

Golden 121

Chapter 121 A Failed Attempt to Steal a Chicken Backfires (Part Two)

Zhuang Rui had been spending all his time at the Pengcheng Antique Market recently, chatting and boasting with Song Jun and others. He was quite familiar with the jargon, and seeing the fat old man's eyes glued to his right wrist, he figured the old man must have his eye on his string of dzi beads. Zhuang Rui found it somewhat amusing. If he were asked to evaluate the items in the shop, he absolutely... couldn't do it, but if he was only asked to distinguish between genuine and fake, the fat old man had miscalculated.

"With so many customers, I think... let's just forget it, sir. It would be so embarrassing if I took your prized possession for nothing."

After feigning hesitation, Zhuang Rui said something that left the "money-grubbing" man speechless.

"Everyone, everyone, I'm really sorry, but our shop is closed today."

Although Qian Yaosi was old, he was very decisive in his actions. After seeing that Zhuang Rui was about to agree, he simply told the customers to leave. In his opinion, even if these people bought all the fake things in the store, it would not be worth as much as the dzi bead in Zhuang Rui's hand.

Seeing the boss speak, the shop assistants also started to shoo people out. Five or six minutes later, the once noisy antique shop became quiet. In order not to be disturbed, Qian Yaosi even asked the shop assistants to pull down the roller shutter door at the entrance of the shop halfway.

"Hey, old man, are you trying to force me to buy or not? Do you think these few people in your shop can stop me? Wood, let's go..."

Liu Chuan was startled by the fat old man's actions. In just a few minutes, everyone in the shop had been chased away, leaving only a few of them in the huge shop.

"No, young man, please don't misunderstand. My surname is Qian, and my name is Qian Yaosi. You can ask around in the antique trade in Nanjing; everyone knows my name. How could an old man force a sale? I just want to discuss business with this young man. May I ask your surnames?"

Qian Yaosi had a chubby, round face and looked completely harmless. He spoke with a forced smile, so Zhuang Rui and the others revealed their names.

"Zhuang Rui, there are so many things here. Judging from what this person is saying, it seems like only one of them is real. Can you tell the difference?"

Qin Xuanbing was a little worried. They had all noticed Qian Yaosi's gaze earlier and knew that the fat old man was after Zhuang Rui's dzi bead bracelet. Qin Xuanbing and the others knew that the dzi bead was a gift from the Living Buddha, and they were afraid that Zhuang Rui would agree to the bet, lose the bet, and have to give up the dzi bead.

Liu Chuan hadn't expected this, but when Qin Xuanbing mentioned it, he immediately became furious. He glared at Qian Yaosi and said, "I'm telling you, old man, you're being a bit dishonest. There are at least several hundred items displayed here. If you ask my brother to pick out the real from the fake, it would probably take him until next year. You're not just calling a pockmarked man a pockmarked man, you're ripping him off."

Upon hearing Liu Chuan's words, Qian Yaosi realized that what he had said earlier was inappropriate. With so many items in the room, even he himself would have difficulty distinguishing the genuine from the fake within three to five days. How much more so for the young man in front of him. If his words were to get out, it would probably affect his reputation. Although Manager Qian didn't care much about his reputation, everyone knew he was known for being "money-grubbing," he couldn't pretend to be ignorant now that someone had brought it up.

After thinking for a moment, Qian Yaosi said, "Young man, you're right. I misspoke. How about this, the real item I mentioned is just some ceramic stuff. There are only twenty or thirty ceramic items here. Young man Zhuang, you won't lose out now. I won't hide anything anymore. I'm interested in your string of dzi beads, and even if you lose, I'll buy them at a fair price, at least 100,000 yuan per bead. What do you think?"

"Ten thousand for one bead? Go buy it from someone else. This string of dzi beads that Mu Tou has been worn by the reincarnated Living Buddha of Jokhang Temple for decades and has been consecrated. You think you can buy it for ten thousand? No way. Mu Tou, let's go. This old man is really dishonest."

In truth, Liu Chuan didn't know whether 100,000 yuan per piece was expensive or cheap. However, looking at the dozens of ceramic products of various styles in the shop, he didn't believe that Zhuang Rui, with his limited knowledge, could identify the authenticity. So, he made an excuse to slip away.

"Blessed by a Living Buddha at Jokhang Temple? And worn for decades?"

Qian Yaosi was stunned upon hearing this. He had been to Tibet in the late 1980s and had the good fortune to meet the Living Buddha at the Jokhang Temple. However, at that time, Qian Yaosi naturally wouldn't have been interested in the items the Living Buddha carried with him. He also knew that Living Buddhas would keep such items for use when searching for reincarnated children and identifying them, and would not easily give them to others. He never expected that this ordinary-looking young man would have such a great opportunity.

Qian Yaosi wasn't afraid that the young man would deceive him. He would know whether it was real or fake after examining it. He naturally had his own methods for authenticating Buddhist artifacts.

However, after learning that this was once a personal amulet of the Living Buddha, Qian Yaosi's desire to own this dzi bead became even stronger. He looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Three hundred thousand for one, how about it, Brother Zhuang? You can search all over the country and you will definitely not find anyone who can offer a higher price than me."

Zhuang Rui remained noncommittal, but Liu Chuan was taken aback. He could accept the price of 100,000 per bead earlier; the string of dzi beads had a total of eighteen beads, which was 1.8 million. Although that was a lot of money, it wouldn't have surprised Liu Chuan given his current wealth. But now, suddenly hearing that the price had risen to 300,000 per bead, eighteen beads would be a full 5.4 million RMB! Zhuang Rui didn't react much to Qian Yaosi's words, but Liu Chuan's heart started pounding.

"This dzi bead of mine is a nine-eyed dzi bead, the finest among the purest dzi beads."

Zhuang Rui said calmly that he had already thoroughly investigated the origin of the dzi bead in his hand. Genuine nine-eyed dzi beads are extremely rare. Apart from places like the Potala Palace or Jokhang Temple in Tibet, they are basically not circulated outside. Putting all that aside, this dzi bead has been blessed by the Buddhist teachings of successive Living Buddhas, and it would fetch an astronomical price if sold. This fat old man seemed to be offering a very high price, but in fact, he had set a trap for Zhuang Rui.

Qian Yaosi didn't expect this young man to be so difficult to deal with. He offered a sky-high price of 300,000 yuan per bead. He thought that even if Zhuang Rui had some wealth, he would be shocked by the price. However, the young man was not moved by the price at all. Instead, he talked about the quality of the dzi beads in his hand.

"Of course I know your celestial bead has at least seven eyes." Qian Yaosi thought to himself with a hint of resentment. However, he still wanted to buy it. At his age, money was no longer very important. The reputation of being a "money-grubber" was something he had earned when he was young. His offer of 300,000 for one bead was just a habit of taking advantage of others.

"Five hundred thousand per piece, sir. Any more than that would be greedy."

Qian Yaosi gritted his teeth and quoted another price. To be honest, this dzi bead wasn't actually worth that price, but after wearing those two old dzi beads, Qian Yaosi's high blood pressure and heart disease were effectively relieved. Zhuang Rui's dzi bead bracelet was obviously of higher quality than his own dzi bead, so this time he had really gone all out.

After announcing the price, Qian Yaosi looked at Zhuang Rui, who was still smiling, and felt a chill in his heart. This was no young man at all; he was a little fox. Hearing such a high price, he could still remain calm.

Zhuang Rui was actually quite surprised. He had consulted a lot of information beforehand and even called Uncle De in Zhonghai. He knew that if this string of dzi beads were auctioned, its price should be around five million. He didn't expect that the fat old man in front of him would offer such a high price. However, Zhuang Rui had no intention of selling the dzi beads, and he was certain that he would not lose the bet with the old man.

"Damn it, why didn't I go to the market with you guys in Lhasa that day? How come all the good things happened to this blockhead?"

Liu Chuan could tell the fat old man wasn't joking, and he said somewhat sullenly, which made Zhuang Rui both laugh and cry. If Liu Chuan had been there, he might have stabbed the stall owner with a knife first. Would he have had a chance to meet the Living Buddha? He would probably be in jail.

"Okay, that's the price." Zhuang Rui nodded and agreed.

Shopkeeper Qian was overjoyed upon hearing this. Although he had lost money on this deal, it was insignificant compared to his health. He immediately prepared to ask Zhuang Rui whether he would accept a check or a bank transfer. His shop had a card reader in case of large transactions.

"If I lose, I'll transfer the dzi bead to you, Mr. Qian, at this price. But if I win, Mr. Qian can't go back on his word."

Just as Qian Yaosi was about to ask, he heard Zhuang Rui say these words. He wasn't angry. Young people are always more confident. People who have just entered the antique business and don't know much about it all feel good about themselves at first. Only after paying tuition a few times will they realize how deep and shallow this industry is.

"Of course, when I speak, I mean what I say, there's no going back on it, don't you guys agree?" Qian Yaosi readily agreed and called out to the shop assistants, naturally receiving a chorus of flattery.

The porcelain in this antique shop is all displayed on a shelf, divided into five layers from low to high. The top layer can only be taken down by standing on a ladder. Each layer has five empty spaces, and each empty space holds a piece of ceramic, including vases, bowls, figures, and so on.

During this period, Zhuang Rui had read books about ceramics and visited many antique shops in Pengcheng Antique Market. He knew that most of the things displayed outside were high-quality imitations of porcelain. Otherwise, if someone accidentally broke them, the shop owner would be devastated.

"Please help me..."

Qian Yaosi waved his hand, and several shop assistants came forward to take all the porcelain off the shelf and place it on a square table in the shop for Zhuang Rui to examine and appraise.

The rule in the antique trade is that items don't pass through your hands. Generally, others won't hand you items. You leave them there and handle them yourself. If you accidentally break them, then it's your responsibility.