University of Massachusetts Boston

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Blue Cow, Green Cow

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Blue Cow, Green Cow
An opera in one scene.

The songs in this children's play may be made up by the children
or sung to tunes of songs that they already know.
You can also add more cows if you need more characters.
Also note that you don't need a narrator if you act out this short play.
What the narrator reads can be converted into stage directions.

Characters:
Narrator (optional)
Anna, a worried mother
Lynn, her sister
Andre, the elder son
Peter, the younger son
Doctor Art, a veterinarian
Receptionist, a Ms. Dolce who also doubles as Doctor Art's assistant.
Neighbor

Set: A doctor's office with a small waiting area and a larger examining room, with an open window.

Time: Now.

Lynn and Anna pantomime while the narrator speaks.
***Narrator**: At the door to a veterinarian's office are Anna and Lynn, her sister. They are struggling. Lynn pulls Anna away from the door; Anna pulls Lynn back to the door. Lynn is both angry and pleading. Two young boys are with them, not paying much attention to the commotion. The boys are down on all fours.*

Lynn: Anna! Listen to me! We shouldn't be here with these boys! Not here!

Anna: I'm their mother and I know what I must do about my sons!

***Narrator**: Finally Anna is able to knock on the door. A receptionist opens the door.*

Receptionist: Why, hello, Ms. Sargeant, hello, Ms. Meadows. What can I do for you?

Lynn: We need help! Anna is . . . well, acting crazy! Talk some sense into her! Tell her we shouldn't be here.

Receptionist [sits down, *writes in a notebook*]: Anna Meadows is acting crazy, and shouldn't be here. And? [*Looks up for more information]*

Anna: No, no, we need to see the vet. We need to see the vet now. My boys, Andre and Peter, are both sick! Look at them!

***Narrator**: Under the general chaos, the boys moo and talk to each other in gravelly, cow-like voices. Then they relax into positions as close to the way cows lie in a field as they can get. Peter, the younger one, starts to nibble at a plant on a nearby table.*

Lynn: Anna, you said "Vet." Now they know they're at the vet. You have just made everything worse!
[*To the receptionist*] I've been trying to tell her . . .

Receptionist [*nervous about her plant***]**: Peter, now don't nibble on that plant, please. It's rather special to me.

***Narrator**: Anna tries to pull her son Peter away from the plant he seems determined to nibble.*

Anna: This is an emergency! Oh, Andre! Peter! Oh, oh, oh . . . boys!

Receptionist [*writes in her notebook*]: Emergency visit for boys. Please, ladies! Boys! I'll call Doctor Art. Sit down, please, in the waiting room. Try to relax. The vet will be right with you.

***Narrator**: The Receptionist, quite nervous by now about her plant, exits to find Doctor Art. Doctor Art enters the waiting room.*

Doctor Art: Hello, my friends! How are you? Step this way [*leads them all into an examining room. The boys walk on all fours, then lie back down on the floor of the examining room.]* Oh, and what have we here? Why, hello, boys. Are you comfortable down there? What seems to be the problem?

Anna: Doctor Art! My boys, they are really sick. They have chills and fever. And they aren't sleeping. But that's not the worst of it . . .

Doctor Art: . . . Oh, I'm sorry to hear this. Tell me more.

Lynn: It's true. And they're exhausted all the time, and even vomiting. [*Desperately*] But listen; they really don't need to see a vet . . .

Doctor Art: . . . When did these symptoms begin?

Anna: Just a few nights ago.

Doctor Art: [*to Andre*] Let me take a look here.

Lynn: This is going too far . . .

***Narrator**: Andre remains on the floor, but stretches out his arms and legs for the doctor to examine.*

Anna: No, no! Andre! He means for you to get on the examining table, not stay on the floor! O, O, O!

Doctor Art: Don't worry. I can see what I need to see. Has they been eating? Eating well?

Anna: They're eating grass!

Doctor Art: That could explain the vomiting . . .

Anna [*to Lynn*]: . . . I told you he'd know what to do . . .

Doctor Art . . . if it's the wrong kind of grass.

Lynn: Ohhhhhhh!

Narrator: *Suddenly, someone knocks loudly at the door before rushing into the examining room. She is quite disturbed.*

Receptionist: Madam, madam! Please! Wait. Doctor Art is busy!

***Narrator:** Meanwhile, she hides her plant.*

Neighbor: Anna! Your boys came into my garden this morning and ate my vegetables! Andre ate my young potatoes, and Peter ate all my melons! All of them! Then they pulled up the other vegetables looks for more melons!

Andre: I love potatoes. Moo.

Peter: I love melons. Moo.

Doctor Art: Humm. Cows don't usually . . . This could be serious. Have either of you had diarrhea? [*He checks their rear ends*] No, doesn't seem so.

Lynn: Sister! Listen to me! We must take them to Doctor Daniels . . .

Doctor Art [*to himself*]: What color is his tongue? [*To Andre*] Say *aaah*.

Andre: Moo!

Peter: Moo, moo, moo. Wait until you see my tongue. Moo.

Doctor Art: I'll get to you in a moment, Peter. Be patient.

Anna: They think they're cows! They don't stop bellowing, night and day. Do you hear them? Bellow, bellow, bellow. . . all they do is bellow like that. And vomit grass! What ordinary doctor can deal with such a problem?

Doctor Art: Looks like a slight case of flambosis. Now let's check Peter's tongue.

Peter: [*thinking about it*] Too late. No need to check. Today I am blue. Moo.

Anna: Blue. Blue today, yellow yesterday.

Andre: Today I am green. Moo.

[*Overlap*ping**]**
[Lynn: Oh, no! Doctor Art, look at them. Peter is not blue.

Doctor Art. Blue. Not brown. Hum . . . . This is grave. Cows must be brown.

Lynn: Andre is not green. Oh, oh, [*turning to the receptionist and the neighbor*] Help us, friends!

Doctor Art: Or black and white. Or sometimes reddish. But blue? And green? Hum . . .

Lynn: They are not cows. Doctor Daniels, on the other hand . . . .

Doctor Art [*to the receptionist*]: I fear I must operate. These cows are really sick. Miss Dolce. Please put on your nurse's cap and prepare for an operation. Two, actually.]

End of overlapping.

Narrator: The receptionist slips away from the scene.

Boys' duet [*Their aria is punctuated with bellows, when each singer feels the urge*]**:**
Andre: It's better to be a cow, ah much better! [two beats] Moo!
Peter: We never do chores. We get in the way.
Andre: We don't go to school. A cow knows its needs.
Peter: We moo all the time, and munch on hay seeds.
Andre, Peter: A life of freedom for me! Moo!
[*back to cow-like talking*] Over the moon!!
Peter: Yeah! Let's jump over the moon!

Anna: Oh, no, not the moon. Oh, what if they try?

Lynn: THEY WON'T TRY!

Anna's aria: Oh, my sons. I'm so concerned. I'm so afraid!

I am consumed with fear for my little boys. Doctor Art is a good doctor; I put you in his hands. [Sung quickly; different tune] But . . . I'm so afraid. I'm so concerned. Oh, my little boys. I have taken care of you, I have washed your clothes, I have cooked food for you, I have carefully washed your clothes. I have loved you! But you want more, want what I can't give. I have loved you . . . And now . . . THIS!

Lynn's aria: My sister, don't lost courage. Don't lose hope. Just listen to one who cares for you.
Doctor Art will do no harm, I hope, and tomorrow we will go to another.
Dr. Daniels will know what to do with these boys.
We've tried your remedy; tomorrow we try mine. You'll see. All will be well.
Just don't lose hope; don't lose courage.

Narrator: *The receptionist returns with a nurse's cap [and outfit?] on. The receptionist/nurse and the neighbor sing, alternating lines, arm in arm and swaying. The boys moo to the tune, jubilantly:*

Neighbor: Cheer up, my friends. Doctor Art is an excellent
veterinarian.
Receptionist: I've known him for years. I've worked with him for years.
Neighbor: I trust my animals to him. I tell everyone about him, everyone
in town.
Receptionist: Take courage, my friends. Doctor Art is an excellent . . .
Both: . . . *veterinarian*.

Narrator: The boys moo softly in the background. The sisters watch him, hopefully; all sway as he sings.

Doctor Art sings: I do not dare let on how bad this is, these women are upset.
Never have I seen two cows so sick as these poor, wretched boys.
A cow that's green? A cow that's blue? A dire predicament for sure!
It's clear that I must operate. Yes, it's clear what I must do.

Doctor Art *[To himself, away from the others.]*
Will I succeed? This is a rare and difficult procedure.
And will it cure these boys? Oh, I'm so full of doubt . . .
Should I fail, the boys will be blue and green forever!
Or worse! Or worse! They may die! I couldn't bear it!

Narrator: Doctor Art walks to an open window and stares into space, thinking. The mooing starts to build to a crescendo.

Doctor Art: No, my duty lies before me. I will have to do it, I'm called to do it.
I must change the blue to brown, the green back to black and white!
Though should I fail, the boys will be blue and green forever!
Or worse! Or worse! They may die! I couldn't bear it!

Narrator: *Here the boys' mooing becomes loud and triumphant as Doctor Art becomes more confident.*

Doctor Art: But I'll not fail! Therefore, bring on the trial! Let be what will be! I can do it!
[*Talking to the Receptionist, now a Nurse*]
Nurse! Prepare! First give me my largest scalpel, the sharpest, sharpest one . . .

Narrator: She produces it from her receptionist's outfit. Anna screams. Lynn falls back onto the examining table, huddles into a fetal position, crying oh, oh, oh!
The boys are still mooing with joy but then they see the knife, a little after everyone else does. Andre looks at Peter. They slowly stop mooing. Andre clears his cow's throat loudly and awkwardly, then sings. His singing sounds more human after the first line or so:

André: I am sorry, Mama. I am sorry, Auntie Lynn. Perhaps I am not really a cow.
I'd love to play football, I want to eat steak! I'm feeling much better now!
Oh, Mama! It's good to be a boy. And Peter agrees with me, too.
[*He kicks his brother like a cow would do, with his back leg.*]
We like being boys. We love being boys. We're ready to go home with you.
Yes, we'd love to go home with you!

Anna and Lynn overjoyed, arms around first the boys, then each other. Alternating lines, they sing:

Anna: O, my sons! My beautiful sons!
Lynn: O, my nephews! Sweet boys of ours!
Anna: How happy I am! You're back to yourselves!
Lynn: No more of that mooing and mooning. . .
Anna, Lynn: And we're happy as we were before . . .

Narrator: *But at the last minute, Peter turns and jumps out the window and runs . . .*
Looks of fear and consternation on everyone's face!

Doctor Art: Wait! Come back!

The end.