

Genius 90

Chapter 90: Those who believe in me, pick up the leaks..._1

Maybe it was because they didn't manage to get the calligraphy manuscript, but the auction continued as usual. Tang Cheng and Ning Weiqiang were not in high spirits, yet Chen Jiangnan seemed quite excited, pulling Qin Fang up to check out practically every item on offer.

Afterward, Qin Fang would give a simple assessment, mostly determining whether an item was authentic or fake.

Fortunately, most of the items up for auction were genuine, with only a few high-quality fakes like the Zhao Mengfu manuscript seen earlier, which lessened Qin Fang's resentment towards the auction.

Chen Jiangnan successfully bid on the Song Dynasty official kiln porcelain he had set his eyes on for 560,000 yuan, a price within his acceptable range. His boldness in raising the bids nonetheless made Qin Fang look at this thin and handsome guy, who Qin Fang had once mistaken for a thief, in a new light.

The auction continued, with Qin Fang watching as an observer without any intention to participate—and of course, he didn't have the means. Even the lowest bid price of 120,000 yuan was beyond this poor guy's reach.

As usual, another item was placed on the display platform—a terracotta Sakyamuni Buddha statue. Qin Fang glanced through the introduction, noting it was from the Ming Dynasty and not very valuable. Among the auction items, it was like a filler, likely used just to bulk out the number of lots.

This time, Qin Fang still went up to take a brief look as before, and since Chen Jiangnan wasn't a Buddhist, he naturally had no interest in the Buddha statue and couldn't be bothered to follow.

"A Ming Dynasty Buddha statue with hidden secrets."

As usual, Qin Fang went up, took a glance, then cast his Scouting Skill, waited for the result, and swiftly came down from the stage, sometimes staying for less than half a minute.

This time was no different, but when the result came through, Qin Fang turned to step down from the stage subconsciously... yet he hesitated, "Eh, why is it like this?"

Qin Fang was stunned. Such a result was quite unexpected for him; after looking at no fewer than twenty or thirty auction items, this was the first time such a thing had occurred.

Distracted, he was unable to continue his step and immediately turned back to inspect the Buddha statue more closely.

The statue was only thirty centimeters tall and appeared indistinguishable from an ordinary Buddha figure. Qin Fang examined it several times but found nothing unusual.

"Hidden secrets inside? Could it be within the belly of the Buddha?"

Since the Scouting Skill indicated that the Buddha statue contained hidden secrets, there must indeed be something inside, with the only possibility being something inside the statue's belly.

However, as to what exactly was inside, Qin Fang had no idea. It might be hiding some earth-shattering treasure, or it could just have a couple of pebbles inside; anything seemed possible.

Since Qin Fang didn't have X-ray vision, he knew there was something inside yet couldn't see what it was, leaving everything to speculation.

"Right, it seems using the skill consecutively might yield different results..."

When Qin Fang felt out of options, he suddenly remembered the scouting results for Chen Jiangnan. He clearly recalled that when he first saw Chen Jiangnan behaving sneakily, he had used his Scouting Skill and the result was different from when he used it again after clearing up the misunderstanding.

"A Ming Dynasty Buddha statue with hidden secrets."

"A Ming Dynasty Buddha statue with hidden secrets, it seems a bit heavy."

"A Ming Dynasty Buddha statue with hidden secrets, there's something inside."

"A Ming Dynasty Buddha statue with hidden secrets, buying the case but returning the pearl might also be a good choice."

Although Qin Fang didn't know if it would really work, he still cast several Scouting Skills on the Buddha statue in succession.

Indeed, reality once again verified Qin Fang's guess, as this time the scouting result did show some slight changes...

"Buying the case but returning the pearl..."

Especially the last result made Qin Fang involuntarily murmur it to himself.

As long as one is not illiterate, most people should know the story of "Buying the Casket and Returning the Pearl." Now, the result given by the Scouting Skill seems to suggest that Qin Fang should engage in such a transaction.

In that story, the valuable object was undoubtedly the Treasure Bead, akin to the Buddha statue before us now. As for the wooden chest that held the Treasure Bead, it is the casket, which is equivalent to what's inside the belly of this Buddha statue.

With such simple reasoning, Qin Fang's thoughts suddenly became clear... it turned out that the hidden object inside was the real treasure.

The appraisal time had come, and naturally, Qin Fang was asked to step down from the stage.

"Younger Brother Qin, what do you think? Are you interested in this piece... I noticed you didn't spend much time on the others, but this one..."

Chen Jiangnan, after all, was a businessman with particularly sharp eyes. Noticing a distinct difference in Qin Fang's attitude, he couldn't help but tease him, while subtly probing.

Qin Fang didn't speak at first, instead he flipped through the booklet, noting the estimated price for the Buddha statue at between 60 to 120 thousand, not very high, rubbing shoulders with the bottom-of-the-barrel items. The only pity... he had no money.

"Brother Tang, Brother Qiang, Brother Jiangnan, I'd like to discuss something with you..."

It didn't matter that he had no money, but the three individuals around him were not concerned about such sums. Although they weren't very close, they would presumably not turn down an opportunity to make money.

So, while the auctioneer was showing off on stage, Qin Fang simply shared his conjecture with Tang, Ning, and Chen, and he was almost certain that the value of this Buddha statue far exceeded the estimated price.

"Are you saying this Buddha statue is an overlooked bargain?"

Tang Cheng didn't seem too bothered and maintained his usual demeanor. Ning Weiqiang and Chen Jiangnan, however, appeared quite interested.

"I can't guarantee how significant the bargain will be, but I think it could double a few times over... Brother Qiang, you know my situation. If I had the money, I'd bid on it myself!"

With such a huge potential bargain looming before him, it would indeed be a great pity if Qin Fang missed it. In someone else's hands, the statue might simply be revered as a simple Buddha image, with no one knowing when the real treasure inside might be revealed.

"Are you really sure?"

Ning Weiqiang was still skeptical. This was a Sakyamuni Buddha statue, not a Maitreya with a large belly. Even if there were something inside, its value was likely limited...

"I'm certain! Brother Qiang, if you all don't believe me, how about this: I'll treat the bidding money as a loan from you, and after I flip the statue for profit, I'll pay you back... That should be okay, right?"

Seeing Qin Fang so confident, Ning Weiqiang and the others were basically convinced, especially since they were still considering Zhao Mengfu's Calligraphy Manuscript incident.

"Alright, let's do this: we four will share the cost of the bidding. If it turns out to be a bargain, we split the profit evenly. How's that?" Surprisingly, it wasn't Ning Weiqiang who spoke this time but Tang Cheng, who Ning referred to as "Qin Fang's generous uncle."

"No problem!"

Everyone naturally had no objections, with the Buddha statue's estimate being no more than 120 thousand; even if the auction price went higher, it would not exceed 200 thousand at most. Each would have to contribute merely 50 thousand, which was peanuts to the three of them.

As for Qin Fang, he was hopeful that he could uncover a significant bargain...

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Recommendation for a friend's new book

If you're tough, I'll be tougher, leveling the scales with a hammer;

If you're strong, I'm even stronger, my fury like a storm over the river.

—To be undefeated across the world, for a fist, loneliness is the final frontier.