

# Pamplona

by

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## DESCRIPTION

It's the running of the bulls in Pamplona—and several of the bulls have some questions about why they run.

## CHARACTERS

A crowd of eight people wearing horns (cited simply as A through H)—gender is unimportant for the roles (even if they are bulls), as is race, creed, color, nutritional preferences, etc.

- A the bold one
- B the traditionalist
- C the capitalist
- D the existentialist
- E the socialist
- F the foreigner (any choice of accent)
- G the poet
- H the philosopher

## SETTING

- The streets of Pamplona, Spain

## TIME

- The running of the bulls

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Eight chairs—matched if desired, but they could also be selected to reflect the personality of each character.
- Eight handkerchiefs.
- Eight pairs of horns—they do not need to be matched, they can be made out of any materials, and they do not even need to be bulls' horns (i.e., they could be reindeer antlers).

\* \* \* \* \*

*As the lights come up, we hear an excited crowd and running feet. In the background someone plays a trumpet fanfare, as heard by someone who has never seen a bullfight but imagines it begins with just such a fanfare—gooey Tijuana Brass-style. The actors all come on in formation as if they have just taken a corner and stand in some formation; while standing there, in place, they start softly with a rhythmic tramp, gradually getting louder and more forceful until they break ranks and sit in the chairs, which can be arranged as the director feels. They are all wearing horns of one sort or another. The director should feel free to move them about as he or she sees fit.*

A

Scope out all this meat on the hoof.

B

All snot-nosed petit bourgeoisie with more time than brains—

C

But with gobs of dispensable cash.

A

Such adorable gore-able flesh!

B

Money is all that ever moves your—vowels.

C

Only selfish I-already-got-mine money—like yours—would say that.

B

I remember when—

A

Shit, just missed him!

E

Flicked his shirt-tail.

B

A bloody groin hook to sate the media's blood lust—

E

No, nicked his glutes!

B  
—and we can trail off with some dignity.

F  
From where from I come—

C  
Our foreign “guest” breaks wind—

H  
Let him speak.

C  
Oh, yes, great hornéd-one! [two syllables: “horn-ed”]

F  
Where from I come, the people are, are, are adjudicating—does  
that word make—?

G  
Addle-pating?

A  
Ho, down he goes, going for him—

D  
(to F)  
What? What?

A  
Damn, booiinnnggg! up like a rabbit on crystal meth!

H  
Advocating.

F  
Advocating—for not having the bulls to run anymore.

B  
This modern world—

C

Zeus' toe jam, people need blood sport—we need this—

G

Not all.

C

Oh, moon-pie, cow-eye, with your iambic and sensitive soul: “Let the stars brand me / Not the cruel radiant iron—” Such a heifer.

G

Someone's got to protect the finer points—

B

Exactly!

E

Bulls could learn from cows—

B

What's the point if it all—

E

—cows mooove together to produce wealth—

A

Cows for me because I like to stud.

E

—they work in a common effort—

A

Oh, better red meat than dead meat, huh?

E

He said balefully—

B

What's the point if beauty is lost to, to—

*A tries to goose E.*

Hey! E

Stop that! B  
(to A)

(to C)  
—lost to your all-precious “consumer” or—  
(to A)  
—filthy license—

E  
Beauty’s in the herd of the beholder—

B  
(to E)  
For Minotaur’s sake, stop that—the herd instinct kills beauty—

F  
Much to be said in flavor—

A  
(laughing)  
In flavor!

F  
—of the bondage—

G  
Bonding.  
(to A)

Don’t laugh at him!  
(to F)  
I like “flavor.”

B  
My point: The beauty of the run, its purity, its grace, has been sacrificed on the altar of these adrenaline junkies with their “dispensable” cash.

H  
Without them—

C  
Hornéd one, the big Cornute—

G  
Some respect, ring-nose.

B  
(to H)  
We don't need them! Rely on the traditions!

A  
Hey, less gas-bagging! We're slowing down!

F  
So, if bulls from where I come from do not no longer run—

A  
They're getting away!

B  
They lose their soul.

H  
No—move beyond the soul.

B  
Beyond the old ways? Ha! That way lies the slaughterhouse.

D  
You can't move "beyond." You just get moved around. And it's still  
the slaughterhouse.

A  
Got one!

*A wipes off one horn with a handkerchief.*

A  
Knocked in the back of the knee—

C  
The popliteal—

Endless tortured circling. D

I can't believe it—taking pictures of him! A

Philistines. Arrivistes. B

Why do we run? D

Stupid question! A

Why do we run? D

We just run—it's loaded in our balls. It's fun. You look so sour! A

Hedonism. D

Swedenism—whatever. A

Are you just bored or really interested in the question? H

What's the difference? D

The bulls in my family have always run. B

“One great line, an endless line, a line of blood unreeling—” G

Our line has great length— B

A  
Prick-length is the only length—

B  
—Minoan bull-jumpers used us—

C  
Hup! The superior vowels!

B  
There is good stock and—  
(looking at F)  
—and—other stock—

C  
Bullshit!

B  
—no matter what you believe.

C  
Bullshit! Only bulls and bears—

E  
Argh! Capitalist dialectic—prepare hip-boots and shovels!

C  
I run for opportunity! All at the same starting line, and then the  
best bull wins—

D  
Wins what?

C  
—start out equal and then those that got—

G  
Wins what?

C  
—get to get more. Law of nature.

Wins what? E

Whatever—it's open-ended. C  
(to D)  
There's only one "why." To get more.

Ever have enough? D

Not in my lingo. C

That's the problem. E

Colonialism. F

And exploitation— E

Hey, the crowd's starting to boo! A

—of the mean streets of production— E

We're gonna get bounced from this gig if we don't crack it! We're gonna end up as carne asada if we don't get a hoof on. Will you all just shut trap for a snort and gore somebody? A

*They all, in a synchronized stylized motion, gore somebody. In an equally stylized way, they pull out handkerchiefs, wipe off their right horns, and put them back.*

Ex-cel-lent! Eight down, none serious. If that ain't a rush in— A

—in the balls, yes. B

Yeah! A

How nicely put— B

E  
(to B, indicating A)  
Your social relations decreed by economic relations—

B  
It's bloodlines, not bank accounts, thank Angus!

E  
(to all)  
I run to free us from the domination of the farmers who raise us—

C  
(to B)  
Of course it's money, you blowhard Brahma!

E  
Every year we get trotted out—

A  
C'mon!

F  
And the way the farmers, they take from everywhere, breaking up families—

D  
The boo-hoo banality of evil.

F  
(to D)  
Only if you've never been to have to wear the yoke of someone who just sees you as meat and muscle—

A  
(to B)  
Hey bro!

H  
(to D)

You know evil is never banal.

G  
(to F)

You have a gift, my friend.

A

Come on!

F

Ripped from the ground native like a root—

A

A “crowder” for the finale?

F

Crowder?

E

Slam into the crowd—

B

Bully for you. Not for me.

D

Bush league.

C

It'll “move” the spectators.

H

No “crowder.”

A

No cr— Why don't you just die now?

*They take off their horns.*

B

Well, another year for posterity.

A

We didn't horn-row anyone, man.

C

Bigger crowd this year—shopowners won big.

E

And we'll get none of it.

F

I am far from a home.

G

And all for what?

C

Hey, make another boring poem out of it.

D

And all for what? Look at us. Why, why, why year after year?  
Absurd ritual—driven by blood or money or sex or slavery, it's  
absurd. Just as ignorant at the end as at the starting gun.

H

Perhaps it's just the run itself.

D

(point to A)

This—wants to plant his horn and his dick anywhere he can.  
Absurd.

(to B)

This aches for royalty, blood thicker than brain. Absurd.

(to C)

Cash register for a heart. Absurd.

(to E)

Revolution drivel—which is just about letting the oppressed be  
oppressors for a while. Absurd.

(to B, indicating F)

Your worst nightmare—the campesino in your closet. Absurd.

G

And me?

D

I love your poems, your courage for something so useless—

G

I pride myself—

D

—but they're piss in the ocean, tears in a salt mine. Glorious  
absurd, but still—

A

And you?

B

You seem to have all of us pegged.

D

My absurdity? My absurdity is that after everything I just said, I still  
want to know why. Now how absurd is that?

H

You must feel—

D

Yeah, yeah, yeah, abysmally alone, so don't even try to imagine.

B

I can imagine—detached—

D

Which, by the way, also feels incredibly free. Unloaded!

B

That I can't imagine.

G

I can.

D

So, no pity.

B

(to himself)

Not being supported by—

A

No pity from us, you wanna live like that. But you got no right—

H

And I?

A

Yeah, how about him?

D

Who knows, oh great Cornute? Perhaps it is just the run itself—  
but doubt it.

H

Why? Simply because you want something more, there should be  
something more for you?

B

Who really knows what the end is at the beginning?

H

(to B)

Perhaps the problem is in even asking “why”—why ask?

C

In a world of flesh and fangs, money is an armor.

(pause)

But sometimes—sometimes that makes me feel as alone as—

E

Not money for armor but the common good. Only flesh can protect  
flesh from the abyss.

F

And no borders anymore—none foreign anymore.

D

Without “why,” so we run—?

H

So we can have conversations like this. Don't you notice? Don't you see how we're all paying attention? For the first time to each other?

A

You make a weird kind of sense.

C

Let's go back to the barn— Let's go back to the barn, bulk up some feed and water, and talk some more about our "bullness." I'm kinda liking this.

F

Agreed.

A

In the aye-yi-yigh affirmative.

B

It would shorten the night.

F

I would feel to home at the moment.

E

Then "to home" let's go.

G

Home is—

C

—where your horns fit.

A

(singing)

"Show me the way to go home / I'm tired and I wanna go to bed"—

*They exit, except for D and H.*

D

Them?

Them. H

They? D

They. H

They are the “why”? D

They are why you don’t need to ask “why.” H

The inmates? D

H  
Nice word, that, “in-mates.” I don’t know about ultimate grounds of being. Just intimate grounds of being. I-N - parenthesis - T-I - close parenthesis - M-A-T-E. Get it?

D  
The horns of the dilemma—if you have no idea what the question is—no idea what a proper answer would be.

H  
I think it might be good to chuck away such questions, grab some feed and water, and talk about our “bullness.”

D  
And the night will pass.

H  
By the grace of the imperfect.

D  
In the company of our in-mates, our in-ti-mates. It’ll all continue to make no sense, you know.

H  
But it’ll make no sense in the best of company—

And that's all we have? D

We have what we need. H

Yeah? D

Yeah. H

*D looks at H, then the audience.*

Them? D

All we need. H

D  
Well, here, by their lights, then, is the meaning of the run.  
(imitating Groucho Marx's dance)  
With a hey nonny nonny—

BOTH  
—and a ha, cha, cha! Yeah!

BLACKOUT