Marble always was an adventuresome cow. She was constantly exploring her surroundings, forever entranced by the intricate workings of our society, truly a cow among cows. It was always a dream of hers to visit the city. Precious few in her herd had ever made it past the confines of the barbed-wire enclosure and those who had were now old and forgetful. But the time was now for her dream to come to fruition.

Marble was a frugal cow with no dependants. For years, she had saved all of the spare change found around the pasture and had cashed in her pop cans faithfully; she was now ready to embark on her long-awaited trip.

On this particular Tuesday, an excited Marble stood by the side of the road and after a few frustrating hours was finally able to hail a cab. She clumsily entered the rear seat. The driver started the meter and she was off on her sure-to-be-exciting adventure.

Marble finally arrived in the city. She paid the cab driver and gave him a handsome tip (he was really very patient). Her first stop, she decided, would be the Post Office.

Marble pushed and shoved her way into the dangerously overcrowded lobby..."was this Christmas time?" she wondered? No, she noticed, it was just that there was only one window open. "I've heard about this type of thing," she mused.

The place was a carnival of activity, each customer with a different problem: "Do you have any more Kublah-Kahn commemoratives?" "Well, how much is first class?" "Do you know the 9-digit zip-code for Dubuque?" And the notices! She had never seen so many: "FRAGILE", "SPECIAL DELIVERY", "BOOK RATE", "WANTED: FOR MURDER." The service personnel were friendly but few and seemed to have a strong affinity for light blue.
Despite its foibles, this was a patriotic place, the Post Office. Marble wanted to pledge allegiance to the flag but was unable to balance on only three hooves. Instead, she merely exited humming "God Bless America."

The next stop on her itinerary was the grocery store. Marble had always been told by her friends to NEVER enter a grocery store, but she simply had to see for herself what the hub-bub was about. She neared the doors and they suddenly swung open...as though inviting her inside. She carefully and cautiously looked around. There was an orgy of color, all bright and brash. She was bombarded with screaming labels and frantic shoppers. She noticed, however, that it was all quite organized, as far as chaos goes...aisle after aisle of neatly stacked, perfectly displayed products begging for purchase.

Marble passed the dairy section and smiled knowingly. As she rambled the aisles, she wondered, "What is the big fuss? Why the urgent warnings?" Then she saw it.

The meat counter.

Instantly, she turned and galloped down aisle 12 while screaming at the top of her cow lungs. It was not a pretty sight. At the end of the aisle, she made a sharp right towards the doors. Still screaming, she skidded on her very hooves (not dissimilar to a dog on kitchen tile) around the bag boy and out the door.

Marble stopped suddenly outside and realized she was still screaming. So she smacked herself back into reality and tried to restore her breathing and heart rate. She bravely decided to continue her sojourn.

Marble travelled down the avenue and noticed a tall, cold building. She read the sign on the door: "Open 9-12 to serve you (if we want to) Closed Saturday, Sunday, alternate Thursdays, and most employee birthdays." She took a left turn into the building and unknowingly entered a caustic and certainly unfriendly world known as The Bank.
Being a foreigner in this place (indeed, most cows are), Marble decided to take a cautious closer look. An initial glance revealed a hard woman, age well over 200, seated before a plethora of buttons and telephones. "May I help you?" the woman demanded.

"No, just looking," Marble thought, though she was unable to vocalize this sentiment because, after all, she was a cow and cows are notoriously inept at foreign languages. She bravely inched forward. This horrible world was unfolding before her very eyes. The brutal carnage of rejected loan applicants, the apprehensive and trembling newlyweds begging for a joint account, the strung-out mother of six facing stern reproach for neglecting last months Christmas Club payment. Marble shuttered.

She noticed the tellers, the blue-haired and bitter leftovers from the early Mesolithic Age. SUDDENLY, THERE SHE WAS! She was the meanest of mean, the Queen of this klan, with 5 stars on her shoulders, it was (GASP!) ZIBBY!!! "Chin up!" she boomed. "Empty those ink pens! Apply that per-check charge! Nuke that overdraft!" She was ruthless.

"This place is unreal!" Marble trembled, "Surely this place is one of the darkest bowels of Hell. I must leave and seek a means of relaxation and security!" It was then that she embarked on the last leg of her journey, the movies.

Ahh, the movies...Marble headed for the neon room of escape. Because she attended the early-Bird matinee, she got in at a reduced rate, which was fortunate since she needed the extra $4.50 to spring for some popcorn. She entered the severely air-conditioned and perfectly garrish lobby, ticket in hoof. She presented her admit stub to the sterile but friendly attendant. Ripping the ticket in two, he mechanically implored, "Enjoy the Show!"

Marble moved toward the snack stand as a herd of moviegoers, apparently famished, muscled for some treats. She went out on a limb, monetarily speaking, and purchased a buffet-sized popcorn and trough-sized cola. Armed and ready, she headed for the seats.
The lights dimmed. The projector started. One half-an-hour later the movie began; it was preceded by a no smoking notice, Will Rogers Institute plea for cash, preview, preview, preview, "enjoy the show", titles, theme song, and a long fade into the movie.

Marble enjoyed the show, despite the fact that some insolent, pre-pubescent rag-a-muffin yelled "ROSEBUD WAS HIS SLED!" early into the first scene. She exited the theatre a refreshed and sticky cow.

And now, with little remorse, Marble had to return home. She had just enough money to get there if the cab driver didn't dawdle. She hailed a cab and headed home a fulfilled and significantly less naive cow.

Marble would experience many, many more new and exciting things in her life but the one experience which yielded her favorite and most memorable anecdotes would always be the day she went to the city.
MARBLE VISITS THE CITY

an honors thesis

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MARBLE VISITS THE POST OFFICE
MARBLE VISITS THE GROCERY STORE
NEXT WINDOW, PLEASE

MARBLE VISITS THE BANK