

# Modern-Day Cowboy: A One-Act Musical

*(Lights up on COWBOY, sitting outside a JAIL, in the parking lot. The JAIL is labelled: UNNAMED CALIFORNIA JAIL.)*

## COWBOY

I'M JUST A COWBOY  
LIVING IN A LONESOME WORLD  
IF I HAD KNOWN THAT  
THE IRS WOULD TAKE ALL MY MONEY  
I WOULDN'T BE HERE FOR SURE

WHERE ARE MY HORSES?  
I LOOK AROUND AND ALL I SEE ARE CARS  
I THINK THEY TOOK MY HORSES  
I'M GONNA PUT A BULLET THROUGH THEIR HEART

*(He begins walking on his journey.)*

I'LL FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS HELL  
JUST ME, MYSELF AND MY COWBELL  
HEADING BACK TO THE HOLY LAND OF TEXAS

*(He steals a bike off a rack and begins riding it. It is comically small.)*

I'LL FIND MY HORSE AND DISAPPEAR  
INTO THE SUNSET, DRINK MY BEER  
AWAY FROM GAS AND PHONES AND ALL THIS BULLSHIT

*(A tumbleweed rolls by, and then stops to say hi.)*

## TUMBLEWEED

WHAT'S UP? HOW YA DOING?  
WHERE WE GOING? WHAT'S THE MOVE?

## COWBOY

"WHAT'S UP?!" YOU'RE A PLANT!  
I'VE GONE BONKERS, WHO ARE YOU?

## TUMBLEWEED

I'M A TUMBLEWEED, NOT A PLANT.  
I'M GONNA FOLLOW YOU TODAY.

### **COWBOY**

IT'LL TAKE A WHILE, SO DON'T SMILE  
JUST STAY QUIET, OKAY?

I'LL FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS HELL  
JUST ME, MYSELF AND MY COWBELL  
HEADING BACK TO THE HOLY LAND OF TEXAS

I'LL FIND MY HORSE AND DISAPPEAR  
INTO THE SUNSET, DRINK MY BEER  
AWAY FROM GAS AND PHONES AND ALL THIS BULLSHIT

THIS IS BULLSHIT

*(The two go past civilization and end up in a road in the middle of the woods. It is  
nighttime.)*

### **TUMBLEWEED**

PICKET FENCES  
SHOPPING MALLS  
COLD AND BREATHLESS  
WATERFALLS

A WEIGHTED TONGUE  
AND SHATTERED EARS SCREAM  
"TAKE ME HOME, DON'T LEAVE ME HERE"

CORNFIELD SUNSETS  
WITHERED TREES  
SIGNS OF LIFE  
NOWHERE TO SEE

HEAVY HEARTED, TWO SOULS RIDE  
TO MAKE IT TO THE OTHER SIDE

**COWBOY**

Do you have to sing?

**TUMBLEWEED**

Singing is one of the great pleasures in life. All the tumbleweeds at home would always sing. It's fun!

**COWBOY**

...No.

**TUMBLEWEED**

Oh, come onnn...

**COWBOY**

Absolutely not.

**TUMBLEWEED**

Hmm...I'll shut up for the rest of the ride if you sing with me!

**COWBOY**

...Fine. But I don't know how to do these silly songs.

**TUMBLEWEED**

You just describe what's happening. With rhymes! I'll start:

THE BEAMING SUN

**COWBOY**

A LOT OF, UH, CLOUDS?

**TUMBLEWEED**

*(pointing at Cowboy's holster)*

A RUSTY GUN

**COWBOY**

*(suddenly defensive, as a wolf appears)*

A WOLF THAT HOWLS!

*(The wolf howls, looking at them both. TUMBLEWEED jumps for joy. COWBOY steps back, gripping his holster.)*

**COWBOY (cont'd.)**

Hey, Plant, we should go. Don't get near that.

*(TUMBLEWEED approaches the wolf slowly and kindly, fascinated.)*

**TUMBLEWEED**

A FOREST FRIEND

**COWBOY**

A LOOMING THREAT

**TUMBLEWEED**

IT WAVES ITS TAIL

**COWBOY**

IT'S NOT A PET!

**COWBOY (cont'd.)**

What the *fuck* are you doing, Plant? Get away from it!

**TUMBLEWEED**

*(coaxing wolf)*

IT'S WALKING TOWARD ME

KIND, GRACIOUSLY

OPEN YOUR ARMS AND LET IT ALL UNFOLD

AND IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES

AND TRUST, YOU'LL FIND

THE FRIENDS YOU DIED TO HAVE ALL ALONG, YOU'LL—

*(Krak! COWBOY shoots the wolf. Beat.)*

**COWBOY**

You okay?

**TUMBLEWEED**

Am I okay? Am I *okay*?

**TUMBLEWEED**

**COWBOY**

*(rolling into COWBOY, attacking him)*  
You *killed* it. You *killed* the thing and it was innocent and it wasn't even trying to attack us, you're a murderer! Murderer!

*(cringing in pain)*  
Ow, ow, ow! Why are you *prickly*!?

**COWBOY**

Look, Plant, I...

**TUMBLEWEED**

Stop *calling me Plant*! I'm a Tumbleweed! For the billionth time!

*(TUMBLEWEED leaves.)*

**COWBOY**

Whatever. I guess.

*(He continues on and reaches his farm. AUCTION GUY is auctioning off his horses.)*

**AUCTION GUY**

And can I have three fifty? What about three fifty? Any one three fifty?

**COWBOY**

STOP! That's my farm! My horses?

**AUCTION GUY**

WHAT'S THAT? YOU CAME BACK? TO GET YOUR LITTLE HORSES  
IT'S TOO LATE, I'M AFRAID, SO PLEASE JUST GO AWAY.

**COWBOY**

I WILL GET THEM, YOU WON'T SELL THEM. YOUR DAY'S OVER, LITTLE GUY.  
I'LL DRAW MY GUN, LET'S HAVE SOME FUN, YOU CAN KISS THIS LIFE GOODBY-

*(AUCTION GUY trembles in fear. COWBOY drops his gun, remembering how TUMBLEWEED felt.)*

**COWBOY**

Now get out of here.

*(AUCTION GUY runs away. COWBOY reunites with his horses. All is solved.)*

## **COWBOY**

I'M JUST A COWBOY  
LIVIN' IN A LONESOME WORLD  
BUT I GOT MY HORSES  
SO I'M THE HAPPIEST GUY IN THE WORLD.