

**BUZZARD BAIT**  
**The Rodeo Bronc**

**(A horse lovers story.)**

By  
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## Buzzard Bait

The first time I saw Buzzard he was standin' all alone at the far end of a big coral on a ranch outside of Colorado Springs. He looked like he'd just stepped off of one of them Leanin' Tree Birthday cards. You know, the kind like you'd send to an old friend, tellin' him this might be his last party. The horse's name was Buzzard Bait 'cause that's about all he was good fer. A flea-bitten sack of ... buzzard bait.

His ears naturally laid back flat against his head, mostly 'cause he hated everything, man or beast. One of his eyes pointed North, the other southwest, and that one was blind. His mane, what was left of it, was like a tangle of barbed wire. His feet looked like they'd come off a camel and took near a draft-horse shoe, but he hadn't been shod fer years. Farriers went close only once. After they got out of the hospital they never came back.

In summer a fog of flies and skeeters would swarm around his face and every once in a while he'd dunk his head in the water trough and drowned about a zillion of 'em. His face was half agin as long as any normal horse's and it hooked back under at his nose, giving him that permanent mean-lookin' buzzard scowl. His hide was bit and kicked from many a battle which, as the stories go, he never lost. And Buzzard's hair? It was missing in patches, some from bein' rubbed or chewed off, other places from some sort of mange he had.

The old horse had big ugly knobs fer knees, his withers looked like the Matterhorn, and his back dipped like the Royal Gorge. His neck was skinny and his hip bones stuck out like hat racks. His ribs stood out so bad they could have been played like a pipe organ in some big church in Dallas. He was supposed to be a stallion but no stallion I ever saw was as mean as Buzzard Bait. His back end looked like he'd been rear-ended by a Greyhound bus. Needless to say he had no conformation. I suppose you could have stuck his head on either end and it wouldn't have made much difference.

If you asked about his bloodlines the cowboys would all go into laughin' fits. Rancher Bob called the AQHA once, askin' about his genealogy and they told him never to call again and hung up on him. Bob even sent Buzzard to the glue factory one time but the guys at the factory sent him back!

Now understand, all these things were his good points. His personality was much worse than his physical appearance.

Buzzard would cast himself on purpose jist to get you to come close, then look out! He was impossible to catch and gettin' him trailered was World War III. He was deliberately dumb and mean and stubborn and smart. He bit and spit and kicked and squealed when anyone would get near and pity the hand who drew the chore of haltering him.

Once each summer the cowboys would tie him down short and saddle him so they could give some horsey greenhorn know-it-all the ride of his or her life. You know the kind; the ones who always say, "I had a pony when I was growing up. I know all about horses." Right! This

horse could buck so hard and throw a soul so high NASA is still up there in orbit lookin' fer a couple of 'em to this day.

Many of the "Horse whisperer" types of trainers had heard about Buzzard through the years and had tried their hand at breaking him but the good ones all came to the same conclusion. If you can't get a horse's heart, you never really have his body. Any horse can make an outward show in his performance but if the heart isn't surrendered to the will of the trainer, then that horse isn't really broken. And in Buzzard's case, his heart was as black as sin.

There was a middle-aged couple, Bill and Grace Love, who had a fancy spread down the road a ways. The Misses was known to all the neighbors as Gracie and Bill was simply called "The Boss."

Grace had a show stallion, a world champ in both halter and performance. I mean this horse was a genuine super champion; drop-dead beautiful, perfect conformation, great disposition, blood lines from the best of the best of the best. He had won everything in which he had ever been entered.

This champion stood alone at the top of the AQHA, the NRHA, the NCHA and all them other fancy "HAs." He even won something once in the NHRA (National Hot Rod Association) and the NRA (National Rifle Association.) The short of it was, he'd won millions in everything there was to enter and held national and world titles from everywhere.

This big boy had so much training he had a string of Phds behind his name. He was the very picture of the perfect Quarter horse. There had never been another stallion like him nor ever would be. And yet he was the most gentle, best mannered animal God ever gave breath to. The only comparison a body could make between him and Buzzard was that they were both horses, of sorts.

Now everybody knows that the original horse God made in the Garden of Eden was the Quarter Horse. There are equine theologians who debate this fact but we'll leave that argument alone fer now. And, of course, any good Quarter Horse man or woman knows intuitively beyond doubt that all other breeds and cropouts came along because of a freak catastrophe of nature, like when a Q-horse accidentally got crossed with a spotted alligator or a Grizzly bear or some such thing. This fact can be verified by referrin' to the history of what Quarter Horse people call the "White Rule."

But I'm gettin' away from my story.

As I said before, the original horse in the Garden of Eden was a Quarter Horse. And if you ever wondered what that champion looked like—I mean the actual horse Adam and Eve rode—all you'd have to do was look at Gracie's stallion. He made all other famous stallions look like yearlings!

Now let's get back to Buzzard Bait fer a spell.

Grace had a soft spot in her heart fer misfits of all kinds. You should have seen the conglomeration of cats and dogs and other critters on her spread, not to mention the half dozen or so horses she'd taken in that had definitely seen better days. If the truth were known, Grace didn't have nothin' of any real quality on her ranch except that one top show stallion.

As the story goes, Grace was up at Rancher Bob's place one day lookin' over a couple of mares she was interested in when she spotted Buzzard out there behind the barn, at the far end of the corral.

"What is THAT thing? A horse or a camel?" she chided.

"He came in a trade," Bob said. "This feller said he'd sell me his best string of broodmares, at a give-away price, if I'd take Buzzard along in the bargain. Well, I didn't think much of it at the time. I sure didn't need another old hay burner standin' around but the deal on his broodmares was just too sweet to pass up. I paid him his askin' price fer the mares, loaded them into my trailer, and headed home. He brought Buzzard up to the ranch later, after dark."

"A couple weeks after that I realized what he'd pulled on me so I asked him where he'd gotten Buzzard. The man said he'd also gotten the old horse in a trade. He said Buzzard had been one of the meanest ugliest rodeo horses ever to buck the circuit. He figured I was enough of a friend that I'd take the "Bait," so to speak, off his hands. A deal was a deal, so now, here he is! I've a notion to lead him up into the high country and make him earn his name ... Buzzard Bait!"

Well, fer some unknown reason Gracie took an interest in that cantankerous old flea-bitten bag O' bones. Against all common sense and the pleading of Rancher Bob she walked out to inspect Buzzard a little closer.

He was a layin' there on his back with all four feet stickin' straight up in the air and he was such a comical picture that Gracie laughed.

Well, Buzzard took exception to this laughter so he rolled and jumped up with his head facing away, ears back, and his hind feet ready for action. No matter how much talkin' Grace did that first day she couldn't get close to Buzzard's head.

"I'll take those two mares," she told Bob, "and I'd like to come back and visit with that horse, Buzzard Bait, next week."

"Now, Grace, You can come as often as you'd like but the problem is, I'd rather not have you around Buzzard. I don't want you gettin' hurt on my place."

"Bob, you've known me for years. You know I'd never do anything to get myself or a horse hurt. I'll be up first of next week to see how the old critter is doing. You'd better not sell him to someone else before I get back. Understand?"

Rancher Bob just laughed, scratched his head, and beamed a crusty grin. "He'll be here waitin' to eat out of your hand, Gracie."

The following Monday Grace pulled in mid-morning. After a cup of coffee with Bob and his wife, Gracie walked out to visit "The Buzz Saw," as he was affectionately known to the hands. This time it went a little better. Even though Buzzard kept his hinder end toward her, he at least turned his head around to see what she was up to. He must have thought she was crazy.

Now believe it or not after half a dozen visits Grace had the old rodeo horse eatin' hay out of her hand. When she would arrive, he would actually perk up and start toward the fence where she parked. He still kept his ears back half the time but Rancher Bob could see at a distance that the impossible was happening. Buzzard was taking a shine to Grace; something he'd never done with anyone before. And what's worse, Grace was fallin' in love with Buzzard.

One day she told Bob, "I want that old horse. How much would you ask for him?"

"No way would I ever sell, trade, or give him to you. I value our friendship too much. I

wouldn't take the responsibility of what might happen once you got him home."

Weeks went by but Grace couldn't get rancher Bob to budge in his determination NOT to let the Buzz Saw leave the ranch alive.

"I've pretty much decided his fate," Bob told Gracie one day. "I've finally had enough of his shenanigans. He tore up a fence the other day and busted Shorty's leg pretty bad. The boys and me, we're headin' up to my lease in the high country early in the morning to gather up the summer herd. We're taking Buzzard along and when we come back he won't be with us. We're goin' ta put him down back in one of those lonesome canyons and let him finally earn his name.

"I don't blame you, Bob, but you let me think on it some more before you go doing anything like that with him. I might have a proposition you can't pass up. I'll be back in the morning.

Sure enough Grace was back bright and early the next morning. Bob and the boys were already loadin' up, gettin' ready for the trip to the high country.

"Well, Grace, we're just about ready to trailer The Buzz Saw. What's this proposition you're so sure I won't be able to pass up?"

Grace walked over to her horse trailer and swung open the back door. Inside was her champion stallion. "Bob," she said, "You've tried to get my stallion from me for years and I would never sell him to you."

"I know that for sure," Bob said.

"But today I'll trade him to you for that Buzzard Bait horse, even Steven. How about that?"

Bob doubled over with laughter and slapped his leg. "That's a pretty good joke, Grace. But now, honestly, what do you have in mind?"

"That's exactly it," Grace said. "I mean it. I'll give my horse to you for your breeding program if you'll give me the Buzzard. No joke. Of course, I'd expect to have a couple of babies out of the champion each year but that's all. So what do ya' say to my offer?"

"Gracie, you're plumb crazy. What does the boss think about your idea?"

"He's the one who suggested it to me," Grace said.

"Boys, put the Buzzard Bait back in the corral," Bob told them. "Grace, let's me and you go up to the house and talk a spell. Like I said, I think you're plumb nuts but I'll listen."

That day in horse history Grace traded her one-of-a-kind world champion stallion for the Buzz Saw. She saved Buzzard from a horrible fate (which, of course, he deserved) and instead, she gave him a home and love like he could have never experienced in any other way.

Now I'd like you to think about this story with me for a spell. Truth is, if we'd admit it, we're all a "Buzzard Bait" to some degree or other. None of us is a natural world champion. We all hit the ground ornery as a cob and tellin' lies a mile a minute. And don't kid yourself, as we grow older it only gets worse.

The Bible says, "**The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?**" (Jeremiah 17:9.) Now that's a pretty strong statement. Most of us would say, "Hey, I've done some things wrong in my life but I'm not so bad. I haven't killed anybody (even though I might have wanted to) or robbed banks (even though I might have wanted to.) That

Bible verse must have meant people like Hitler. You know, the really bad people through history. I'm just an average Joe or Jane. I'm not perfect but I'm not really so bad when you get to know me."

Hey, I agree. I feel the same way about myself. But that kind of thinking won't cut it with God. He knows us better than we know ourselves and if He made that statement, and applied it to every human being who ever lived, He must know something we don't.

Think about it. How many times have you and I done something wrong (even deliberately wrong) then said afterward, "Well, nobody's perfect!" That's the point. "Nobody's perfect."

But that's not all. God goes on to say, "**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" (Romans 3:23.) That's God's way of saying, "Nobody's perfect." But the implication of that goes far beyond our understanding of the matter. Why? Because there are consequences of our sin that God demands to be dealt with.

Now hold up there, don't go ridin' off jist yet. Let's talk this out. I think I might have something valuable fer you to chew on. I promise, I'm not tryin' to git you to join any church or start bein' some kind of "Holy Roller," or something like that. I jist want a few minutes to talk seriously about your future, after this old life comes to an end. You know what I mean — When you finally go to that great shining ranch in the sky. Sort of like when Buzzard Bait was traded and went to live at Bill and Grace Love's place. I think you'd agree that the other choice — spending eternity at the Hell's Canyon Ranch — is not something anyone would want to consider.

Most people go through life without thinking much about spiritual things. Why don't you grab a cup of coffee and hear me out. The best part of my story is yet to come.

"Will I go to Heaven when I die?" Most of us ask that question sometime in our life. If you have never asked it of yourself maybe it's time you did. In order to be able to give a solid "YES" to that question there are four basic things a person must understand and do. It's really simple. God made it so easy even a little child can understand.

#### FIRST – MAN IS A SINNER.

**For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.** (Romans 3:23.)

When I drew a word picture of Buzzard Bait earlier I was trying, in a humorous way, to point out that we aren't much different than that old horse when it comes to our sin nature. You see, none of us likes to admit that God might be right when He says that our hearts are "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." We just can't see ourselves that far gone.

We tend to say, "Sure, I've done my share of things that were not the best choices but, hey, I'm not so bad that God would have to send me to Hell." Of course, that's the way we look at ourselves in the mirror but God sees us from a different perspective.

Problem is, it's not really a matter of how much sin we've done through the years. The

problem is that we have a sin nature that we inherited from Adam and Eve and that nature is the thing that causes us to sin.

We're all in the same boat ... and the boat is like the Titanic. Nobody is going to get out of this life alive so we might as well recognize the fact that God is right. We're all sinners. But that's not the end of the story. There is a price on our sin and it isn't cheap. Let me explain.

## SECOND - THERE IS A PRICE ON SIN.

**For the wages of sin is death.** (Romans 6:23a.)

Rancher Bob was so disgusted with Buzzard Bait that he was going to take the old horse on his last long trail ride and leave his carcass up in the high country for the buzzards. That's pretty descriptive but when you understand what the Bible says about it, you'll see that the punishment God has in store for sinners is even worse. Why? Because God's punishment lasts for eternity!

Yep, there is definitely a price to be paid for our sin. It doesn't matter if we've sinned a little or a lot. We owe a debt to God for our sin, a debt we could never pay in ten-thousand lifetimes. But don't go to pieces over it just yet. Somebody paid that price for you. Here's how it happened.

## THIRD - JESUS PAID SIN'S PRICE ON THE CROSS.

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** (Romans 5:8.)

That's the answer! Jesus died FOR us ... IN OUR PLACE! He was our substitute. Jesus paid the price for our sin on the cross. He took all the punishment and the death that we deserved.

Look at it this way; God the Father loved us so much that He literally traded His only Son, Jesus Christ ... FOR US ... like Grace Love traded her world champion stallion for Buzzard Bait. There's no better deal anywhere in the whole universe than that. And you can believe it!

## LAST - ONLY BY FAITH IN JESUS CAN WE BE SAVED.

**“For by grace are you saved THROUGH FAITH ...”**  
(Ephesians 2:8a.)

Faith ... Simple child-like faith. That's the secret to eternal life. In the original language of the Bible, “to have faith” or “to believe on,” meant to completely rest or rely on something or

someone, like when we crawl up on the back of a horse and let it carry us along. In other words you can't walk alongside, petting the animal on the neck, and say you were riding. No, you have to actually get up on his back.

And it's the same with faith in Jesus. You have to actually put your faith in Him, resting on Him, believing that He ALONE paid the price of your sin and that He ALONE will take you to Heaven when this life is over. You can't get to Heaven by attending a church once in a while or even every Sunday. That would be like petting the horse on the neck but never climbing up on its back. Remember, sitting in a church building every week will no more make you a Christian than sitting in a barn would make you a horse!

So what do we do to be saved from the consequences of our sin and to be certain we will go to Heaven when we die?

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** (John 3:16.)

Believe in your heart that Jesus died in your place to pay the penalty of all your sin and that He will take you to Heaven when it's your time. Accept the free gift of eternal life He offers you today.

**“for the wages of sin is death BUT ... THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.”** (Romans 6:23.)

And how, exactly, do you accept God's free gift of eternal life? You can simply pray to Jesus, in your own words, and ask Him to save you today. Tell Him you realize that you are a sinner but that you recognize now that He died in your place to pay for your sin. Then ask Him to save you.

**For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.**  
(Romans 10:13.)

If you have not done so before, settle this matter once and for all. Accept God's free gift of eternal life today. Call on Jesus and ask Him to save you now. You'll never be sorry.

The Bible says, **“Behold, now is the accepted time, Behold, now is the day of salvation.”** (II Corinthians 6:2b.) Please take a few minutes alone sometime today and have this conversation with Jesus Christ about your eternal salvation. And after you have settled the destiny of your soul, go to another Christian you know, perhaps a family member or a friend from church or the person who gave you this little booklet, and tell them that you have been saved. Let them share in your joy with you.

Lord bless and keep you ... forever!

A cowboy's prayer:

**Lord Jesus, I've sure enough been a sinner. But I'm askin' you to forgive me and to save me right now. I accept your free gift of eternal life today. Please be with me and ride with me from here on out. Thank you much.**

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