

## **Bullhoey**

**Welcome stranger. I'm so glad you took the time to tour our little village. I'll be glad to be your guide and navigator. Feel free to stay as long as you like. It helps us when strangers come through. Whether visitors stay for an hour or a weekend, they always leave their mark here in some way. That's how we get most of our new ideas. I'm sure that you have a few of your own.**

**As you can see, this is the main street of our little village. Nearly everywhere that you would wish to travel to is right here on one of these intersecting streets and of course if it is not, you can just ask any of our residents and they will inform you as to the where and how. But not the why. That is altogether another story. Many of them would be glad to walk with you and make sure that you get to your desired destination. Now you might see or hear some things that you don't comprehend here. You can ask me anything and I will do my best to address your inquiry or take you to someone who knows more than me-which is almost everyone.**

**Before you even ask, I will attempt to explain why the buildings on our side of the street are all leaning to the right and all of the buildings across the street are leaning to the left. Of course that is related to the question of why most of the people are either leaning to the right or to the left as well. As far as buildings go, you will find all of the dwelling places away from the main street askew and all at very different angles. You will also find that some of our residents lean neither to the left or the right-but they are in the minority. Some skip and hop through town while some others are frequently found duck walking through town. The duck walkers usually have the most unusual points of view, but they can't help it. Everything must look quite different from that perspective. If you stay for awhile you may find that your gait changes as well.**

**Before I can discuss the walking and building issues I have to backtrack a bit. Better get used to that-I do it a lot. Anyhow...Just like any other town (or so I have been told,) There are four cardinal directions that one can take into or out of here. We have a North. We have a South. We have an East. And we have a direction that cannot be named.**

**When a visitor rides up from the South boundary, we know that they will be hungry, thirsty, horny and rowdy. Though we try our best to accommodate them, they usually get bored easily and don't stay very long.**

**When a visitor rides down from the North country, we know they will be inscrutable and slow to speak. They're often more interested in listening to our**

philosophical conversations than anything else. Some northerners have gotten so caught up in philosophical discourse that they have forgotten to leave or as we say, they have become us.

When a visitor rides in from the East, we know that they come in with a long tradition that has been lived out and passed down for many years. Although we may find them to be a little stunted and stodgy, they often find us strange, and rarely stay very long. At first they may try to change us to be like them, but after while they realize that this is too big a task, and leave.

That leaves us with the direction that cannot be named. One must be careful in looking in that direction that you don't linger too long. A short glance works best, anything longer leaves you susceptible. Many things both healing and horrible have been purported to enter our town usually under cover of the morning mist or the evening haze. Any thing that enters our town from that direction becomes unpredictable. Like the Bullhoey for example.

Yes, I see your eyes light up when I mention the Bullhoey. That's what you're really here for, isn't it?

Before I tell you about the Bullhoey, let me set you straight on how we measure the passage of time. In the town square is the one and only clock that measures time as you are likely used to measuring it. The clock on the East side is a sundial. As you would expect. The clock on the south side is set on bar time, and of course bar time is different in every bar. The clock on the north side measures time in both forward and backward dimensions since some believe that time has not been proven to only move in one direction. Of course the clock on the side of town that cannot be named is, as you would expect it to be, quite mysterious. We don't even know who erected it along with an engraved coda of special instructions. No one has figured out how to make sense of it, but that doesn't stop it from being a topic of coffee shop discussions. It measures not only the length of time but also the width and depth. Of course most of us live superficially and are used to measuring time only by it's length. In summary, you're probably better off to just make your best guess by sun or by moon. Those are still our most reliable timepieces.

Sssh. Did you hear that? Three shrill sirens, each one louder than the last. Quick avert your gaze toward that nearby tree and close your eyes until the all clear sounds. There's a Bullhoey on the loose.

I guess I'd better tell you about the Bullhoey. Brace yourself, from what I understand they have never been observed outside our village. Where to start. The Bullhoey has three curved tusks protruding from it's piglike snout. Each tusk is sharp enough and long enough to end your existence with a single thrust. There are two attributes that draw the attention of the Bullhoey. If you are face to face and lock eyes with it, even inadvertently, it will charge you. If it sees in it's periphery that you are showing fear-it will charge you. In other words- heads, you lose.

If on the other hand, you glance at the posterior region- tails, you lose. Of course you will not die merely by glancing at one of the beast's seven hind regions-all angled oddly, but for the next forty-eight hours you will wish you were dead. Extreme nausea will be accompanied by a meningitis like headache that will make that last migraine seem like rain tapping on the roof.. While you are enduring your unbearable headache and can't even open your eyes, you will be unable to turn away from your detailed images of the beast's nether anatomical regions.

There is a third glance that one can make, however it is extremely unlikely. As unlikely as calling a coin flip and having it land upright. Legend has it that if you glance at either side of a Bullhoey for a few seconds-you can ask for one thing to be healed-and it will be so. A second too long however, and the beast will turn towards you as it feels it's energy leaving, and that will be all she wrote.

Finally, there's the all clear. The threat is over for now.

Sorry visitor, I get a little long winded sometimes. Would you like to have lunch? We can either go to Dirks East End Grill, Johnny's Southside or Northern Conversation which is primarily a coffee shop, but does have a few other items. Hopefully you like donuts, cause that's mostly our cuisine. Cumulatively, we offer 383 different donuts, all of which are available as full dinners. You can have your lobster mac n' cheese or ham n' swiss or your breakfast donuts or just about anything else your heart desires. And yes, all of them have frosting or powdered sugar on them or they wouldn't be donuts, would they. We'll stop in at Northern Conversation and see what's happening. I'm guessing that a few of the philosophers will be there. It should be an interesting place to hang out for awhile.

As you can see, all the buildings on the main street are leaning one way or the other. This is often a topic of discourse at the coffee shop. You'll find that there are two seemingly opposite thoughts about why this is. One group, the left-leaners thinks that we live in a bottom up universe where by random unguided actions everything builds up to create everything else. Then- it makes sense that the buildings evolved to lean in opposite directions so that no single wind could blow them all down. Of course the right-leaners think differently. They're convinced that we live in a top down universe guided by one who cannot be named. They believe that the one who cannot be named set things up in this village to reveal the diversity of the universe and to inspire this unique village to have these kind of philosophical discussions. Of course the skippers, hoppers and duck-walkers have a different view of this. In fact, the duck-walkers have such unique viewpoints that there are no two alike. The left and right leaners like to point out that their unique viewpoints simply result from having their heads tilted up as they walk.

If you look up as we're passing, you can see a fine mesh cage suspended above the center of the town. This was some technological feat to design and install. Although we have never had two Bullhoey sightings at the same time, if we did-it

would be entirely unmanageable. You see-we have to be prepared for a variety of contingencies, and we do our best. We certainly want our citizens to feel safe. In fact, Bullhoey preparedness training begins in middle school.

Here we are at the coffee shop. Let's sit a spell and see what the conversation of the day is.

"I don't think that they really exist," stated philosopher #1

"Just because you haven't observed one doesn't mean anything," offered #2

#1 and #2 looked at #3 and waited for a response,\.

"Just takin it all in...Don't worry. I'll weigh in if I feel like it."

"Look if science haven't discovered them...then they're absent or irrelevant," continued #1

"I suppose you think we're mistaken about the direction that cannot be named."

"That's right. If it can't be perceived with our senses and measured with our reason- what good is it?"

"A scientist can measure the heighth, girth, root growth and health of a tree. They can drill into it and find out what creatures live inside it, but they cannot comprehend or measure the value and aesthetic appreciation that a particular tree has for the one who planted it thirty years ago and watched it grow or what value it may have for their children," posited #2.

At that, the other two philosophers agreed to call it a day and meet again next week.

"these paradoxes never actually get resolved, but we find them enjoyable anyway. Well stranger, that's the basic tour. I can recommend a couple of places to stay w/ nice rooms and amenities or you're welcome to camp out at our park on the East edge of town if you care to extend your visit.

I hope that conversation you heard didn't disappoint you about the bullhoey. Some of our visitors become convinced that the bullhoey don't really exist and they become very disappointed. The final word on that is still under discussion. So...will the legend of the bullhoey die out, you may wonder, like other legends. Well stranger, that's really up to you.