

**A COW AND A HORSE WALK INTO A
BAR**

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CHARACTERS:

FRANK
BOB
MARTHA
SHIRLEY
TED

} *Old friends.*

SETTING: *A hotel lounge.*

SHIRLEY: Tell us a joke, Frank.

FRANK: Nah, I don't think so.

BOB: Ah, come on, Frank. You always have a good joke to tell.

FRANK: I don't think it's a good idea.

TED: What's the harm in telling a joke?

MARTHA: We all need a bit of a laugh, Frankie.

FRANK: But last week...

SHIRLEY: Last week is ancient history. Water under the bridge. Right guys?

(They all agree.)

FRANK: Well...okay. A cow and a horse walk into a bar...

BOB: Why?

FRANK: Why what?

BOB: Why did he walk in with a horse? Why not another cow?

FRANK: Because all his cow friends were busy. How would I know?

BOB: Well, you're telling the story.

FRANK: Alright, all the cows were busy so this cow walks into a bar with a horse...

BOB: Kind of sad, really.

FRANK: What?

BOB: None of his cow friends could go with him.

FRANK: Well, he wasn't alone, he had the horse for company.

BOB: Yes, but it's not the same, is it. I mean, we all like to be with our own kind. And you'd think they could spare an hour or so to go out with their mate, wouldn't you?

TED: Something bothering you, Bob?

BOB: No, it's just...well, it would have been nice if just one of you had made time to go to the dinner the other night, that's all. I mean, they were giving me an award and all, it would have been nice to have a friend there.

TED: Didn't you take your wife?

BOB: Yes, but it's not the same, is it? That's what I mean. The cows didn't care enough to make the effort so I had to go with a horse.

FRANK: For God's sake, this isn't a metaphor for life, Bob, it's just a bloody joke!

MARTHA: I think he knows that Frank, he was just making a point. If I hadn't had my daughter's engagement party on the same night I would have been there with bells on, Bobby, you know that.

BOB: I know, Martha. I wasn't including you in the cows.

MARTHA: Thank you.

SHIRLEY: And I was at the party too, don't forget.

FRANK: Anyway, a cow walks into a bar with a horse/...

BOB: How was it, by the way?

FRANK: Sorry?

BOB: I was asking Martha how it was. The engagement party.

MARTHA: Oh, brilliant, thanks, Bob. Didn't finish up until three in the morning. Wish you could have been there.

BOB: You know I would have been if I hadn't had my awards dinner.

MARTHA: I know, Bobby, I know.

TED: Of course some cows didn't get an invitation to the engagement party, did we.

MARTHA: Oh, Teddy, you know why I couldn't invite you.

TED: Not really, no.

MARTHA: Do we really want to bring that up now?

TED: I asked your daughter to marry me, she said no, end of story. I just thought she could do better than that bozo. It's all past history, Martha. I don't know why you can't let it go. I've forgotten it.

MARTHA: It was only last week, Ted.

SHIRLEY: He asked your daughter to marry him?

BOB: A week before her engagement?

TED: Okay, okay, I'm lonely. There I've said it. Bob's not the only one who doesn't have cows to go out with. And at least he's got a horse.

SHIRLEY: But Martha's daughter! She must be twenty years younger than you.

MARTHA: Nearly thirty, but who's counting.

FRANK: Excuse me, is anyone remotely interested in hearing my joke?

SHIRLEY: Sorry, Frank. Go right ahead...two cows walk into a shop.

FRANK: It was a cow and a horse and they walked into a bar...

BOB: Why?

FRANK: I told you, all the cows were busy.

BOB: No, why did they go to a bar? Why not the cinema or a nice restaurant?

FRANK: I suppose they wanted a drink!

BOB: Do cows and horses actually drink alcohol?

SHIRLEY: Well, they could have had a soft drink.

MARTHA: Yeah, or a nice lemon, lime and bitters. That's what I usually have when I don't want to get tipsy.

SHIRLEY: That's obviously not what you were drinking at the engagement party then.

MARTHA: Shirley! Are you implying that I was drunk?

SHIRLEY: Well, I jolly well hope so. I'd hate to think you knew what you were doing when you snogged my Bert.

MARTHA: Snogged! I gave him a peck on the cheek to say goodbye.

SHIRLEY: Oh really? Last time I checked his cheek wasn't on the inside of his mouth.

MARTHA: You're seeing things that aren't there.

SHIRLEY: I thought I was going to have to get a crowbar from the car to prise you two apart.

BOB: Now, ladies, you've both been friends for a long time/...

SHIRLEY: Too right we have, and she's always fancied my Bert since the day I started dating him.

MARTHA: Well, he did date me first.

SHIRLEY: Selling you an ice cream in his father's milk bar hardly counts as a date.

MARTHA: He used to take me out after he'd knocked off.

SHIRLEY: It was the only way they could close shop, you hung around there so much. They thought they were going to have to put you on the payroll.

FRANK: Look, surely it's all water under the bridge now. Shirley married Bert and Martha married Arthur and who cares who dated who.

BOB: Whom.

FRANK: What?

BOB: Who cares who dated *whom*.

FRANK: Could I just finish my story? You said we all needed a good laugh.

TED: Yes, let the man finish his story, for goodness sake.

FRANK: Thank you, Ted. So this cow walks into a bar with a horse/...

MARTHA: Were they boys or girls?

FRANK: What?

MARTHA: Boys or girls...the cow and the horse.

BOB: Or one of each?

FRANK: What does it matter?

MARTHA: Well, if they were boys they might be going to play pool, and if they were girls they might be looking for boys.

SHIRLEY: Not all cows are like you, Martha.

BOB: And if one was a girl and one a boy, they might be out on a date.

FRANK: A date.

BOB: I used to take my missus out to the local once a week when we were courting. Those were the days. I had to practically beg her to come to the awards dinner the other night. Even my horse didn't want to come with me.

FRANK: What does it matter what they were doing there?

MARTHA: Well, it matters to them.

FRANK: Okay, okay...they were two boys...a boy cow and a boy horse and they walk into a bar...

BOB: So they came to play pool?

TED: How could a horse and a cow play pool? Don't be stupid, man.

BOB: Well, how could they get in a bar in the first place, the door probably wouldn't be wide enough.

MARTHA: My cousin Wilfred could never get into bars. We used to bring him drinks out to the carpark. He was a real porker.

SHIRLEY: Run in the family, did it?

FRANK: It was a double door, okay. The cow and the horse got into the bar through a double door and the pool tables were all busy so they went up to the bar and/...

MARTHA: Which pub was this?

FRANK: I don't know/...

MARTHA: Because I don't know any pub with double doors in this area. If I did we would have taken Wilfred there.

SHIRLEY: Yeah, and Martha would know every pub within a ten kilometre radius from here.

MARTHA: I've taken just about enough of your mouth, Shirley Baker.

SHIRLEY: What? I was just backing you up.

MARTHA: Yeah, like Brutus backed up Caesar.

TED: Ladies/...

MARTHA: There's only one lady here, Ted.

SHIRLEY: Yeah, and it ain't her.

BOB: Come on now girls. Let's make peace not war.

SHIRLEY: Why don't you marry her, Bob? She needs a man to maul since she killed off Arthur, and everyone knows you're sweet on her.

BOB: I wouldn't say I'm sweet on her...

MARTHA: What do you mean, killed off Arthur?

SHIRLEY: The man was fat as a pig in a cornfield and you just kept feeding him and running after him so he never had to lift his head from the trough. Naturally he died of a heart attack. What did you expect?

BOB: Of course, I'm very fond of Martha/...

MARTHA: Oh, so I killed my husband because I kept him well fed. Maybe if you cared more for Bert he wouldn't go around sticking his tongue into other women's mouths. He's probably looking for food!

- TED: Bob's already got a horse, why would he marry Martha?
- SHIRLEY: Well, *you* marry her then. Keep her away from other people's husbands.
- TED: Well, I'd be happy to/...
- BOB: *(To Martha)* How could you even think of marrying him when he just proposed to your daughter?
- TED: Oh, so you're going to leave your horse and saddle up another one when there are cowboys walking around lonely?
- BOB: Enough with the horse metaphors! Show some respect.
- TED: You started it, you little horse thief, crying about cows not coming to your stupid dinner...
- FRANK: COULD YOU ALL JUST...SHUT...UP!

(Pause)

A boy cow walks into a bar with a boy horse because all his cow friends are at a party. They walk through the double doors into a pub outside a ten kilometre radius of where we now stand and because all the pool tables are busy they go up the bar to order water because everybody knows that cows and horses don't drink alcohol or lemon, lime and bitters...

(He waits for any interruptions...there are none.)

And the bar tender says 'What'll it be?'

(Bob starts to say something but Frank interrupts him quickly.)

And the cow and the horse understand him because they actually met at an ESL class for farm animals and learned to speak English fluently. So the horse says, 'Two waters, thanks.' And the cow says/...

- MARTHA: I'm going home.

(She stands to leave.)

- BOB: Martha...are you alright?

- MARTHA: Oh, yeah. I'm just fine and dandy. I've been practically accused of adultery with my best friend's husband when everybody knows she snatched him away from me all those years ago. Then I'm accused of murdering my Arthur because I cared too much. And now I'm being

offered around like so much horseflesh to a man who just last week proposed to my own daughter...I'm just dandy, thank you very much.

(Pause)

And now I'm going home.

SHIRLEY: I didn't accuse you of adultery, I said you kissed him. And why wouldn't you, my Bert's a hunk of a man. That's why we were fighting over him in the first place.

BOB: And we all know you loved Arthur to death...I mean, you loved him dearly. He had a wonderful life with you and it was just his time to go.

TED: I wasn't serious about marrying your daughter, Martha. Truth is, I just wanted to be part of your family. To be honest, I think her mother's a far better catch.

(Pause)

MARTHA: Well...I'm still going home. It's late.

SHIRLEY: Same time next week, sweetie?

MARTHA: I guess so.

BOB: I'll be here.

TED: Maybe I could give you a lift, Martha? Pick you up at seven?

MARTHA: Well, thank you, Ted, that would be nice.

(They all exit leaving Frank. Bob enters again.)

BOB: Coming, Frank?

FRANK: *(Sighs)* Yeah, I'm coming.

(He follows Bob.)

BOB: Great joke, by the way. We can always rely on you to cheer us up.

(They exit.)

END