

## THE TRIAL OF A HORSE THIEF

A man in the old west was being tried for stealing a horse. You need to remember, now, that stealing a horse in the old west was a very grave and serious offense. A person could be hanged if found guilty of such a deed.

It so happened that the man was accused of stealing a horse from another man in that town whom no one liked. The man whose horse had been stolen had always made it a point to get the best of any person with whom he had any dealings. He had never tried to do anything good for anyone other than himself. Consequently, the man whose horse had been stolen didn't have a single friend in the entire town.

The case was tried and presented to the jury. The evidence against the accused man was pretty strong. After about thirty minutes of deliberation, the jury returned to the court chambers. "Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?" the judge asked. The chairman of the jury stood up. "Yes, we have, your honor," he replied. "What is your verdict?" inquired the judge. There were a few moments of silence and then the chairman spoke. "We find the defendant not guilty if he will return the horse."

After the judge had silenced the laughter in the court room, he admonished the jury. "I cannot accept that verdict. You will have to retire until you reach another verdict," said the judge. The jury went back into their room to deliberate toward another verdict.

Now no member of the jury had any particular liking for the man whose horse had been stolen. At one time or another he had gotten the best of each of them. About an hour passed before the jury could reach another verdict. They re-entered the courtroom. They took their place in the jury box and the courtroom grew silent.

"Gentlemen of the jury," began the judge, "have you reached a verdict?" The chairman of the jury stood up. "Yes we have, your honor," he replied. "What is your verdict?" asked the judge.

The courtroom was totally silent. You could have heard a pin drop. Everyone eagerly awaited the verdict. The chairman read the decision reached by the twelve good men, tried and true. "We find the defendant not guilty, and he can keep the horse!" The courtroom burst into laughter!

