



On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)
Joyce Bupp

of my buddies.
Then they stopped at me.
"Go away. Bug off. What's your problem?" I wanted to moo to them. But you can't tell a human anything, so I just swished my tail and shook my head in irritation. After they pointed and gestured and eyeballed me for a while, they left. Good riddance. Hoped I'd seen the last of this pestiness.
But, nooooooo way.
A couple of weeks later, one of my humans comes and slips this rope thing around my head. Tugs on it 'til I follow him to the end of the barn. And then — get this! — he ties me there. All by myself. The indignity. At least there was a pile of silage there that I could munch on. After while, they took the rope thing off and sent me back to the herd. Go figure.
And did the same senseless thing again the next day. And the next. Let me tell you, this was getting old. But I didn't kick or butt or try to run away, or anything like that. See, I try to get along.

Why me?
Why have they singled out me for all this attention?
After all, I'm just one of the herd members in the milking string. I try to do my job. Stay healthy. Eat lots. Milk well. Not get tangled in any fences or bruise my udder or shove the other girls around.
Of course, even though I am fair size for my age — I'm only two — some of the older cows are lots bigger and heavier and can push their weight around a lot bet-

ter than me, anyway. I learned my place in the bovine pecking order early on, believe me. Some of those old mamas can ram you pretty hard if they want your spot at the feed bunk.
So there I am, standing with the rest of the herd in the barn sometime ago, just munching away on my cud and waiting for my turn to be milked so I could be more comfortable and lay down to rest. And a couple of strange humans come walking down through the barn, pointing at and talking about some

Then, they did it again. Only, this time, they took this noisy thing they held in their hand and began to cut my hair. A little here, a little there, more off the top of my head. I hate to admit it, but it did improve my looks.
And if that wasn't enough, then they started to spray me with cold water all over. And it was chilly. I shivered. But the sun was warm and I dried off soon. Afterward, it actually felt kinda' good. But I didn't smell like a cow anymore.
Then they led me off into a nice, flat grassy spot behind the house. I remembered having run through there one time, when a bunch of us youngsters knocked a hole in the fence and sneaked through. This time, it was daylight and there were a bunch of strange humans around. They brushed me until my coat glistened in the sunshine, clipped at me some more, and — get this — gave me a fake tail to make mine look fuller. Go figure.
Then this bunch of strangers all crowded around me and made me stand in one spot, just so. They

kept putting my feet in certain positions and holding my head in the air. Every time I tried to relax or move a little, they put me back in that same position. Then, they would all jump back and some clown up front would yell and make funny noises, trying to get my attention. What a bore!
And while all this was going on, the guy who seemed to be in charge kept slipping behind some piece of equipment that clicked every now and then. He did it a couple of times. But I must admit, I did look pretty. No one ever told me what was going on. but I overheard a couple of snatches of human mumblings about taking my picture because my father was showing a lot of promise as a bull. Bulls. Who needs 'em, anyway? We girls are the ones who do all the work.
But, since I got back to the barn, a couple of my bovine buds have been teasing me about wanting my autograph. Keep it up, I told 'em, and you're gonna' get an autograph. A hoofprint on the flank.
Sigh. The stuff we photo models have to put up with . . .

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