

Blooming Clovers: Tavern or Bust!

Written for the 'Not Lucky, Just Busty' contest

By Stravix

It was a dreary day outside the walls of the Rusted Horseshoe tavern. Orla could see the shapes of the grey clouds outside the blurred windows getting darker with the promise of rain. For a tavern keeper this was usually a good sign, as folks were more likely to scurry to places of warmth and food than trot about in a downpour. But past experiences told her that this just meant her day was about to get a lot more boring.

Her one sole customer on such a day as this cleared his throat, and Orla instinctively sighed in preparation.

“Bleary afternoon and this place is still as quiet as a dormouse hiding from an alley cat.”

“Maybe my customers are scared off by the refined gentleman sitting on my stool” she replied, which garnered a grunt from the man in response.

A quiet tavern outside a thriving Irish town is about as unnatural as things can get. Doing her best to ignore the statement she continued staring out the blurry windows as locals and travellers passed by without nary a glance into her establishment. She didn’t understand it.

“You look one foot in the grave, girl. Would it kill you to look cheery...” the man said louder.

Slumping more over the counter out of spite while putting on her most sullen expression. “Ask me arse...” she huffed.

BANG!

Orla jumped from the sudden noise that resounded in the empty building. Tearing her eyes off the windows she finally looked at the man whom she had been wanting to not exist. *Lord* Cormac, as he kept reminding her to refer to him as, looked much like someone had carved an enormous statue of a dandy gentlemen and placed it on one of her barstools. The empty mug gripped in his hand being the source of the racket.

“Horrible beer.” He finally said after a few quiet moments. Wiping the froth off his enormous moustache with a handkerchief he produced out of his finely tailored shirt.

Orla sighed loudly. “Then don’t drink it.”

“Who else would drink it then? And your food is worse.”

“Then don’t eat it! I’m not cooking anything for your *noble* palate anyway.”

“That right? I doubt even someone half-dead and starving in the streets would be satisfied.”

She resumed slumping onto the counter. “Then shove it up your...”

“ORLA!” he shouted as he stood up, blocking the sunlight from the windows in their entirety and sending a shadow over her. His steely gaze held her own for another few quiet moments before he sucked in a breath to regain his composure.

"I didn't come here to argue. It's been months! Your father's venture has a mounting debt, and you haven't shown any aptitude in running it. It's not a small thing, Orla. Besides, running a tavern is not suitable for a young woman of your bloodline."

"Oh, here we go." Orla decided to stand up straight, even though her average height and slim build paled in comparison to the block of a man. "Then what *should* a woman of my line do? Hook up with some noble son and pop out kids forever more, right?"

Cormac bristled. "She shouldn't be running a tavern, obviously! Drink and debauchery are all these establishments are good for!"

"Ain't drink and fun the point of taverns? My Da' thought so."

"My brother... Your *father* was an idiot."

"Don't you *dare*." Orla sneered at him. "He gave me everything I ever needed and wanted."

"Aye, spoiled you rotten too, and what good happened in the end?"

She felt heat rising to her face, but a cold feeling in her chest sucked it back down as his words bit in. Once more the dirty rag on the counter became the sole focus of her attention.

"You helped my Da when things got rough. It's not fair you don't help me too." She whined.

"That *help* was because I couldn't stand seeing him wallow about like some pissant in the streets with my niece." He pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration. "He might have been an idiot, but you should have a better future."

Orla looked up at him. "Then help me get a future right here! Just give me some money and a bit of time! I can learn! You said my first brew was dirt water, but this time you called it beer!"

Lord Cormac sighed and rubbed his forehead. "*Beer* at the very minimum of the word."

"But that's something, right?"

"You also can't cook."

She folded her arms indignantly. "My food is fine! If I can eat it, so can everyone else."

"Don't lie! You barely feed yourself. Willow of a girl that you are." Cormac gestured at her body up and down with a pointed finger. "You've barely grown anything worth calling a woman."

Orla felt her face flush in embarrassment. "Oh shut it you muppet!" she covered her chest, not that it took much effort to hide. "I'm not a woman unless I got some tits like some dairy cow, that it?"

Cormac cleared his throat as if shoving down an answer. "...and you are rude on top of it all. But no matter, Patrick will be along to collect shortly. And when you inevitably can't pay up..."

Orla felt the rag crumple in her fingers.

"... I will buy the deed and clear the debt myself. This building will become a trading post and I will scrub your idiot father's scheme from our family's history. You will come to live at my estate. You will learn to read, write, and *act* as a lady should. In time, you will find a worthy suitor..."

He raised his hand quickly to catch the balled-up rag flung towards his face.

"...For what it is worth, I know your father would not want you to live like this. Lonely and barely able to take care of yourself."

"Don't you *dare* say what would have thought! You don't know my Da' like I did." Orla hissed back.

Lord Cormac stared at her coldly before gently placing the rag onto the counter, donned his cap and strode towards the door.

"See you again soon, Orla."

The door closed. And with that she was alone.

"Ahhhhgh! You stupid thick muppet of a ghghghr!" Her fingers sank into her red locks as if she could tear out the frustration by force. The truth behind Cormac's words pressed down on her so much she felt as if she couldn't breathe. The tavern was *hers*. It was her world for as long as she could remember. Running beneath the tables when she was little. The smells of sweaty travellers and leather boots mingling with the scents of hot stews and alcohol. Her father's voice joining into the laughter.

"...find a worthy suitor. Not on your life." She huffed as she straightened up and made towards the door to turn the open/closed sign. She didn't feel like working anymore today.

"I'd sooner run away and live in the forest as a crazed harlot." She chuckled to herself. "Let's see if he likes *that* from his bloodline." Her hands wrapped around the wooden board.

"Talking to yourself again Orla?" A muffled voice came from the other side of the doorway. Glancing up she was surprised to see a blurred face staring back at her through the door's windows.

"GAH!" she yelped and stepped back. The door opened slowly allowing a gust of wind in from the worsening weather to blow in. A thick braid of auburn hair announced the owner first as Eileen stepped through the entrance, dressed in the dark, banker attire known to bring dread to all debtors who see it in their doorways. Her hips jingled with various coin pouches and purses that held today's reaping.

Seeing her friend's pristine appearance made her more self-conscious of her own state. Brushing her hair with her fingers she managed to mutter. "Eileen... Ah, hello! Erm... y-your father's not behind you is he."

Eileen's braid waved as the girl shook her head. "He has got a few other places behind me to visit. I went ahead of him. Figured you might want to... talk?"

The slight offer of empathy was the final straw to break her, and she slumped to the floor in front of her and starting crying. "Eileen! You couldn't stall for just wee bit more time?! I don't want to lose my Da's place! It's all I have!"

Eileen sighed and squatted down. Careful to keep her long skirt from brushing the dirty floor. "I know, and I'm sorry. Lord Cormac caught onto my little tricks with my father." She pursed her lips looking down at her friend. "But i-it's kind of a part of life to let go of the past, right? I heard that he'll be taking you in! You should be happy! He's the richest man from here to the Lilles after all. You'll be in fine care."

Orla sniffled and coughed. “Oh sure, reeeeeeal happy. He’ll make me a prim and proper lass just to hand off to some noble lord for his son’s birthday...He insulted my beer and cooking you know!”

Eileen cleared her throat. “Orla, I...the quality of your cooking is...”

Orla scoffed. “I know I can’t hold a candle to your skill, but it’s food! Like people go to a tavern for something to eat, right?”

“Well...” Eileen pursed her lips and looked at a random spot on the wall like it was the most interesting thing in the world compared to Orla’s pleading eyes.

“I just like my freedom, Eileen.” Orla sighed. “This tavern is my home. My Da’ built it for me so I can do what I want, when I want and tell off who I want.”

Eileen smiled softly and reached out to help smooth her hair. “Your father was a good man.”

“He did all this for me. I just don’t want it to end as a failure...” Orla sniffled. “Especially not because of my stupid uncle.”

Eileen, pushing aside her own need for cleanliness, soon shuffled over and plonked herself down beside her on the dusty floor. Reaching out she laid one arm across Orla’s shoulder and pulled her in close. Orla let herself lean on her.

“Look, you just need time to process it.” She patted Orla’s shoulder and pointed at the door. “Go out for a run in the meadows. Clear your head. I’ll go and make sure my father will visit this place last on the rounds, ok?”

Orla looked at the clouds past her blurry windows. “It’s going to rain.”

“Like being dirty and wet ever stopped you,” Eileen said as she pulled Orla up to her feet, taking a moment to brush the dirt off both of their skirts.

Orla thought about it for a moment. The idea of going out to the world of nature behind the tavern and going for a run did sound tempting. There’d be no-one to lecture her about her food quality *or* future out there.

Eileen merely smiled at her as if she was reading her mind. “Go on, have a run. You got time. I’ll stay here and watch your place.”

“Oh fine, fine! A run does sound good.” Orla relented. She flipped the sign on the door to close the tavern and opened the door. She breathed in the pleasant smell of petrichor flowing over the winds.

She glanced back at Eileen. “Thanks... For the shoulder to cry on.”

“You’re welcome, Orla! See you again soon.” Eileen waved her off, and so Orla took off into a jog.

If the tavern was her castle, the lands behind it were her territory. She knew all the animal trails and secret spots from her time frolicking in her childhood. The brilliant white blooms of hawthorn trees littered the landscape of her favoured meadow as she ran full tilt across the open expanse. The tall grass licking her legs as she bounded across it. The clouds grew dark overhead and the first few drops of a rainstorm started to fall on her head.

Orla skipped to the other side of the meadow and took refuge within the trunk of a hollowed-out tree just as the rain started to truly pour. It filled the woods with a tranquil sound that soothed her thoughts. Though the dread of losing the ability to do this still sunk into her head.

“Doubt a *proper lady* would run through a forest barefoot,” she grumbled to herself.

The rain stopped briefly as the fast-moving clouds parted to allow rays of sunshine to touch the earth. Orla left her hiding spot with her feet now squelching in the mud as she ran. As her muscles began to ache, she became aware of just how long she had been out.

She sighed. “Well, suppose Ol’Patrick will be waiting for his pound of flesh.”

As she spun to turn back however, she was greeted by the most beautiful rainbow. A spectacle of colour that shone across the meadow like a gateway across her path home.

“Oh, good, the heavens themselves have laid worthy carpet for ‘Lady Orla’ to begin her journey.” She kicked off the ground and practically skipped over towards the rainbow, fully intending to run towards it until it would vanish from her sight.

Such a metaphoric image was denied her however, as just when she had run about halfway back across the field in its direction her foot caught and sent her face-first into the mud.

Coughing up a potent mixture of wet soil and grass Orla launched into a colourful string of expletives that would have left her uncle fuming. It was only till her throat grew hoarse that she looked back to see what horrid thing tripped her in the first place. Looped around her foot was what looked like the handle of a thick black pot, which still stood upright despite having just tripped her.

“Who’s the feckless gobshite that left this piece of junk out here?” Orla freed her foot and gave the black thing a nudge. It wasn’t until her foot left a muddy smear on the metal that she realized that it was well polished, and up until her foot touched it, absolutely unblemished.

It was also heavy.

Rising to her knees before it she could see her mud-covered face reflected perfectly on the surface as she leaned forward.

“Isn’t even wet...”

Her head shot up and looked around for the owner, but only saw her meadow and trees. She listened. No voices carrying on the wind either. Her eyes squinted as she examined the pot again. Her curiosity finally got the better of her and she reached up to lift the lid.

The contents blinded her.

Gold coins. A whole hoard of them. All shining in the few rays of the sun as they pierced the roiling clouds. Orla closed the lid again. She fully expected someone to appear as if she just found the butt of some joke. Several moments passed again until she opened it once more. This time carefully reaching a finger in to push a coin. It was cold. She picked one up. Cold and *heavy*.

“*Can’t be real. I must be dreaming*” she thought. But the gold *looked* real. It felt real as she rolled the coin around in her palm.

Suddenly her father's story about pots of gold and Leprechauns crept into her memory. The stuff of fairy tales that lived on the tongues of drunks and in the pages of books.

"If the pot of gold is real, then there'd have to be..." The thought drove her to stand up straight and look around once more. Nothing changed. There was no small person drabbed in green leaping out to grant wishes in exchange to save their pot.

A wish would be very good right now. So, she decided to shout. "Oh look, I found a lonely pot of gold out in the wilderness. How lucky!"

Only wind and silence.

Orla was growing annoyed. If it was a prank, it was in bad taste. And if it *was* a small fae's hoard of gold, they weren't working real hard to protect it. In either case, it was hers now. Bending down she grabbed the handle and pulled. The pot was heavy and cumbersome as she pulled it up off the ground.

Making a spectacle of herself she shouted as she slowly shuffled away with her new acquisition. "I'm taking it home! Off I go! Hope the owner of this pot of gold doesn't stop me!"

As she waddled away with the heavy pot, she started to gradually dismiss the possibility. Maybe there was just a generous Lord who enjoyed playing pranks. Orla always thought nobles just came from a different world. A strange, uptight bunch with weird mannerisms and weirder interests and far too many demands. Eileen was the only exception she allowed in her image of them. Looking down at the gold-laden pot she saw her chance to stay away from their world.

"Going to be a gas when Cormac finds the deed off the market too!" She couldn't help but giggle to herself.

By the time she hauled the heavy pot back home her mirth had since evaporated in a cloud of hot sweat and aching muscles. Her tavern's door was a welcome sight as she rounded the corner.

Seeing Ol'Patrick step out of said door, however, was not. The elderly banker's eyebrows shot up into his bowler hat as he laid eyes on her through a pair of expensive optics. Her appearance, covered in mud and more than a little sweat, was something he was prepared for today.

"O-Orla?! What in the heavens happened to you?" he sputtered. He looked torn between offering help or stepping further away as she approached.

Eileen came out of her tavern door next and shared her father's reaction at the sight. "Orla!?"

Orla pushed aside her dishevelled appearance and put on her best smile. "Grand day to you, Patrick... sir. Sorry for being late to your arrival; I just had to...grab something."

Patrick's mouth opened and closed a few times before the cold logic of a man of coin reasserted itself. "Well, young lady, I certainly hope it is something of worth. No more extensions, I'm afraid. Lord Cormac's orders."

Grinning like an idiot Orla placed the pot in front of her and opened the lid. The wealth of gold coins shone brilliantly in the light. "Will this suffice, sir?"

Eileen gasped. Patrick frowned as he walked over to take a closer look. "What...how did you come by this? You haven't had a coin to pay for months and you expect me to believe?"

Orla cut him off, “Yeeeah... Well see, my Da’ left me behind something. Said it was in case of an emergency and not to use it unless I was sure. Part of me wanted to save it to surprise my future suitor after the wedding but... I decided to place a bet on my tavern instead?” Her last words coming out like a question to herself.

The elderly man bent down and picked out a coin from the pot and started inspecting it with an expert eye. He rolled it over his palm. Pinched between his fingers, attempted to bend it and even scratched it with his fingernail as if expecting paint to peel off.

“These are genuine...” He repeated the process with a few more before finally whispering, “... but why in a pot?”

“Had to bury it in something, right,” Orla said hastily.

Patrick blew out his breath, as if trying to think up of a logical reason to refute what he was seeing. Eileen caught Orla’s attention by waving from behind her father. Mouthing out something and gesturing towards the pot. Orla jerked her head behind her towards the forest and shrugged.

“Well, I can’t see no reason to deny your explanation, though I imagine Lord Cormac will be most surprised.” He gestured towards his daughter. “Now then, Eileen, if you would. Let’s take it inside the tavern and get to it.”

Eileen quickly jogged over to help Orla lift the pot off the ground.

Grunting with effort, Eileen managed to hiss through clenched teeth. “Was that story true?”

“Would, ‘I found it in a field’ have sufficed instead?” Orla replied. Eileen gave her a quizzical look but decided to remain silent.

With much effort, the pair hauled the heavy pot inside. It was placed on the counter with a thud and the two tax-collectors went about their business with practiced precision. Patrick snatched and stacked the coins into measured amounts while Eileen went about measuring the weight of each pile on a scale she produced from one of her many pouches. Keeping track of the amount by dutifully scribbling on a ledger.

Orla merely watched from the side, her arms and legs thankful for the rest. It occurred to her she didn’t know the total contents of the pot herself. She had been so excited that she’d neglected to stop and count them, but the pot being full of more gold than she’d ever laid eyes on she was sure it was enough.

“Now then.” Patrick muttered as they finished counting and weighing.

Orla held her arms behind her back and rocked on her feet. “Well, does that cover it or does it cover it?”

Patrick sucked his teeth before answering. “It... does not.”

“What?!” Orla’s cry caused the banker to jump.

He hastily shuffled through papers on his ledger. “W-well t-the debt was quite large, you see, a-and after s-several months of compound interest with n-no payments... the debt grew a bit.”

“Also, we can say you paid off *most* of it,” Eileen cut in, wanting to give her father a chance to compose himself. “There’s just a bit left to go Orla.”

Orla forced her frustration down as she replied. “How much is a *bit*?”

Eileen inspected the ledger. “Just...twenty-five gold pieces. Down from quite a large amount.”

Running her hands through her mud caked hair Orla let out a groan. “So, what does *that* mean for my tavern. Today was the final day, no? No more time?”

Patrick tapped his ledger nervously. “W-well, y-yes. By Lord Cormac’s direct request...”

Orla stepped forward and pointed a finger at the elderly man. “I *just* paid you a massive amount off. *Surely* that means something.”

“I...um...but the request...”

Orla pressed him. “*He* expected I couldn’t pay a shilling. You got a wealth of gold to go walk back to him with. You tell him this tavern is *mine*!”

“T-two more days...” he finally muttered.

Orla snapped at him. “Two days!? Are you daft!”

Eileen stepped between Orla and her father. “Orla, please. I know this must be frustrating but Lord Cormac was *most* insistent. My father could lose his position if we go against him.” Her voice took a firm tone. “A debt nearly cleared is still a debt owed. We can keep him off you for two more days, maybe not even that. You know what he’s like”

“Oh, I *know* what that dog’s bollox of an uncle like alright.” Eileen seethed. Having her hopes dashed twice in a single day was not something she was used to.

Patrick sucked in a breath and straightened himself up. “T-two days Orla. Twenty-five gold pieces. Pay that much off and the tavern is yours by right.” With that he hastily gathered up his papers, along with the gold, and shoved it into his various bags and pockets without any sort of order.

Orla slumped onto the counter in defeat. Eileen reached out gently and rested a hand on her shoulder in assurance.

“Come along Eileen,” Patrick called out. Sensing Orla’s growing frustration he was eager to be anywhere else but here.

Eileen sighed and gave Orla a pat on her shoulder. “I’m sorry,” she said quietly before hurrying after her father.

Patrick held the door open for his daughter to pass. He looked back over at Orla and licked his lips. Mustering the courage for one last word. “C-Chin up. Even if you don’t pay it off, Lord Cormac has *generously* offered to pay off the debt in full! You will receive your father’s nest egg back in that case! It would no doubt serve as a great dowry for your future husband as it was intended!”

Patrick ducked away as an empty wooden mug bounced off the wall just beside his head. Now fully understanding his welcome had run out he rushed out the door and pushed his daughter along with him.

Orla kept up the tirade until she felt her throat grow hoarse. She slumped against a wall and sank to the dirty floorboards. Her body no longer tolerating the abuse and stress that had been piled on it. The telltale patter of heavy rainfall began to fill the empty silence of the tavern as she sulked.

Curling up into a ball she buried her head into her legs. "It's not fair..."

"Ya done made balls o'it now, thief"

Orla's head shot up. She didn't hear anyone enter the tavern. Looking around didn't reveal the source of the voice either.

"I've found ye."

The voice echoed seemingly from every wall. It was high pitched and feminine, like that of a young girl. "Who in the... You some kid? I'm not in the mood for pranks!" she shouted, her anger from earlier reigniting itself.

"Ooh, this is no prank. I found ye red handed. Empty pot n'all"

Orla's eyes widened. She glanced at the pot still sitting on the counter.

"What? I found it abandoned in a meadow!"

A laugh reverberated off the windows. *"Found it abandoned in a meadow, says she! And 'who' leaves pots o'gold in meadows under rainbows, eh? Are ya that dense!?"*

Doubt crept into her mind as she stepped further out into the tavern. She looked up and around, as well as under tables.

"Dirty little pranksters...or leprechauns," she finally answered.

"Oh, very good! You do have a brain on you. Now that there's an understanding on us, where's the coin?" the voice began to grow louder.

Orla finally gave up trying to find it and backed up against a wall. "All spent. But that's not my fault anyway. Anyone would have taken something so valuable left out and alone like that!"

The voice rose and become sharper. *"You spent them? Well, that's a problem now. See, they were mine, and I expect them back....but I will admit, I was a bit lax in keeping an eye on them, so if you fill up the pot just the same as before, I'll let bygones be bygones. No harm no foul"*

She felt her hands clench around her dress. "That's stupid. I can't, even if I wanted to."

"Can't? Or won't? Miss Tavernkeep. Your greed is obvious!"

Orla felt a pang of fury within her growing fear. "Can't! Do I look well off to you?!" she gestured to her mud covered clothes.

"More lies, more lies. Well, I know how to get ye motivated!"

More frustrated than afraid Orla started moving towards the door, deciding to try and feign indifference. "You go ahead and do that, I'm leaving!" she reached into her pocket to find the key. "You better get out too unless you want to be locked in here!"

She reached the door and pulled, only to find it unable to move. Her key was missing too.

The voice began to sing. *"To the one who stole me pot'o'gold, whose greed and wealth blew up ten-fold..."*

"Oh, shut it you gobshite! You don't scare me!" Orla shouted. She started to move towards the kitchen and the back door.

"Who spurned my offer of recompense, who decided instead to give offense..." The voice followed her as she stepped into the cooking area. The shelves bare and empty with dirty plates and mugs strewn around without a care.

Orla reached the back door and pulled. She let out a growl as it didn't give an inch either.

"Shall fill with the empty contents of my pot, to match her wealth, no coin forgot"

"Shut up! Are you deaf? I said I have no coin to give!"

The voice rose into a deafening volume. She felt it reverberate to her bones as it shook a few plates off a bench. Orla backed herself into a corner. *"From coin you grow, so from coin you'll blow!"*

Having finished its song the voice went quiet. Orla waited. Her hands braced on the walls as if expecting her whole tavern to crash down on her head. When it became apparent nothing was going to happen, she warily left her corner. The only sound was her breathing and the rain pattering outside.

The fear in her belly vanished. She let out a laugh.

"That it? Shaking a few plates free, real nice trick there. What's next? Going to spill a few... ah!" She gasped as a warm, swirling feeling raced across her chest. It was like dozens of tiny, tickling fingers sliding across her skin.

She sucked in a breath to force herself to focus and pressed her hands onto the offending area. Pleasant though it was, her chest felt like it was vibrating beneath her palms, and not in a way that matched her heartbeat. Pulling the muddied cloth forward, she looked down at her bare breasts and frowned.

Her boobs were still nothing to speak of, but she distinctly remembered the view of her legs not being as obstructed. "Were they always...nng!"

The swirling, vibrating feeling suddenly surged in intensity and before her eyes her breasts swelled. Faintly, in the near silence of the tavern, she could hear a faint noise emanate from within her.

Hissssss

"What in the...ungh!" The hissing grew louder as her mounds inflated steadily. No longer a washboard, Orla, for the first time in her life, looked like she earned the gifts her peers gained through their puberty. She actually had a pair of tits.

The voice finally returned. *"Oh, she notices! The curse will only keep on pumping them up bigger and bigger till ye give back what ye took!"*

Orla's mind scrambled to comprehend what she was seeing. "Curse? Pump? What are you filling me with?!"

“Didn’t ye listen to my song? I worked so hard on the lyrics too. ‘The empty contents of my pot’” the voice replied. *“What’s in my pot right now, girl?”*

“What sort of stupid question is that? It’s empty!” she pressed her hands into her chest. “Empty...Air?”

Hiiiiiiiii

“Nnnh!” she let out a moan as her breasts welled up against her fingers in another bout of swelling.

“Right she is! So better pay up now!”

“I told you I can’t! So knock it off!”

“Then I’ll just sit and watch till the finale comes!”

Hiiiiiiiii

Panic began to grow at the thought of what the finale would even entail. Another gush of air and her breasts ballooned to fill her hands completely. “W-wait! I can...give me time! I can get it back!” she pleaded.

“I wonder just how big ye’ll get before ye can’t hold anymore?”

Hiiiiiiiii

As sudden as it started, the feeling vanished. The hissing fading into silence along with it. Orla stood there glancing between her new, bigger set of breasts and the empty room around her. Moments passed with nothing whatsoever occurring. Deciding not to question it, Orla inched towards the backdoor to try opening it once again.

“What in Oberon’s fine behind is going on?!” the voice shouted. While it was still loud, it had lost its etherealness and now took on a more regular quality. Sounding much like the speaker was sitting in the room with her rather than echoing throughout the tavern.

The voice continued, sounding above her. “I got the curse right, yes? Wording was fine, aye. Concentration? Splendent...What am I missing?”

Orla’s eyes snapped up towards the ceiling. There, nestled in the rafters, was a ball of green cloth with a flash of bright red hair hanging loosely down towards her. As the shape moved, she saw what looked like two slender legs ending in a pair of neat, green shoes dangling off the side.

Seeing it in the flesh made her situation sink in. She really was dealing with a magical, curse wielding, trickster of a leprechaun. A living example of Irish mythology had stepped out of the pages of lore and into her tavern.

A leprechaun that was not paying any attention to her. Slowly, Orla reached out and wrapped her fingers around a carving knife.

The tiny fae put their hands on their hips and nodded to themselves. “Well, time to try something else I guess...” it said before spinning around on the rafter, which gave Orla a good look at it.

The leprechaun was only as tall as two tall wines bottles if you stacked them on top of each other, but every other respect, it looked like slim human girl with pointed ears. She was dressed in green attire so fine it would make Lord Cormac ask for their tailor. Bright, emerald green eyes widened at her as they locked gazes. Both stood frozen in place as their minds caught up with the situation.

“Shite...” The leprechaun squeaked as Orla’s arm cocked back and hurled the carving knife. The blade sunk into the wooden beam just between their legs. The fae slid off the rafter backwards and landed on the floorboards in front of Orla.

Orla, now emboldened from seeing something she could hit, growled as she picked up another knife. “You tried to pop me like some cow carcass in the sun you little gobshite!”

The leprechaun pointed a tiny finger back at her. “I wasn’t going to do anything of the sort, just scare ye a bit...and don’t call me a gobshite ye thief! My name’s Merrigold, I’ll have ye...!”

They never got to finish her sentence as she had to jump out of the way of a butcher’s knife sent flying towards her. Orla, feeling her fury resurface in a renewed conflagration, charged as she grabbed anything and everything she could get her hands on to use as projectiles.

The leprechaun, apparently named Merrigold, dodged a storm of cups, knives and other cooking utensils being thrown her way with surprisingly agility as she skittered off into the main dining area.

Her voice carried around the corner. “Now hang on! Really wasn’t trying to do harm, just make ye give up and pay up! Ye looked like the type so...”

“And I kept telling you I *can’t*!” Orla, grabbing an empty water jug, raced around the doorway and cocked her arm back in preparation. To her surprise, the small fae had vanished again.

“*What do you mean ye can’t? Ye own this place don’t ye?!*” Merrigold’s voice echoed around the tavern like before.

Orla stepped into the dining area with the jug cocked and ready to throw. “Aye!” She sucked her teeth. “Well, I almost do...” Feeling herself get off track she focused on her rage. “But fact is I’m broke! So feck off! I have enough problems!”

Thwack!

A sharp pain announcing itself on the side of her head heralded a wooden mug bouncing off her skull. She reflexively held up a hand to shield herself from the follow up mug. Peering around her hand she spotted a dining cupboard that had opened itself and was busy disgorging her collection of cups and serving utensils in her direction. Orla ducked behind her counter as a set of carved wooden knives and forks rained over her.

“I’m not going anywhere till my pot is full of gold again, ye thief! Who do ye think ye are? Stealing from a poor, innocent lady like myself while I was having a nap.”

Orla poked her head over the bar, only to duck again as a bowl bounced just in front of her nose. Cocking her arm back she tossed the jug blindly in the direction of the cupboard and was rewarded with a squeak and a thud. Peering over the bench she could see Merrigold again, who was busy nursing her arm while lying on the floor.

Seeing her opportunity Orla quickly vaulted the bar and closed in. Merrigold only had time to lock eyes before she was tackled into the wall and hoisted up by her arms.

Orla out a cackle. "Got you!"

Merrigold struggled as much as her little body would allow. Her feet flailing uselessly in open air. "Can't tell if ye are bold or just plain daft. Ye forget I'm a leprechaun? I could just curse ye again!"

Orla shook her. "I know you are the little gobshite that tried to do away with me! That's all I need to know."

"I *told* ye I wasn't going to... Ah forget it." Merrigold flicked a hand at her. Orla felt something small and cold bounce off her chest and thunk onto the floor. Glancing down it shone gold even in the fading afternoon light.

PsssSSHhhh

"Oh god..." Orla gasped as her chest shuddered and inflated once again. Air rushed into her breasts and forced her skin to stretch the mud-caked cloth of her dress. The sensation of her skin bulging outwards was becoming more pronounced. She couldn't help but purse her lips as her nipples pressed forth and became visible through the thin fabric. Orla refused to admit inwardly that it felt good, and instead focused on the target of her wrath.

"Let go!" Merrigold squeaked and flicked her hand again. Orla spotted the projectile, a coin, just before it bounced off her head.

HIISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

"H-hey! Knock it...Oooh!" Another gush of air and Orla felt her knees buckle. Her grip loosened enough for Merrigold to twist herself free and fall to the floor. Wasting no time, she slid between Orla's legs as the girl clutched her ballooning chest.

Hiiiiisssssssssssssssss

The feeling ebbed and vanished once again. Taking a moment to catch her breath, Orla slowly pulled her dress out again to take a quick glance down. Her breasts had ended their inflation to a size that matched the small sweetbreads she used to stuff into her clothes when she was younger.

"So, the curse *is* working on ye."

Orla spun. Merrigold was now on top of her bar armed with an empty glass bottle in one hand and a single gold coin in the other.

She brandished the bottle like a sword. "Ye stay right over there now. This might be my last coin I could use on ye, but I promise; try to grab me again like that again and your head will be introduced to this bottle."

After shifting her dress back into place over her new assets, Orla spotted the two coins that hit her earlier resting on the floor. Her mind raced.

"What sort of perverted curse did you put on me?" Orla demanded.

“The kind that was *supposed* teach ye a lesson! Blow ye up nice, full and helpless.” Merrigold shook her head as she paced on top of the bar. “But how was I supposed to know ye were flat broke?”

Orla snorted indignantly. “Well, that’s your fault isn’t it.”

Merrigold looked around at the dirtied state of the tavern as if seeing it for the first time. “How though? Ye are a tavern keeper aren’t ye? In these lands ye should be raking it in hand over fist!”

Orla bent down and armed herself with a mug. “I’ve been having a bit of money trouble alright?! Not that it’s any of your business.”

The leprechaun sagged and let out a growl of frustration. “Titania’s Tits... Course Merrigold would be robbed by the worst thief in the land, a broke one...” Stepping over to her empty pot still resting on the bar, the small fae sat on it. Still keeping a wary eye on her.

Sensing a change in the air and grateful for the reprieve, Orla moved to pick up a stool and sit as well. The tension dying somewhat as the pair stared at each other and nursed their respective bruises. The only sound being the heavy rain that poured outside.

“So...”

“So...”

Merrigold sniffed as she rubbed her shoulder. “Curse isn’t going to work if ye are broke... but I’m not leaving without my gold! Curse or no, that’s a promise.”

Rubbing the side of her head where the mug struck earlier, Orla grimaced as she felt a lump form. “I wish I could. If I had a knack for coin I wouldn’t be in this mess in the first place and wouldn’t be dealing with your annoying arse.”

Merrigold glanced behind her at one of the large tapped casks nestled in a small alcove behind the bar. She stared at it for a moment before springing across the gap between the counter and bar to stand before it.

Orla stood up as the small woman started opened the tap and started filling her bottle. “Hey! You better pay for that!”

Before she could say anything in protest Merrigold had begun guzzling the beverage. It wasn’t long before she gagged and spat the contents out onto the floor. “Gah! I’ve tasted dirt water better than this swill. Ye call this beer?!”

“Oh for the love of...” Orla groaned. “It’s better than what it was, alright? What can you expect me to do when I wasn’t taught?”

Merrigold pinched the bridge of her nose. “Queen Almighty ye really are a hopeless one. A tavern keeper without coin, brew or sense. Fine mess this is!”

Orla bristled. “Well, what kind of leprechaun are you!? I found your pot. I waited for you. Shouted even. Yet where were you? Off having a kip in some bush?”

Merrigold’s face went bright red. “So what if I was?! That gives ye permission to steal now? That how it is?”

“So you *were* asleep!” Orla pointed a finger at the little woman. “If you stayed awake to grant my wish everything would’ve been grand! This whole mess is on your tiny head!”

Letting out a growl, Merrigold rose as if to leap at her, but let it out in a breath instead. “Well, you got me there... I will admit I was a bit lax at the time sure.”

Orla stared at Merrigold, surprised the little fae relented so quickly. “You’re giving in? Just like that?”

“I’m not giving nothing!” Merrigold stood up fully and placed a hand on her heart. “I just can’t lie about it. I was asleep. Lies are the worst amongst my folk!” She waved the bottle at her again. “Doesn’t excuse what ye did though.”

As Orla tapped the table under her finger as she glanced between the pot and the leprechaun. She realized all she had to do was wait for two days and the gold would return to her possession as her uncle would purchase the whole place outright, but then she’d lose everything and be placed under his lordship. It was then she decided on a plan. The first part was to keep that fact about the debt a secret from Merrigold. The second part...

“So, how about that wish. I should get one, shouldn’t I?”

Merrigold spluttered as if she had swallowed a fly and brandished her bottle. “What?! Ye are blooming mad if ye think I’ll grant a wish to...”

Orla placed her hands on her hips. “Why not? In the end I did find your gold.”

“Aye, and ye were meant to *return* it in exchange for a wish. Not spend it!”

“I *would* have returned it, but *someone* was asleep. So, I should get a wish!” Orla spat.

The leprechaun let out a high-pitched laugh. “Bollox! That is not remotely fair and ye know it.”

“Then...” Orla thought hard. A free wish seemed out of the question. “Then, how about a wish for both of us?”

“What do ye mean, *both*?” Merrigold frowned, but it wasn’t an outright refusal.

Orla stood and opened her arms wide. “We share a problem, right? We both want coin.”

Merrigold’s eyes narrowed. “Aye?”

“So, how about this for a wish.” She left her table and held out a hand to the small fae. “Help me bring this place to life. Teach me how to run it. Help me pay off the rest of the debt in time and I’ll give you what you want in return as soon as I can.”

Merrigold lowered the bottle back down onto the bar and leaned on it like one would a walking stick. Her emerald green eyes boring into Orla’s head as if she was trying to pry her thoughts open.

“One condition.”

Orla felt a sinking feeling in her stomach. “What condition?”

“Just a small thing,” the small woman held up a hand with one tiny finger extended. “Ye listen and obey everything I say.”

“What? That just makes me a servant, don’t it?” Orla scoffed.

Merrigold nodded. “Aye, it does. But for the intents and purposes of getting this place running, I’ll be your boss till the wish is satisfied. Ye don’t know how to do things. I do.”

Orla struggled with the thought. She didn’t want to admit the small fae had a point about her skill, but if it meant escaping Lord Cormac’s clutches.

“Alright...” she sighed.

“We have a deal then?” The fae’s tiny hand extended out and waited.

Orla left her mug and strode over to the counter. She felt the situation was rather comical as she loomed over the fae, but her heart fluttered at the idea of getting assistance from a magical creature of Irish fairy tales. She was eager to see Lord Cormac’s face when the deed was in her possession.

“Deal.” Taking Merrigold’s hand in hers gently, she felt the air stir around the tavern as if it was recognising the pact itself. They shook.

“What’s yer name anyhow? I can’t keep calling ye thief.”

“Orla. Now, about the curse?”

“Staying on.” Merrigold said matter-of-factly as she released her hand and hopped down from the counter. She had produced a small book and quill and had already started scribbling.

Orla coughed and stammered. “W-what do you mean *staying on*?”

Shrugging, Merrigold kept her eyes focused on her book. “Wasn’t part of the wish. Curses aren’t my speciality besides. Best get used to it for now.”

“Get used to...bollox! How am I meant to do anything with my tits blowing up out of my clothes?” Orla grabbed her enlarged breasts for emphasis. Her muddy dress, having been designed for a much smaller woman, was already beginning to distort over her new assets.

She looked up from her book. “Ye might be surprised! Plus, think of it as a bit of insurance for me. Besides, with me help this tavern will be bursting at the seams! Ye’ll be swimming in coin.”

Orla was awkwardly trying to shift her clothes into a more comfortable position. “It won’t be the only thing bursting at the seams...” she muttered.

“Ye’ll be fine! Soon as enough coin is in my pot once again the curse’ll break well before ye hit yer limit. Trust me!” Merrigold said as she waved a hand dismissively.

“How big will I even get?” Her brows knitted together in worry. The two gold coins thrown at her earlier were enough to pump her up to modest handfuls. Orla struggled to imagine how large she’d get before the debts were paid.

Merrigold gave her a knowing smirk. “Lost yer fire already, lass?”

“Of course not! I-it’s just I might not have clothes that will fit me.” Orla huffed.

Sticking the quill into her mouth the small fae nodded in agreement. “Aye, that’s true. Won’t be an issue. Now explain the debt.”

“Two days and twenty-five gold coins.”

“That all?” Merrigold let out a small trill of a laugh. “Work hard and that’ll be no issue!”

Orla nodded, but could sense the approaching workload. “You are going to help me though, right? Magic things up a little?”

“Oh, I’ll help get things rolling, don’t ye worry. But yer wish specifically asked me to teach ye how to work this place, so that is exactly what I’ll do.” Merrigold nodded in satisfaction.

Orla’s face scrunched up as she remembered her own wording. “W-well, okay, so what do we do first.”

Merrigold looked out the blurred windows, then at the tavern, then finally resting her eyes on Orla herself. “You are going to clean *everything*. I, however, am going to grab some things. Hop to it,” she said with a grin.

“Really? Can’t ye cast a spell for that at least?” Orla moaned. As she moved to the broom cupboard gloomily, a question formed.

“You said curses weren’t your speciality, so what is your speciality?”

Flashing a bright smile as she was hopping towards the back door, Merrigold replied. “Cooking with thyme!”

The moon was high above by the time by the time Orla finished scrubbing, dusting, and sweeping every conceivable surface. Taking a quick bath, she immediately collapsed into her bed. Her muscles cursing her for the day’s abuse. She let out a soft groan as she quickly realized lying on her front was no longer comfortable, but drifted off to sleep regardless.

Orla’s dreams were thankfully free of mischievous Leprechauns, however reality soon reasserted itself when a small hand slapped her cheek.

“Rise’n’shine, Orla!”

Winching at the red-hot feeling now blazing on her face, her wakening senses felt an unfamiliar weight on her body. Opening her eyes blearily she took in the sight of Merrigold sitting atop her.

Orla groaned as she glanced outside her window. “Sun’s not even up yet...”

Merrigold hopped up to stand, a movement that planted her feet squarely onto Orla’s stomach and sending her breath out in a whoosh.

“That it is! But it will be soon, and ye got work to do, lassy!”

Determined to return to sleep, Orla pulled the covers over her head to block the sight of the annoyance. “Not now. Just...a bit longer, I had a long day yesterday.”

Merrigold chuckled menacingly. “Ohoho, I thought ye’d be like that.”

Orla didn’t have long to wonder what she meant as a bucket of ice-cold water was dumped on her head.

Leaping out of the bedsheets in an instant Orla shrieked. “Arrrgh!...You absolutely gobshite!”

As the foul word left her mouth, she felt a tingle run up her spine. Unbidden, she began to laugh. A kind of loud, snorting laughter that was unnatural to her. As tears filled her eyes she caught glimpse of Merrigold’s smug smile.

“W-ahahah! What did yo-hohohoo...doo?!” She managed to sputter out.

Merrigold grinned at her. Reaching out she snagged one of Orla’s hands in her own and gestured towards her finger. A golden ring rested on her pinky finger, which was matched with a similar looking, tinier ring on Merrigold’s own. Both were engraved in twisting, vine-like lines that shimmered in the light.

“Tavern is all cleaned up nicely, so the next thing to clean up was that attitude o’yours. Service must be with a big smile, right?”

Orla tried to pry the ring from her finger but discovered it firmly attached. Her eyes widened.

Merrigold continued. “So, I took the liberty of adding a wee something to help ye adjust to treating patrons and people with a bit o’repect.”

“I didn’t agree to this?! Take this off!” Orla wailed as she continued to pull the ring to no avail.

Clicking her tongue, Merrigold shook her head. “Oh, but ye did. Ye asked me to teach, and teach ye I will. Now, get up, you got some shopping t’do!”

As Merrigold pranced off into the main room, Orla let out a grumble. Now fully awake, and with her bed soaked in cold water, there was little else to do but follow. She soon discovered quickly that her wardrobe choices had shrunk considerably, with most of her favourites proving now unacceptably tight across her bust. Even her new modest assets proving far too large to fit into the slim fit clothing.

The remaining choice was a boring, white frock that stretched past her knees in thick, plain fabric. Orla gave thanks that it possessed a bit more space on the top half. After jumping into her boots, she snagged a wicker shopping basket from the kitchen and stepped into the main room. Merrigold was milling around the casks behind the counter, which now bore a painted clover symbol on the sides. She was busily filling out a collection of bottles with the contents.

“Those aren’t mine...” Orla said.

Merrigold nodded. “My special blend and our secret weapon for that tight deadline. Now then, we need to do some shopping.” She gestured to Orla’s basket.

Orla looked down and saw a small slip of paper covered in elegant handwriting already sitting within. It was a list. “Vegetables, herbs, meat...cloth?! Why do we need...do even you know how much all this will cost? And I need to buy more clothes first.”

“No time for clothes shopping! We got a business to run.” Merrigold produced a pair of gold coins from between her fingers and tossed them at her.

Catching them out of reflex, Orla’s eyes widened and closed her eyes shut in preparation for the curse to take effect.

It was a few moments of silence until Merrigold snickered at her. "I threw those two at ye before. Should more than cover what we need."

"Real funny." Orla grumbled. "And what do you mean 'we.' I don't think the townsfolk would accept a small green woman running about."

Raising a hand above herself with a flourish, Merrigold clicked her finger and was suddenly enveloped in a small cloud of smoke that rose up to the ceiling.

"It's not often I get to do this, mostly on account of it being tiring." As the smoke cleared, Orla was surprised that she had to shift her gaze upwards. Merrigold stepped out of the cloud with the proportions of a regular, slender human woman, though her cloud of red hair had lengthened to stretch down past her belt.

Flashing a smile before scooping up her basket of clinking bottles. "Now, time is coin! Let's go shopping."

Orla felt the apprehension rise as Merrigold looped her arm around hers and pulled her towards the door cheerfully.

Merrigold leaned in to whisper into her ear. "Oh, and don't forget to smile out there! No matter what happens! That's an order!"

Orla huffed as she slammed the door behind them and locked it. "Smile smile smile. I'll smile when I damned well feel like it you little goblin."

She felt the tingle race up her spine again and she bent over into a loud, embarrassingly snorty laugh. A few passersby looked at her strangely as they walked past. Merrigold stood there quietly with a grin on her face, clearly enjoying the spectacle. When Orla finally caught her breath, she swore mentally and gave the leprechaun her finest glare.

"Let's just go," she muttered.

As they strode together towards the town centre Merrigold launched into a lecture. "Ideally, ye'd get your foodstuffs delivered in the morning from yer favourite suppliers. Saves time to prep for the day. But seeing as ye're a spoilt wallflower of a businesswoman..."

She continued to talk pointedly the advantages of connections and Orla's lack of them as they approached the first stop, the herbalists, which was just down the road. The smell of ground herbs and spices became more pungent as they approached the old shop, which looked like it was being slowly conquered by the local plant life.

The middle-aged shop keep's eyes lit up at her as they stepped inside. "Welcome! Oh, well would you look at that. Orla! Out and about for once, and so early in the day too. Who is your new friend?"

Merrigold's lecturing had driven Orla into a foul mood, and the woman's comment about her morning habits didn't help. Refusing to meet her eyes, Orla gave a half-hearted greeting. "Hey."

A tingle. Orla burst out an embarrassingly loud guffaw. Reflexively covering her mouth as she felt heat rise to her face she once again cursed internally. The shop keep looked at her like she had grown horns.

Merrigold stepped around Orla and tipped her hat. “Good morning to you, name’s Merrigold, it’s a pleasure. Just a friend from out of town.”

Orla forced a smile as she cleared her throat. “Yes, I am out and about... and all that... We are looking for these.” She held out the list before her.

Squinting at the slip of paper the shop keep for a moment and gave a nod. “Oho, someone’s cooking up something...though, if you don’t mind me asking, you have coin for it right?”

“Of *course* I have coin! I’m not some beggar you...” she caught her words in her throat before she continued. Reaching into her coin pouch she flashed the two gold coins they had with them. “Yes, I do... Ma’am”

“So you do... I’ll just be a moment.” Taking a coin from her hand, the woman gave her a look before disappearing behind a curtain into her backrooms.

“See, not hard to hide those thorns o’yours. Smile could use work though. Ye looked like you were going to bite her head off.” Merrigold hefted her basket of bottles and turned towards the door. “Now, I smell opportunity. Don’t go anywhere!”

Before Orla could ask what she meant, the overgrown leprechaun had already vanished out the door and onto the street outside. Now alone, Orla returned to twisting the ring and attempting to slide it off to no avail.

“Isn’t one annoying curse enough...” She muttered as she fruitlessly pulled on the jewellery for several moments.

Hiiisssssss

Orla’s eyes widened as the sound reached her ears. The swirling, pleasurable feeling filled her chest as it began to inflate once again.

“Shite! Why now?! I haven’t...” She whispered before an urge to chuckle overtook her. Her body now convulsed with barely contained laughter as her she felt her breasts push up against the cloth of her frock. Though it had more space than everything else in her wardrobe, she already felt the garment begin to pull against her back as more and more material was dedicated to her ballooning assets.

HiiiiissSSSS

Creeeeeeeeak

The push of her tits against the fabric was met with the soft protest of the seams of her clothing as they began to tighten. The outline of her chest widened across the frock as it met resistance and began to bulge sideways. Orla silently cursed Merrigold as well as her slim wardrobe.

“I’m...gonna...wring her neck...Ugh!”

Hiiiiisssssssssssss

The growth slowed and subsided. Though it was only a few moments, her breasts had ballooned out another inch. Granting her a womanly figure she never dreamed of possessing. Her tits now pushed out her frock like a rounded cliff. Reaching a hand up tentatively, Orla pressed down on

one breast and gasped in a mix of shock and pleasure. She could feel the air shift around and spread out from beneath her fingers. She again refused to admit it felt amazing, but found herself exploring her new balloons all the same. Her self-examination was cut short as footsteps moved closer from the backroom.

“That’s the lot,” said the shop keep as she emerged with a set of small parcels, along with a stack of silver coins on a tray. The woman looked up at Orla and stopped midstride. Her eyes squinting as she took in Orla, as if seeing her for the first time.

Orla, eager to get out of there, held her arms towards her with a smile that felt entirely unnatural to her. “Thanks *soo* much. Now if you don’t mind, I have a big list of shopping to do.”

The shop keep shook her head, seemingly dismissing a thought, as she handed over the herbs and silver change. Curtsyng and muttering a hasty word of thanks, Orla spun and hurried out the door as quickly as she could while appearing natural.

Merrigold was waiting for her outside, throwing and catching a handful of silver coins idly. Flashing a grin as Orla strode up. “Got the goods?”

“What did you do?” Orla hissed at her between clenched teeth.

Merrigold opened her arms wide, her basket of bottles clinking. “Plantin’ seeds! Like I said I would. Opportunity leads to profit don’t ye know?”

“And puffing me up at the worst times!” Cupping her chest for emphasis; her fingers no longer able to encompass her new rounded globes. “Can’t ‘opportunity’ wait till we get back to the tavern? You are going to get me in trouble!”

“Nope! This is absolutely, positively necessary for yer success in a timely fashion.” Merrigold replied.

Orla groaned. “You are doing this just to torment me aren’t you?”

Merrigold clicked her tongue. “Now that’s uncalled for. I am helping, ye’ll see.”

“Fine...fine whatever, let’s just go!” Orla huffed and started off down the road.

The pair soon entered the square that was home to the local food markets. Hawkers of fresh produce were locked in close-combat with the dozens of buyers aggressively haggling over every perceived slight in quality. Orla felt entirely out of place in the morning chaos. Merrigold however was peering at every crate and stall with intense curiosity.

“Oh Oh! Look at it all! I bet I could brew something fierce with a bit of chilli!”

Orla ignored her and just kept walking. Her eyes focused on a shop at the other end of the market. They just about cleared the throng when Merrigold jerked her arm and pulled her in a random direction.

“Oop! I smell another opportunity!” Merrigold said excitedly.

She was about to speed off and vanish into the crowd when Orla’s hand snapped out to grab her by the shoulder. “Oh no, you are *not* blowing them up bigger in the middle of a crowd. My frock is struggling already!”

Spinning around to face her, Merrigold placed her hands on Orla's shoulders and pulled her in close. Squishing her flat chest against Orla's soft, airy assets. "Ye want to keep your tavern, aye?"

Blushing, Orla could only reply with a resigned. "Yes, but..."

"Best hold it together then. That's an order from yer boss!" Merrigold flashed a smile and began to pull her through the crowd before she could protest any further.

Orla was dragged against her will to a shadowed corner of the market. A dishevelled man lay sprawled on the corner of a stairwell. Both his boots and clothes were caked with dirt, and he looked like he hadn't bathed anytime recent.

"What do we got to do with him?" She felt her nose wrinkle as they got close.

The man, hearing her words, tilted his head up blearily and shielded his eyes from the morning sun. "Wha ya want?"

Merrigold flashed a smile at him. "Good morning to ye, sir! Ye look like the type to enjoy a bit of a fine drink on occasion, am I right?"

The man blinked slowly as his mind slowly processed her words. "Aye..."

Orla had been slowly stepping away from the man when Merrigold's hand whipped out and pulled her directly in front of him as if she was presenting the man a prize.

Merrigold continued. "Well good news for you! Orla here is a new tavern keep and has graciously decided to pass around some of her new brew at half the price!"

"What are you talking about?!" Orla hissed through her teeth. The man turned his attention to her. His bloodshot eyes squinting at her before his features broke into a grin as he took her in.

"Well, aren't you a shapely young lass? A tavern keep too. Woman after me own heart!"

Orla could feel her eyes water as his breath washed over her. "Ugh your breath stinks, you bleedin'..." a tingle cut her short and she let out a loud, halting laugh. The man grinned wider and joined her laughter. The pair filling their little corner of the market with mirth.

Wiping a tear from his eye. "Ah, I was only pulling yer leg, girl. Whatsis drink you got? How much? I'll give it a go."

Merrigold pulled a bottle from her basket and presented it like she was gifting a crown. "Five silver, down from ten! Quite the bargain."

His face scrunched up in consternation. "Five silver? I could buy me and my mates a round for that."

Unperturbed, Merrigold continued. "Aye, a round of the cheapest piss ye could guzzle. But what Orla is offering is quality! How 'bout this then. Take a swig for free, then tell me it ain't worth the price."

The man's gaze flicked between Merrigold's wide smile and the bottle in her outstretched hands.

“Fine, no-one will say Finn turned down a free drink,” he took the bottle and uncorked it. Orla watched as he jammed it into his filthy mouth and drank. A bit of rich red fluid dribbled from his lips and ran down his chin. It wasn’t long before his eyes lit up with an unusual vigour and he stopped to admire the bottle.

“This is bloody grand! Grander than grand! I’ve never tasted the like. And ye say this is half price?” He practically shouted.

Merrigold grinned and sprightly lifted the bottle from his fingers. “Aye, that it is. Now, worth the coin or no?”

“Worth more than what ye asked for!” Finn’s hand slipped quickly into his dirty clothes to pull out a bulging coin pouch. His filthy hand swept towards Orla, now shining with ten silver coins.

“That’s too much...” Orla said, though her eyes looked longingly at the money.

“A tip for the up-and-comin’ tavern keep!” Finn replied. His smile looked unnaturally eager as he shook the coins at her.

Slowly, knowing what was about to happen, Orla extended her hand to accept them.

Merrigold crowed. “Oh! how generous!”

As soon as the cold metal touched Orla’s palm, the curse hit her.

Hissssss

“Nnngh!” Orla curled her toes as a short gush of air was forced into her. The front of her frock stretched into a smooth surface of cloth as moulded itself to her ballooning tits. Her bare nipples pressed up against the fabric so firmly that she worried that they’d poke through.

Creeeeeeeak

“Mmmgh...” she breathed out a soft, quiet moan as the inflation slowed. She was thankful that the effect was short, but her flushed face and pleased breath had been noticed. Finn’s gaze was locked firmly on her chest.

A flash of indignation and Orla was about to say something foul, but the feeling of the ring around her finger reminded her to hold her tongue. Instead, she curtsied hurriedly and grabbed Merrigold by the wrist. “We are leaving!”

“Thanks for your generosity! We are the tavern just outside the south gates!” Merrigold shouted out as she was all but dragged away.

Orla pulled her back to the food stalls. “How’d you know he had coin? He looked like any old beggar or homeless man.”

“I can smell opportunity like a dog smells his own arsehole.” Merrigold said proudly. “We leprechauns are natural businessfolk. Ye couldn’t have wished for a better partner to grow your earnings.”

Orla glanced down at her shrinking dress. The front of her frock stretched out before her; exposing a line of cleavage that rose and fell every time she took a breath. Her finger traced

across the stitching that connected the top to the skirt and could feel the twine stretching the gap between the two.

"I think I'm a few coins away from bursting out of this... can't you just wait till I get home?" she pleaded.

Merrigold shook her head firmly. "I said before, nope! Gotta snag them before they wander off back to their wives and workplaces!"

"I am going to cause a scene if I get any bigger!" Orla hissed.

"Then ye best hurry up, 'cause there's a whole lot more opportunity here that I mean to take advantage of!" She hopped a step ahead and spun around on a toe. "We'll make a game of it! Ye'll get the rest of the food stocks, I'll snag the cloth from the shopping list. But, at the same time, I'll continue plantin' seeds as I see fit."

Orla's face paled at the notion. She opened her mouth to protest.

"Can the young tavern keep get home before she blows her top?" Merrigold sang before elegantly twirling and leaping behind a stack of crates. Orla swore inwardly and hurried after her but, much to her annoyance, found the area bare of any leprechauns.

"Don't forget to smile now!" Merrigold's voice echoed in her head.

"Merrigold..." Orla groaned. Anxiety now filling her, Orla adjusting her frock nervously before striding quickly into the crowds. Keeping her back straight and her gait stiff in an attempt to not stress her garment any further. Her destination was the familiar food stall that she and her father used to visit often. A meat and vegetables stall run by a wedded pair of burly butcher wife and her small, thin grocer of a husband whose names she couldn't remember.

The wife was busy splitting a particularly thick cut with a cleaver as Orla approached. "Orla! Haven't seen you in months. Look at you out and about so early in the morning."

Orla smiled pre-emptively this time while presenting the shopping list, not wanting to risk laughing and busting a stitch. "Good morning! I want everything on this."

Hssssssssssss

"Will be right with you. Honey, load of potatoes and carrots!" she yelled. The woman's bellowing voice masking Orla's own gasp of pleasure as a gush of air flooded into her. Biting her lip to stifle a moan as her frock squeezed her breasts tighter and tighter as they fought to escape.

"Now I know she's just enjoying this." Orla thought.

Snap

A muffled snap resounded from her clothes as a seam busted open.

"You know, since your father passed, I was worried if you were eating well," the wife rambled as she went about slicing a cut of beef into suitable chunks. "But got to say, you are filling out that dress well enough."

HiiiiSSSSSSSS

“Oh, you d-don’t say.” Orla said through her teeth as she reflexively covered her chest. Air continued to pump into it in a steady stream. Her cleavage rose towards her chin steadily as her mounds struggled to find space.

Snap Snap SNAP

Orla felt more stitching snap from around her midriff as the dress threatened to split in half. She gave silent thanks as the wife finally returned with several wrapped slices of meat and a pile of vegetables in a basket. “Here’s your order!” Her eyes narrowed as she looked at Orla. “You alright, Orla? Looking a bit flush there.”

Orla hurriedly swept the items into her basket. “Yes, yes, grand! Thanks!”

“Don’t be a stranger now!” The wife called out as Orla spun and hurried off.

Hisssssssssss

Creeeeeeeeeeeaaak SNAP

The hissing noise only grew in volume as she navigated the busy shopping area. Her shopping basket bouncing in front of her as she held it up like a shield to hide behind. Trying desperately to keep a distance from any passersby. A task that steadily grew more difficult as her slender frame now bobbed with two inflating balloons stretching fuller and wider as she walked. The growing valley of cleavage under her chin bounced wildly as it continued to spill over the opening.

“Ju-just a bit more till I can get out...” Turning a corner in her haste she bowled straight into another shopper; a young woman. Shopping baskets were sent sprawling onto the cobblestones.

“Oh god damnit!” Orla swore, which brought immediate regret as the telltale tingle raced up her spine and she bent over laughing. “Oh...nooo hohohoho!”

The young woman didn’t share her apparent humour. “The feck you laughing at?!”

HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

CREEAAK SNAP SNAP

More seams burst across her front. Orla, still chuckling, quickly started to shove the spilled contents back into her basket as she spoke. “S-sorry hehehe...I...I’m just a wee bit ticklish.”

“You wot...” the woman’s protest fell silent as she laid eyes on Orla’s bulging chest as she bent over. Each tit was now as large as her head, and still growing larger. Pure white skin bulged out of every opening on her failing frock.

Stuffing the last stray vegetable back into the basket, Orla straightened.

SNAP

The final stitch failed in its battle and her frock split into two halves. The skirt portion slipped down to hang precariously low across her hips while the top half stretched around her balloon orbs as a single, struggling piece of cloth pulled taut across her expanse. The faint pink of her areola began to slide into view as the fabric shrank.

Creeeeeeeaak!

“Have a good day!” Orla all but yelled at the befuddled woman as she broke into a run. Her dignity now literally hanging by a thinning thread.

“Orla?”

A familiar voice rang out behind her. Glancing back, she spotted Eileen in the middle of the crowd. Her usual conservative black bankers outfit absent in favour of a dark, form fitting corset dress, along with a shopping basket of her own.

“E-Eileen! Sorry, a bit busy!” Orla shouted back.

Eileen pushed through the crowd to follow her. “Orla, wait! I want to talk!”

HISSSSSSSSSSS

Creeeeeeeeaaaak

Orla grunted as another gush of air hit her. The cloth hugging her chest began to strain into a thin line as her breasts bulged around it. “C-can it wait? I *really* need to be somewhere!”

“It’s important!” Eileen panted, having finally managed to catch up to her. Orla increased her pace to keep her from seeing her front clearly. “I...are you okay? Your face is red...and what are you even wearing? Please, slow down!”

“Can’t slow down! Yes, aye! Trying something new, and just a bit flush from all the crowds is all!” The crowd finally cleared as Orla ran free of the market throngs.

HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

CREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK!

BAMPH!

Orla’s eyes widened as she felt the cool morning air caress her skin. The tortured remains of the top half of her frock fluttered to the ground as her tits finally burst free of their confines. Full, round and free they bounced weightlessly in full view of the morning sun. Choosing to save her modesty over the goods, she dropped her basket and covered her front with her arms.

“Oh, feck!” she moaned. Another tingle and she started laughing uncontrollably.

Eileen ran up beside her. “Orla!” she panted, her eyes falling on Orla’s enlarged assets. “What in the heavens?!”

“Eileen...just... hehee... help me back to the tavern,” Orla pleaded as she gasped for breath. Eileen nodded slowly and quickly scooped up the fallen basket and contents. Stepping up alongside Orla she used her own body as a cover from any passing eyes.

Getting back to the tavern with her dignity mostly intact Orla hastily ushered Eileen inside and locked the door behind her. Eileen took in her friend’s new proportions wordlessly, unable to comprehend her rapid transformation from flat chested to possessing the two swollen globes that bounced on her front.

“O-Orla...what...They’re enormous! Have you seen a doctor? That isn’t natural!”

Hssssssssss

As if on cue her chest ballooned out another inch before her eyes. Orla's hands cupped her mouth to stifle a moan. "Nngh... Eileen, you don't know the half of it... its... a curse."

Eileen looked torn between coming close to comfort her, or backing away further as Orla's chest inflated towards her. "A curse?!"

"Aye... Just let me get something on me, if I can even find something...and I'll explain"

As expected, Orla's wardrobe was now functionally a box of useless cloth, as nothing she once wore would even stretch around her chest. Improvising, she grabbed an apron from the kitchen to wrap around her front in a meagre gesture of modesty, while donning a set of long workpants underneath. Eileen sat transfixed at the bar as Orla explained the situation regarding the debt, the pot, Merrigold and how it all related to her ballooning chest.

Eileen sighed. "Oh Orla...I wish you asked me for help..."

"I asked too much of you as is Eileen... You played defence for my sake for so long with that silver tongue of yours...Also...sorry I threw a fit at your father the other day. He was just doing his job."

She smiled softly. "It's okay, he's a little used to it. So, where is your new partner now?"

"Out there selling samples of her brew and adding to my...'wealth'" She gestured to her chest, which bulged to the sides of her apron.

"So that explains the haste..." Eileen's gaze lingered on Orla's chest. "D-does it hurt?"

Orla's fingers slide across their surface and pressed into them, sending a shiver of pleasure through her body, tempered by the odd feeling of weightlessness that didn't match up with their size. "It's...actually kind of pleasant."

Any more episodes of inflation had been conspicuously absent since she started her story. Orla hoped Merrigold had just run out of bottles to sell and wasn't up to anymore mischief.

Thinking of the leprechaun suddenly brought Orla to a panic. "Eileen, maybe it's best you stay away for now...I have no idea what would happen to you if Merrigold finds out I told you about her."

Eileen shook her head firmly. "Let her find out. I'm staying here."

Orla's heart warmed at the gesture. "But..."

Standing up Eileen rounded the bar and approached the mysterious new casks of brew. "No buts! Besides, I don't think leprechauns are supposed to be cruel for the sake of cruelty...at least not what I understand from the tales. There's always a give and take with them. They are a business minded sort."

Orla watched as she took a mug and placed it underneath one of the taps. "Eileen? You don't drink."

Eileen poured herself a small sample of the brew. Its dark red colour shone in the glass, and along with a frothy head, looked absolutely inviting.

She inspected the brew closely. "I really don't, but trying the brew of a mythical leprechaun is too tempting of an experience to miss. Besides, you'll be serving it soon, so it should be fine, right?"

Lifting the mug to her lips Eileen sipped it at first, before tilting it more and more. Soon the sample was gone entirely with a gulp. Procuring a handkerchief from a pocket she dapped the froth from her lips gently.

"Well?" Orla asked.

Eileen broke into a wide smile. A red colour slowly crept into her cheeks. "Very tasty! I'm no connoisseur of beer at any length, but this is something I could find myself drink regularly I think!"

Orla leaned on the bar, her breasts spreading across the cool wood, as Eileen inspected her now empty mug. "Must be good then...I'd try it myself, but I think I have enough leprechaun magic flowing in me as..."

Orla words fell back down her throat as she watched her friend quickly move the mug back under the tap and starting filling it again, much more than a mere sample this time.

"Eileen? What are you doing? It's midday."

Eileen blinked, looking down at the now full mug in her hands as if realizing what she was doing, before smiling back at her. "Oh! I just thought a small sample might not be sufficient as a test. If I could just..."

Before Orla could protest her friend had raised the now full glass to her mouth and chugged the brew like a professional bar-hopper. The dark fluid slid into her mouth smoothly and vanished immediately. When she could breathe again Eileen let out a satisfied sigh of relief and leaned back against the bar, her face now flush.

"Delicious!" she mouthed softly.

Orla's brows knitted together in worry. "It's good you think so. If it can please your noble tongue then it should be grand...hey!"

Eileen had slumped against the bar and was already moving to pour herself more of the brew. Bounding over the counter Orla gently grasped her friend's hand and moved it away from the cask. Her friend moaned like a child having their favourite toy taken away.

"Ohh, just wanted one more test..."

"You should slow down, Eileen. I can spot a lightweight, and besides this is Merrigold's product. I don't think she'd appreciate me handing it out for free."

Bolting upright suddenly, Eileen nodded. "Y-you're right, Orla. I a-apologize. I don't know what came over me..."

Orla sighed in relief. But relief was replaced by surprise as Eileen dove into her pockets and pulled out her coin purse.

"Eileen, wait!" She shouted as Eileen fished a fat stack of silver from her purse and tossed it into the pot. It looked like she never even bothered to count them.

“That should c-cover it and one more, no?” Eileen smiled happily as if she was bestowing a great gift.

PHHHIIISHHHHHHH

“E-ileen nggh!” The burst of air in her chest sent Orla reeling back into the shelf. Breasts bulged further out the sides of her apron as the curse pumped her larger from the sudden donation. Eileen was already back at the cask and pouring herself another.

HiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiSSS

The inflation ended abruptly, but not soon enough as Eileen downed one more glass of the mysterious beer. Stepping over and taking her friend by the arm she gently guided her around to the other side of the bar, further away from the casks this time.

“So...heavenly...” Eileen moaned, slumping happily onto a table as Orla sat her down.

Having placed her in a safe position Orla ran back to grab a pitcher of water and another glass. Quickly stepping behind the bar and acting as a wall as Eileen had risen unsteadily to her feet and was lurching back over.

“Eileen, enough! You’ve had enough!” She said in her best tavern keeper voice, attempting to emulate the sternness of her father during the rowdiest of nights.

“But Orrrlaaaa...I want to heeelp...I’ll paaay...” she groaned as she attempted to round the bar to reach the cask again. Orla stood in her way; arms wide.

“You’ve helped me enough! I couldn’t ask for a better friend, but please no more...ngh!” her words fell short as Eileen stumbled into her. Her friends’ fingers sank into the billowy mounds of her chest as she used them to steady her fall.

“Ngh...but the cuurse...” Her hands roamed around Orla’s breasts like a baby trying to find a bottle. Already unsteady on her feet, Eileen slumped forward and buried her head between her cleavage. Her friend’s head sank and vanished into the soft, airy valley entirely.

“E-Eileen! Enough!” Orla struggled to guide her back to another table, farther from the casks, while dealing with the pleasurable assault on her senses. As soon as she neared a seat she gently pried her head from her depths and helped her sit down.

Eileen sank onto a table and rested her head. Orla immediately backed away out of her reach. “Just...what is in that beer?” she asked out loud.

“Two kinds of barely, hops, yeast, water and a whole heapin’ helpin’ of ‘generosity’”

Merrigold, now her normal, tiny size, was sitting on the counter like she had been there the whole time. Hopping to her feet, she bounded across the tables to land next to Eileen.

“Oiling up your first customer! Proud of ye!” she said, prodding the passed out woman in the face.

“Eileen is a friend, not just a customer.” Orla replied

“And a lightweight too by the looks.”

Orla glared at her. “What did you *do*? Getting drunk is one thing but that was almost like she was possessed!”

Merrigold shrugged. “Nothing harmful. Made a beer that tastes great, but coaxes a bit more from the pockets, if ye get my meaning.”

“This...this was your plan? Get people hooked to a magical beer and fleece them?”

“That’s uncalled for! I don’t fleece no-one. It’s a slight nudge in a beneficial way of thought is all. The taste and all that is genuine stout. Best in the business!” Merrigold shouted the last part proudly before jabbing a finger in her direction.

“Besides, *who* was it that needed a solution in a timely fashion. Yer wish was to keep your tavern, was it not?”

Orla sucked her teeth as Merrigold’s words stung. She looked at Eileen, who was sleeping soundly. “So, she’ll be okay?”

“Right as rain! But ye best get suited up. There’s gonna be a whole lot more like her in bit. Real heavyweights this time too!”

Looking down at her apron. “A bit?! But I haven’t anything to wear!”

“Aww, not gonna give them a beer and a show, lass?”

Orla growled. “Oh, ask me arse you...” a tingle of the ring stopped her words in their tracks and forced her to blurt out another laugh.

“Ah, I’m just pulling your leg. I made ye something. Left it on your bed. Now I got some cooking to do so get going!” She hopped off the table and sped off into the kitchen.

Fingering the straps of her apron nervously Orla proceeded into her bedroom. There, laid out on her bed, was the greenest dress she had ever laid eyes on. A short sleeved, green corset with dark green lace criss-crossing the front laid atop a scandalously short, light green skirt that looked like it would barely cover her knees. Looking closer she could see swirling patterns that looked like leaves and clovers etched into the cloth. Holding it in her arms she could feel the craftsmanship. It was the finest piece of clothing she had ever touched.

Suddenly it dawned on her what the cloth on the shopping list was for. “But when did she get the time to make this?”

Bang bang bang

A sudden sharp banging on the front of the tavern broke her out of her reverie. It was not even evening yet. “Already?” she said to herself.

She hurriedly slipped into the stunning outfit, and was relieved that the light green cloth stretched over her inflated bust almost magically. However, the corset left a valley of cleavage exposed for all to see. Bereft of any other options however she quickly tightened the lace, causing her mounds of flesh to bulge upward towards her chin.

BANG BANG BANG

Now fully clothed, she sped out of her bedroom to see milling silhouettes outside her windows. As she walked closer to the door the sound of voices outside only grew louder.

BANG BANG

Her door shook as she approached.

She felt herself gulping nervously. “Coming!”

She unlocked the door and opened it to reveal a sea of bodies standing outside. The man at the front she barely recognized. It was the Finn, the dishevelled dirty worker from earlier that day, now fully clean and dressed in a fresh outfit that was dyed entirely in shades of green. Standing on her tip toes, her eyes widened as she noted everyone seemed to have had the same idea of colours.

He tipped his cap at her. “Good afternoon to you, lass. Sorry to bother, but are you opening soon? Tis a bit early, but me and the lads wanted to get more of a taste of that brew of yours.”

Orla’s heart fluttered in her chest as she took in the crowd. She hadn’t seen so many since her father passed. Thinking of him, she put on her best smile, of which she had plenty of forced practice today.

“Yes, of course! Come in!”

“Thank ye much!” he turned to face the crowd. “Tis open, mates!”

The crowd roared in approval and started shuffling towards the door. The man doffed his cap again as he moved past her. “Grand new sign by the way, going to turn heads for sure!”

Orla frowned, then looked up. Above the doorway hung an entirely unfamiliar sign. It appeared like a four-leaf clover, but the leaves on the bottom half were strange. Squinting harder, she let out a groan. The two bottom leaves were flesh coloured, and resembled a woman’s bust being pressed into by a pair of strings that barely covered the nipples to form the clover shape. The large, swirly green letters beneath read;

The Blooming Clover

“When did she...ah, to hell with it. Welcome to the Blooming Clover!” She started laughing even before the telltale tingle raced up her spine. Spinning on her heel she all but pranced her way over to stand behind the bar as the crowd filed into the room. Chatter filled the once empty space as people got comfortable and took in the surroundings. Already a few had left their tables and were moving their way over to the bar.

Finn was the first up.

“Four pints of the...say I never actually asked the name of it...” he then squinted at the menu above her head. “...plus two bowls of stew.”

Orla was taken aback for a moment as she followed his gaze. Her menu had been quickly redesigned and now contained a healthy assortment of dishes written out in flowing script.

It had been but a few minutes since Merrigold had raced into the kitchen. Far too soon for any sort of hot meal to have been prepared. Her mind raced as she opened her mouth to answer.

A voice rang from the kitchen and two steaming bowls slid into the serving window “Call them Merrigold’s! Order up!”

The man grinned. “Ah, there’s the other lass. Merrigold’s, eh? Lay them on me, tavern keep!”

“Right, Merrigold’s coming up.” Pushing her thoughts about the name aside Orla went to work. As she poured the dark red liquid she felt a fluttering in her chest as she heard the man fumble around in his coin pouch behind her.

“I just hope the dress can handle it...” she muttered as she finished pouring and pushed the frothy beverages to the man, who was grinning eagerly.

“Cheers!” he smiled and presented a fistful of coins to her. She held her hand out, sucking in a breath as the cold silver fell into her palm.

PHHHIIIIIISSHHH

Air swelled and pumped her tits up within her new outfit. She bit her lip as the pressure roiled within, her exposed cleavage bulging up momentarily as if she had taken a deep breath, before it settled down again. Feeling the pile of silver in her palm, more than she has ever held since inheriting the tavern, filled her with determination. It was on.

“I don’t care how big I get... I’ll get as big as it takes!” she thought to herself.

“Just twenty-five gold pieces worth,” she said under her breath as the next customer stepped up and began to order, slamming down a stack of silver they had already prepared.

HIsssssSSSS

Turning around and pouring the beers helped hide her flushed expression from the curse. With every customer her chest bulged and stretched the outfit. She begrudgingly gave thanks to Merrigold for giving her boob pocket extra space.

“I’ll take half a dozen Merrigold’s, lass!” A stack of silver slid onto her counter.

Nodding and immediately spinning around to the tap. “On the way!”

HisSSSSSSS

“Oh, and I’ll take four of the stews too!” Another stack banged onto the counter beside the first.

HiSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

Like someone had opened a floodgate inside her body; the sensation of air being pumped into her chest only increased as each coin entered her possession. She felt her chest rumble as it stretched underneath the cloth. The corset kept the inflating mass of flesh above her belly as it slowly filled into two firm orbs beneath the cloth.

As she spun to serve another order of pints her breasts bounced and knocked down a stack of empty mugs. The stack being sent clattering to the floor beneath her feet.

"The debt is as good as dust" she thought to herself with a smile. Glancing down at her expanse of tit-flesh, however, sent a tinge of worry through her mind. She'd have to pay off Merrigold next, and couldn't begin to fathom how big she'd get before earning enough coin. Pressing a finger into one swollen tit, she *felt* like they had plenty of space to go despite already dwarfing

her own head in size. Glancing around to ensure nobody was looking first, she slid her hands beside her tits and squeezed them together as hard as she dared.

CREEEEEEAAK

“Mmmngh...” Her clothes protested as her hands sank into her spherical boobs. Flesh bulged out in every direction as the pressure shifted forward. Orla even felt her nipples inflate a bit before she released her hold and allowed them to bounce back into shape. A soft moan of pleasure exited her lips as the feeling of the air swirling and pushing inside her body sent shivers down to her toes.

“Maybe I just could hole myself up in my room and hire someone to work till the curse is broken” she thought out loud. Blushing with the idea of having nothing but private time to herself as she filled up bigger and bigger. They felt amazing now, and she could only imagine how the sensations would increase as her wealth accumulated.

At the corner of her eye she saw Eileen begin to stir, which snapped her out of her warm thoughts. She quickly grabbed a fresh pitcher of water and bounced her way over. “You okay, Eileen?”

“Ugh...” Eileen leaned back into her chair as she groaned. Her eyes fell onto the pitcher of water and reached out unsteadily.

Orla poured a small glass for her and pulled the chair far enough out for her to sit. “Suppose that answers that. You went off the saddle a bit there.”

“I feel like my head is full of pebbles rolling around...” She looks around and her eyes widen at the crowd, then at her enormous chest. “Oh goodness...how long was I out?”

“About an hour or two. I would have helped you to my bed, but kind of been swamped...”

“Two hours?! Oh..Oh my! Orla, I meant to tell you before.” She attempted to stand up and stumbled. “My father and I...we...”

The door bell jingled. Orla looked behind Eileen to see who had come in and her heart froze. Lord Cormac strode through the opening, quickly followed by Eileen’s father who looked like he was trying his best to hide within the man’s shadow. Cormac’s eyes frowned as he took in the bustling tavern.

“I thought you said I had two days!” Orla hissed.

Eileen sighed, nursing her head in her hands. “We tried to convince him, really. Showed him your initial payment and everything, but he refused to extend any more time.”

“ORLA!” Cormac’s booming voice broke through the chatter of the tavern. Conversations quieted as the patrons of the tavern all turned and laid eyes on one of the most well-known, and likely feared, figures in town. Orla stood up from her table slowly. Eileen rose behind her and followed behind as the pair weaved their way through the tables. Cormac’s cold gaze fell on her and his eyes widened immediately as he took her in. His mouth opened and closed a few times as he struggled to find words.

He found them soon enough, however. “What kind of trickery is this, Orla. What is that getup?! What...” he spluttered as his gaze flick up and down her body. “Don’t you have any pride? Are you so desperate to hold onto this...this den of...”

Her thoughts racing in a mix of panic and anxiety, Orla struggled to speak. “I... I don’t know what you mean,” she blurted out. “As to the dress...just wanted to fit the part. Adding a bit of cheer, Corm... Lord Cormac”

Cormac’s moustache trembled as rage overtook him. “I *knew* this place should have been shut down immediately after the wake.” He sighed and composed himself. “I blame myself. No matter. Time’s up, Orla. Judging by your look, you don’t have the rest of the payment on you.”

He gestured behind him and Patrick shuffled forward. He held a deed in his hands and a familiar sack of gold in the other. Orla’s eyes widened as she recognized the sack as the one he stuffed the gold into the other day. Unrolling the scroll of paper unsteadily, he cleared his throat. “B-by the power i-invested in me, by the bank of Saint Ch...”

Orla’s felt her heart sink to her stomach.

“I smell opportunity!”

A human sized Merrigold suddenly appeared behind the pair and slung her arms across their shoulders. “Repossessing the tavern I just started working at, right in the middle of the opening party? Real shame that is, now.”

Cormac’s face contorted in disgust as he shook her hand off his shoulder. “Orla managed to hire someone? Well, unfortunately you’ll be out of a job starting tonight. Blame my niece for her short-sightedness.” He gestured again to Patrick to hurry it up.

Patrick looked uneasily between Cormac and Merrigold before looking down at the deed once more with trembling hands. “Ahem...by the bank of...”

Merrigold reached down and plucked the paper from his shaking hands before prancing gaily across the room and leaping up onto the bar. “Now, I wasn’t finished.”

Cormac bristled and strode after her. “Now see here, young lady!”

Deftly re-rolling the paper up into a neat tube she brandished it like a sword in his direction. “Good sir, I’d hate for you to close this place down before sampling this tavern’s best.”

“I’ve had her best already, thank you!” Cormac sneered. He tried to swipe the deed from Merrigold’s fingers only to have her jaunt across the bar. Her boots narrowly missing plates, mugs and fingers without a care as she danced just out of his reach.

Wagging the scroll like one would tease a bone to a dog, Merrigold continued. “You’ve certainly not! She’s got a real winner this time, I assure ye.” She balanced her body on the very corner of the counter and opened her arms grandly. “Ain’t that right lads and ladies!”

The crowd roared in reply. “Right she is, M’lord!”

“It’s best thing I ever tasted sure!”

“Be a shame to shut her down before tasting it. Just a pint!”

“Ye afraid of getting oiled up on a sip, are ya?”

The room suddenly filled with jeers and cheers of all kinds. Orla was unsure on what to do when her eyes caught Merrigold's gaze looking over at her expectantly. The leprechaun waved the deed in her direction and gave her a wink. Nodding back at the cask behind her.

Orla leapt into action. Running quickly behind the counter and snapping up a mug, she poured a pint for him. "Just one, like you always do."

Cormac let out an exasperated sigh. "Orla, I've told you your beer is horrible. Enough with the theatrics and hand me the deed. Why even bother with this?"

Slamming the mug down onto the counter before him, a motion that sent her balloon chest bouncing up to her face for a moment, Orla bristled. "Because I've run myself ragged getting this place up and running in a day. Look around!" She gestured. "This isn't the tavern you saw a day ago...Even if you can't believe it, the least you could do is have one last pint."

He looked at her and then down at the mug. His expression cold and impossible to read. Orla reached into herself for a final gambit.

"Please?" she said. Taking her days' worth of forced practice to put on her best smile.

Cormac's expression softened. His eyebrows rose slowly. "Well, that's a first."

The tavern stood still, awaiting his response.

"If it will convince you to finally give up on this silly venture, why not?" He moved and sat down on a bar stool. The crowd erupted into cheers and hollers. Mugs and fists banged on tables as Merrigold joined Orla to push the mug towards him with a slender finger. The air stood still as he took it into his hand and inspected the contents thoroughly as if it would leap out at him.

"Doesn't *look* like your last attempt." He muttered before bringing the mug up to his lips. He sipped slowly at first, his nose and eyes scrunched in preparation for a horrid experience. But as he drank, his eyes slowly opened. His eyebrows knitted together in a frown as he tilted the drink more into his mouth. Slowly, ever so slowly, they relaxed and he upturned the entire contents down his throat.

After what seemed like minutes to Orla, she watched him set the mug down gently. "That...was actually pretty acceptable."

Merrigold chuckled. "Aww, look at him trying to hold it all in. Ye want some more, right? Tis on the house!"

Cormac pursed his lips. Nodding in silent agreement after a few moments.

"Thought so!" she sang. Pulling out another mug behind her back she slid it across the counter into his waiting palm. This time there was no hesitation as he downed it in one draught. He tapped his finger on the counter and another was slid his way. The crowd watched the spectacle with growing rowdiness. Every pint was met with a cheer that rattled the wooden walls as the nobleman downed it.

As the seventh beer vanished into his gullet, Orla could see a wide smile creep out from underneath Cormac's moustache. "Now, that is a beeeer! Hahaha!" he laughed.

His laughter was something that Orla had never dreamed of hearing. The sheer glee on his face was so unnatural to Orla that she felt uneasy. Like looking at the teeth of a grinning wolf and being unsure if it was happy or hungry.

Merrigold sat on the counter with one leg propped up to lean on. “Glad you approve! Shame it is the last night you’ll ever taste it.”

Cormac blearily turned to her. “W-what?” he muttered.

She waved the deed in his direction. “Are ye so oiled up ye forgot? Ye closing this place down, right? Leaving poor me and your niece out of a job. Such a shame, but business is business.”

Cormac frowned as he struggled to recall anything past the warm, happy thoughts buzzing around his head.

“Was only a measly twenty-five gold pieces too. I bet we could earn all that and more before the moon reaches its zenith at the rate we are going.” She clicked her tongue. “Shame, shame. If only we had a wise, wealthy financier to save us.”

Orla watched as her uncle shot to his feet. His upper body whirled as he spun around unsteadily to face Patrick, who had found himself a stool and had been watching the proceedings entirely dumbfounded.

“Pa-Patrick!” Cormac bellowed. Pointing at the banker with a wavering finger.

Patrick jumped up straight. “Y-yes, M’lord”

Cormac belched loudly before he continued. “I am...I am...” He frowned and turned back to Merrigold, who waved the deed at him with a wink.

His face contorted in apparent focus, which only succeeded in crossing his eyes. “I am clearing the whole debt... myself...”

“W-what?” Patrick squeaked.

“ON MY NAME...I’M CLEARING THE DEBT ENTIRELY!” he shouted even louder. “Give me the blasted paper, man!”

Scrambling to follow his drunken order Patrick nearly fumbled the gold bag that he had been carrying with him. Pulling a paper out of one of his many pouches he hastily handed it to Cormac along with a pot of ink and quill.

He stumbled over to the nearest table and concentrated before signing it with surprising quickness, before all but tossing the paper back at the old banker. “Oh..and...r-return my niece’s...coin”

Her eyes fell on the bulging sack of gold coins as Patrick turned and hastily walked towards her. The shining metal glinting in the tavern lights.

“I...it’s mine.” Orla whispered as he watched Cormac finish his signature with a wobbly flourish. It was her tavern, and with the gold returned she would clear the curse faster than she hoped. Stepping forward she all but snatched the bag from Patrick’s outstretched fingers.

“It’s finally mine!” she cried out in glee as the weight of gold coins filled her hands.

“And that’s that curse done and dusted!” she thought to herself. Eager to be back to her normal, slim self she spun towards the bar.

Only to find the pot missing.

“The pot... Oh no” she whispered. A feeling of dread formed in the pit of her stomach as the consequences of her sudden acquisition of wealth dawned on her

PSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSHIISSSSSSSS

Unnngh!” She gasped loudly as her breasts began to inflate with unprecedented force. Glancing down she could see her tits vibrate from the torrent of air being forced into them. The sight of her cleavage rapidly rising towards her face sent her into a panic. They were getting big far too quickly.

HIISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

CRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK

Ignoring the ominous sound from her top. She whirled around in a desperate search; her ballooning chest smacking into a laughing patron hard enough to send his face into his mug.

Desperately she called out. “Merrigold!?! Where...Ungh!”

HIISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

CRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK

SNAP

A string on the front of her top snapped off as the air flowing into her increased; her chest bound forward and slammed into Patrick, sending the elderly man sprawling onto the floor. The tavern erupted in laughter as the crowd seemingly enjoyed the spectacle before them.

“She’s a growing gal, isn’t she!”

“The Blooming Clover herself! Cheers to that!”

“Merrigold!?” Orla shouted out again. She looped her arms around her chest in a fruitless attempt to hold back the growth as she looked for any signs of the leprechaun. Her effort only served to cause her mounds of tit flesh to bulge up and envelop her chin as the air within shifted. She felt a heat rising to her face as her senses became overwhelmed by her stretching skin being pressed tightly within her failing clothes.

CRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK

SNAP

Another string lost the battle on her top. Orla’s gaze flicked across Eileen’s as her friend stared back in horror.

HIISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

“Mmmngh!” Gasping for breath between moans. “Too big...too fast.”

SHRRRRRIP

Tears shot across her top as the fabric failed against the intense pressure. The fabric stretched taut across her growth. The swirling embroidery proving no barrier against the burgeoning chest inflating inside it.

“Merrigold!” she shouted louder. Her thoughts raced, but settled quickly on the immediate need for getting out of sight. Spinning and moving her way through the crowd gave several patrons a face full of ballooning tits as she pushed through. She reached the doorway to the kitchen in a run.

Just as she entered the threshold however, her forward momentum was halted.

“Ugngh!” she moaned in a mix of pleasure and frustration. Far too wide, her chest had firmly wedged itself into the doorframe as she had tried to run through. Now squeezed firmly on both sides the air could only swell her forward.

HISSESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

RRRRRRRRRRIP

BAMPH

The sudden shift in pressure was the final straw for her top. The strings snapped in unison, which allowed her ballooning breasts to reduce the delicate fabric to shredded tatters on the floor. Orla pushed and pushed, but found herself unable to budge an inch. Adding to the worry was the feeling of pressure beginning to build. The air ceasing to swirl freely, rather, it felt as if it was just growing. Building itself bigger and bigger as her breasts struggled to contain it.

HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

FOOMP FOOMP

With the sound of two corks being shot off a pair of wine bottles her nipples popped out and stood erect in the warm air of the kitchen. The air, struggling to find space, forced its way into them and puffed the delicate pink skin erect and tight.

Worry grew into full blown panic. Throwing the bag of gold hastily into the kitchen, she turned back to lock eyes with Eileen, who was the only one transfixed on her amidst the crowd of rowdy patrons. “Help!”

Snapping to her senses Eileen sped across the floor and up to Orla's side. "R-right!"

Seeing her friend's need, she braced up against her back and shoved.

CREEEEEEEEAK

“Nnnngh! Harder Eileen... I don’t want to be stuck here!” Orla wasn’t sure if the ominous sound was from her chest or the doorway as she was slowly forced through the opening. She groaned in a mix of fear and pleasure as her tightening skin slid slowly across the hard wooden frame.

CREEEEEEAK-PHWOMP

PHSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSH

[illegible]

CreeeeeeeeeeeeAAAK

This time for sure, Orla knew the ominous, stressed sound was from her body. A high-pitched groan that resounded throughout the shrinking space, which only served to send her further into a panic. Fearfully, she placed her hands besides her enormous globes and pressed. They were

drum tight, and yet she could feel the air rumble within her. Her growth was slowing to a crawl, yet the curse continued to pump. The air struggling to find anywhere else to go.

“Please!” Orla pleaded, her face contorted in fear and pleasure. Eileen nodded and immediately hurried out into the dining room.

Now alone and utterly helpless, Orla could only squirm on the floor. She could feel the kitchen through her breasts as they stretched from wall to wall. Every surface pressing into her expanse sent a shiver of fear and pleasure through her senses. As if the mere prod of a handle would be enough to make her pop.

CREEEEEEEEEEAAK

As her nipples brushed the ceiling, she felt it. Another groan of pressure that shuddered through her body. Her breasts had stopped stretching. Two perfect spheres of taut, shining skin shimmered in the evening light.

“I’m... full...” Orla whispered. Her nails dug into the floor as dread filled her. She prayed Eileen was quick and assertive enough to stop anymore beer-addled donations.

HISSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

Unexpectedly, the flow of air began to cease. The sound fading in her ears till it was but a whimper. Carefully, Orla let out a slow sigh of relief. Feeling as if her very breath was going to tip her over the edge if she went too hard.

“It...It stopped. Oh, thank God it stopped!” Though she was now a prisoner in her own kitchen, she allowed a bit of relief to take refuge in her mind.

“We need to close right now!” Turning her head towards the door and shouted. “Eileen! Mind turning the sign around and start urging people to finish up?”

It was then she realized it wasn’t only the hissing in her body that had grown silent, so had the tavern. There were no voices. No clattering of plates and bowls. Even the air itself felt as if it had been silenced. She couldn’t see much from her position on the floor, and the quiet was beginning to bother her.

Slowly, delicately, she pulled herself across the floor. Wincing as overinflated mounds bounced lightly off the rafters, she shifted herself to get a look into the dining room. Eileen slid into view. Her friend was facing away from her with an arm raised to the side of her mouth as if she was about to shout something.

“Eileen? What’s wrong? Why’s everything so quiet?” Orla asked. As she stared, certain details began to sink in. Eileen’s long braid which usually had a mind of its own had frozen in place mid-swing.

In fact, everything had frozen in place. Eileen’s dress didn’t flutter. Her hand never shifted from its position by her open mouth. As Orla’s eyes slid down, she noticed that her friend was even suspended mid-run. Her prim, black shoes were floating an inch off the floorboards.

“I did tell ye my speciality was cooking with thyme, aye? Love the stuff.”

With the sound like a storm gale Orla's tits released the pressure in a rush of air that sent dirty plates and cooking utensils flying around the kitchen. Her eyes rolled back into her head and her mind went blank as all thought was swept aside as her body emptied itself.

"Haaaah! Nngh! Feeeeeck!" she cried as the air continued to rush out of her chest. Every pulse deflating them down another size, until finally they sat flat against her body once more.

Opening her eyes in a daze, Orla let out a long breath she had been holding in. "I...I didn't burst..."

It was then Orla became aware of Merrigold's laughter ringing throughout the kitchen. Looking behind her she witnessed the fae rolling around wildly in mirth. "Hahaha! I said to ye right at the start, ye'd be fine!"

Orla let out a weak growl in frustration. "You...you...I thought I was going to explode!"

Orla returned her gaze to the ceiling as her mind spun from the ebbs of the excitement and fear. Her thoughts were pierced by the sound of coins hitting her bar counter. Whatever spell Merrigold had cast had stopped and life returned to the tavern.

"Half a dozen Merrigold's!" cried a voice.

Eileen's soft, panicked voice soon sounded out after. "No! W-wait! ...the tavern's closed! No more!"

Hisssssss

Orla's eyes widened as she felt the air surge into her breasts. Her flat chest already a memory as two inflating mounds reoccupied the space. "Again!?" she cried. Her eyes flicked to the space where the bag of gold fell. Only to find it missing.

Merrigold hopped off the counter and landed in front of her. The bulging gold sack dwarfing her tiny body as she held it. "Aye, helps the business! And till I finish teachin' ye, we need all the help we can get. I'll be holding onto this for a looooong time"

Feeling overwhelmed mentally and physically, Orla could only let out a groan.

Merrigold flashed a grin at her. "Pleasure to be doing business with ye, partner!"

THE END