitement.

The owner of the horse agrees to the trade.

Mr. Norton is certain Mrs. Bates is going to get upset because the horse is old and isn't very pretty.

As they continue to walk along, they see 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 puts the idea into Mr. Bates' head.

"Now that's an excellent idea. If we had a pig, my wife could cook pork and bacon for breakfast for more than a month," Mr. Bates agrees.

He asks the man with the pig to trade the horse for the pig, and he says, "OK."

Mr. Bates is proud of his new pig and wants to show it to his wife, but soon they pass a man with a rooster.

Mr. Norton speaks up again, "Why don't you trade the pig for the rooster. Every farm needs a rooster!"

"What a great idea!" Mr. Bates says excitedly. "It can wake us up every morning.

We'll never sleep late again!"

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

Mr. Norton is sure that Mrs. Bates will be not be happy with her husband for his silly trades.

On the way home, they pass a restaurant.

Mr. Norton comments, "I wish you had sold the cow. Then we would have enough money to buy some food. Maybe the owner of the restaurant will trade your rooster for some food."

The owner is delighted to have a rooster and makes the trade.

Now Mr. Norton is certain that Mrs. Bates will be angry.

After having a filling meal, they start to walk back to the farm. Mr. Norton cannot keep quiet.

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

"Why do you think that?" he answers.

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

"I don't think so," is all Mr. Bates can say.

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

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

When they walk into the house, Mrs. Bates greets them.

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

Mr. Bates replies, "Well, I have an interesting story. 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 our farm," Mrs. Bates gives 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 informs her.

“Really! You traded the horse for a pig? Now we’ll have pork for a month,” Mrs. Bates responds to the news.

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

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

“Actually, I don’t have the rooster anymore. On the way home, we were hungry, so we stopped to eat at a restaurant. I didn’t have any money, so I traded the rooster for our lunch,” Mr. Bates ends the story.

“I’m so happy you were able to eat. Now I don’t have to cook 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 says smiling at her husband.

Mr. Norton realizes that he has failed to make the Bates argue.

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

“What is that for?” Mrs. Bates asks, very surprised to see so much money.

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

She responds to him, “Why should I be mad? My husband is very clever. He came home with a full stomach and two hundred dollars. That’s 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. decide, approve              |
| 4. calf _____       | d. evening meal, dinner         |
| 5. trade _____      | e. married people, man and wife |
| 6. pretty _____     | f. say hello, meet              |
| 7. pork _____       | g. smart, shrewd                |
| 8. greet _____      | h. disagreement, fight          |
| 9. supper _____     | i. meat from a pig              |
| 10. clever _____    | j. baby cow                     |

**TRUE / FALSE:**

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|---|-------|
| 1. The Bates had two horses.  | T / F |
| 2. Mr. Norton suggested that Mr. Bates should 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 restaurant owner 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 their extra 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 have an argument.
  - 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?

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

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

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

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5. What did he trade the horse for?

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

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7. Why did Mr. Bates and Mr. Norton go into the restaurant?

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

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

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10. Why did Mr. Norton make the bet?

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