

Folly 112

Chapter 112 Who Is She?

With a pot of lard ready, Mu Shuangshuang more or less knew that one pound of pork fat could be rendered into six to seven ounces of lard.

This wild boar had ten pounds of pork fat, so the final rendered lard came out to be a little over seven pounds.

After Mu Shuangshuang put the lard into jars, she set the oil dregs aside, sprinkled some salt, and waited for them to cool before giving them to the two kids.

Next, she prepared to continue rendering lard from eighteen pounds of pork fat. Just as she placed the fat in the pot, Lu Yuanfeng came over.

"Shuangshuang, why don't you take a break before continuing?" Lu Yuanfeng suggested, seeing Mu Shuangshuang sweating profusely.

"It's alright, just this one pot to go. Once it's done, I'll rest. By the way, have you cleaned the winter melon?"

"It's clean. Should I slice it or cube it?"

Lu Yuanfeng essentially had little to no cooking skills, so he always asked Mu Shuangshuang before doing anything.

"Let me do it. You watch the pot for me, and flip it occasionally. Xiao Han can handle the fire."

Winter melon stewed with bones is a delicious dish in peasant households. It's usually reserved for holidays. Some families can't even afford a piece of meat during New Year, so Mu Shuangshuang decided to make a winter melon stew so tasty that the two brothers would drool over it.

She only used half a winter melon, cutting it all into chunks. As for the bones, she soaked them in water first to get the blood out, then took them out.

After finishing the second pot of lard, the cooled oil dregs were ready to eat. Mu Shuangshuang took two small bowls and gave Xiao Han and Yuanbao each a bowl.

"Eat up. I'm not sure if it tastes good," Mu Shuangshuang smiled.

"It's definitely delicious, I can't help drooling already." Yuanbao didn't bother with chopsticks, grabbing the bowl and started stuffing his mouth with his hands. He ate with such relish that Xiao Han, watching him, also started drooling.

But Xiao Han didn't eat immediately; instead, he looked at Mu Shuangshuang. "Little Zhi and Dad and Mom haven't eaten; Xiao Han wants to save some for them."

Mu Xiaohan grew up not eating much good food. Whenever he had anything to eat, he thought of his family.

Mu Shuangshuang felt very touched; her brother was really considerate, yet it made her heart ache. Old Mrs. Mu spoiled Mu Dade with all the good food, almost to the point of madness.

She hoped her brother would be considerate, but not at a cost of having nothing. If the family lived well, and Xiao Han remained considerate, that's what she wanted to see.

"Xiao Han, you're very thoughtful, but as you can see, there are plenty of oil dregs left. I'll take some back for them later. You finish your portion."

"Okay!"

Xiao Han nodded vigorously, unlike Yuanbao, he ate delicately, using chopsticks and taking small bites.

Mu Shuangshuang stared at Mu Xiaohan for a long time; Xiao Han's features were really fine, like a porcelain doll, making it hard for her to look away.

"Sis, why are you looking at me?"

"You look good, now hurry up and eat!"

Mu Xiaohan blushed red then began to eat seriously.

While the two kids were engrossed in eating, Mu Shuangshuang scooped up the second pot of lard but left some to fry those pork bones.

The pile of bones mostly consisted of spare ribs and shank bones; the ribs had been bought by someone else, so dinner wouldn't be ready anytime soon.

The bones fished out from the water sizzled upon hitting the pot, and soon, the meat around them turned golden brown.

Lu Yuanfeng's kitchen instantly filled with the aroma of cooked meat!

After checking the state in the pot, Mu Shuangshuang started adding water, then she put in the pre-cut ginger and garlic, closed the lid, and instructed Lu Yuanfeng.

"This needs to stew for half an hour. After half an hour, add the winter melon chunks. Once the winter melon is cooked, you all can eat."

Afraid that Lu Yuanfeng wouldn't know, Mu Shuangshuang reminded him again. "Taste the winter melon; when it's done, you can have dinner."

"Got it. Shuangshuang, why don't you stay for dinner tonight, and invite Third Uncle, Third Aunt, and Little Zhi over."

Lu Yuanfeng nodded vigorously, then looked at Mu Shuangshuang expectantly.

The girl had been busy all afternoon without a break; surely she deserved a good meal here.

"No, in any case, cook the meat before you sleep, and bring the meat and your usual tools outside tomorrow morning. Those twenty pounds of prime meat can't go to waste."

Twenty pounds of prime meat would fetch 300 coins if sold at fifteen coins per pound, equal to Yu Si Niang's fifty days of wages.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't bear to waste it and instructed Lu Yuanfeng to try to do well.

"Shuangshuang, you... really can't stay for a meal? I'll explain to Mr. Mu and Mrs. Mu, I..."

Lu Yuanfeng was noticeably at a loss, not knowing what he could do to make the girl stay for a meal.

Whether to show gratitude for her hard work this afternoon or just for his own selfish reasons.

"It's not my grandparents; don't overthink it. Don't forget, I'm still considered a patient. Jumping around too happily might not look good if seen by others."

Mu Shuangshuang teased Lu Yuanfeng with a smile. Although she wouldn't bring this up outside, they both understood.

"Well... alright, wait a bit. I'll get you something."

Lu Yuanfeng felt a bit sad but didn't want to trouble Shuangshuang. He only wished she could split from her family soon; it would be more convenient for her to come over for meals then.

Lu Yuanfeng took out a wooden barrel with two pounds of pork tenderloin he reserved for Mu Shuangshuang, considered the best part of the pig.

With high moisture content, low fat, and fine muscle fibers, it's delicious whether stir-fried, sautéed, or cooked in any style.

Lu Yuanfeng wished to keep the five-flavor pork too, but it sold out too quickly, booked in a blink of an eye. Though five-flavor pork might not match tenderloin, it's delicious stewed with vermicelli.

"Here, take it home. Say it's the wages for helping me work, according to your contract. Your grandma can't exact it from you."

"Ha, I really don't need this; I'll just take the intestine home."

Mu Shuangshuang shook her head. She wasn't foolish, knowing that even if Old Mrs. Mu didn't want it, they'd still eat some. She wouldn't be that generous to them. Better to take the pork intestine home and prepare it for Dad and Mom tonight.

"Shuangshuang..."

"Don't say it, we have one goal now: earn more silver so the two boys have money for school, and save up some dowry for Little Zhi too."

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang insisting, Lu Yuanfeng reluctantly gave her the pork intestine, as well as the remaining half-pot of oil dregs, not taking even a bit, giving it all to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Shuangshuang, I'll count the money tonight and tell you how much, then I'll give it to you."

"Sure, you don't need to see me off. Go back!"

Mu Shuangshuang held onto her items, stopping Lu Yuanfeng who was about to send her off.

The sun hadn't set yet, and many people working in the fields hadn't returned, so it was very safe. Besides, Mu Shuangshuang had Xiao Han as her little bodyguard.

"Be careful then!"

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang off, there was a pretty girl standing by Lu Yuanfeng's kitchen door, contrasting with the earthy wall.

The girl wore a faded yellow dress, seeming somewhat curious watching Lu Yuanfeng send Mu Shuangshuang off, her eyes held a peculiar look.

"Who is she? Why are you seeing her off?"

Her questioning tone made Lu Yuanfeng frown.