In the 1960s, my father's hobby was inventing games. Although none of his games was ever accepted by a major publishing company, a few were printed locally and sold for a short time in the central Michigan area. One of his games, unfortunately named Izzat So by the publishers (another edition was called Wud-U-Blev), was my particular favorite. In Izzat So, players reassembled proverbs which had been printed on small cardboard tiles and divided into three pieces.

Incredibly, my future husband's parents bought a copy of the game, and this copy I proudly presented to my own daughters recently, explaining how Grandpa and Mommy had spent hours playing and developing this wonderful game. It was while I was teaching my oldest daughter, Megan, to play Izzat So that I rediscovered what had given me the most joy 25 years ago. What fun it was to rearrange the tiles and form new proverbs—maxims with a ring of, well, not-quite-truth, such as Beauty is but skin deep, and Beauty is the best cook.

Even my six-year-old, Jericho, enjoys this variation of the game; for example, she coined the saying Don't bite before spilled milk.

Following are some of my favorite neo-adages. I formed them in several ways: in Group A, the initial tiles were switched; in Group B, the middle tiles; in Group C, the final tiles; and in Group D, I just fiddled around until I came up with something appealing, often combining more than three tiles. Part of the charm, of course, is imagining a context in which these "new saws" might be spoken, with appropriate grandmotherly wisdom.

Group A
- Don't bite a pig in a poke
- Every dog has the disease
- Misery begins at home
- Don't cry in a storm
- Time is but skin deep
- Beggars teach an old dog new tricks

Group B
- The early hands make the worm
- One rotten bird gets the barrel
- Curiosity knocks the cat
- Rome was sleeping in a day
- A bad broom comes back
- Pride loves to hear a fall

Group C
- The early bird gets big ears
Beggars can't be in one basket
What goes up must grind slowly
One rotten apple spoils the worm
Every mule loves to hear fertilizer
Don't put all our eggs in the mouth

Group D
All your eggs are a devil's broom
A fool and a pig grind slowly
Pitchers have no moss in the mouth
No fool goeth before the wheels
Never buy a pig in a poke
Little of the pudding killed the worm
A gift horse glitters like an apple spoils
If the best cook can't be at home, there is smoke
Sleeping together in one basket heals all
Big ears don't look in a workshop

For those of you who are unable to recognize all of the proverbs by their components, the entire list of izat So proverbs is given below. I hope some other Word Ways readers are fortunate enough to own a copy of Bob Worgul's game. If you do not, perhaps you'll enjoy creating your own neo-adages. I'd like to hear about your favorites; write me at 808 North Cherry St., Three Oaks MI 49128.

Hunger|is the|best cook
Beauty|is but|skin deep
Look|before|you leap
Don't cry|over|spilled milk
Never buy|a pig|in a poke
Every|dog|has|his day
Misery|loves|company
Charity|begins|at home
Any port|in an|storm
Time heals all|wounds
Beggars|can't be|choosers
The early|bird|gets|the worm
Many|hands make|light work
Curiosity|killed|the cat
Rome was not built|in a day
Let sleeping|dogs|lie
A bad|penny|always|comes back
A new|broom|sweeps clean
Pride|goeth before|a fall
Opportunity|knocks|but once
Little|pitchers have|big ears
Honesty|is the|best policy
What goes|up must|come down
No fools|like|an|old fool
A watched pot|never boils
If the|shoe fits|wear it
Still|waters|run deep
A stitch|in time|saves nine
A calm|portends|a storm
Don't bite|the hand|that|feeds you
The cure|is worse|than|the disease
One rotten|apple spoils|the barrel
Every mule|loves to hear|himself bray
The wheels of justice|grind slowly
Snow|is the|poor man's|fertilizer
Don't look|a gift horse|in the mouth
Idle hands|are a devil's|workshop
A fool and|his money are|soon parted
A rolling|stone gathers|no moss
Make hay|while the sun shines
When the|cat's away the|mice will play
The proof|of the pudding|is in the eating
All that|glitters|is not gold
Where|there is smoke|there is fire
Birds of a|feather flock|together
The pen|is mightier than|the sword
You can't|tell a book|by its cover
A penny|saved is a|penny earned
You can't|teach an old|dog new tricks
Time and tide wait|for no man
A great ship asks|deep waters
Those who play with fire|get burned
Strike|while the iron is hot
Too many|cooks spoil|the broth
Variety|is the|spice of life
An apple a day keeps the doctor away
There|is small choice in rotten apples
Don't put|all your eggs in one basket