

The Cow

By Charles Rodriguez

Chris yawned into his hand.

This was the worse part of the day, the drive home. He delivered pizza. It wasn't a great job, but it paid the bills. Unfortunately it left his car smelling like pizza. A year ago he would have found the idea highly appealing, but now he despised it. He hated everything to do with pizza.

He flicked on his high beams, knowing he wouldn't see another car for the rest of the night. He worked the night shift, which meant he was forced to make deliveries even after closing time, so long as the order was placed before the restaurant's unofficial cutoff. And after he had made all of the evening's deliveries he would have to do the cleaning assigned him while his co-workers patiently waited to lock up for the night and go home, knowing they would never dream of lending a hand with his tasks so that they all might go home that much sooner.

Chris yawned again, his eyes becoming blurry as sleep threatened to wash over him. Suddenly he slammed on the breaks, bringing his car to a screeching halt, just inches from the cow standing calmly in the middle of the road.

Great Chris thought to himself, now wide awake, as he blared his horn in frustration at the unperturbed bovine. Nothing. The cow didn't even blink.

He opened the door to his car and climbed from the driver seat onto the moonlight street, the rattling of his car engine drowning out the sounds of the night. It was unseasonably warm and the moon shone bright in the November sky. Chris moved to the

front of the car and whistled, seeing now just how close he had been to colliding with the cow standing before him.

“Ooga booga!” Chris shouted, waving his arms menacingly at the cow, hoping to scare it away. Nothing. *Is this cow from India?*

Chris pulled some grass out of the ground at the side of the road, waving it provocatively before the cow, hoping to coax it out from in front of his car. Nothing.

“You’re starting to make me angry now cow!”

Nothing.

Chris threw the grass he was holding onto the ground and stalked next to the beast and wrapped his arms around its head, pulling with all his strength to move the massive cow. Having failed, Chris moved behind the cow a few paces, now planning to charge into the great beast, driving it out of his car’s path. The plan soon proved to be disastrous, however. Something under Chris’ foot caused him to slip before he could take two steps and he tumbled to the ground, his chest falling on what felt and smelled like fresh cow dung. Chris stood to examine himself. It was cow dung.

“Why!” Chris shouted his arms thrust into the sky angrily. “I just want to go home and get some sleep,” he whimpered, “is that too much to ask!”

“You could have just asked.” A voice interrupted.

“Who’s there, who said that?”

The cow turned its head toward Chris, its big intelligent eyes falling on Chris’s pitiful dung covered form. “Do you see anybody else out here, darling?” The cow asked.

“This isn’t happening.” Chris said, now getting to his feet.

“Actually it is, and as previously stated, if you wanted me to move all you had to do was ask.”

“Cows don’t talk.” Chris mumbled.

“And humans don’t normally throw themselves into piles of cow dung, but here we are.” The cow responded.

“Point taken.” Chris said. “So now what?”

“I believe there is something you wanted to ask me?”

“Uh . . . would you please move off the road?” Chris fumbled.

“Certainly.” The cow did something with its face that Chris assumed was a smile and turned to leave. She sauntered away from Chris, disappearing from sight behind some brush beside the road.

Chris watched her go, and then, realizing she was gone, returned to the driver door, paying extra attention to where he stepped. He pulled at the door handle so he could make the rest of the drive home. The door was locked.