



Ralphie - Andy - Elvis

GENTLE GIANTS

Ralphie, Andy, and Elvis are adult male Holstein Steer. While in itself that might not sound so remarkable, male Holsteins are not a common sight. The reason for this is that they are an unwanted byproduct of the dairy industry and are killed for veal while they're still calves as they aren't milk producers and they aren't beef cows.

Receiving no consideration other than as units of monetary profit, Ralphie, Andy and Elvis were separated at birth from their mothers. They were rescued from dark, filthy barns, each tied to rails that wouldn't let them so much as turn around.

In terms of size, adult male Holsteins are monsters! Ralphie stands six feet tall (eight feet if he picks his head all the way up and taller still if one counts the horns). Once fully grown, they will stand even taller and will weigh slightly less than a Hyundai. Holsteins are huge animals and among the largest in the western hemisphere.

Ralphie, Andy, and Elvis each know exactly how powerful he is. Each knows his own physical size and each knows yours as well. Each is fully aware that he could cause you great damage. But that doesn't stop Ralphie from touching his nose to yours or letting you rub the vulnerable soft area under his two-foot long throat. And it doesn't stop Andy from licking your arm like a cat (complete with sandpaper tongue) or lowering his forehead close to yours so the two of you can

get in some head-rubbing time. Elvis can be a bit more reserved. But, when approached, he too will lower his head, lick your hand and allow you to brush him until your arm gives out.

How often during your week do you encounter such power wrapped up in such gentleness?

— *Bob Esposito*

