

Delivering the Bobcat.

Yesterday, I had the most unusual thing to do. If you had asked me a couple of years ago if I could see myself doing what I did yesterday, I would have told you that you're insane. I delivered a Bobcat to a taxidermist. Take a while to chew on that sentence*. I will explain. My husband recently developed the hobby of shooting. He started by acquiring a rifle, a shot gun, and a pistol. Fine, I thought. Then, the passion took hold* more substantially. His gun safe became quite full, he learned the hobby of loading his own bullets (that will be a whole other podcast), and several full length camouflage suits can now be found hanging in his closet. His obsession has grown. I'll give you some background to this situation, so you can get a clear picture. First of all, in this area, hunting is a major sport. There is a wide variety of wild animals, including predatory animals, that you can legally hunt. This activity is controlled and monitored by the Fish and Wildlife department of Washington State, which is responsible for preserving all of the native animals, and controlling their populations. Some years, the deer population explodes, which in turn, leads to a huge increase of cougars over the next few years. Crops and gardens can suffer because of too many deer, and farmers' livestock disappear with the increase of cougars. So, in a relatively short space of time, the situation can get out of control. It's great to know that there are plenty of the native animals in this state, but a safe and healthy balance needs to be maintained. Another reason for my husband's new love of hunting, is that all of his cousins (who live in a small, rural town about an hour away) are hunters. They are the type that always have hunting permits ready, and carry guns in their trucks, on the off chance* of running into a wild beastie. One of Tom's cousins is a cattle rancher. He and his hired cowboys take the cows up into the hills to pasture*. "The place is crawling with cougars," he has said to Tom. And he has often lost cattle to the cougars because they are so healthy and well-fed. There are no predators of cougars, so they need to be controlled through hunting. Anyway, my husband so far has managed to get a coyote, and a bobcat. I knew that it would be up to me to take the bobcat to the taxidermist because my husband leaves early for work, and comes back late. So, with mixed feelings, I took this beautiful cat to Tubb's taxidermy to be turned into a rug. How bizarre. The first thing that I saw when I walked into the building was a huge cylindrical machine that was humming, and inside were a couple of dogs. "Are those dogs?" I asked the owner. "Yes," he replied, and explained that they were beloved pets that were being freeze-dried for their owners....As I looked around the room, I felt, actually, as if I was the one being observed. There were animal heads and skins everywhere, and all eyes were on me. Even the massive moose head on the wall seemed to say, "What are you doing here, you silly woman?" Well, I went over the details of the kind of rug we want, made a deposit, and had a quick, last look at the stretched out skins, the hanging furs, the skull molds, and the freeze drying Foofy and Bingo. I made a quick exit. I've come to the conclusion, that being a helpful wife can often open the door to strange experiences, and good material to write about.

Related vocabulary and expressions: take a while to chew on that, the passion takes hold, on the off chance, to pasture.

1. He chewed over the situation in his mind before he confronted his boss.
2. The passion for sailing took hold of him at a young age; he's been sailing ever since.
3. I took my umbrella with me, on the off chance that it rained.
4. The farmer put the cows out to pasture early in the morning; now they're ready to come into the barn.

