

Genius 91

Chapter 91: Picked Up a Huge Bargain!!_1

The bidding process is not worth detailing, anyway, with the likes of Tang Cheng and Ning Weiqiang, these wealthy and powerful privileged young masters entering the fray, the one or two other bidders, upon seeing their moves, immediately backed down. They managed to secure the lot for just the lower estimate of 60,000.

After acquiring the Buddha statue, Qin Fang and the others really lost interest in the rest of the auction, listlessly passing the time, all awaiting the unveiling of the mystery.

Having paid and taken delivery of the auction item, Qin Fang and the four others settled into a private room at Elite Salon. Ning Weiqiang even specially summoned the salon's in-house expert appraiser, whose skill far surpassed those so-called experts.

"Young Master Tang, Young Master Ning, what are you two..."

After the appraiser arrived, he was quite confused to see the group intently focused on a Ming Dynasty Buddha statue that wasn't particularly valuable.

"Don't ask me, ask him..."

Tang Cheng remained calm, while Ning Weiqiang glanced sideways and promptly handed the situation over to Qin Fang.

"Hold on, wait a moment..."

Qin Fang didn't pay him much mind either, instead, he meticulously examined the Buddha statue. In his hand was a very small hammer, with which he made gestures in the air, as if pondering the best starting point.

"Young master, what are you planning to do..."

The appraiser was quite surprised as he watched Qin Fang and couldn't help but ask, unable to guess what he was attempting.

"Where should I strike with the hammer to shatter this Buddha statue without damaging the object inside?" Qin Fang glanced at him, knowing he was an expert appraiser from Elite Salon and couldn't help but ask for his opinion.

The appraiser rolled his eyes when he heard this but, having been around Elite Salon for quite some time and used to such antics from rich second generations and official second generations, he was somewhat reluctant to disregard the desires of these young masters, although Qin Fang's clothing seemed of lesser quality than his own.

"From the head... the base is too thick, the sides are too prone to causing damage!"

Actually, the appraiser himself was quite puzzled. He couldn't understand how Qin Fang knew there was something inside the Buddha statue as he had examined it thoroughly in the past and had not found any seams, thus he naturally couldn't tell if there was anything inside.

However, to keep his job, the appraiser still gave a fairly sound opinion, which happened to coincide with what Qin Fang had in mind.

With the help of the appraiser, Qin Fang carefully positioned the Buddha statue, placing the head of the Buddha on the edge of the table, lifted the small hammer, and then gently dropped it.

Crack~~

A crisp sound was heard, followed by a faint sound of breaking, and the head of the ceramic Buddha statue was immediately smashed.

"Eh... there really is something!"

Chen Jiangnan, who was also observing closely, was surprised to see something revealed when the head of the Buddha statue was smashed, aside from a few broken ceramic pieces.

At Chen Jiangnan's exclamation, the two privileged young masters who were drinking nearby looked at each other in astonishment, both stood up, and walked over.

Meanwhile, Qin Fang was carefully extracting the item hidden inside the Buddha statue. Thankfully, the statue was hollow and, although not very spacious inside, there was still some room to maneuver the object concealed within.

"What is this..."

Once Qin Fang had extracted the cylindrical object, roughly thirty centimeters in length, everyone crowded around the table.

They saw the object wrapped in what appeared to be oil paper, a common waterproof material in ancient times. Qin Fang twisted the oil paper, which seemed to have aged significantly.

"You do it..."

After some thought, Qin Fang decided not to touch the oil paper, preferring to entrust this important, delicate task to the expert appraiser who was specially called in.

After the appraiser shattered the Buddha statue cup and the item inside actually appeared, his heart was in turmoil from that moment on. Now that Qin Fang had given him such a task, to say he wasn't nervous would be an absolute lie.

Fortunately, this was his profession, and he was always excited about each and every antique that either came to life or appeared in the current world in his hands.

The material of this layer of oil paper was beyond the understanding of Qin Fang and the others, but that didn't mean he was clueless. A single glance told him it was a product of the Ming Dynasty, which meant whatever was wrapped inside had to be from the Ming Dynasty or even earlier.

And since this item had been hidden inside the Buddha statue, it indicated that its value was far greater than that of the statue—how could the appraiser not be excited?

"Be careful, don't damage it..."

Watching the appraiser's slightly larger movements, Chen Jiangnan called out anxiously, as if he was afraid of damaging the item.

"Understood, understood..."

The appraiser replied with a forced smile on his face. He felt like cursing Chen Jiangnan inside, but with two privileged young masters in the room whom he couldn't afford to offend, he had to swallow his frustration.

While verbally agreeing, his hands kept moving quickly, carefully removing the layer of oil paper that had almost stuck to the item, finally revealing the object inside completely.

When the contents inside were exposed, the first thing to be seen was a roll of yellowed paper. The appraiser delicately spread the scroll on the table, slowly unfurling it to reveal its true identity before Qin Fang and the others.

Hissss~~~

Almost everyone present couldn't help but inhale sharply.

"This is..."

Compared to the others, the appraiser, who had seen many genuine antiques, recovered quickly, carefully starting to appreciate what was now laid out before them. But as he inspected it closely, he almost had a fit.

"Orchid Pavilion Preface!"

Although Qin Fang and the others had been harboring a little bit of hopeful luck, when the appraiser practically squeezed out these three words with deliberate pauses, they were also nearly stricken.

Anyone who knew even a little about calligraphy, even those who hadn't actually written much, would probably recognize the "Orchid Pavilion Preface" as the so-called "Number One Calligraphy in China".

"Look again, roughly which dynasty it's from, who copied it..."

Tang Cheng, after all, was a military man by training. Although he was quite astonished too, he remained relatively composed and immediately instructed the appraiser.

There were many versions of the Orchid Pavilion Preface stele rubbings circulating in the world, and a considerable number of people had copied it. Since the Preface to the Orchid Pavilion had been passed down, calligraphy masters from each dynasty had made copies, and this particular rubbing had been hidden so secretly, it clearly had an extraordinary origin. It might indeed be the highly valuable antique that Qin Fang had speculated it to be.

"No need to look further, it's the Stele Rubbing Shenlong Version of the 'Preface to the Orchid Pavilion,' copied by Feng Chengsu of the Tang Dynasty from Wang Xizhi's original... As for whether it's an original, it's still uncertain at the moment. I've seen the engraved version at the Capital Imperial Palace Museum, it's practically identical to this one..."

When the appraiser spoke, his voice trembled.

Although he couldn't confirm whether this was the original, from various hints and signs, he was almost certain it was undoubtedly the original.

And if it was confirmed to be the original, it meant that in his hands, an original that had vanished from the world had resurfaced, and he would be one of the first witnesses. He might even be remembered for ages to come.

"Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

As he uttered these words, the faces of Tang Cheng, Ning Weiqiang, Qin Fang, Chen Jiangnan, and the other four were no longer filled with the joy of finding a bargain, but with utmost seriousness.

"It's the original! Brother Tang, call for someone..."

At this moment, Qin Fang cast a Scouting Skill at the scroll and, after determining the result, his expression seemed rather helpless, but he still said to Tang Cheng.

This was no longer a mere bargain pickup, but a discovery of a staggering treasure, a burden too overwhelming even for all of their combined strengths to handle...