The Luna and her Quadruplet Pups by Jane Above Story

Chapter 124

3rd Person

When Mary Laurent looked out her cottage window to see her husband, Thomas, trudging across the terraced hills of their remote farm with four young pups toddling after him, she had to do a double take. At first she thought she was imagining things- they'd had all manner of strange creatures show up on their lands over the thirty years of their marriage, but this was something entirely new.

The children were covered in mud from head to toe, and following her mate at quite a distance.

They seemed to be taking the journey in sprints, crossing the open expanses of green pasture land at a trot, before stopping to hide behind various objects, from trees and farm equipment, to the couple's prized llamas. She might have thought they were trying to sneak up on Thomas, only it was clear he knew they were behind him. He was pretending like he was completely oblivious to them, though she could see his face crinkled in concentration as he drew near- as if listening carefully to ensure they were still following.

They must have come from the jungle – after all, it surrounded their land on all sides. Still, she had no idea how they'd gotten there, let alone escaped the deadly forest. When her husband finally reached the door to their modest home, she met him with her hands braced on her plump h!ps. "What on earth, Thomas?" She asked in exasperation. "Trust you to go check on the herd and return with a whole litter of pups."

"Gently now, my love," He cautioned. "They're more than a bit skittish – I don't think they've had an easy time of it."

"Gently," She snorted, "I've raised more than my share of pups, Thomas Laurent, and I'll tell you right now that a scared babe needs a firm hand in care, not wishy-washy cajoling."

She marched out of the house and right up to the muddy children, who were unsuccessfully attempting to conceal themselves among the baby llamas in the nursery pens. They'd zeroed in on a small brown calf and clearly imagined they could camouflage themselves against its dark fur.Well, what have we here?" Mary asked pointedly.

"Llamas."A small voice whispered back

The proclamation was followed by the sound of a dull thud and a whispered, "Llamas don't talk!"

How do you know?" The first voice hissed back. You're not a llama 'xpert."

Cuz they would've said something by now." A third voice reasoned.

Hmm, so I have pups hiding among my crias do I?" Mary observed.

We're not pups!A fourth voice put forth meekly. I mean here, we're not here!"

Mary shook her head, smothering a smile.

Alright now, no more hiding, you little ones need to come inside and get cleaned up so I can get a proper look at you."

For the first time a tiny head covered in dark hair popped up into view, peeking over the back of the young llama and revealing a pair of bright green eyes narrowed distrustfully. "He promised we wouldn't have to take baths."

Mary crossed her arms over her ch3st and arched her brow. "Did he now?" She asked,

Well, I'll not have muddy pups in my clean kitchen. You'll have baths and I don't want to hear another word about it."

The pups exchanged uncertain glances, clearly trying to decide what to do. "Hop to it now,"

Mary urged them, clapping her hands. "The sooner you're clean the sooner you can eat."

This announcement, spoken in the uncompromising tones of an obvious mother, got the pups moving like nothing before. They obediently followed Mary into the cottage, pausing at the door to let her pull off their dirt- encrusted shoes and clothing, and before long all tour pups were soaking in a warm bubble bath.

Though they still huddled together nervously, they let Mary wash and dry them, trying to fight the urge to cry or ask for cuddles when she fussed and lamented about all their bug bites, scratches and bruises. She treated their wounds and bundled them in blankets, before bringing them steaming bowls of homemade stew.

"Don't eat too quickly now." She scolded as they began to scarf down the food. "You'll make yourselves sick.

"But it's so yummy," Parker complained.

"An' it's been ages since we had food." Ryder added mournfully.

"Poor wee lambs." Mary crooned sympathetically, "can you tell me what happened to you? Did you get separated from your parents somehow?"

Yes." Paisley nodded, sniffling but not saying more.

Mary, who's sharp wit had singled out Paisley as both the most guarded of the children and the most vulnerable, zeroed in on the girl. "What's your name, my darling?

Paisley shook her head. We can't tell you our names.

Why not?" Mary pressed.

"Cuz we don' know you." Paisley frowned. "And we don' twust grown ups we don' know."

Well that's very wise." Mary praised, exchanging a worried glance with her husband.

For most children the principle of "stranger danger" was entirely theoretical, but she had a bad feeling these pups had learned not to trust the hard way. "Still Thomas and I want to help you. How can we do that if we don't know your names?"

Riley shrugged, a challenge coming to life in her mischievous eyes.If you really wanna help, you'll find a way."

Thomas choked on a laugh, covering it with a cough as Mary cut her eyes to him, Well aren't you the feisty one." She observed, turning back to Riley, "does that mean you're brave enough to tell me how you ended up lost in the jungle?"

"We 'scaped." Riley informed her vaguely, yawning and stretching now that her belly was full. The other pups were becoming drowsy too, cuddling closer together in their blankets as Mary and Thomas watched.

"Escaped what?" Thomas pressed, but it was too late. The pups were already fast asleep, their bowls abandoned as they snuggled themselves into a puppy pile and passed out in pure exhaustion. For the first time in many, many days, they rested without fear of being attacked or eaten – with full bellies and smiles on their faces.

By supper time, Thomas and Mary had gone around in circles half a dozen times about what to do with the stray pups who landed on their doorstep. If they'd thought the children were orphans they would have kept them in a heartbeat, for the couple loved children and their own pups had been out of the house for a few years now. Yet despite how skittish the little ones seemed, it was clear they'd been well-loved at one time, and their tearful expressions when Mary asked about their parents spoke volumes.

"We should take them into town this weekend."

Thomas suggested. "That's probably where they got lost."

The girl said they escaped, if they got lost in town, I'm not sure we want to take them back there." Mary fretted. "I think they just need some time. They' ll come to trust us and eventually tell us their story."

Mary, think of their parents. Thomas admonished, they ll be out of their minds with fear and grief, we have to try to reunite them as soon as possible. It might be different if we were going to keep them. But someone is out there, looking for them right now."

You're right." Mary sighed, it just makes me nervous. They're not exactly inconspicuous, and if we start asking around about them it will call attention to the fact that we have them. What if the person they escaped is there searching for them?"

We'll have to be careful about it." Thomas nodded. Maybe we don't take them with us, maybe we just go to market and see if there are any rumors about missing pups, then go from there .

It won't be faster, but I expect it will be safer."

Mary agreed. "Do you think they'll wait that long?"

Thomas's mouth quirked, I don't think they have much choice in the matter, do they?"

"Mark my words, Thomas." Mary declared, those pups survived the jungle and who knows what else, they're bright and strong-willed, if they want to go home, they're going to do whatever they can to get there.

Well we can't allow them to run off on theirown!" Thomas whispered worriedly. "They're much too little."

I know that and you know that." Mary frowned, "but babes never see it that way.

Little did they know, but the pups were listening to every word of Mary and Thomas's conversation, and they were already plotting what to do next.

They seem nice," Ryder murmured, looking hopefully at his siblings, "they want to help."

"Or they want us to think they do." Paisley corrected. What town do you think they're talking 'bout?"

"I dunno, but we can't let them ask questions – Anita will be looking for us, just like they said.

Maybe we can ask them to take us back to the NightFang pack' Parker suggested.

"If we do that, they'll find out who we are."

Riley frowned. "Tha's how this all started.

People wanna use us to hurt Daddy or they'll be so afraid of getting blamed they'll tries to get rid of us."

Paisley nodded. "She's right. If we're gonna gets home, we're gonna have to gets there on our own.
Ryder and Parker mumured their agreement.

Okay, so when they take us to town, we make a break for it, yeah?"

"Yeah." Riley sighed, looking sad.

"Wha's wrong?" Paisley questioned her sister worriedly.

Riley offered her a forlorn expression in reply.

I'm gonna miss the Llamas."

Previous Chapter
Next Chapter