

Bull
An Episode

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Characters:

The Crowd

The Bull

Mrs. O (bama)

Drag Queen Rodeo Clowns, QT is one

D and C, the Men in the Superbox

The Bull Wrangler

1. The bull

In darkness we hear the bull exhale. It shifts its weight, sixteen hundred pounds on wood floorboards. The rattling of a metal chain. The bull is penned and waiting.

The Bull Wrangler: Easy, easy. Not much longer. Save it for the ring.

We hear the roar of the crowd, drunk with need. It becomes deafening. Somewhere away from this noise:

2. Mrs. O. searches for her face.

Mrs. Obama walks down deserted city streets. She has no face. Streamers, political placards and other trash litter her path. She sees her reflection in a window.

She continues searching. She happens upon a flyer and finds her face on it. She clutches it close, then sees another and another.

3. The Men in the Super Box

DISCREET ANNOUNCER: These are the men of the super box. They fought their way up here so their sons could take cars, college, class and their fathers for granted. Back then enemies were real and knowable, not the shadows that are always with them now -- the drinks that seem weaker, the body parts they can't depend on, the way their asses sweat like going into battle when they visit an ATM machine and fear they'll be seen looking at a piece of paper in their pants pocket where the wife has written down the pin number. Here in the Superbox that was once their mountaintop, there's nothing to do but look down and fear their inevitable fall.

D: I hear the bull's past his prime.

C: You're the one who worries me. Try to stay awake today.

D: I wasn't sleeping. I was praying --

C: God doesn't give a shit about people like you --

D: That you'd shut up --

C: It's the poor he's in love with --

D: I grew up poor.

C: Don't get sentimental.

D: How can I be sentimental when I haven't taken a good shit in three days?

C: It's important that we seem interested. You never know when they'll cut to you for a reaction shot.

D: Look at that pile out there--

C: If we're not paying attention, people's interest will wander.

D: Must be twenty pounds of crap there.

C: They're already talking about retiring him.

D: What I'd give for that kind of output.

C: What do you suppose they do with them?

D: Now all I get is these little . . . pieces.

C: Maybe a stud farm?

D: Whisps really.

C: Although, at some point, even that stops working.

D: Like those streaks in the sky --

C: It can't be cheap to pay the bills of a 1700 pound bull.

D: That aren't really clouds.

3. Crowd moment

4. Mrs. O. gathers her likeness

Mrs. O. wanders far and wide collecting her likenesses. She finds them on mountaintops. In deserted subway tunnels. On the desk of Orin Hatch's top aide. Under her own bed.

5. The rodeo clowns

RODEO ANNOUNCER: Give a hostile welcome to the saddest, maddest, baddest rodeo clowns around! These gals know the one place in the state where one can acquire high heels in a size twelve. And they're not afraid to hurl them at your head. They've been called disgusting, depraved, unnatural. But what's got 'em fightin' mad today is being called 'inconvenient' by their own kind. They were the first to be out, first to be outraged, first to be outrageous and now they're being called a political liability by the straight-actin'-baby-havin'-legally-married-on-a-good-day-gays.

6. Crowd moment

7. The Men in the Super box

D: The crowd's ugly today.

C: They smell blood.

D: Better be a good show.

C: Who cares? Either way we'll make money.

D: I wouldn't like to see them get angry.

C: Who doesn't enjoy seeing a woman get gored?

D: You sure she's coming?

C: She'll come. We've got that thing she wants.

D: No one wants your old thing.

C: Not that.

D: Even your wife has to get drunk to operate that machinery.

C: I don't care how liberated she is, she needs a face.

D: It's dangerous to bet on what a woman will do.

C: She'll want her face back. And she's got to come here to get it.

D: But she seems pretty tough.

C: Are you rooting for her now?

D: No --

C: You're afraid of her!

D: I'm not afraid of a woman. Even if she is black.

8. Her travels bring her to the stadium

The crowd grows louder. Mrs. O is now carrying hundreds of flyers, newspaper clippings, dreams of old women in the South, drawings by pre-school children that show her with an enormous set of teeth. In the Stadium her likeness is everywhere. She moves steadily towards the ring.

As she reaches the edge a Drag Queen is flung up against the fence.

QT: Goddammit I can't run anymore. If he's gonna lasso me he's gonna get a high heel to the head. Is my wig crooked? At least he's good looking. I refuse to be beat and humiliated by an un-fine man.

Girl what happened to your face? You know you're next, right?

(Sound of horses, cowboys' whoops, the crowd. Dust kicks up. Rope encircles the Queen)

QT: I know you can't help me. Don't worry about it. White people won't help me. Even queers won't help me.

Here, take this.

(she hands Michelle a lipstick)

Your face is all gone.

(As she is dragged away)

See you in heaven, hon.

9. The bull wrangler

In darkness we hear the bull exhale. In his ear, the wrangler speaks:

Wrangler: I'd wrap that leg, but then they'd be asking all kinds of questions. Already came by this morning re-checking about your paperwork -- discrepancy about your age they said. Betting's not what it should be. . .

You gotta put on a good show. It's gonna be a woman you're up against, but don't let that throw you. Just do your job. No one'll blame you. In fact, if anything, you should go kinda rough on her. Your reputation's not what it used to be, and to go after a gal'll give you some low-down-son-of-a-bitch credentials. Sure, they'll talk in public of putting you down, but in private, the men will breathe a sigh of relief.

(beat)

I wrap that leg it's all over! Cancelled. Obsolete. In this business obsolete means meat. Don't expect any sympathy from me. I'm pullin' my weight! I'm the one shovels your thirty pound crap pile. I'm the one lugs your organic alfalfa you sorry ass vegetarian pussy.

I'm the one loves you.

10. Mrs. O before the crowd

Mrs. O walks down a series of wood corrals. The sound of the crowd ramps up as she gets closer. Finally, she reaches a gate; on the other side is the bull: one dark, wet unblinking eye visible through the gate's slats. A moment. The bull exhales. The roar of the crowd the lights become brighter, unbearable. The sound of a bell. Then light goes out and in darkness we hear the start of the match.

END of EPISODE