

Mini-Story: Bovine Tavern Wench

By FoxFaceStories

Artan settled down at the Hero's Inn, following a hardy adventure that had come to nought. Calling for an ale, one adventurer among several at the table, he was shocked to see that no ordinary tavern wench approached the table, but a woman of unexpectedly bovine appearance. A pair of horns protruded out from her honey-blond hair, along with a pair of furry white and brown-splotted cow ears. Her face ended in a short, wide cow's snout, yet still retained a womanly look. The rest of her body, as far as the adventurers could tell, was also covered in fur. She was a dainty thing, short and sweet, but had an undeniably hourglass figure, with a pair of breasts that strained against her bodice and rose like impressive soufflés with each breath. Despite her cow features, or perhaps because of them, she was actually quite beautiful. Beautiful and entrancing, in an exotic kind of way.

"What can I get you, gentlemen?" she asked in a sweet, high voice. Her large eyes were a deep blue, and she had a welcoming manner about her. "You, sir, look like you need a drink after a hard day."

"That's certainly true," Artan said, trying not to stare too deeply, "my quest went rather sideways. If you have a hearty ale to spare, I would pay for it kindly."

"I can certainly do that, sir. You look like you need one."

She gave a small curtsy, before turning away. A ropey tail flicked freely out from behind her green and brown tavern-made clothing, and Artan noticed she was barefoot. Or, judging from the clacking they made upon the floor, *bare-hooved*. She took the orders of another customer, sharing a laugh.

"Who is that woman?" Artan asked an older man at his table. "I've never seen her like before."

The old man laughed. "Didn't ya know? That there Eris Greenheart, the famed cow-girl of the Hero's Inn. But you might know her as the *former* Night Thief of Terrengrad, Eren Greyhast."

Artan scoffed at this, unbelieving as the adorable bovine tavern wench began pouring ale behind the counter. "Nonsense. The Night Thief was killed by the wizard Zolan in the Tower of Treasures."

"Was he now? Well, I can tell you different. Eren Greyhast was the first – and so far, the *only* – person to ever skilfully find his way into the Tower of Treasures. As the bards tell it true, he did indeed pass through deadly traps, best cunning illusions, and solve the most devious puzzles,

all to reach Zolan's prized treasures. Only, as you may have heard, the wizard Zolan loves his transformation spells, and as Eren made his way ever closer to the heart of the tower, the occasional slipup saw him experience change after change.

First, the Night Thief was shocked to find himself becoming weaker, shorter, less than 5-and-a-half feet. A small problem. Later, his body turned suddenly into an attractive female. But no matter, he would find a cure, so he pressed on. After another slipup, Eren felt the discomfort of growing horns, fur, a tail, and riper melons. But even as a cow-woman, his pride refused to leave him. And he pressed on. Until finally he found the treasure, and in a great act of foolishness failed to check for one final trap, and found himself frozen on the spot. That's when the wizard Zolan . . ."

"Here you go boys, two ales." The two men looked up in surprise at Eris. "Enjoy!"

"I will," said Artan, still disbelieving the tale. He turned to the older man. "Go on then . . ."

The old man waited for Eris to walk away, her honey-blonde hair bouncing in rhythm to her tail, which swayed from a well-placed hole in her dress. She laughed with another customer, placing a hoof-hand on her impressively round hip as she served him. She was clearly well-liked here.

"Anyway, as I was saying, the Night Thief was caught, frozen in place like a statue and dead to rights. He knew that the terrible powers of Zolan extended to the ability to prolong death's release even through unnatural tortures. But the wizard was impressed; no one had ever gotten this far, and it was only a minor – though disastrous – slipup that meant Eren wouldn't escape. And so, the wizard offered a choice to Eren Greyhast:

"You can either suffer an endless torture here in the tower, and be a reminder to all not to disturb my tower, or you may return safely to the Hero's lodge, with the following conditions: you will never again retain your male form, and you will remain this delightful cow-woman for life. Furthermore, your thieving days are over; you shall be a serving maid in the Inn, well-taken care of, but a living warning to others. Last of all, a woman – even a furred one such as yourself – must have a woman's urges also. Your womanising days are long behind you; from now, you shall look to the manly heroes much as the serving wenches once looked at you. So, what be your choice?"

"And he chose to remain the way he was?" Artan asked, bewildered.

The old man guffawed, and downed the rest of his ale. "Well, what do you think he should have done, accepted endless torture and pain only to die?"

"But . . . to become a woman. A cow woman."

"Better than death lad. Besides, *she* seems quite happy. Enough so she's a married woman now."

Artan nearly dropped his drink. "Eren is married? As a woman?"

The old man grinned. “Aye, going on over three years now. And it’s *Eris* these days. She’s married to Bulham, the tavern keep. Lucky man, and she a lucky woman too, to have found a new lease on life. And an enjoyable little coincidence that his name is *Bull*-ham, don’t you think?”

Artan was bewildered. “How does he – she, I suppose – stomach it? Surely the shame . . .”

“Oh, it’s not so bad, especially once you’ve had a few years to get used to it.”

Artan whirled about to the cowgirl returned with his ale, a smirk on her snout and a firm hoof-hand on her hip. She raised an eyebrow in amusement as she placed the ale down upon the table.

“Trust me, if the Night Thief of Terrengrad, Eren Grayhast could be adaptable, why not Eris Greenheart, tavern maid of Hero’s Inn? Hello Zolan, I see you’re regaling another with my story.”

Artan turned with shock to the old man. “*You’re* Zolan the Wizard?”

The old wizard laughed. “Oh, I like to drop in for a free ale from my favourite tavern maid from time to time. Admire my handiwork. And do I sense a new development Eris? Does Bulham know?”

Her hoof-hand fell to her stomach as she smiled. “Oh, Bulham is *very* excited, and doesn’t care what it looks like. He’s just hoping for a son. At least all my milk will finally have a place to go.”

The two chuckled, and Eris stepped away on her hooves, a spring in her step. Artan remained bewildered, but Zolan just put a hand on his shoulder. “From Night Thief to mother. People are adaptable, friend, as you’ll soon find out. After all, don’t think I didn’t notice you near my Garden of Pleasures before you turned tail. Hmm . . . tail. Say Artan, how do you feel about *horses*?”

The End