

The Great Cow Race of 2003

By Moe Lane

Additional Bad Ideas by Jaymiel (and maybe others?)

It all started with a gang of Ofanim of the Wind - you know, stories that begin with that phrase never seem to end well.

Anyway, there was a bunch of Ofanim Windies going from point A to point B, and they encountered something interesting at Point C: a bad person who owned a herd of cows. After they left point C, the person was still bad, but he was now notably bereft of cows (not to mention barns, fences and working farm equipment). He doesn't show up again in this adventure seed, so don't worry about him further -- besides, he really did deserve to have his cows taken away from him.

So, now the Windies had a bunch of cows, some fond memories (including a few recollections of how they used to do this sort of thing all the time in the Good Old Days) -- and absolutely no idea what to do with the blessed animals. After all, cows are not exactly low maintenance pets; it's also sort of hard to put one in a motorcycle sidecar. But the Windies just couldn't abandon them, or anything.

Luckily, one of the Windies happened to be a devotee of the *Weekly World News* -- to a celestial of a certain type, it's the equivalent of *Variety* -- and, as luck would have it, there was a relevant article. The conversation went something like this:

First Windie: "Dude!"

Second Windie: "Dude?"

Cows: "Moo."

First Windie (pointing at article): "Dude!"

Second Windie (reading article): "No Way!"

First Windie: "Way!"

Second Windie: "No Way!"

Cows: "Moo."

First Windie: "Way!"

Third Windie: "Dude?"

Cows: "Moo."

First Windie (pointing at article): "Dude!"

Third Windie (reading article): "Way!"

Second Windie: "No Way!"

Cows: "Moo."

Fourth Windie: "Dude?"

...and so on, until the matter was settled:

First through Sixth Windies (Holding paper): "Dude!"

Token Seraph (looking at article and shrugging):
"Way."

Cows: "Moo."

Well, it certainly did answer what would happen to the cows -- at least for the time being. They were going to join the Windies on the cow racing circuit.

Yes, there is such a thing -- THIS IS THE AUTHOR SPEAKING NOW, AND HONEST TO GOD, I'M NOT MAKING THIS UP; THIS EXISTED IN 2003 -- as an organized cow racing circuit, complete with jockeys and saddles and everything. You get on the cow, race the cow and take home a purse of real money and everything if you win. A little checking indicated that a race was taking place within the week, and the Windies would have gone to see it, just on general principles: but considering that they actually had bovines, well, it was clear that they had to enter the race. After all, any idiot can make a bike go fast, but getting decent speed out of a cow requires skill.

So, they went.

Now, this is the part where the complications set in. However, there are so **many** possible complications that choosing just one to run into the ground seems chintzy. So, I offer you a whole bunch. Pick and choose as you like. Or just use them all.

- The Windies, of course, have every intention of seeing just how fast you can get a cow to go. This means that they'll be attempting to use their resonance during the race. Frankly, I think that the image of a slightly subsonic cow is too good to pass

up, so I'd be inclined to permit it. That should make life complicated for any random PCs wandering by who happen to have a somewhat less flexible definition of discretion than your average Servitors of the Wind.

- The cows, being stolen, have to be disguised. Do any of your players owe Servitors of the Wind a favor? Are any of your players nice enough to raise their hand when you ask for a volunteer for 'an interesting plot hook'? Did any of your players go use the bathroom at just the right moment for you to let the rest of the party in on the joke? If the answer to any of the above is yes, then guess who's getting houseguests, complete with paint cans? That includes the cows, of course: I recommend laying down extra paper in the basement for them. It makes cleanup easier.
- Needless to say, where you get Windies, you get Magpies (sometimes to the point where they're standing each other drinks at the bar). Servitors of Theft will have different motivations in this scenario. Some will wish to steal the Windies' cows, because it's a challenge. Some will wish to go steal some other cows and enter the race themselves. Some will wish to steal the Windies' cows *and* enter the race. One theoretical Magpie wants to steal a random

'outside' cow, use it to replace a Windie's cow, enter the race with the new cow, win, replace the winning cow with the cow he originally stole, then return that first cow back to the place he stole it from with excellently forged evidence attached that 'proves' that the cow has spent the last few weeks having a grand old time in Tijuana. Needless to say, the Servitors of Theft will think nothing of doing all of these things at once.

- Let's say we've gotten the Windies to the race, complete with hastily-painted cows -- which, bear in mind, might not have been the same cows that they had started out with. Of course, no angel can ride a cow twice, as the second time he's not the same angel, and it's not the same cow...
- Sorry about that (DISCLAIMER: I am not actually sorry). So, the Windies get to the race. The PCs should be along for the ride, motivated by curiosity / enthusiasm / a feeling of impending doom.
- Bear in mind that any snitches planning to rat out the Windies will essentially get shrugs and comments of "So what?" from their Archangels (including Dominic): racing cows is hardly illegal and Servitors of the Wind have wide latitude when it comes to stealing stuff for the Lord. But if they're still worried, they're perfectly

free to keep an eye on things... actually, that was only *phrased* as a suggestion.

- Good thing that they told somebody, though! It justifies so many other complications.
- First off, there's the possibility of the inevitable Vapucow. A shame that there aren't any Calabim of Technology, because they'd love this scenario, but Balsraph works almost as well. The Balsraph has modified his bovine to break the current Guinness World Record (yes, there is one) for fastest cow on Earth: unfortunately, he's not quite realized that his steed won't be able to handle the turns at top speed.
- At some point, you may be tempted to have an announcer start shouting "My God! Battle Cattle has flipped over the guardrail and into the stands! Paramedics have started running towards the rider... no! God, no! Battle Cattle has exploded! You can see the fireball reaching towards the sky... oh, the humanity..." Succumb to the temptation. You know you want to.
- Or there could be the inevitable Servitors of Ronald, who are giddy about the whole thing: all they have to do is stay alive throughout the entire escapade and they're in like Flynn with their Prince. There's nothing -- nothing at all -- that could happen that will get in the way of them falsely taking credit for the whole

shebang. There'll be four of them: three demons and a Hellcow. The demons' strategy is to stand around the whole time, grinning like loons.

- The Hellcow's strategy is to flip over the guardrail and into the stands, where she can take grim revenge for a billion helpless Happy Meals.
- Oh, the possibilities abound! Here's one: a Malakite of Lightning whose major claim to fame was the uplifting of a cow to sentience. This resulted in Jean deciding that the proper response to such an endeavor, objectively speaking, was to chase the Malakite through the Halls of Progress while beating him with a large wooden stick. After this (and subsequent Outcasting), the Malakite spent several years carefully replicating his experiment, and is now ready to prove wrong all those blind fools who laughed at him at the University...
- Honestly, by now it's starting to look like it'd be odd if Kobal *wasn't* here somewhere. You'll find him sitting on a bleacher and waiting patiently for the magic to start. Being on vacation, as it were, he sees no reason to start any trouble on his own: indeed, if the PCs ask nicely he'll even share his popcorn.
- Just as a thought, if you were looking for an opportunity to introduce Cow Seeds into your campaign, now would be as good a time as any.

Superiors never really take vacations. Or maybe somebody else has some; either way, if your players are starting to suggest that they aren't fully involved in the adventure, why not give them a unique opportunity to *get* involved? Just saying, that's all.

- Speaking of getting involved, did you know that the Cow Parade (cow statues of various types) was touring the country at the time? You weren't sure? I'll bet you that your players won't know, either - or whether or not the statues are of a type that would let a couple of them be actually Kyriotates of Stone under deep cover. Heck, why stop at a couple. Make them *all* Kyriotates of Stone. It'd be one heck of a cavalry.
- People, I'm just getting started. Remember the Hellcow? Well, the Brightcow that once called her -- um, 'that other cow that sort of looked like this cow' -- does, and she's prepared to stop her nefarious ways, using the righteous powers of Moo Thai. There's nothing like a martial arts duel to the death between sentient bovines to make for a memorable game experience.
- How could I forget Jordi? Well, easily, because everybody else does, frankly. Besides, if he was going to start disrupting sporting events involving animals he'd start with the Kentucky Derby, or

something. The only thing Jordi will care about is making sure that any stray cows hanging around afterwards find good homes: this may be a profound relief to the PCs, as he'll take them off their hands without too much cajoling.

- Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that there's a Triad at the county fair where this madness is occurring, and let's also say that they're stuck in the middle of all of this when things go squirrely. They'll need deputies. Wonder who they'll tap for the honor...
- Honor? Oh, Laurentines: got to have Laurentines. They're probably chasing the Tsayadim who are chasing the Hindu ethereal god that's watching over the Brightcow. Or maybe the ethereal god is chasing the Tsayadim who are chasing the Laurentines. Or maybe they're just all called a timeout and are sitting at the local outdoor bar, trying desperately to figure out how to write up the action reports on **this** one.
- It's going to get crowded at that bar, let me tell you, especially after the Triad makes a tactical retreat to it and glumly start counting out how many days it's been since Dominic checked up on them...
- Luckily, the Gamesters there already owe them a pitcher. Look, demons stuck with keeping track of Servitors of Cows are not going to be part of Asmodeus' elite.

- Move the tables together and grab some more chairs: there's a plaster and stone cow dressed like the Fat Elvis coming through, and it really looks like it needs a drink.
- Have you noticed that the race hasn't even started yet? Of course, between the regular contestants -- no, wait, by now Protection, Flower and Destiny snatch teams have dragged every human within two miles off to safety, so *that's* all right -- anyway, between the Windies, the Magpies, the Cybercow, the Hellcow, the Brightcow, the Uplifted Cow, hopefully at least one PC, a couple of Stone Cows and the Archangel Eli, you can't even see the damned track anymore.
- Hmm. Kyrio Tag, anyone? No, this has gone on long enough: the starting pistol is fired...

...and mayhem ensues.

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