

Beer for My Horses

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Beer for My Horses

by [B_Radley](#)

Summary

A Link through the ages? Or is he just crazy?

Notes

Author's Note: Content warning for implied portrayals of the social and economic attitudes of the Wild West in the 1870s, as well as the combatting of those attitudes. Also, the length of this one might be my vote on the question of 800 words. It is done in the spirit of the challenge, but can untag if I need to.

Major James Blackthorne, United States Tenth Cavalry, stares at the two large males confronting the young woman in the makeshift saloon. His eyes narrow at the two, apparently yet another incarnation of the dozens of less-than-savory examples of late 1870s society concentrating in this frontier encampment on the edge of the plains.

All of them trying to figure out how they can kill as many as they each can of the hundreds of buffalo gathered on those plains.

He shifts his eyes to the young woman. He notices that her skin, darker than most, sets her apart and as fair game in the minds of these sterling specimens of humanity. Her attire and hairstyle sets her up even more.

She is clad in leather trousers and a vest that leaves her arms bare. In spite of himself, he doesn't look at the usual charms that such attire would enhance. Rather, it is the distinct muscle tone of her arms, that he doesn't usually see while admiring the feminine form.

That or her height. She is easily six feet tall, an inch or two taller than he is.

Her eyes, fierce and flashing fall on his. He realizes that they are an intriguing blue-gray in color. It is when he gets above her eyes, that he sees her true uniqueness. Instead of the expected dark hair, long and straight of one possible heritage, or curly of another, there is none.

The young woman is completely bald, except for her eyebrows and eyelashes.

He shakes his head, sending the smirk that she gives him away. He turns to the two men leering at her, being egged on by the audience of like-minded mouth-breathers.

"I think that you can allow the young woman to go about her business," he says.

The first one, who might be the most intelligent—which isn't saying much in this crowd, turns his eyes towards him. Blackthorne isn't clad in his blue uniform coat, just the light blue trousers and his army weapons belt.

"Why the hell should we listen to you, soldier-boy?" he says, twirling the large knife in his hand. "Her kind ain't welcome here."

Blackthorne shifts to the proprietor, who stares at him defiantly. He looks down at the the gold coins on the bar. "So her money isn't?"

He doesn't answer, but looks at the spokesstug, who moves closer to the young woman, leering at her. "She certainly has the opportunity to make some," he says.

“I doubt that you have a small enough denomination for the thirty seconds that you could keep my interest,” she says. Surprisingly she says this in a cultured English accent. “Or the hygiene.”

The man turns and starts to advance on her.

Until the long barrel of a Remington pistol intersects with his right nostril, held steady in her hand.

Blackthorne feels the crowd shift. He unsnaps the flap of the holster covering the Colt Single Action Army, then moves the right hand to the Smith and Wesson Schofield in the crossdraw on his left.

“They’ve only got three guns,” another genius says.

There is a mutter through the audience. First Sergeant Lincolnton stand in the door, his hand near his Colt.

Along with ten other troopers. “I don’t need any more,” he says. “They are my weapons.” He looks at the bartender. “Whisky for my men,” he says. “And if you say you don’t serve their kind in here, I will shut this place down. I have that authority.”

He turns to the thug with the Remington growing from his nose. “Buy the lady a drink,” he says forcefully.

Cadet Fourth Class Jamie Blackthorne starts awake, the dream, or whatever it was, fading. He glances down at the other cadet lying against him on the couch in the common quarters. Those blue-gray eyes are now shuttered.

They had known each other for all three months; now that they were out of Beast Barracks, they did have a breather to lie on a couch, studying together on a lazy Sunday afternoon.

He shakes his head as he tries to remember the entirety of the dream. Like the others over the past ten years or so, they didn’t have the quality of dreams.

They were more like vivid memories.

Memories of those gone before in his family, from what he had read.

The officer of buffalo soldiers in the wild west was a new visitor.

He grins. Maybe he was just crazy, and Starfleet’s rigorous psych profiles had missed that fact.

“You’re not crazy,” Chandra murmurs against him. His eyes widen. Even though they had shared images together through her empathic gifts, he didn’t think she could read his thoughts.

They hadn’t gone that far in their ‘cultural explorations.’

She grins at him, not opening her eyes.

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