

Running of the—AAAH!

A bovine comedy by

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For Ernest Hemingway, with irony...

This is entirely a work of fiction inspired by a whole big bunch of ongoing—and highly controversial—true life events.

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Running of the—AAAH!

CHARACTERS: (In order of appearance; 8 roles, 4M, 4F)

THE CATTLE:

HOSS: American bull with only one horn waged in an internal debate with himself on whether to become a pacifist. 3-years old, to be played by an adult male actor (20s).

PATCH: American bull. Hoss's best friend. Stupid, but has fun with it. 3-years old, to be played by an adult male actor (20s).

DOZER: American bull. Hoss's rival. Passionate and eager runner from a lineage of champion runners. Age unknown. To be played by an adult male actor (20s-40s).

BRYNN ALICE: A cow and the object of affection of both Hoss and Dozer. 3-years old, to be played by an adult female actor (20s).

CINCI: A cow. 9-years old, to be played by an adult female actress in her 60s. A battle-scarred veteran full of stories.

THE HUMAN CATTLE:

SANDY O'DONNELL: A 32-year-old proud cowgirl, coordinator, and hostess of the Georgian *Great Bull Run*.

CORTEZ REYES: A 48-year-old Spaniard. A professional announcer with 12 years of experience covering various running of the bulls (*encierro*) events in Pamplona, Spain, transplanted (against his will) to cover the 1st Americanized version of the event.

LUNA MEDINA: A 23-year old Spaniard. Overly-passionate vegan and overly-proud animal activist.

****RECORDED MALE VOICE:** A recorded (not live) male voice will also be needed, but this should be recorded in advance by any male cast/crew member.

SETTING: The stage is divided in two halves: Bullpen and Open Pasture. A divider is between them such that one side cannot see the other. Both sides have fencing upstage and downstage, but not on the wings.

TIME: Late October 2013.

****IMPORTANT PRODUCTION NOTE:** For the benefit of the actors' safety, especially if full cattle costumes are utilized, plus, given the restrictive stage locales, coupled with the fact that the play is presumably being presented inside a darkened theatre, please, please, PLEASE take the following stage directions with a grain of salt. None of the following stage directions I have set forth on paper are set in stone in any way, shape, or form. Feel free to amend/alter/adjust them as you see fit for the benefit of the actors' and audience members' safety, so long as this does not interfere with the story. Thank you. And please be careful!

Act One/Scene One

Scene One: Monday

(At rise, stage is bare. Bullpen and adjacent grazing pasture are vacant. Pen and pasture should be divided by a cutaway partition, real or imaginary, as the space allows, so that—when onstage—the bulls in pen remain hidden from view from the cows in pasture and vice versa. Pen should have two separate fences across the stage, both upstage and down, as should pasture. However, both enclosures should remain open-ended into each respective wing to allow for entrances and exits. The corral gate is not yet present onstage. A long silence.)

PATCH *(Offstage)*

So... come on, out with it. *(A long silence)* You know... *(A beat)* Last night?... *(A long silence. PATCH sighs.)* Your... date?...

(A long silence)

HOSS *(Offstage)*

Eh.

(PATCH sighs)

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Your attention to detail is mind-boggling.

HOSS *(Offstage)*

Eh.

PATCH *(Offstage, mocking)*

Eh. *(A beat. PATCH sighs again.)* Come on, seriously, what was so wrong with *this* one?

HOSS *(Offstage)*

She's a cow.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Ew!

HOSS *(Offstage)*

Exactly.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

No, no, no. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that. I take it back. That's just a horrible, knee-jerk, gut reaction that I disgust myself for even havin'... *(A beat)* All the time. *(A beat)* What I meant to say was... so what?

HOSS (*Offstage*)

So what?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Yeah. So she's a cow. Big deal. That's never stopped you before.

HOSS (*Offstage*)

I know, but seriously, the one last night was a full-on heifer.

(A long pause. Then HOSS enters the bullring followed—almost immediately—by PATCH. Though the characters are meant to be played by adult male actors, both HOSS and PATCH are, in fact, full-grown adult male bulls and should be played as such so that nothing about their appearance or mannerisms suggests otherwise.)

PATCH

But I thought you said you always liked your dates to have a little meat on their bones.

HOSS

But not when the meat EATS the bones!

PATCH (*Turns away*)

I think you're just makin' excuses again.

(HOSS slowly turns his head back to face PATCH.)

HOSS

What'd you mean?

(PATCH leans down and munches on some grass on the pen's lawn below.)

PATCH (*With his mouth full of cud*)

You always find some kind of excuse for every single little milkmaid you date 'cause—in your eyes—they don't hold a candle next to the perfect little Miss Brynn Alice. I swear, sometimes it's as if you—

(HOSS turns his head away in disgust.)

HOSS

Eck, can you please not do that?

PATCH (*With his mouth still full*)

Do what?

HOSS

Graze with your mouth open, it's disgusting.

PATCH (*Still chewing*)
Geez, what's with you lately?

HOSS (*Still looking away*)
What do you mean?

PATCH (*Swallows*)
Well, today my open-mouthed grazin' offends your delicate sensibilities, yesterday the mere thought of gorin' and tramplin' over our handler made you queasy... and then just last week—

HOSS (*Looking back*)
I like Mitch! Why would you even think about gorin' and tramplin' over a nice guy like him?

PATCH
You know, for kicks.

HOSS
It doesn't sound like it would be much kicks for Mitch.

PATCH
'Course it would!

HOSS
Not in a good way.

PATCH (*Shrugs, as best a bull can*)
I'm just spitballin'.

HOSS
Mitch's a whole helluva lot nicer than our last handler. Don't you remember the jerk-face before Mitch who liked usin' that cattle prod just a little too much?

PATCH
Oh, yeah, 'course I remember *Doug*. (*A beat*) *Pervert*.

HOSS
Exactly, but Mitch—

PATCH
I like Mitch too, Hoss. That's why I wanted to show him my appreciation.

HOSS

By goring him?!

PATCH (*Sincere*)

My horns are the means by which I express my love and gratitude. I don't know why everyone always keeps misinterpretin' that.

HOSS

Loss of blood clots the judgement.

PATCH

Never have truer words been spoken aloud.

HOSS

God, I hope that's not true.

(A long pause)

PATCH

Let's just agree to disagree on your whole little definition of gorin', 'kay?

HOSS

You mean disagree between the truth and total and complete nonsense?

PATCH

Yes.

HOSS

Have you ever gotten your brain to catch up to your mouth?

PATCH

Not yet, but almost. It's certainly gaining on him.

HOSS

I can tell.

PATCH

Really?

HOSS (*Sighs*)

But then the mouth extends the lead.

(A beat)

PATCH

Right, well, okay, then, so, anyway, while we're on the subject of you being offended by my open-mouthed grazin'—

HOSS

We're not.

PATCH (*Sighs*)

Fine. Going back to the subject of you being offended by my open-mouthed grazin', something has been off with you lately. Is it because you're nervous about the big race on Friday?

HOSS

You mean the big stupid race on Friday?

PATCH

Oh, I didn't know they changed the name. Okay, fine, is it because you're nervous about the big stupid race on Friday?

HOSS

No.

PATCH

Well, something is off with you. Like last week when you wouldn't even try my Rocky Mountain Oysters.

(A long silence)

HOSS

Uh... Patch? I've been meanin' to break the bad news to you... even though they're called oyste—

PATCH

You love seafood!

HOSS

Rocky Mountain—

PATCH

It's a secret family recipe!

HOSS (*Off the cuff*)

I thought you were walkin' a little funny today.

PATCH

Not mine. (*A beat*) My mom's.

HOSS

How's your dad feel about that?

PATCH

Sore. (*A beat. PATCH chuckles*) But that sure didn't stop him from gobblin' 'em up.

HOSS

EW!

PATCH

How would you know? You refused to taste 'em! Not even one bite!

HOSS

That's 'cause I've never been *that* hungry!

PATCH

But I was gonna give you the left one and the left one's my fav.

HOSS

EW! (*A long pause. HOSS sighs*) But okay, fine, just out of nausea-inducing curiosity, I'll bite, what makes—WAIT! WAIT! WAIT! Sorry, horrifically-poor choice of words. What I meant to say was... okay, I'm intrigued, what makes the left one—

PATCH

The right one usually tastes limp.

HOSS (*Dry heaves*)

EW!

PATCH (*To clarify*)

I said, usually.

HOSS

Look, right one, left one, either way, makes no difference. Neither one of them is goin' anywhere near my mouth.

PATCH

Just like mom always used to say.

HOSS (*Dry heaves*)

EW! EW! EW! I'M SERIOUS! PLEASE STOP!

PATCH

Fine. (*A beat*) But you're missing out.

HOSS (*Off the cuff*)

And now so's your dad.

PATCH
Yeah, by choice.

HOSS
What?!

PATCH
He volunteered ‘em.

(A beat)

HOSS
Why on earth would he—

PATCH
Haven’t you ever seen my mom when she gets in one of her *moods*?

(A beat. HOSS scoffs.)

HOSS
Surprised he didn’t offer ‘em both.

PATCH
He did.

HOSS
EW!!

PATCH
Twice.

HOSS
EW! EW!

PATCH
But dad said he didn’t really mind, ‘cause he told me he’d already surrendered ‘em both to her years before anyway... at least metaphorically.

HOSS
Patch? Define the word metaphorically.

PATCH
Well... I think dad meant last time, when mom sautéed ‘em.

(HOSS shakes his head in disbelief. A slight pause.)

HOSS

Wait a sec, I thought you thought they were seafo—

PATCH

I never said that.

HOSS

Yes, you did!

PATCH

Well, yeah, but not in a serious tone of voice.

HOSS

You don't have a serious tone of voice!

PATCH

Sure I do. It's the one I use when I want to change the subject. (*Serious tone of voice*) All I'm sayin' is you've been actin' different lately.

HOSS

I thought you wanted to change the subject?

PATCH

Why would you think that?

HOSS (*Sighs*)

'Cause sometimes I forget who I'm talkin' to.

PATCH

You see. That's 'cause you've been actin' so weird lately. Like the other day when you wouldn't even let me look around in that China shop.

HOSS

Trust me, goin' in there would have been a really bad idea.

PATCH

But not even one hoof!

HOSS

That first hoof would have been your last.

PATCH

I only wanted to browse.

HOSS

With you browsing turns to—

PATCH

I never buy anythin—

HOSS

Not buy, dummy. Break.

PATCH

Oh, well, yeah, but that was just that one time. And that wasn't even my fault. Everything was so crowded together in that shop. Packed in like sardines. That old lady-owner probably didn't even know how to pronounce Feng Shui.

HOSS

Neither do you!

PATCH

Oh, did I get it wrong again?

HOSS

Duh. For the last time, it's pronounced... Phlegm... Spray.

PATCH

Same diff. Either way, that shop needed some serious phlegm spray.

HOSS (*Sighs*)

So not havin' any gave you the right to shatter everything in the joint?!

PATCH

Look up "Domino Effect" in the dictionary, what do you think you'll find?

HOSS (*Sighs*)

A picture of you standing in what's left of a china shop with a "whoops-a-daisy" look on your face.

PATCH

Whoops-a-daisy? That sounds like something an infant would say.

HOSS

Right. 'Cause I wanted to make sure it sounded believable coming from you.

PATCH

But I thought it wasn't something I said, it was just a stupid look on my face.

HOSS (*Shrugs*)

They go hoof in hoof.

(A beat)

PATCH
I have that look on my face again, don't I?

(HOSS nods.)

HOSS *(Sighs, then to clarify)*
Hoof in hoof, as in hand in—

PATCH
OH! Now I get it!

HOSS
Doubtful.

(A long pause)

PATCH
But I still can't believe there's really a picture of me in the dictionary! *(A long pause)* I
wanna see it!

HOSS *(Sighs)*
Well, I cut it out to show you, but then I forgot it in my other wallet. *(A beat)* You
remember my cousin Carl, don't you?

PATCH *(Shakes his head)*
Is that what they did with his body?

HOSS
At least he still serves a purpose after death.

PATCH *(Slightly grandiose)*
Actually... we all do, really, don't we? If not for all our sacrifices, why would they call
'em Happy Meals? *(A long silence)* Oh, well, I guess it's true what they always say...
(PATCH sighs audibly) "Leather never dies... it just fades away."

HOSS
Nobody says that. *(A beat)* Why would they? Ew.

PATCH
Yeah, I just now realized that. That one actually stung a little bit comin' outta my mouth.
Sorry. *(A long pause. PATCH grins.)* So... is cousin Carl still good with money?

HOSS *(Sighs, then reluctantly)*

Not around the holidays.

PATCH

Good one. *(A beat)* He's probably just worn out.

HOSS

Bad one.

PATCH

Guess I'm running out of things that moooooooooove me.

HOSS

Really, really, REALLY bad one!

DOZER *(Offstage)*

They're all really, really, really bad.

(A long pause. PATCH and HOSS look back off in the direction DOZER'S voice came from.)

PATCH

Well, look what the nose ring dragged in.

HOSS *(To PATCH)*

Better.

PATCH *(Beaming)*

You think?!

HOSS *(Nods)*

You know, I thought I smelled something a bit off.

(A beat, then DOZER enters. He towers over PATCH and HOSS and looks like a much tougher, more aggressive, and more intimidating bull.)

HOSS

Hey, Dozer. What are you doin' over here in our neck of the pen? Eat all your own cud already? Need some of our grass too, now?

PATCH

Come on, Hoss, you know Dozer doesn't eat grass... he eats lawnmowers.

HOSS

How could I forget?

DOZER

What did I tell you two idiots about makin' those stupid cow jokes?

HOSS

That they're your favorite.

DOZER

Don't.

PATCH

No, you said you wished you had thought of them.

DOZER

I said I'd rip your Rocky Mountain Oysters off and feed 'em to you if I ever heard you utter another one.

PATCH

Close enough.

HOSS

Well, how come we have to stop makin' 'em but you don't?

DOZER

What are you talkin' about?

HOSS

Oh, come on, dude. Heard me... *udder...*

PATCH

HA!

DOZER

That's not what I meant and you know it!

HOSS (*To PATCH*)

How could I get something so genius, so wrong?

DOZER (*Scoffs*)

And you're asking that *genius*?

HOSS

No, I'm asking rhetorical. He's always right without even saying a word.

PATCH

Who is this Rhetorical guy? Do I know him?

HOSS

Are you asking me or Rhetorical?

(A beat)

PATCH

Uh...

HOSS *(To DOZER)*

How can you question my motives when what he does is this much fun?

(DOZER sighs and PATCH starts looking around.)

HOSS *(Cont'd, to PATCH)*

Maybe we should get our hearing checked.

PATCH *(Genuine)*

What?

DOZER

Your hearing goes a lot quicker when you only have one horn. But don't worry, I'm 'bout to break off the other one too to even things out.

HOSS *(Mocking)*

Ewww, I'm so scared. *(To PATCH)* How 'bout you, Patch? You scared?

PATCH

Huh?

HOSS *(Sighs)*

Distracted by your own thought process again?

PATCH

Huh?

HOSS *(To DOZER)*

I think the hamster in the wheel just switched gyms.

DOZER

You know something, Hoss?

HOSS

Give me a hint.

DOZER

You're so—

HOSS

Careful! Watch what you say! *(A long pause)* It might actually be meaningful this time.

DOZER

You're so arrogant.

HOSS

Then again...

DOZER

You're a smug, arrogant, little—

HOSS *(Sighs)*

No, I just think you made a logistically implausible threat, there, Dozer. Break off a bull's horns? That's like tryin' to paw up some dust while you're sinkin' in quicksand.

PATCH

So, basically, it's sort of like you're sayin' he's full of bulls—

DOZER

HEY!

HOSS

What?! He said it!

(A long pause. DOZER begins to paw up some dust as a sign of aggression.)

HOSS *(Cont'd, off DOZER pawing up dust)*

Uh-oh, would you look at that? You know what that means, right Patch?

PATCH

He has to go to the bathroom?

HOSS

Perhaps, but I think it really means that Dozer's serious this time.

DOZER

I AM!

PATCH

Are you seeing red?

(A beat. Then PATCH and HOSS snicker and DOZER immediately lunges forward and pins PATCH'S throat against the bullpen's partition by his horns.)

DOZER *(To PATCH)*

You think that's funny?

(PATCH shakes his head and tries to stifle his laugh.)

DOZER *(Cont'd)*

Not laughin' now are you?

HOSS

Dozer? *(A beat)* Have you ever tried to laugh when you can't breathe? It's like that whole pattin' your head and rubbin' your stomach at the same time thing. Pretty darn near impossible. Especially when you try to rub all four of 'em!

(PATCH attempts to laugh harder while still not being able to breathe. HOSS notices.)

HOSS *(Cont'd)*

Oh, but look at that... you see? Patch can still do it. Man, I'm so jelly.

(PATCH nods and DOZER releases his horn-death grip, backs away, and relaxes his guard... a bit.)

DOZER

You think you're so clever, don't you?

HOSS

Only compared to some.

DOZER

Yeah, well, we'll see if you're still so smug after I trample right over you in the big race on Friday.

PATCH *(To clarify)*

You mean the big stupid race on Friday.

DOZER

DON'T YOU DARE CALL IT STUPID!

PATCH

Oh, man, they changed the name back already? I wish they would make up their minds.

HOSS *(To DOZER)*

I don't know if I'll be smug on Friday, but I'll certainly be surprised seeing as I've decided I'm not gonna run.

DOZER

Yeah, well, even so, that doesn't—

DOZER and PATCH

WHAT?!!!

HOSS

I've decided not to run with you fellas in the big race.

PATCH

What do you mean you're not gonna run?

HOSS

I dunno... but I think I've sort of turned into a pacifist.

PATCH

But I thought you said they *weren't* seafood.

HOSS (*To DOZER, off the cuff*)

And I always thought that whole "Cows Are Stupid" thing was just a stereotype.

PATCH

You mean you're just gonna walk?

DOZER (*To HOSS*)

Your moron-friend over there sure loves provin' those stereotypes right, though, don't he?

PATCH (*Correcting him*)

Doesn't he.

DOZER (*To HOSS, sotto*)

When they were drillin' that ring into his nose, I think he forgot to say stop when they hit the brain.

HOSS (*Shakes his head*)

I'm not even gonna say it.

DOZER

Come on! Why don't I get to play, too?

HOSS

Because that one's just too easy.

DOZER

So what? That's never stopped you and the numbskull before.

HOSS

But ours have never been *that* easy.

PATCH

Are you guys talkin' about me in front of my back again?

DOZER (*To HOSS*)

Really?

HOSS (*Sighs*)

Okay, fine. (*A beat. Reluctantly*) What brain?

DOZER

Thank you. Was that so hard?

HOSS

No, but it still didn't feel right.

DOZER

Why not? I see you two yukin' it up like that all day long.

HOSS

But it's different with us. Patch's my friend and you're... well... uh—

DOZER

Oh, okay. I get it.

HOSS

I'm sorry, Dozer, but when I do it with my friend it feels natural.

PATCH (*Blushing*)

It does?!

HOSS

But not when you do it with me?

DOZER

Yeah, I dunno, but when I do it with you, big guy... to be honest, I sort of feel a little cheap and dirty.

DOZER

You know, Hoss, it's not like you have a say in the matter.

HOSS

About feelin' cheap and dirty? I know. Someone told me I have no control over feeling cheap and dirty a very long time ago.

PATCH

Who?

HOSS (*Gestures at DOZER*)

His sister.

(PATCH snickers, while DOZER starts pawing at more dust at breakneck speed.)

HOSS (*Cont'd, to PATCH*)

You don't remember that?

PATCH

She never told me that.

HOSS

No, but you were right there when she told me.

PATCH

I was?

HOSS

How could you forget?

PATCH

What was I doin'?

HOSS

Holding her legs up.

PATCH (*Chuckles*)

Oh, yeah, that's right, now I remember. (*A pause*) To this day I still regret not makin' a wish.

(DOZER immediately charges at HOSS and PATCH. They take off in a quick jaunt and there should be a significant bit of time with the three bulls galloping around in circles, with HOSS and PATCH successfully eluding DOZER. Then BRYNN ALICE enters the adjacent open pasture alone. She starts grazing. While the three bulls cannot see her, DOZER and HOSS smell her scent instantly. They stop running around in circles on a dime and immediately race back over to the cutaway partition and start taking in huge, deep whiffs of air. PATCH notices and joins them at the partition.)

HOSS

I love the smell of pheromones in the morning.

DOZER (*Taking it all in*)

Oh... yeah. Big time. And the kind Brynn Alice emits is like nostril-crack.

PATCH

I think my nose is broken. I don't smell a thing.

HOSS

I think that might have to do with those Rocky Mountain Oysters you love so much.

DOZER (*Another big whiff*)

Mmmm... my favorite.

PATCH (*Off DOZER, to HOSS*)

You see?!

HOSS

Uh... I don't think Dozer meant yours!

DOZER

Huh?

PATCH

MY ROCKY MOUNTAIN OYSTERS!

DOZER (*Cautious*)

What about them?

PATCH

Hoss doesn't think you like them.

DOZER

I don't.

PATCH

I KNOW! YOU LOVE 'EM!

(A long silence)

DOZER (*Through clenched teeth*)

Wanna run that by me again?

HOSS

Oh, boy.

PATCH *(From the rooftops)*
DOZER LOVES MY ROCKY MOUNTAIN OYSTERS!!!!

(DOZER immediately starts pawing at the dust below him at breakneck speed again. HOSS notices but PATCH doesn't.)

BRYNN ALICE *(Unseen by the bulls but visible to the audience)*
Come again?

HOSS
Uh, Patch...

PATCH
I know, I know... if you want to get into semantics, it was my dad's oysters that Dozer loves so much, but still.

BRYNN ALICE
Um...

HOSS
No, that's not what I was gonna say.

PATCH
Okay, fine. My mom's.

(DOZER picks up the pace.)

HOSS *(Shaking his head)*
Boy, oh, boy.

PATCH *(Oblivious, to DOZER)*
They sure were mouth-waterin', weren't they, big fella? You didn't think these were too salty like they were the last time, did you?

HOSS
Uh, Patch—

PATCH *(Sighs)*
What? What's so freakin' important, Hoss, that you gotta keep interruptin'—

HOSS
RRRRRRUUUUUNNNNN!!

(DOZER charges at PATCH, who finally notices and quickly turns and runs in the opposite direction with DOZER giving chase. PATCH exits the stage with DOZER)

gaining on him. HOSS watches in the direction they both exited in. HOSS'S facial expressions say it all as he watches and reacts to the offstage SOUNDS of DOZER catching up to and goring PATCH.)

PATCH (*Offstage, bellowing*)
AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

BRYNN ALICE
Oh, my God, is Patch okay?!

HOSS
Oh, he's fine.

(More offstage SOUNDS of DOZER goring PATCH again.)

PATCH (*Offstage, bellowing*)
AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

BRYNN ALICE (*To HOSS*)
You sure about that?

HOSS
He'll walk it off.

(More offstage SOUNDS of DOZER goring PATCH again.)

PATCH (*Offstage, bellowing*)
AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

BRYNN ALICE (*To HOSS*)
How 'bout now?

HOSS (*Shrugs*)
Walk it off. Limp it off. Either way.

(More offstage SOUNDS of DOZER goring PATCH again.)

PATCH (*Offstage, bellowing*)
AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

BRYNN ALICE (*To HOSS*)
You still think he's gonna be okay?

HOSS
Nope. No way. Not now. Of course not.

(A long silence with just HOSS and BRYNN ALICE on stage still together though still apart. Another noticeable moment of pause.)

HOSS *(Cont'd)*

But enough about poor old Patch over there, Brynn Alice. How are you doin'?

BRYNN ALICE

You mean poor, old, bloody and bruised Patch over there.

(More offstage SOUNDS of DOZER goring PATCH again.)

PATCH *(Offstage, bellowing)*

AAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

HOSS

Exactly. *(A beat)* Enough about him. How are you?

(A long pause)

BRYNN ALICE

Okay, I guess. You?

HOSS

Peachy.

(More offstage SOUNDS of DOZER goring PATCH again.)

PATCH *(Offstage, bellowing)*

AAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!

(A long pause)

BRYNN ALICE

Why do you even hang out with that idiot?

HOSS

That's precisely why.

BRYNN ALICE

Huh?

HOSS

Next to him, I'm a genius.

BRYNN ALICE

Next to him, my cow pies are geniuses.

HOSS

Good point. But see, I hang out with Patch specifically because he's so dumb. He does stupid stuff like this all the time, and every time he does, he's the one who gets in trouble, not me.

BRYNN ALICE

So he's your scapegoat then, huh?

(A beat)

HOSS

He was as soon as I needed to explain to him that scapegoat was not just another name for the secret identity of Billy Goats Gruff.

BRYNN ALICE

Weren't there three Billy Goats Gru—

HOSS

Oh, yeah, like I'm gonna even think 'bout broachin' that subject with glue stick over there.

BRYNN ALICE *(Chuckles)*

Oh, Hoss. *(A beat)* You know... I've always liked the way you make me laugh.

HOSS

Well, I've always liked the way you make me... never mind.

BRYNN ALICE

I'm really gonna miss you. I just wanted you to know that.

HOSS

Oh, well, thank you, Brynn Alice, and I'm goin' to miss—wait a minute. *(Clueless giggle)* Where am I going?

BRYNN ALICE *(Nervous giggle)*

Oh, well, you know, I mean, after the *Great Bull Run* is all said and done and everything.

HOSS

Actually... I've decided not to run in the big race on Friday.

BRYNN ALICE *(Chuckles)*

There, you see. That's just what I mean. Always the jokester.

HOSS

No, I'm serious, I've decided I'm not gonna run.

BRYNN ALICE

The choice isn't up to you.

(A long silence)

HOSS

Oh, so that's what Dozer meant by that. God, I hope it's not his decision.

BRYNN ALICE

If any decision on the planet was ever left in the hands of Dozer, the entire universe would have imploded and collapsed in on itself a long time ago.

HOSS

You know, I think you're right. I think that's actually the basis of Stephen Hawking's whole theory. Have you read "A Brief History of Bovine?"

BRYNN ALICE

You never run out of 'em, do you?

HOSS

Not sure if you're referring to my theoretical physicist joke or the fact that I just implied cows and bulls know how to read, but either way... no.

BRYNN ALICE *(Chuckles)*

Yeah, safe to say I'm really gonna miss you when you're gone.

HOSS

You keep saying that and I'm not sure what you mean. I decided I'm not gonna run, you see, unlike Patch and Dozer... I think I've actually turned a corner and become a bit of a pacifist.

BRYNN ALICE

Aw, that's cute.

HOSS

Thanks. *(A beat)* But even if I did change my mind... *(Nervous giggle)* I mean... it's not like I wouldn't come back after all the running was over and everything... right?

(A long pause)

BRYNN ALICE

Oh, uh... I'm sorry, I thought you didn't want to run anymore because you finally found out what happens to you afterwards.

HOSS

What happens to me afterwards?

(A beat)

BRYNN ALICE

Trophy?

HOSS

Now who's being cute. Seriously, what happens to me afterwards?

(An awkward pause)

BRYNN ALICE

Oh, look! Grass!

(BRYNN ALICE starts chopping down on some cud and slowly starts inching herself away from the area of the stage where the pasture and pen meet at the partition. A long silence.)

HOSS

Brynn Alice? *(A beat)* Brynn? *(A beat)* Alice? *(A beat)* Hello?

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Well, despite his best efforts... there are no flies on me. *(A beat)* Right, Hoss?

*(HOSS turns to see PATCH hobble back on stage inside the bullpen, limping, with fresh new bruises covering the expanse of his entire body and *flies (*can be imagined) encircling his body.)*

HOSS *(Off bruises and flies)*

GGGGGGAAAAAAAHHHHHH!

PATCH

Does it look that bad?

(A beat)

HOSS

It's not how it looks on the outside, it's what's on the inside that counts.

PATCH

Then I think I'm in big trouble 'cause I think I can taste my tail.

HOSS

Well, what is it they always say? "Hate to see the other guy."

PATCH

Oh, he's fine.

HOSS

Sure, maybe on the surface. But deep down inside... I bet he's hurtin' real bad.

(PATCH beams with a revitalized sense of confidence. A long silence.)

DOZER *(Offstage)*

No, I'm fine.

(HOSS and PATCH turn briefly offstage and then HOSS motions for PATCH to come closer, which PATCH does, very, very slowly, each step he takes more painful than the last.)

PATCH

Ow. *(Step)* Ow. *(Step)* Ow. *(Step)* Ow. *(Step)* Ow.

HOSS

Wow, it hurts even to walk?

PATCH

It hurts even to breathe.

HOSS

Well, I guess that's one way to get out of the big race on Friday.

PATCH

Nah, you know better than that. I'll walk it off and then I'll run. Unlike you, you pacifier, I want to run.

HOSS

Pacifist.

PATCH

You say potato... I say baby-face, wussy-boy.

HOSS

Listen to me, Patch. I think you might want to reconsider running in the—

PATCH

I want to run. And you know this! I've been looking forward to the *Great Bull Run* for over two years now.

HOSS

But then why would you provoke Dozer into—

PATCH

Well, I also live for sympathy.

HOSS (*Nods*)

Yeah, you've told me. A lot. (*A long pause. Chuckles*) I even remember that time when you told me you were convinced your mom had been kidnapped.

PATCH

Hoss?! Her picture was on the side of that milk carton!

HOSS

Her picture's on the side of every milk carton!

PATCH

Right! So then why wouldn't anyone take me seriously? I will never forget that.

HOSS

Neither will the authorities. Bet that's the only time someone ever called in a *Dairy Alert*.

PATCH

Bet they would have taken me seriously in India.

HOSS

No, bet they would have said, "Aaah, a talkin' cow! This one's not sacred, he's possessed!"

PATCH

They're so touchy over there. But then again, have you seen how many people live in India? I guess they have to be touchy. There's nowhere else to go.

HOSS

I see your beat-down didn't have an effect on your bad joke-tellin' ability.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Debatable.

HOSS (*To PATCH*)

I think you might even have made it a little worse. (*A beat. Calling off*) Right, Dozer?

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Not up for debate.

(A beat. DOZER enters and immediately crosses over to join HOSS and PATCH.)

PATCH *(To HOSS)*

Dozer here might have gotten in a couple lucky punches but I think we all know who the real victor was.

DOZER *(To HOSS)*

I think I get why you like to hang around him now.

HOSS

Probably the same reason you like gorin' him, huh?

(DOZER and HOSS both nod in unison.)

HOSS and DOZER *(Deadpan)*

Superiority feels great.

PATCH

I agree. *(A beat)* I wish we could tell the world how much more superior we bulls actually are. *(A long pause)* Wouldn't it be cool if we could actually talk to all those ignorant humans?

(PATCH laughs loudly and boisterously. A long silence.)

HOSS

No. *(A beat)* I think God was smart the way he made things work. I think there's a reason dogs bark, ducks quack, and cows moo.

DOZER

And Patch says, "Duh."

HOSS

Right.

PATCH

And duck-bill platypuses say, "Why does God hate us?"

HOSS

Bingo. Besides, what do we have to say to all those humans that's so important? "But I don't wanna go to the slaughterhouse! It smells funky in there."

PATCH

Well, sure, it would be weird to hear us speak at first, but they'd get used to it. Like the first time I saw my mom breastfeedin' my baby sis in public. Awkward at first, but then it was sort of beaut—

DOZER

Don't you dare finish that sentence, creepo.

HOSS

You saw that?! *(A beat)* By choice?!

DOZER *(Sighs)*

Everybody saw it, Hoss. They took pictures of that baby calf going to town on his mom's teats for days. You mean to tell me you never saw the billboards?

HOSS *(To PATCH)*

Billboards?

DOZER

And I'm bettin' lots and lots of therapy bills too.

PATCH *(To HOSS)*

It was all part of that whole new Chick-fil-A marketing campaign. You want people eatin' more chicken? Up-close candid shots of a cow nip's bein' suckled. The more graphic, the more likely people start thinkin' ... chicken sounds 'bout right for dinner.

(A long silence)

DOZER

Anybody else hungry?

HOSS

Nope. Nauseous, yes, hungry, not so much.

PATCH

Milk comin' outta every orifice.

HOSS

EW! EW! EW! *(A long pause)* Good God, Patch. Thanks a lot. I think it's safe to say we've all lost our appetites for life now.

(A beat)

DOZER

I could still eat.

(DOZER turns and quickly wanders off, though he stays onstage, just off grazing on his own now.)

PATCH (*Watching DOZER go*)
And they say advertising doesn't work.

HOSS (*Sighs*)
Nobody says that.

PATCH
Sure they do. Name one marketing campaign that people actually remember.

DOZER (*Calling back with his mouth full of cud*)
Where's the beef?

PATCH
Okay, fine, there's one, but name two.

HOSS
Got milk?

PATCH
I always knew the advertisers had it in for us cattle.

HOSS (*Scoffs*)
You think Noah had it in for us cattle.

PATCH
He did! Two by two! What about the rest of 'em?!

HOSS
The rest of 'em knew how to swim. You're just a conspiracy junkie!

PATCH
With good reason! Why else do you think they kidnapped my mom?

HOSS (*Sighs*)
Nobody kidnapped your mom. (*A beat*) If they did, how'd she cook your dad's Rocky Mountain Oysters?

(A long pause)

PATCH
Why you gotta go and do that?

HOSS
Do what?

PATCH

Ruin it. We were havin' fun. We were on a roll there for the first time in a long time. 'Course mom was never kidnapped and 'course she was never on any billboard and 'course there's no talkin' sacred cows in India. But so what? We were finally back to playin' around just like we used to.

HOSS

Used to? We only stopped five minutes ago!

PATCH

I know. God, I miss the good ol' days. (*A beat*) Besides, we did get Dozer to finally leave us alone, didn't we?

HOSS

And by us you mean you.

PATCH

Well, I—

HOSS

You know, you don't have to answer me every time I speak. Not everything I say is a question that demands an answer.

PATCH

Oh, I'm sorry, was that another question for your new best friend Rhetorical again.

HOSS

YES!

PATCH (*Scoffs*)

I figured. Man, I hate that know-it-all.

(*A long pause*)

HOSS

I just don't think it's that much fun to joke around about ourselves like this anymore.

PATCH

And you wonder why I think you've been actin' so differently lately.

(*A long silence*)

HOSS (*Seriously*)

Patch, what happens to us after the *Great Bull Run* on Friday?

PATCH

Steak dinner?

HOSS *(Sighs)*

Again, just not funny anymore.

CINCI *(Offstage)*

That's because the truth is never funny. *(A beat)* Said no one ever.

(A beat. HOSS and PATCH try unsuccessfully to look offstage above the cutaway partition in the direction of CINCI'S voice as the lights slowly fade. End of Act One/Scene One.)

Act One/Scene Two

Scene Two: Tuesday

(At rise, SANDY O'DONNELL is taking CORTEZ REYES on a tour of the bullpen and adjacent pasture. All three bulls, HOSS, PATCH, and DOZER are still in the pen, but are no longer "speaking," just grazing in silence as cattle pretty much always does. PATCH and HOSS are still standing near each other while DOZER is still off on his own. BRYNN ALICE and CINCI are also grazing in silence in the pasture. It should be staged in a way as to make it obvious that SANDY and CORTEZ are not standing inside the pen or pasture, but safely observing the cattle from just outside. SANDY speaks in a thick southern Georgian accent and is overly-bright and bubbly, while CORTEZ remains guarded and stoic, though he speaks English just as fluently as he presumably speaks Spanish.)

SANDY

Well, so, here they all are.

(CORTEZ silently surveys the cattle with a granite face.)

SANDY *(Cont'd)*

O'er here we got's the fellas. That's Hoss right over there and that other one is Patch, right next to him. Those two always seem to be together, almost as if it's like they're BFFs or somethin'. *(HOSS snorts/scoffs.)* And that big fella over there all by himself... we call him Dozer. *(A beat)* Get it?

(A long silence. Again, CORTEZ remains silent. SANDY moves on, undaunted.)

SANDY *(Cont'd)*

And over here are the gals. My personal favs, *obviously*. That young one, we call her Brynn Alice and then our older gal is Cinci. Named after the one and only, of course. Obviously, we have to keep them separated from the boys. And so, that's all of—

CORTEZ (*Curt*)

Not boys. Not dudes. Not fellas. Not bros. Not guys. Not *hombres*. (*A beat*) And good God, woman, certainly not *girls* or *gals* either. (*Super curt*) Bulls. Cows. (*A beat*) Cattle. And what in the world were you thinkin' naming them? (*CORTEZ shakes his head*) Is this your first time around livestock?

SANDY

Then what do you suggest—

(*CORTEZ sighs and then points at the cattle one-by-one, overly-aggressively.*)

CORTEZ (*Pointed*)

Uno. Dos. Tres. Cuatro. Cinco. (*A beat. Curt*) El terminó.

SANDY (*Still going for playful*)

But I don't speak Spanish. And never do they. But then again... (*Shrugs*) Maybe they do and I just don't know it. What's Spanish for "Moo" anyways? El Moo-o?

(*A beat. CORTEZ glares at SANDY.*)

SANDY (*Cont'd*)

Oh, come on, now, Mr. Reyes. I'm just playin'. I know better than to name our farm animals. I've read *Charlotte's Web*. But these gu—*bulls*—are special. They—

CORTEZ

NO!

SANDY

Whoa! (*A beat*) Wait a sec, if you're gonna revert to Spanish out of anger, don't you mean (*Mocking*) "NO?!"

(*CORTEZ glares at SANDY with even more disgust.*)

SANDY (*Sighs, cont'd*)

Oh come on, I'm just teasin'. No offense. I certainly wouldn't mind if you all of a sudden started sayin' "Y'all would like to take a dang *siesta* under a big ol' *sombrero* with a daggum *Corona* and a cotton-pickin' *Cuban cigar*."

(*A very long silence. CORTEZ'S glare intensifies.*)

SANDY (*Cont'd*)

Cotton-pickin' *cigarrillo* and daggum *Dos Equis*?

(*Another long silence*)

CORTEZ *(Sighs)*

Americans...

SANDY *(Pointed)*

What about us, Americans?

CORTEZ

Such a stupid, horrific mistake.

SANDY

The country or the people?

CORTEZ

You're not funny. And neither is any of this.

(CORTEZ turns around without saying another word and exits quickly.)

SANDY

Whoa, wait a minute. Where are you goin'? You don't even know your way around yet. I haven't even shown you where you're gonna be sleepin' tonight... *(A long silence, and then, biting)* And it's such a lovely stable.

(SANDY quickly exits off in the same direction CORTEZ had exited in. A long silence. And then all the bulls and cows relax their grazing postures. HOSS and PATCH quickly cross over to the cutaway partition.)

HOSS

Cinci? Cinci?

PATCH *(To HOSS)*

Wait a sec. *Cinci?* What about Brynn Alice? Oh, I see, a new Bessie shows up... I mean a new old Bessie shows up on the scene and you suddenly move on to the next moo-box just like that.

HOSS

Shut up, Patch. Not now. I told you, it's not funny anymore.

PATCH

Sorry, but it breaks my heart that you would just give up on Brynn Alice. Especially when the new cow's like 45 years old.

DOZER *(As he starts approaching PATCH and HOSS)*

I think it's time for me to break something else of yours.

HOSS

PLEASE DO!

PATCH

You know, Dozer, sometimes you're nothing but a lot of talk.

DOZER

What about what I just did to you?

PATCH

I said *sometimes* you're nothing but a lot of talk.

HOSS

But sometimes he's...?

PATCH

Ow!

HOSS (*To DOZER*)

You think the time has come again?

DOZER

I think it's a good thing you're givin' up on the race and on Brynn Alice. She's too good for you anyways. Besides, she is—

CINCI

45!?!?!?!?

PATCH

46?!

CINCI

That's 322 in dog years!

PATCH

And?

CINCI

322!?!?

PATCH (*To HOSS*)

Did I forget to carry the 1 again?

CINCI

322!?!?

PATCH

Why you gettin' so upset? Like you said, that's in dog years not cow—

CINCI
COW YEARS AND DOG YEARS ARE THE SAME THING, STUPID!!

PATCH
You're a dog?

HOSS (*Sighs, then to DOZER*)
Now that she's here, I gotta ask Cinci a question. I have no time for his moron-ey-ness right now. Honestly, would you mind?

DOZER
I don't work for you.

HOSS
True. But if you gore him again I'll tell you the sexy, sweet thing Brynn Alice told me about you.

BRYNN ALICE
Hoss!

HOSS
I won't tell him everything! Besides, it doesn't look like he's gonna get Patch outta the picture anyways so I guess your little Dozer-whipped-cream-dream-sequence-fantasy can still be our little secr—

DOZER (*To PATCH*)
Hey! Dumb-face!

PATCH
That's my name! Don't wear it—oh.

(PATCH notices as DOZER paws dust quickly then charges at him. PATCH turns and taking off in a gallop towards the wings with DOZER in hot pursuit.)

PATCH (*Cont'd, as he flees*)
SOMETIMES!!!! I SAID SOMETIMES YOU'RE A LOT OF TALK!!!

(PATCH runs offstage with DOZER exiting right on his tail once again. The offstage sounds of PATCH being pummeled and gored are HEARD by the other cattle and the audience once again.)

BRYNN ALICE
Whipped-cream-dream-sequence-fantasy? With Dozer? Ew.

HOSS

Too soon?

BRYNN ALICE

I take back what I said, Hoss, I'm not gonna miss you when you're gone.

HOSS

You can't take it back.

BRYNN ALICE

Why not?

HOSS

Because I need it!

CINCI

You won't after Friday.

HOSS

Cinci? *(A long pause)* What's going to happen to me on Friday?

CINCI

You know... I hate it that they keep runnin' over there and we havta keep not gettin' to see all the gory gorin' details?

HOSS

Cute. But seriously, I'm beggin' you, tell me what happens to me after the big race on Friday?

(A long silence)

CINCI

You die.

HOSS

Why would I cry?

CINCI *(Sighs)*

I swear, this partition squeezes the acoustics until they bleed baby calf tears. I didn't say CRY, I said you—

BRYNN ALICE

Because you'll be so sad that you didn't win!

CINCI

Brynn Alice? What are you—

BRYNN ALICE

You said Hoss is going to cry a lot! Cry like a little big bully baby when he loses.

HOSS

Wait a minute. I told you I've decided I'm not even gonna run, sure, but even if I did, who says I would lose?

(A long silence. Then CINCI and BRYNN ALICE both start laughing hysterically.)

HOSS *(Cont'd)*

Oh, come on, you don't know that for sure.

CINCI

Oh, sweetie... even Patch knows that for sure. The whole world knows.

HOSS

Then how come I don't?! What does the rest of the world have that I don't?

CINCI

Mirrors.

HOSS

Well now I might just have to go ahead and run just to prove y'all wrong.

CINCI

Go ahead. Too bad we can't make a bet on it; stupid casino and that "No Livestock Allowed" policy.

HOSS

We could place a bet on it just between us.

CINCI

Okay!

BRYNN ALICE

No, Hoss, don't.

HOSS

Why not?

CINCI

'Cause Brynn Alice knows you won't be around to pay up. See, truth be told, the fact is I never said "cry," Hoss. I said after the big race you're gonna—actually, all you bulls are gonna—

BRYNN ALICE

Yes, you did, Cinci! You said he was gonna bawl his beady bully little eyes out like a blubbering little one-horned, wussy-boy, cry-baby.

CINCI

You forgot purple people eater.

(A long pause)

HOSS

I have beady eyes?

CINCI

She's paraphrasing me, Hoss. I didn't even know you only had a horn. Or one eye.

HOSS

I don't have only one eye! And I don't cry!

BRYNN ALICE

Oh, come on, it's nothing to be ashamed of Hoss. I think it's kind of a bit sexy when boys show their emotions like us gals.

HOSS

You do?

BRYNN ALICE

Sure.

CINCI

You do?

BRYNN ALICE *(Shrugs)*

Kind of a bit.

HOSS

Well, in that case, I'll try to make sure to cry more often.

BRYNN ALICE

I can't wait.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

ME NEITHER!

(A beat. The bulls and cows onstage turn to look offstage in time to HEAR PATCH get gored again.)

PATCH (*Offstage, cont'd*)

That tickled.

BRYNN ALICE

Why does he keep instigating him?

CINCI

He probably doesn't want to give Dozer the satisfaction of knowin' he's hurtin' him.

BRYNN ALICE

So he's just gonna keep enragin' him until he ruptures his own brisket?

CINCI

Classic defense mechanism.

BRYNN ALICE

That doesn't make any sense.

HOSS

As opposed to all those other pearls of wisdom that spew out of the numbskull's numb skull?

(And we HEAR the goring again.)

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Okay, stop! Stop! Stop! Please stop. Now I'm serious!

BRYNN ALICE

Finally!

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Or I'm gonna pee right down my little leather legs.

BRYNN ALICE

Someone should really stop him from speakin', he's gonna get himself killed.

HOSS (*Shrugs*)

Maybe that's what he wants, too.

CINCI

Another classic defense mechanism.

BRYNN ALICE

Why would anyone want to get themselves killed like that?

CINCI

And that's precisely what everybody's gonna say on Friday, too.

BRYNN ALICE'

SHHHHH!

(A beat)

HOSS

I think you're both forgettin' one crucial thing about Patch.

BRYNN ALICE and CINCI

What?

HOSS

He's dumb as a post.

BRYNN ALICE and CINCI

Oh, yeah.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

But not a *crying* post! *(A beat)* Wussy-boy!

(And we HEAR PATCH being gored yet again.)

PATCH *(Offstage, cont'd)*

Okay, Dozer, sincerely...that one gave me feels. A special little tingling in my Rocky Mountain Oysters.

(And we HEAR it again.)

BRYNN ALICE *(To HOSS)*

Aren't you going to do something about it?

HOSS

What do you want me to do?

BRYNN ALICE

Something! Anything! He's your best friend!

HOSS

Stop saying that out loud.

BRYNN ALICE

But how are you gonna feel after he gets himself killed!

(A long silence)

BRYNN ALICE *(Cont'd)*

Well?!

HOSS

I'm weighing my options.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

THROUGH THE TEARS?!

HOSS *(To BRYNN ALICE)*

I'll be fine.

BRYNN ALICE

Like hell. You'd be devastated and you know it.

HOSS

I'm not so sure now. You see what he's like! He yearns to poke and prod and if you give him something to run with, he just takes off and there's no stopping him.

CINCI

And this is a friend of yours?

BRYNN ALICE

They're best buds.

HOSS

Probably not a good idea to use the present tense when you say things like that.

(A long pause)

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Oh, run! You think I should run, Hoss? Thanks buddy, now I get it. *(A long pause)* Geez, why didn't I think of that before?

(We HEAR the SOUNDS of PATCH taking off in a gallop offstage.)

DOZER *(Offstage)*

HEY! COME BACK HERE!

PATCH *(Offstage)*

HA! I'd like to see you try and catch me, you giant beast of a—oh, never mind, seems you're actually pretty fast for a—

(And we HEAR PATCH being gored yet again.)

PATCH (*Offstage, cont'd*)
AAAAAGGGGHHH!!!

BRYNN ALICE (*To HOSS*)
Your friend is out of his gourd.

PATCH (*Offstage*)
HA! Good one Brynn Alice! Out of his gour—

(*And we HEAR PATCH being gored some more.*)

PATCH (*Offstage, cont'd*)
AAAAAGGGGHHH!

BRYNN ALICE (*To HOSS*)
For God's sake, Hoss. Enough is enough! Tell him!

HOSS (*Softly*)
Enough is enough.

BRYNN ALICE
Why don't you say it loud enough for him to hear you?

HOSS
I did.

BRYNN ALICE
No you didn't.

HOSS
Yes, I did.

BRYNN ALICE
No you didn't.

HOSS
Patch?

PATCH
Yeah, he did. I heard him. Hoss said enough is enough.

HOSS (*To BRYNN ALICE*)
See?

(*And we HEAR PATCH being gored yet again.*)

PATCH
AAAAAAGGHHH! OBVIOUSLY NOT LOUD ENOUGH FOR DOZER TO HEAR
YOU THOUGH!!!!

DOZER (*Offstage*)
No, I heard him too.

(*And we HEAR PATCH being gored yet again.*)

DOZER (*Offstage, cont'd*)
I just beg to differ.

HOSS
I give up.

BRYNN ALICE
What do you mean you give up?

HOSS
He's not worth it.

PATCH (*Offstage, softly*)
Yes, I am.

HOSS
Dozer's just gonna keep gorin' him and gorin' him and gorin' him.

PATCH (*Offstage*)
Okay, I changed my mind. Stop helping me.

HOSS
Fine!

BRYNN ALICE
No, Hoss, no! Patch wants it to stop now too.

CINCI
Oh, sure, 'course he does now that he's got a punctured lung.

HOSS
No, Patch doesn't want it to stop.

BRYNN ALICE and CINCI
WHAT?

PATCH (*Offstage, feebly*)

Actually, for the first time, Brynn Alice is right, now I do.

HOSS

Nah, he wants it to keep going and he wants to keep gettin' gored again and again and again.

PATCH (*Offstage*)

We're not friends anymore.

BRYNN ALICE

Why in the world would he not want the goring to sto—

CINCI

Yeah, why?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Yeah, why?

HOSS

Because if it stops this way, it'll be on Dozer's terms.

BRYNN ALICE

So what?

CINCI

Yeah, so what?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

I think I'm beginning to like his terms.

HOSS

If it were up to me, sure, I'd say all that gorin' should have stopped eons ago. But it's not up to me.

BRYNN ALICE

Then who's it up to?

HOSS

It's up to them. They're the ones doin' it, they're the ones who keep doin' it, so they're the ones who have to decide enough is enough. Unfortunately, I'm not sure they will be able to.

BRYNN ALICE and CINCI

Why not?

HOSS

Why'd you think they started saying all us bulls are stubborn in the first place? 'Cause they wanted to start a rumor mill?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

I always suspected as much.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Me too.

HOSS

Patch and Dozer are the ones that have to decide to call all this nonsense quits. But they're either too stubborn or too stupid to commit.

PATCH (*Offstage, to DOZER*)

Which one do you suppose you are?

DOZER (*Offstage, calling back to HOSS*)

BUT YOU HAD TO BE HOPIN' I WAS BOUND TO HIT SOMETHING VITAL.

HOSS

I still am! (*A beat*) We all are. (*To BRYNN ALICE and CINCI*) Aren't we?

BRYNN ALICE

NO!

CINCI

Yeah, kinda.

BRYNN ALICE

CINCI!

CINCI

What? All the humans enjoy schadenfreude at us cows' expense all the time. Why can't it be our turn for a change?

BRYNN ALICE

Because we're not like them. We're better than they are.

HOSS

No we're not. We're just a bunch of stupid cattle.

PATCH (*Offstage, to DOZER*)

There he goes braggin' about my intellect again.

HOSS

I'm not talkin' about you this time, Patch. I'm talkin' about all of us.

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Really, Hoss, you mean it? You really think all cattle are as dumb as I am?

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Let's not go overboard. Hoss, you wanna clarify your statement right quick before I turn back and start gorin' you this time?

HOSS

Okay, fine, maybe dumb is not the right word. Look, all I know is that everybody hates us cattle while we're alive. Just look at what they do to us! They don't appreciate us until after we're all dead and then they take one bite and suddenly fall in love with us.

BRYNN ALICE

Until the obesity and heart disease kicks in.

CINCI (*To HOSS*)

So you think they should eat us while we're still alive?

(A long silence)

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Well, I did hear that there is some kind of raw food diet sweeping the nation.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Where did you hear that?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

I overheard two drunken hillbilly hippies talkin' about it when they were trying to figure out how to ride me.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

They thought you were mechanical?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Nope. (*A beat*) Unless mechanical is another word for "you sure do got a purdy mouth."

HOSS

Well, did you at least try to get them to think you were mechanical?

PATCH

Of course! (*A beat*) Eventually.

BRYNN ALICE

How?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Well, I did the robot for a while. When that didn't work... sad to say, but I resorted to twerking.

CINCI

With your tongue?

HOSS

God, I wish that mental picture wasn't so vividly imprinted on my soul.

BRYNN ALICE

I wish it wasn't contagious.

(A long pause)

DOZER (*Offstage*)

So that's when they figured out you were a real bull?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

No. They didn't figure that out after they tried to milk me.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

AFTER?!

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Don't judge me.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

If I could stand on my hind legs right now... I'd tip you.

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Aw, you're sweet.

BRYNN ALICE (*Sotto, to HOSS*)

Are you lettin' them go on because they finally seem to be getting along now?

HOSS

No, but I told you before, it's not up to us anymore, it's up to them.

BRYNN ALICE

Okay, so do you think they've finally had enough now?

HOSS

Ask them.

BRYNN ALICE (*Sighs*)

Fine. (*A beat*) Do you—

PATCH (*Offstage*)

So?... (*To DOZER*) You had enough then?

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Are you asking me to quit?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Do you want to quit?

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Do you want me to quit?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

I want you want to quit if you want to quit.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

I want to quit if you want me to quit.

BRYNN ALICE

God, how long could this go on?

CINCI

How come all your rhetorical questions always sound like you're waiting for an answer?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

God, I hate that scumbag.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

I hate you too.

(CINCI sighs and starts to exit.)

PATCH (*Offstage*)

No, I wasn't talkin' about you this time, big guy.

DOZER (*Offstage*)

Then who were you talkin' about?

PATCH (*Offstage*)

Rhetorical.

Who? DOZER (*Offstage*)

Rhetorical. PATCH (*Offstage*)

(CINCI sighs audibly and turns and starts to exit towards the open end of the pasture.)

Who? DOZER (*Offstage*)

Rhetorical. PATCH (*Offstage*)

(BRYNN ALICE turns back just in time to catch CINCI before she's off.)

BRYNN ALICE
Cinci? (*A beat*) Where are you goin'?

CINCI (*Still not looking back*)
I've got to go rinse my brain to try and dry off and salvage as many brain cells as I can save. Besides, the whole reason I hung around in the first place was not even because of McGee and his infantile little brother McGoo in the first place.

BRYNN ALICE
What then?

CINCI (*Sighs*)
Are you gonna finally tell Hoss what happens to him after the big race on Friday? Even after this entire stupid nonsensical conversation, you still don't think he has a right to know?

BRYNN ALICE
Oh, he has a right, but I changed my mind. I don't want him to know.

CINCI
Fine. Then you know where I'll be if you change your mind again the right way.

BRYNN ALICE
No I don't.

CINCI
Right. That's exactly where I'll be. (*BRYNN ALICE looks confused but remains silent*)
And I hope that you do change your mind. Sincerely I do. And I know deep down, you

hope you do too. You hope you can get the courage to tell him the truth and you know it. You know he needs to know. And he has a right to know.

HOSS

I don't know anything anymore.

BRYNN ALICE

Even if I did change my mind, is there anything we can do about it?

CINCI

No, but that's not the point.

BRYNN ALICE

So then what's the point?

CINCI

You know that too.

BRYNN ALICE

I know I do. But I want to think about it some more.

CINCI

Fine. Take your time. You've got all the time in the world. Hoss doesn't. But you do. You can certainly take as much time as you want.

BRYNN ALICE

What makes you say that?

(CINCI gestures offstage and BRYNN ALICE turns to look.)

DOZER *(Offstage)*

Are you sure you want me to stop?

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Are you sure you want to stop?

DOZER *(Offstage)*

Are you? *(A beat)* All you have to say is you want me to stop.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

I want you to want to stop if you want to stop.

DOZER *(Offstage)*

I want to want to stop if you want me to stop.

CINCI *(To BRYNN ALICE)*

Call it a hunch.

(CINCI starts to exit again.)

BRYNN ALICE

Wait. Seriously, I don't know where you're gonna go.

CINCI

Anywhere but here.

BRYNN ALICE

Oh, okay, I know that place after all. *(A beat)* But—

CINCI

They're never gonna stop!

PATCH *(Offstage)*

Do you want to stop?

DOZER *(Offstage)*

If you want me to stop.

PATCH *(Offstage)*

I want you to stop if you want to stop.

DOZER *(Offstage)*

I want to stop if you admit that you want me to—

HOSS

SSTTTTOOOOOPPPPPP!!!!!!!

(A beat. Onstage and off, all eyes on HOSS.)

HOSS *(Cont'd)*

THEY'RE COMIN' BACK!!!!

(A pause. Then CINCI quickly returns onstage and joins BRYNN ALICE and both go back to grazing. DOZER quickly enters the stage and immediately starts grazing as well, as does HOSS. Slowly, an even more battered and bruised PATCH enters and begins grazing feebly just as SANDY and CORTEZ reenter the stage and resume their positions just outside the pasture and pen.)

SANDY

I'm... but I'm afraid I don't understand Mr. Reyes, how can—

CORTEZ

Encierro is by no means a joking matter. We Spaniards take the running of the bulls very, very seriously. And I will not have the first *Americanized-slash-bastardized* version trample on our traditions and culture just 'cause you think it'd be a barrel of fun to mock our venerated traditions over here in the States. We are not about to become the butt of some global joke. Pamplona will not be ridiculed, *Ms. O'Donnell*. And neither will our national event. (*A long silence*) I won't allow it.