

A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
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THREE COWS



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By Spark Team



THREE COWS*

Note to the reader: Words and phrases typical to West Africa are retained, and indicated by italics.

The Bible teaches us how important it is for Christians to be loyal to one another. I Corinthians 1:10 says, “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

Once there were three cows. One was white, one was red and one was black. They always stayed close together when they were out eating grass because they knew it was the safe

thing to do. But then someone tricked them into not trusting each other, and that led to a sad end.

Now Leopard wanted to eat cow, but he was afraid because the three cows always stayed close together, and each one had sharp horns and strong hooves. Leopard watched them for many days, but the three cows always stayed close together and that made Leopard very afraid.

So Leopard made a plan. He hid in the bushes and watched for his chance. When White Cow moved a short distance away from the others, Leopard pushed his head out of the bushes and whispered to her.

"Psst, White Cow. *How the body* today?"

"Oh, I am well, Leopard. Now do not come too close or I will call the others. I do not trust you "

"Do not be afraid," said Leopard in his sweetest voice. "I just want to ask you a question. Do you think that Black Cow is your true friend?"

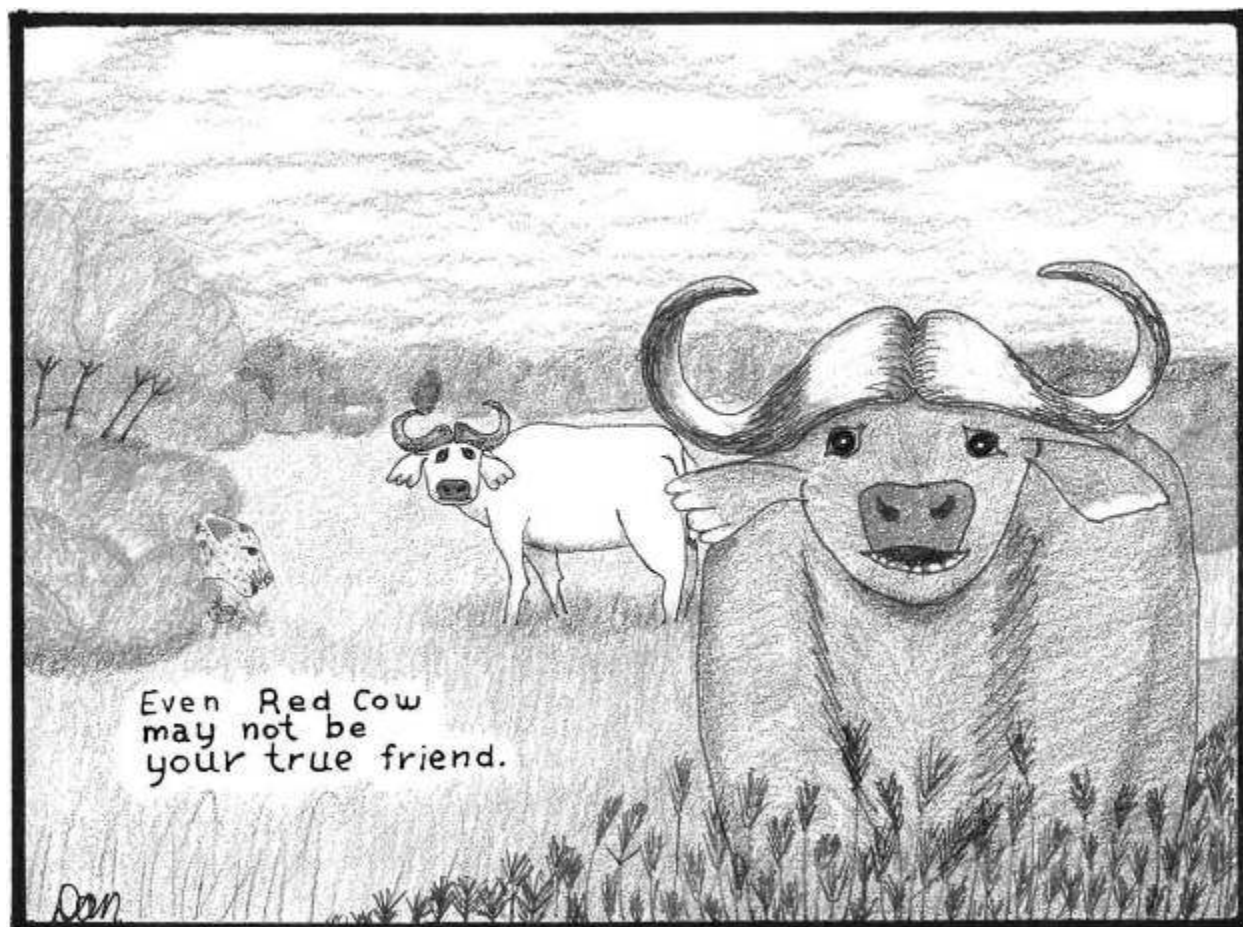
"Oh, yes," said White Cow. "We have been together for a long time and have eaten much grass side by side."

"Oh, but I am sure," whispered Leopard, "that Black Cow is false. She is not your true friend but is only pretending. One day she will trick you."

Later Leopard found his chance to make conversation with Red Cow.

He whispered to Red Cow, "Are you sure that Black Cow is your *good good friend*?"

"Oh, yes," said Red Cow, "We have eaten much grass side by side."



"Well, I think one day Black Cow will be false to you. Be careful! Do not trust Black Cow too much."

So , both White Cow and Red Cow began to watch Black Cow to see if she would be false. They watched to see if she would *do bad* to them. They found themselves staying farther and farther away from Black Cow.

One day Black Cow was quite some distance from White Cow and Red Cow. Leopard pounced on Black Cow. Black Cow bellowed for White Cow and Red Cow but they were too far away and could not hear her. Leopard killed Black Cow, and for one week he ate sweet cow meat each day.

When Black Cow was all eaten, Leopard became hungry again. So he went back to White Cow. Again he whispered to her from some bushes.

"How long has it been since you saw Black Cow?"

"More than a week has passed since I saw Black Cow," White Cow answered.

"Now you see the thing I be telling you. Black Cow was not your true friend for she has gone off with someone else. These days you cannot trust anyone. Why, even Red Cow may not be the *good good friend* you think she is. *Ay-yah*, it is too sad that today we can hardly find a *good friend* who will always be true to us even *when hard time catches us*."

When White Cow heard this she began to watch her friend Red Cow. "How can one know a true friend?" she asked herself. "*Ay Yah!* I wish Red Cow really liked me and would stay close to me. *Ay Yah!*" Actually, it was White Cow who was staying away from Red Cow so she could watch her.

So White Cow and Red Cow did not stay as close together as they had before. Often White Cow and Red Cow were far apart. Leopard kept watching them.

One day they were much farther apart than usual. Leopard killed Red Cow before she could call to her friend. Then Leopard ate Red Cow meat each day for one week.

When Leopard had finished eating Red Cow and was hungry again, he walked boldly to White Cow.

"Where are your friends, White Cow?" asked Leopard.

"I really do not know," answered White Cow. "I have not seen Red Cow for over one week, and I have not seen Black Cow for more than two weeks. It is lonesome without my friends."



"Oh, but if they had been true friends they would not have gone away," replied Leopard smoothly.

Then he started boasting. "Now I will tell you something, White Cow. When Black Cow was left alone, I killed Black Cow and ate her. Then when Red Cow was left alone, I killed and ate Red Cow. Now you are left alone and I will soon kill you. Then you will be my meat. See how fat I am. Cow meat is *sweet too much!*"

When White Cow heard these words, *her heart fell down too much*. She realized that she had been tricked by Leopard's lies. She was *sorry too much* and so upset by her foolishness that she did not even try to get away.

So, Leopard killed White Cow and ate sweet White Cow meat for one week.

REMEMBER: We need to help and encourage one another. Do not let others make you think bad about your friends, or not believe them. The devil will divide us Christians if he can. God says: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). He also says "... do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Hebrews 13:16). Do not be like White Cow.

*probably taken from Aesop's "Lion and the Bulls"

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