

Diary of a Wannabe Cowboy

written by

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Logline:

In a dystopian South Africa, a wannabe Cowboy must track down his beloved prized cow, Meisie, while haunted by a forgotten Desperado from his past.

EXT. COWBOY'S BOXCAR - DAY

The sun glistens off of a field of untouched, tall grass. The wind rustles the stalks of this serene setting. A singular trail cuts through the grass, a COWBOY with a big, red hat rides his steed carefully through the decisive path.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Ever since the Fall, everything  
changed. No one knows how or why.  
It just is now.

In the distance, a lone boxcar emerges from the waves of golden grass. On the top of the structure sits a beach umbrella, a beach chair and a cooler box. A lone windmill towering beside the boxcar creakily spins in the breeze.

COWBOY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But that doesn't really matter much  
to me. The quiet life is all I  
need.

Cowboy reaches a small gate. He slides off his horse, MYRTLE, opens the gate leading Myrtle into the paddock. A DAIRY COW, wearing a little straw hat with a daisy on it, lazily chews cud in the paddock. Cowboy gently pats the Cow's head.

COWBOY

Meisie... you bored all cooped up?

MEISIE nestles into his hand. Cowboy surveys the fields around his home. Nothing as far as the eye can see. He sighs.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Yeah, me too.

EXT. GRASS FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

On the grassy ridge, a new path is cut. A DESPERADO wearing all black sits atop his pitch-black BRONCO. The noon sun casts an opaque shadow, obscuring his features.

A black crow circles over Desperado. He watches Cowboy, in the distance, as he tends mindlessly to his chores. Desperado spins his horse around and follows his path back from where he came.

EXT. COWBOY'S BOXCAR - CONTINUOUS

Cowboy hears the crow's caw. He turns to look in the direction of the sound but the sun blinds him.

He adjusts his hat but sees nothing except the crow circling in the distance.

Cowboy shakes his head and refills Meisie's troff from a bucket of water.

ROOF

He climbs up the ladder to sit on the beach chair. He opens the cooler box and fishes out a beer. Cracking it open, he reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a small note book. He writes in it.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Yep. I have everything I need.  
Myrtle and Meisie keep me company.  
I don't know what I would do if  
something happened to one of my  
girls.

INT. COWBOY'S BOXCAR - MORNING

A sliver of blue-hour light peeks through the window over Cowboy's bed. Casting soft light over the immaculately tidy, make-shift room. Every item in the room is mismatched and odd but placed in a particular order. A large portion of a wall is dedicated to blue ribbons and photos of Meisie.

The blaring of an alarm clock makes Cowboy stir in his bed, he looks over at the clock. It's 4:15. Next to the alarm clock is a picture frame with two YOUNG BOYS laughing and hugging CALF MEISIE.

He groans, rolls out of bed. Then immediately slips on his gorgeous, leather cowboy boots. He notices a speck of mud on the left one. Opens his bedside table drawer and pulls out a cloth and leather polish. He polishes the boots until they both gleam.

He stands and picks up his hat from the post of his bed. Flips the light switch on.

No power.

Cowboy quickly goes to open the fridge, the light is off inside. He slams the door shut. Running his hands down his face, groaning. He grabs his saddle, reins and knapsack.

## EXT. COWBOY'S BOXCAR - CONTINUOUS

The lavender sky illuminates Myrtle and Meisie softly as Cowboy pulls back the heavy boxcar door. Cowboy rests the saddle and reigns on the fence of the paddock, he politely tips his hat to the ladies in greeting.

COWBOY  
(in Afrikaans)  
Good morning.

They watch Cowboy as he climbs to the roof, he checks on the windmill. Wires connecting from it to his home have been chewed through.

He groans and kicks the windmill.

COWBOY (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

He clutches his foot and hops around.

He calms himself down and climbs down the ladder. Cowboy opens the gate of the paddock, he marches towards Myrtle carrying his equipment.

COWBOY (CONT'D)  
We gotta go find some more wire.

He saddles up Myrtle and leads her out of the paddock, then he turns and points an accusing finger at the lazy cow.

COWBOY (CONT'D)  
Meisie, be good. You understand?

Meisie chews cud. Satisfied with that response, Cowboy nods. He swings up onto Myrtle. Together they trot down the only path through the grass.

Meisie watches them go as they fade into the distance over a small ridge.

## EXT. GRASSY FIELD - LATER

The soft light has given way to the glaring mid-morning sun. Cowboy bites his lip nervously as Myrtle walks decisively through her path. A gate approaches with a tarred road laying just on the other side.

Cowboy slides off Myrtle, he opens the gate. Myrtle instinctively walks past him to the other side. As she passes, Cowboy bows and places his hat on his chest.

COWBOY

Madam.

He quickly closes the gate again.

A sign reading "Please Do Not Enter" is tied to the gate. Cowboy steps into the stirrup, bouncing on his other foot to prepare to swing up.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

One... two... three--

Myrtle shifts towards a patch of grass. Cowboy yelps in surprise, his stirrup-ed foot is dragged away with Myrtle. He is forced to hop along to avoid being swept off his feet.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

(in Afrikaans)

Come here!

EXT. TAR ROAD - LATER

They trot down the unkept tar road, dodging the millions of potholes before them. From behind, a retro, light blue truck putters along. Cowboy gulps, he looks behind to assess. The truck slows down beside him and rolls down the window.

A SWEET OLD MAN pops his face out from the window.

SWEET OLD MAN

(in Afrikaans)

Good morning.

Cowboy tips his hat down in greeting.

COWBOY

Good morning.

SWEET OLD MAN

Are you going into the town today, son? Come by my store, the new Spar is stealing all my business.

Cowboy's eyebrows jump in surprise, he leans on his saddle.

COWBOY

There is a new Spar? I didn't think there would be one way out here.

SWEET OLD MAN

Yep, they are expanding back out from Gauteng. All kinds of folk are moving back into the country.

The Sweet Old Man looks back out onto the road. The heat waves glisten over the tarmac. He slides his kind gaze back to Cowboy.

SWEET OLD MAN (CONT'D)

If you come by my store I'll give you a discount. We farmers have to look out for each other. Here, have a free sample.

Sweet Old Man reaches to his passenger seat. He pulls out a small, brown paper packet with grease stains on the bottom. He tosses the packet to Cowboy.

SWEET OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Oh, and be careful with livestock around here, I've seen leopard tracks around my farm. Every day those things have been getting braver since the migrations have been late this year.

Cowboy opens the packet, pulls out a few cuts of biltong.

COWBOY

Thank you, I will!

The Sweet Old Man waves to Cowboy, he continues driving down the road. Cowboy watches the blue truck disappear.

COWBOY (V.O.)

I never expected people to move out of the cities again. Especially so far into the Kalahari.

EXT. ABANDONED LODGE - DAY

Plants grow in the cracks of a cobble stone driveway. The thatched roof has folded in on itself.

The sign nearby is broken down but part of it can still be read "Laroo... Lodge." With five little gold stars still hanging on underneath.

Cowboy ties Myrtle to a log as he swings his equipment onto his back. Myrtle immediately attacks a lump of grass nearby, not troubled in the least.

Cowboy studies the sign for a moment, he uses a leatherman to pop one of the stars off. Chuckling to himself he sticks the star to his shirt.

COWBOY

What do you think, Myrtle? Do I  
look like a real sheriff?

Cowboy begins to imitate a cartoonish sheriff impression. Tipping his hat to no one, with a wide, bow-legged strut and to finish off the impression, he finger guns nothing, making little pew pew sounds.

The star falls off his shirt. Myrtle watches him with all the disappointment a horse could muster.

INT. ABANDONED LODGE - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Light shines into the reception through gaps in the roof. Cowboy looks around, he reaches into his knapsack and pulls out a silver revolver. Straps it to his hip, clumsily.

COWBOY (V.O.)

The world never fully recovered  
from losing so many people at once.  
Whole cities fell quiet. The people  
who were left were left to fend for  
themselves. South Africa fell  
apart.

With wire cutters in hand, Cowboy walks around the empty lodge. Scavenging.

Piles of leaves and straw pepper the ground that he walks on. He steps on a twig. *Snap*.

A bird flies, spooking Cowboy. He trains his gun unsteadily with one hand.

COWBOY

(whispering to himself)  
God...damn. Scared me. Stupid bird.  
I hate birds.

INT. ABANDONED LODGE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cowboy gingerly steps through into a long dining room with an open floor plan. A long table running the length of the room lays undisturbed, the cutlery and crockery covered in a layer of dust. Cowboy picks up a whole glass. He examines it and tucks it away into his knapsack.

A rustling from outside catches his attention. He stills his hand hovering over the revolver. Waiting.

Nothing.

Cowboy sneaks towards a set of stairs leading to a loft room.

LOFT

Cowboy peeks his head over the stairs and looks around the loft. A singular sofa is sitting in front of a short bookshelf, an old box TV on top.

Cowboy smiles to himself. He tucks the gun away and pulls out the wire cutters. He approaches the box TV and begins to gingerly cut the wires. He unscrews the back of the tv and fiddles with it.

COWBOY

Score!

He gets to work.

DINING ROOM

A really fucked up LEOPARD strolls into the room. Not making a sound as it sniffs around. Its breathing is shallow and asthmatic. The echoes of Cowboy fiddling with the wires upstairs catches its attention.

The Leopard, like a house cat, stalks up the stairs. Its instincts in full control.

LOFT

Cowboy is winding the wires along his forearm, pulling at the cables that feed up the wall and through the rafters to get a good length.

The stairs creak, Cowboy stops. His eyes dart to the sound. The head of the Leopard peeking over the edge. Slowly Cowboy reaches for his gun. He shoots, closing his eyes.

*BANG!* The loud sound scares the Leopard away.

Cowboy sinks to his knees, his breath caught in his throat.

COWBOY

The world keeps getting more and more dangerous.



EXT. TAR ROAD - NOON

Cowboy rides on Myrtle. He passes a utility pole with a "Wanted" poster stuck to it. It flaps in the wind, the face of the criminal is unseen.

Myrtle passes the pole, Cowboy's eyes stay glued to it. Watching it flap in the breeze.

Down the road a WOMAN wearing aviator sunglasses and a white cap sits on top of BULLET, an appaloosa horse. She is stapling another poster to a pole.

She turns to greet Cowboy.

WOMAN

Afternoon.

Cowboy blinks, but he remembers his manners and tips his hat down in greeting. He gets closer.

COWBOY

Howdy.

The Woman finishes stapling the poster, she wipes a bead of sweat on her forehead and tilts her head towards the pole.

WOMAN

You seen this man around here?

Cowboy hesitates, he looks at the poster she just stapled.

COWBOY

No... ma'am.

The Woman studies him for a moment before tucking her stapler in her saddle bag.

WOMAN

He is a dangerous man, a bull thief. A lot of angry farmers want him dead.

The Woman brings her horse closer to Cowboy, she towers over him. She reaches her hand out to shake his. He takes it.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Name is Queenie, I'm a bounty hunter in this province.

COWBOY

Queenie Van der Walt? Yeah, you're the bounty hunter that brought in the Haasbroek triplets. Didn't they rob a train?

QUEENIE smiles, she gazes wistfully to the horizon.

QUEENIE (THE WOMAN)

Glad to head my reputation precedes me. It's not often I meet a fan.

She smiles and winks. Nodding her head in the direction Cowboy was going, they ride side by side down the street.

QUEENIE (CONT'D)

You see, there are a lot of good people out here with livestock. You got any?

COWBOY

I have a dairy cow.

Queenie looks at Cowboy for confirmation.

QUEENIE

Just the one, nothing else? No bulls? How does she even work?

COWBOY

Just the one, she doesn't work. She's my friend.

Queenie scrutinises Cowboy with a thinking face.

QUEENIE

You are probably gonna be fine then. These kinds of people are only after prized bulls.

She hands Cowboy another wanted poster from her knapsack, she taps the bottom of it.

QUEENIE (CONT'D)

Those are my details. If you see this man. Get ahold of me. He's dangerous. Do not engage! You understand me?

Cowboy gulps as he looks into the ferocious eyes of Queenie staring at him over her aviator sunglasses.

COWBOY

Are you going to kill him?

QUEENIE

Not unless I have to. He needs to  
be taken in front of a jury first.

The pair of them reach Cowboy's gate.

COWBOY

This is me.

Queenie's face goes serious. She looks at Cowboy with a hard  
eye and motions to his revolver, still holstered to his hip.

QUEENIE

Be careful. Don't use that thing  
unless you absolutely have to.  
Don't do anything stupid.

She trots ahead into a canter. Leaving Cowboy alone. Cowboy  
watches Queenie disappear into the distance, he shakes his  
head as he climbs off Myrtle's back.

COWBOY (V.O.)

Not only do we need to be weary of  
wildlife reclaiming our lands, but  
also of fucking thieves in the  
night, taking our livestock.

Cowboy unlatches the gate, leads Myrtle through.

COWBOY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If my father were still alive. He  
would know what to do.

EXT. GRASSY FIELD - LATER

Cowboy rides lazily on Myrtle as she walks home, he is  
preoccupied with the wanted poster. He studies it carefully.

Cowboy's fists crumple the paper. He stuffs it into his  
knapsack. Looking up he sees the paddock gate is wide open.

Meisie is missing.

Panic sets across his face. He kicks Myrtle into a canter, he  
stands in his stirrups and searches around the grassy fields.

COWBOY

Meisie!