

BEEF JUNKIES
Jonathan Dorf

First produced by the Pittsburgh New Works Festival

List of Characters

COWBOY, mid to late twenties and the smarter half of a Bonnie and Clyde team

COWGIRL, same age and his companion who is addicted to beef

SHEPHERD, younger than the others, the somewhat naïve keeper of Betty the Bovine

A road somewhere in suburbia, the near future, just before five o'clock in the afternoon.

The following note should be part of any program: “Originally produced by the Pittsburgh New Works Festival.”

Author's Notes

The landscape of the play is described as a “not quite apocalyptic” suburbia. While I leave the details of “not quite” to each individual production, I do want to clarify the use of the phrase “nuclear family” in the play. In this case, “nuclear” is intended to describe the traditional family structure (mother, father, children), rather than nuclear in the atomic energy sense of the word. Having said that, if you're dead-set on an irradiated landscape, take your best shot.

(A deserted road on the outskirts of a not quite apocalyptic suburbia. Just before five o'clock in the not so distant future. COWGIRL, late twenties and the Bonnie half of a Bonnie and Clyde team, holds a syringe. Her hands shake. COWBOY, about her age, holds a backpack.)

COWGIRL

I can't do it. My hands are shakin' too bad.

COWBOY

I got you, baby.

(Cowboy puts his hands on hers to steady them.)

COWGIRL

You'll miss the vein.

COWBOY

I'll be careful.

COWGIRL

Don't miss the vein. I'll bleed.

COWBOY

You won't bleed if I miss the vein.

COWGIRL

You'll hit something else.

(beat)

Come on!

COWBOY

You said don't help you.

COWGIRL

Can't you see I'm shakin'?

COWBOY

You want me to help you or not?

COWGIRL

Just find the vein!

(Cowboy grabs the syringe.)

Hold still. **COWBOY**

I wouldn't need the hit if I wasn't shakin'. **COWGIRL**

Hold your breath. **COWBOY**

What's that gonna' do? **COWGIRL**

Maybe your heart'd stop. You'd die for a second. Then you wouldn't move so much. **COWBOY**

Psycho! **COWGIRL**
(She holds her breath. He injects her. She exhales and relaxes.)
That's why I love you, Cowboy. What'd you get me?

Lamb. **COWBOY**

Tastes like chicken. **COWGIRL**

It doesn't *taste* like anything. **COWBOY**

I can too taste it, and it tastes like chicken. **COWGIRL**

Everything tastes like chicken to you. **COWBOY**

I know what beef tastes like. **COWGIRL**

How long's this gonna' hold you? **COWBOY**
(beat)

Couple hours. **COWGIRL**

COWBOY

That's all?

COWGIRL

Were you standing there when he puréed this stuff? Feels like it's cut with chicken bouillon.

COWBOY

I can't watch the guy every second.

COWGIRL

Next time, bring the animal. I'll do it myself.

COWBOY

We can't lug the damn lamb around with us. It's not like we've got a car.

COWGIRL

So let it walk.

COWBOY

Before or after we kill it and slice it up?

COWGIRL

Take up less room if it's sliced.

COWBOY

And go bad.

COWGIRL

I feel like clucking.

(Cowboy picks up his backpack.)

COWBOY

A lamb will not fit in this backpack.

COWGIRL

I know.

(Cowboy pulls out a small insulated bag and holds up a vial from inside it.)

COWBOY

What's in these vials, that's high test. And it stores easy.

COWGIRL

And it tastes like chicken. I don't feel so good.

(He hugs her, trying to console her.)

COWBOY

I know.

COWGIRL

I need a cow.

COWBOY

I know.

COWGIRL

I know I'm weak.

COWBOY

It's not your fault.

COWGIRL

I can't stop.

COWBOY

You gotta' get your mind off it.

COWGIRL

I see a hamburger.

COWBOY

Where?

COWGIRL

(points in the air not far away)

There.

COWBOY

Where?

COWGIRL

By the tree. In the bun. Can't you see it?

COWBOY

Is it very small?

COWGIRL
It's ten feet tall.

COWBOY
It's not there.

COWGIRL
I know, but it's dripping fat, and it's sizzling. It's on a sesame bun, and you can just see some onion sticking out. There's a dab of ketchup on the onion. Maybe it popped out from under the bun. It's winking at me.

COWBOY
The onion?

COWGIRL
The burger. The bun keeps opening and closing.

COWBOY
There's no burger.

COWGIRL
I know, but it looks so good.

COWBOY
Where is it?

COWGIRL
(points)
There.

(Cowboy walks toward the imaginary burger.)

COWBOY
Am I there yet?

COWGIRL
It moved. It moved out of the way.

COWBOY
Where is it now?

COWGIRL
(points again to a different spot)
There.

COWBOY

Tell me when I get there.

(Cowboy moves toward the burger's new "location.")

COWGIRL

It moved again.

COWBOY

Now where is it?

COWGIRL

I don't think you should chase it anymore. The bun looks angry.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!