

Folly 96

Chapter 96: Stirring Things Up (Second Update)

Lu Yuanfeng waved the pig skin in his left hand, while his right hand held a piece of freshly cut meat, still bloody, clearly from a recently slaughtered animal.

"I've packed the pig skin and sewing scissors, and this meat is deer meat. On my way back from town, I went into the mountains, and just happened to find a deer that had fallen into a trap. Someone in the village was buying meat tonight, so I slaughtered it; these are the unsold portions."

Lu Yuanfeng instinctively made an excuse for having three hundred taels of silver here, and then secretly glanced at Mu Shuangshuang's expression.

"But we haven't divided the family yet. If you give it to me, our third branch won't get to eat it." Mu Shuangshuang shrugged helplessly and answered.

Indeed, the issue of family division was a major obstacle in her path. Until the family was divided, she couldn't flaunt her wealth, and the food could not be openly taken out, or else the family division would certainly be hindered.

This evening, Yu Si Niang and the two Little Doudings had persistently persuaded Mu Dashan, who then agreed to talk to Old Mrs. Mu and the patriarch to see if division was feasible. It wouldn't matter if the first branch enjoyed life, the third branch wouldn't beg for handouts.

Naturally, Mu Shuangshuang suspected that Mu Dashan's endeavor wouldn't be so easy, hence she had a backup plan ready. However, she would have to go into the mountains tomorrow.

"Then what should we do?"

When Lu Yuanfeng slaughtered the deer, the first person he thought of was Mu Shuangshuang, which is why he saved the prime meat and fatty parts around the deer's belly.

The rest he didn't think about at all, and he completely overlooked that giving this to her wasn't helping, but harming her.

"It's simple, take it back with you. Yuanbao is growing and eats a lot to grow quickly."

Mu Shuangshuang wanted to take the pig skin from Lu Yuanfeng, but he insisted on accompanying her near her home.

The processed pig skin wasn't heavy, but it was still quite a large piece, and Lu was worried the girl was too delicate to carry it herself.

Mu Shuangshuang was thinking about how to explain the rabbit situation to Lu Yuanfeng, so she relinquished insisting on carrying it herself, and after a long walk, she suddenly spoke up.

"Lu Yuanfeng, I'm sorry, the rabbit Yuanbao had for Little Zhi was killed by my aunt. She said she would help Yuanbao raise it, but it's probably not going to happen now."

Her tone revealed a hint of heaviness, and Lu Yuanfeng felt a gloominess, prompting comforting words to slip out.

"It's okay, rabbits are raised to be eaten anyway. If Little Zhi likes, I'll catch a better-looking one tomorrow."

"Um... thank you Lu Yuanfeng, but you don't need to catch one. Tomorrow, I'll personally go to the mountains to catch a rabbit."

Always troubling this honest guy made her feel uneasy since her hands and feet weren't broken.

"You want to go personally?" Lu Yuanfeng's brow furrowed instantly and without hesitation, he refused.

"No way, it's too dangerous in the mountains. Even when I'm with Yuanbao, I don't dare go too deep into the forest."

Mu Shuangshuang knew Lu Yuanfeng wasn't lying. On recent trips to the mountains, she had carefully observed the surroundings and discovered a trail of animal footprints.

The impression was larger than usual animals, but she was unsure of its exact species, yet it confirmed the mountain was dangerous.

"The wild boar you saw me sell at the market wasn't caught by me, it fell into a trap by itself." Lu Yuanfeng continued to explain.

The wild boar Lu Yuanfeng took to the market weighed seventy to eighty pounds, appeared immature and not very strong, but wild boars were notoriously fierce and powerful, and he wouldn't necessarily benefit in direct confrontation.

If Shuangshuang encountered one...

"But I have to go into the mountains and need your help..."

Mu Shuangshuang gestured to Lu Yuanfeng, whispering her little secret to him.

"Shuangshuang, you can leave this to me. I can go find Zhang Huai Shu later, but you have to let me join you. We won't venture deep into the forest, just a few circles around the edge will suffice to catch a rabbit."

Zhang Huai Shu and Lu Yuanfeng had a good relationship, so helping wasn't an issue.

"That would be great, just have Uncle Zhang say I was bitten by an animal in the mountains and it's quite serious, requiring a lot of silver for treatment, preferably a hundred taels."

This visit to the mountains served two purposes for Mu Shuangshuang: to catch a rabbit for Little Zhi and to find an animal to douse herself in blood, then fool Old Mu family.

She had analyzed that the Old Mu family refused to divide mainly because her parents could still earn money and they were reluctant to let go of such hardworking children. Now if something happened to her and she owed a large debt, the Old Mu family might discard the third branch as a burden.

She hoped her parents would take a firm stance and cut off her grandparents' expectations.

Returning home, Mu Shuangshuang began making bags for Lu Yuanfeng and the others. The processed pig skin lost its initial hardness but was still rough.

She first found a wooden stick to measure the approximate size of the pig skin, then started snipping it with scissors.

The bag she made for Lu Yuanfeng was simpler, square-shaped, capable of holding a dagger and a pile of copper coins, or some basic dry food, like steamed buns.

She used thick thread, twisting several strands of fine thread into one rope, first running it through the pig skin with a burlap needle, then threading it again with an embroidery needle.

The seemingly simple steps took over an hour to complete. She stretched her back, retrieved her childhood clothes from the closet, dismantled the fabric, and sewed three pockets inside the bag.

It was helpful that she had seen modern handbags; making one now brought a stream of inspiration, though the pig skin was too plain and lacked any decorative elements, making it too monotonous.

The last step was the bag strap. Mu Shuangshuang mixed three materials: pig skin, hemp, and coiled fine thread.

The pig skin was on the outside, the fine thread on the inside, stitched together to make it sturdy enough.

Making the bag strained Mu Shuangshuang's eyes to redness, knowing there wasn't time left today but only enough for a small bag for Little Zhi, about seven inches, enough to hold some copper coins.

The difference with Little Zhi's bag compared to Lu Yuanfeng's was that aesthetics mattered beyond utility; it had to look good.

Mu Shuangshuang thought of modern cartoon characters and decided on a panda-faced bag for Little Zhi.

The wild boar skin, once processed, turned beige, close to white, only short of panda-like black eye circles and ears.

She just needed to add four pieces of black fabric at key spots and stitch them on.

Finally, when it was past midnight, she completed Little Zhi's bag.

The appearance was, indeed, quite ugly; its skin not soft enough, asymmetric panda ears, unexpressive eyes, lacking aesthetics but oddly adorable.

Indeed, it was cutely ugly because it reached the extreme of ugliness!

Still, nothing could be done; her craftsmanship and available tools were limited.

Looking at her adorable-ugly panda purse, Mu Shuangshuang pursed her lips and blew out the oil lamp that burned for several hours.

The room finally darkened completely, and Mu Shuangshuang turned over and fell into a deep sleep.

As soon as she closed her eyes, it seemed morning had arrived, with Old Mrs. Mu's pig-slaughtering-like cries echoing throughout the Old Mu family.

Well, it's time to get up and stir things up...