

# No Free Lunch Today

In the golden years, a man's word was as good as a promise. Modric believed in this, and so enjoyed his monthly visits to the nearby village of Berkton. There, he would **barter** his **carpentry** for food, clothing, tools and silver coins. During his visits, Modric kept a keen eye open for good deals.

On his most recent trip, Modric noticed a sign hanging in the window of Kallin's Eatery, a new establishment in town. It read: BUY A LUNCH, GET A FREE LUNCH TOMORROW.

*Could this be true?* he wondered.

It wasn't like Modric to pass up a good deal, so he stepped inside.

"One lunch please," he announced as he sat down at a small table.

Kallin, the store's owner, brought to Modric a steaming bowl of roast and carrots. The price ended up being a little more than Modric had **anticipated**, but he was confident the deal would be worth it once he collected on the free meal tomorrow.

Fully satisfied, Modric paid Kallin and then made his **rounds** in Berkton.

The next morning, he finalized his business dealings and then returned to Kallin's Eatery before leaving town.

"I'll take my free lunch now," he proclaimed.

Kallin put his hands on his hips, eyeing Modric crossly. "There are no free lunches served here today. If you want a lunch, you must pay three silver coins."

Confused, Modric motioned to the sign still hanging in the window, reminding Kallin, "I bought a lunch here yesterday, so you owe me a free meal today."

"Sorry, pal," groaned the store's owner. "It's like I said. There are no free lunches *today*." Kallin gave Modric a **wry** smile as he pointed to the sign in the window. "The sign says *free lunch tomorrow*, not *today*."

Realizing that Kallin was clearly a crooked man, Modric chose not to argue with him any further. Besides, he had an idea.

"Fair enough," said Modric. "I'll purchase today's lunch then."

Kallin nodded, retrieved a turkey leg and a cob of corn, and then served Modric his meal.



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Not allowing the **ruse** to trouble him, Modric **savored** every bite of his lunch. The turkey meat was warm and juicy, and the corn was buttery sweet. It was the tastiest meal he had eaten in a long time.

Upon finishing, Modric wiped his mouth clean, stood up and strolled toward the front entrance.

“Where do you think you’re going?” shouted Kallin. “You haven’t paid for your lunch yet.”

Modric paused, turned back to the owner and said, “Of course, sir. I’ll be more than happy to pay you the three silver coins for today’s meal.” He chuckled and then went on to say, “I’ll just bring them to your store first thing *tomorrow*.”

Kallin, realizing that Modric had beaten him at his own game, did not utter another word. Instead, he stomped over to the window and ripped down the sign.

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## Vocabulary

**Barter**: *to trade or exchange without money*

**Anticipated**: *to expect or look forward to*

**Rounds**: *the going from place to place*

**Wry**: *bent to one side or devious*

**Ruse**: *a trick*

**Savor**: *to enjoy the taste of something*