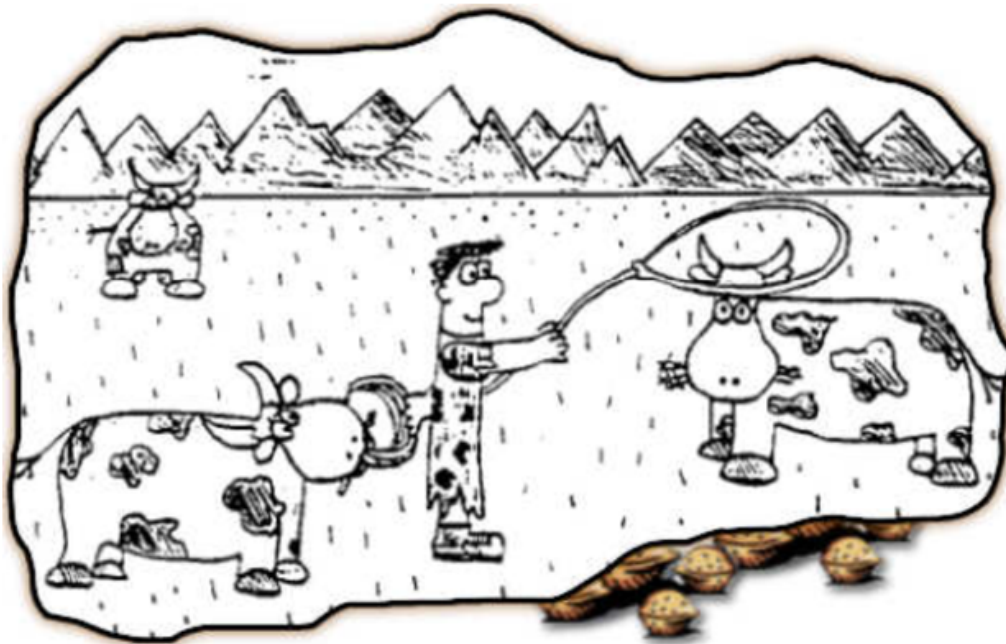


WALNUTS ON THE RANGE

(Investment)



As the villagers found new and improved ways to perform their services and to produce their goods, they earned more wood pieces. They were earning much more money than they required for just their basic needs. The people of the valley also had more spare time, so they developed new wants. Caps and hats were no longer the only luxury that they allowed themselves!

Some of the creative villagers began to invent and manufacture games and sell them. The most popular one was the board game conceived by Greg and Gary while

walking near Marvin's garden, inspired by Sean and Shannon's successful monopoly of the shoe market. Toys were also produced to meet the demands of the village's children, such as "Walnut Grove Kids" and the "Nutendo" game system.

As their spare time increased, the Caplanders developed even more efficient ways of doing their jobs. They invented new tools and simple machines. Their huts were kept in good repair and there was plenty of food and clothing. They had increasingly more money to spend. As their standard of living increased, their life expectancies increased as well. These advancements, as well as the increases in disposable income, fueled the desire for continued progress.

Everyone in the village felt the high spirit of the time, none more than Bianca and Marvin. While working in their bountiful fields, Bianca decided that her relationship with Marvin would be more fruitful if they would finally tie the knot.

Sweetly, she said to Marvin, "My little pumpkin, I know this is going to sound corny, but I feel the time is ripe for us to sow the seeds of our love and let our relationship blossom!"

Marvin, overjoyed by Bianca's proposal, gently placed a 24 carrot ring on her finger, exclaiming, "Lettuce be

married!"

The joy of the prosperous village was now complete as word of the wedding traveled through the village grapevine. Everyone was invited, and only Smidley refused to attend; he missed one of the greatest social events in the history of the valley.

Marvin wore a suit made of the finest skins, while Bianca was ravishing in her exquisite corn silk gown. Barbie the bop and Tiffany the trendsetter, dressed to kill in their most outrageous outfits, flirted with all the Caplander guys, and showed off the newest dance craze, the Walnut Wiggle.

Amidst the festivities, a group of boys stopped Wally at the punchbowl with an unusual proposition. They had hoped to catch him in a good mood, and after he'd had a few glasses of punch.

"Wally, we want to make you an offer you can't refuse," said Lou, their leader. "When we were exploring the other side of the mountain, we saw large herds of cattle in the distance. We would like to travel to this land to see if we can capture some of these cattle. With them we could set up a new enterprise and earn a lot of money. But we don't have the wood pieces to finance such an expedition. If you will provide us with the wood pieces we need, we will share the profits with you."

Wally thought for a minute. He did have enough wealth that he could afford to risk some of it. Here was a possibility that by investing his wealth he would be able to create more, not just for himself, but for these boys and the village, too. Caught up in the progressive spirit of the times, he agreed.

"All right, I'll give you the money you need," said Wally, caught up in the buzz. "If you are successful, I will take one of every three of the cattle you bring back. If you fail, I will have lost my investment. Since we all stand to profit from this venture, I know you will work hard and use the supplies wisely. I am willing to bet my cap on this, because the possible rewards are worth it!!!"

In this way, Wally acted as a capitalist, risking his wealth, or capital, in the hope of creating more wealth. He toasted the boys with a glass of punch, and they all danced until dawn to the fine music provided by Denny the DJ.

Exhausted but happy, the newlyweds announced their intention to travel the valley for a few weeks leaving their assistant, Gordo the Gardener, to tend to the fields. While the Caplanders showered them with good wishes, Bianca hurled her beautiful and delicate bouquet of produce high into the air. At once, all of the single women lunged after it. Wendy the wealthy widow, smiling but rumped, emerged

from the heap victorious, waving the bouquet and batting her eyelashes at Wally.

As the celebration came to a close, the happy couple left and contentment filled the air, and things calmed down in the village.

The boys Wally had invested in were gone for a long time, and his optimism turned to worry that they had either gotten stampeded or had run off with his money. But in a few weeks they returned bringing many fine cattle, and they felt happy with the success.