



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

The Calf with a Heart

After nearly fifty years of raising cattle, you would think we had seen it all.

Spring calves come and go in steady rhythm. Strong ones. Spotted ones. Long-legged ones. Some we remember. Most we don't.

But on April 2, 2025, one calf captured our heart with his.

He stood beside his mama in the green spring grass, still unsteady on new legs, and right there in the center of his forehead was a perfectly shaped white heart.

Not a dot. Not a crooked patch. A heart.

I blinked. I tilted my head. I walked closer. Surely it was just the angle of the light. But no — it was there. Clear as day.

We named him Valentine.

His mother, Blackie, is the matriarch of our herd — tall, steady, and wise in the way good cows are.

She has raised strong calves year after year. Each one carries her little signature: a white tip on the tail. Valentine does too.

His sire is Jimbo, is our registered Black Angus bull with a calm temperament and solid build.

Between the two of them, Valentine has good bones beneath that charming marking.

As he's grown, so has the heart. It hasn't faded or blurred. If anything, it's become more defined.

Strangers who see his photograph often ask if I edited it in. I didn't. I wouldn't know how



Spring calves come and go, and most aren't memorable. (Photos courtesy of Annette Bridges)



if I tried.

John reminds me that hearts don't add pounds at the sale barn.

He's right, of course. Ranching is business. Calves grow, calves sell. That's the rhythm.

But every now and then, something small interrupts the practical march of it all.

A reminder that even in a life built on feed schedules, breeding charts, and market reports, there is still room for wonder.

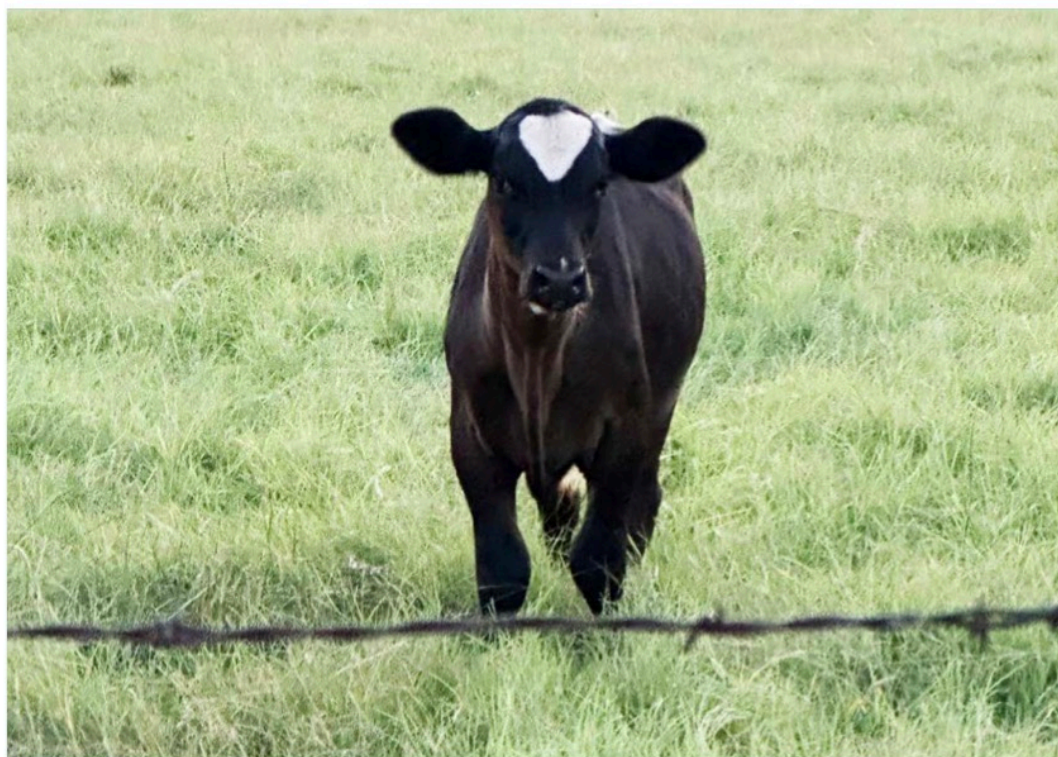
Valentine will soon leave our pasture — whether through private treaty or the auction ring.

What I know is simple: after half a century spent welcoming new life into the pasture, I've never witnessed a calf take its first breath with a heart so boldly stitched together.

And maybe that's the point.

Some things don't change the numbers.

They just change you. 



The calf with the heart growing up.

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