

A Trash 229

Chapter 229 The Forbidden City Speaks! You Are Not Qualified to Bid on This! (1)

The confrontation between the two Palace Museums was merely a minor interlude. The Ming dynasty Golden-Lidded Jade Bowl, though Long Jianfei boasted confidently, was ultimately won by Lin Yide of the Jiangnan Museum. It came at no small cost 1.5 billion yuan to be precise. Long Jianfei had the funds to secure it but felt it was unnecessary, as the real highlights – the dragon robe and the Yongle Encyclopedia were yet to come and would require substantial reserves. There was no room for extravagance.

Of course, the celebrities sitting in the last row were well aware that a video camera behind them was recording everything happening inside the conference room. Local television had broadcast Luo Feng's treasure discovery live the night before, and an auction was promised the following day.

However, viewers had not seen any indication of an auction taking place, and were growing increasingly impatient.

Instead of a livestream, the auction was being recorded for post-editing and release.

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The bidding resumed with Liang Shimin's "Snowy Lu Ting," which started at 90 million yuan. The wealthy bidders had no qualms about spending vast sums of their wealth on calligraphy pieces and paintings, particularly those designated as top-grade cultural relics. However, even if they were to win an auction, they would be bound by a treaty forbidding them to take the relics abroad, as doing so would be considered a crime.

Despite these constraints, if someone truly wished to smuggle the artifacts out, they could likely find ways to deceive the authorities for example, by keeping a fake replica in their collection. Consequently, many especially important cultural relics were off-limits to private individuals. But these wealthy bidders would not dare take the risk, as being caught would result in imprisonment.

"91 million!"

"92 million!"

"Adding just one million? Are you looking down on us?" laughed Zheng Bailin and a few other rich bidders.

Zheng Bailin then raised the bid to 100 million yuan, causing the room to suddenly fall silent for a good 8 or so seconds before another middle-aged wealthy bidder called out, "125 million!"

The museum representatives, on the other hand, could only sigh with envy.

In truth, spending more than 100 million yuan on such a piece was somewhat extravagant. But if the rich bidders were keen, the museum representatives would not interfere. The cost was too high, and as such, the group of museum representatives could only resentfully watch the wealthy bidders' performance.

The bidding continued, and the auction house representative from Taiwan raised the bid to 130 million yuan. Long Jianfei, who had previously kept his eyes closed, suddenly opened them and bid 131 million yuan. It was acceptable for a wealthy bidder from his own nation to win, but not them. They had to be kept in check.

Zheng Bailin slapped his thigh and called out, "150 million! I, the owner of Zhu Dafu Jewelry, will hang this piece in our headquarters! Stop competing!" Originally, Luo Feng had thought the painting would sell for only 100 million yuan, but he had underestimated these rich bidders. The museums might have been stingy, but the wealthy individuals truly had no shortage of money.

In the end, Zheng Bailin's three-man group secured the painting for 160 million yuan. Zheng Bailin had been the one to raise the bid all along, but the three bidders would later discuss which of the three paintings each would take. Subsequently, the Ink Grape Painting and Tang Bohu's calligraphy piece were also won by the trio. However, they had to pay a steep price: 120 million yuan for the Ink Grape Painting and 210 million yuan for Tang Bohu's piece.

As the auction proceeded, the middle-aged woman from the Taiwan Museum could no longer contain herself and approached Long Jianfei, asking, "Director Long, what is your intention? Why do you raise the bid by 1 million every time we make an offer?"

"What do you mean? Are you suggesting that our Palace Museum is not qualified to bid? That's absurd!" Long Jianfei retorted, "The highest bidder wins. If you have the money, just bid! Why waste time with all this talk?"

Long Jianfei had no interest in entertaining her further. If it were not for the fact that they shared a common origin, he might have already lost his temper. The middle-aged woman had intended to create a scene, but Long Jianfei's sharp, cutting words left her with no opportunity. Realizing that her bids would be outdone by the domestic museums no matter how high she went, she huffed, flicked her sleeve, and left.

"What is she even doing here? Does she really think these valuable relics would be allowed to leave the country?" Long Jianfei sneered. Indeed, the issue of whether these artifacts would be allowed to enter the "foreign" country, which was not entirely foreign but part of China, was a matter of great concern. "Exactly, she's so arrogant. I don't know why they even bothered coming here! It's a waste of money on airfare!" someone else chimed in, "These relics are far too important to be allowed to leave the country!"

Lin Yide and Sun Daozhen also looked contemptuously at the middle-aged woman's retreating figure. At this moment, Qin Rubing carefully took out a volume of the Yongle Encyclopedia and placed it on the soft cloth covering the table. She began, "Ladies and gentlemen, this volume is titled 'Shanghan Weizhi Lun.' As you all know, it is a long-lost medical text. While I cannot say for certain whether the cold damage treatment recorded within is more advanced than modern methods, it is well-known that many illnesses that modern medicine struggles to treat may have been curable by ancient healers. This book is of extremely high value! I would advise private collectors to refrain from bidding!"