

Agree to disagree

Written by Bandile Sikwane

Illustrated by Chantelle and Burgen Thorne



Sometimes, it's wise to agree to disagree. Not every matter needs to be argued until the cows come home. This is a lesson that Belinda Bovine the calf and her best friend, Dumisani the dragonling, learned the hard way. To settle their intense, yet immensely silly argument on that uncomfortable, fly-filled, hot summer's day, they waited until sundown, when all 90 of Belinda's family came home from the fields. And, boy, were they all famished. "Oh, hi, Dumisani. Nice of you to join us for dinner," Belinda's mom deliberately interrupted as she usually did when these two started their bickering. They didn't even hear her.

"Is not!" insisted Dumisani.

"Is too!" countered Belinda, as they gorged on the scrumptious dinner. There was no food as tasty as that served at the barn at Rasdorf Farm.

"Mine is way louder," argued Belinda.

"That's not even possible!" said Dumisani with gleaming eyes, shocked by the claim. "Mine is dangerous and all-consuming!"

"Oh, please!" The sarcastic words spilled out from Belinda's food-filled mouth.

"The pair of you better stop with all this arguing, or you will eat outside," warned Belinda's mom, who was by now most exasperated.

The warning brought about the kind of silence that could only come from content stomachs. The kind of contentment that relaxed the body, allowing the stomachs to do what they do best: digest, digest, digest.

The silence was short-lived. As Belinda's mom poured them fizzy soda water, the two were at it again.

"Mine is way more deadly. Mom says it causes the globe to warm," said Belinda confidently. It wasn't a factual claim as such, more of a challenge to Dumisani.

"Oh yeah! Prove it," shouted Dumisani.

Belinda obliged with great gusto. To everyone's anguish.

So...



"That's nothing!" retorted Dumisani. "Hold my drink."



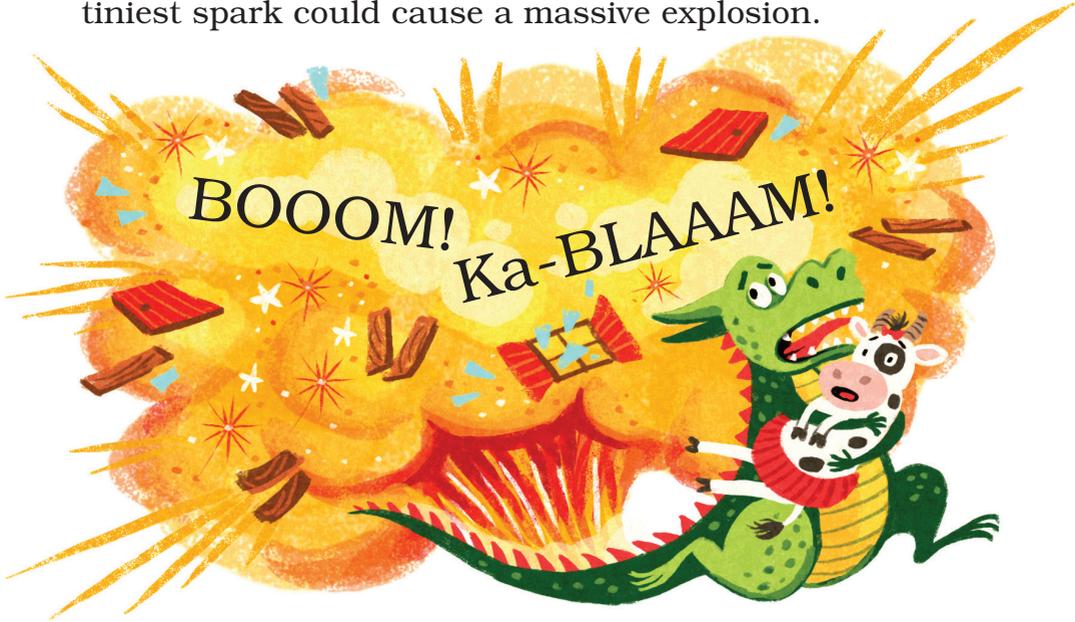
discharged Dumisani.

Now, Belinda and Dumisani were unaware of three facts.

The first: During digestion, a cow's four stomachs cause a build-up of gas called methane. The cow releases this gas by belching.

Fact number two: Dragons can only fly after their meals have been completely digested. They use four of their eight stomachs to break down the food like cows do, which also produces methane gas. The other four stomachs combust the methane. That's why it is thought that dragons "breathe out" fire, when it's just how they burp.

Fact number three – and this is the most important one: Methane gas is flammable. This means that the tiniest spark could cause a massive explosion.



Dumisani's burp was anything but the tiniest spark. When combined with Belinda's boisterous bovine belch from downlow belly-deep, the explosion blew the roof off and completely disintegrated the barn at Rasdorf Farm.

It was fortunate that all inhabitants escaped with their lives. It must be said, though, it was unfortunate that such devastation was caused by an immensely silly argument. It all goes to show, sometimes, it's wise to agree to disagree.

And luckily, for once, on this crucial fact, Belinda and Dumisani finally agreed.

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Ideas to talk about

Why do you think Belinda and Dumisani argue such a lot? Do you think that sometimes it is better to agree to disagree? Why/why not?

What counts as a fact? Who decides if a statement is a fact?



Visual

Look carefully at the picture on the first two pages of the story.

- ★ How many cows and dragons can you see at the table?
- ★ What food is available for them to eat?
- ★ What do you think they are drinking?
- ★ Can you find Dumisani, Belinda and her mom?



Reading

Why do you think the story is called *Agree to disagree*? Do you think that Belinda and Dumisani learned the lesson that sometimes it's wise to agree to disagree? Give a reason/s for your opinion.



Writing

Write a play using the text from the story.



Performance

Perform your play with family members and/or friends.



Craft

Make a bookmark with a cow or dragon head at the top.

