

Golden 127

Chapter 127 Jewelry Fair

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"Hey, Brother Gu, did you bring this item for me to appraise, or are you just trying to annoy me? It's so obviously genuine, can't you tell the difference yourself?"

After Qian Yaosi and the other elders finished explaining to Liu Chuan and the others, they slowly began to speak.

"Oh, Brother Qian, I haven't been to Nanjing for years. It's a rare treat to come here. Why would I joke with you like this? This item looks like a genuine old thing at first glance, but its condition is just too good. I've shown it to several people, and they all couldn't tell. That's why I've come to you."

Old Gu kept shouting that he was innocent. When he first saw the bronze Bodhisattva, he felt that it was a genuine antique. He bought it for 300,000 yuan, but he was never sure. He asked several people to take a look. Some said it was a genuine antique, while others said it was an antique made by a fake. So he took it to Qian Yaosi for his opinion. Although Qian Yaosi did not have a good reputation in the antique business, few people could match his eyes. He was famous for his accurate judgment.

"The item is genuine, a genuine antique. Brother Gu, the reason you can't see through it is because this bronze bodhisattva came from a well-preserved pit and has been passed down for a long time. It looks like it has been 'washed,' but in fact, it has been frequently admired and handled, and the surface of the object has become smooth and polished due to long-term friction from sweaty hands."

"Brother, you've made a fortune on this deal. This bronze Bodhisattva is impeccably crafted, with exquisite workmanship that's beyond reproach. Of all the bronze statues I've seen in all these years, this one is the best. If someone likes it, it could sell for three to five million."

Qian Yaosi's mind wasn't on the bronze Bodhisattva statue, and he spoke listlessly, clearly still somewhat resentful about losing the bet to Zhuang Rui earlier.

Old Gu was naturally delighted upon hearing this. He instructed the man who had accompanied him to put away the box, patted Qian Yaosi on the shoulder, and said, "Brother, suffering a loss is a blessing in disguise. A life of smooth sailing isn't necessarily a good thing.

These words, however, awakened Qian Yaosi. His round face finally broke into a natural smile as he said, "That's right. Today I'm hosting. Let's find a place and have a few drinks. It's my way of welcoming you, Brother Gu. Brother Zhuang, come along too. Meeting is fate. Would you do me the honor of giving this old man some face?"

"Let the young man treat us. You've already spent a lot of money today."

After consulting with Qin Xuanbing and the others, Zhuang Rui said with a smile that it would be a bit unreasonable not to treat them after winning the bet. Besides, Zhuang Rui also wanted to exchange ideas with these two. He was particularly interested in the process of counterfeiting porcelain. In the end, Zhuang Rui was able to win this bet today because of his spiritual insight, and he didn't feel much sense of accomplishment.

Qian Yaosi waved his hand and said, "Now that we're on my old man's turf, there's no need for you to treat us. Come on, you two pack up and get off work early. I've really made a fool of myself today."

Just then, Zhuang Rui's phone rang. He answered it and heard that it was his brother-in-law Zhao Guodong's apprentice calling. After exchanging a few words, Zhuang Rui said helplessly to Qian Yaosi and Gu Lao, "Gentlemen, it's just bad luck today. Something really came up. I'll have to apologize to you two another day with a feast."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui had something to do, the two didn't insist on keeping him. After exchanging phone numbers, Zhuang Rui, along with Bai Shi and Liu Chuan, left the antique shop. After walking out of the shop, Zhuang Rui looked back at the shop's signboard and couldn't help but laugh.

"Songbaozhai"—wasn't this just giving him a treasure?

"Wood, who called? Why are you in such a hurry to leave? You don't have a female classmate you're interested in in Nanjing, do you?"

As soon as they stepped out of the antique shop, Liu Chuan hurriedly asked, his eyes constantly glancing at Qin Xuanbing. Qin Xuanbing hadn't initially thought of it that way, but after being encouraged by Liu Chuan's words, she also looked at Zhuang Rui.

"Get lost. I don't have any female classmates in Nanjing. The guy who designed the mastiff kennel map for you last time was a man, okay? My brother-in-law is drunk. Xiao Hu called to ask what our plans are for tonight. How about this, Da Chuan, you take Xuan Bing and Lei Lei home first. I'll settle my brother-in-law in. If we're free tonight, let's go to the exhibition hall and help out."

Zhuang Rui kicked Liu Chuan in annoyance. Just as Liu Chuan was about to kick back, he saw the little white lion eyeing him menacingly and reluctantly withdrew his foot, making Lei Lei and Qin Xuanbing laugh.

Back at the parking lot, Liu Chuan put the set of purple clay teapots in Zhuang Rui's car, and then he and Lei Lei each drove away in their own cars. Zhuang Rui, however, drove his Grand Cherokee back to the car dealership, where Zhao Guodong's apprentice, Xiao Hu, was waiting.

"Brother Zhuang, you're here. Master had too much to drink, and I'm not familiar with Nanjing, so I had no choice but to call you."

Zhuang Rui parked his car and had just stepped out when he saw the door of Liu Chuan's beat-up Toyota open. Xiao Hu got out of the car and said somewhat embarrassedly.

"It's okay, you keep driving and follow me. We'll find a hotel to stay in first."

Zhuang Rui knew that his brother-in-law's apprentice was very honest and had never even left Pengcheng. He checked the time on his phone and saw that it was almost 9 p.m. They had spent quite a bit of time at the antique shop. He peeked into the Toyota and saw Zhao Guodong, his face flushed from drinking, snoring away.

Looking at his brother-in-law, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but find it amusing. Zhao Guodong was too honest; he would drink any toast offered to him. He should talk to him about it when he had the chance, otherwise, with so many social engagements, he would be drunk every few days and wouldn't be able to keep up with the car repair shop business.

On the way to the Qinhuai River, Zhuang Rui saw a hotel that was of a decent standard, so he went directly to the hotel and booked two rooms. He planned to help Qin Xuanbing set up the exhibition that night, then go back to the hotel to rest before driving to Zhonghai. After all, it would take four or five hours to get from Nanjing to Zhonghai by highway, and Zhuang Rui dared not be careless.

After settling his brother-in-law in, Zhuang Rui called Liu Chuan to ask for the address of the exhibition. Then, guided by the car's GPS, he arrived at the exhibition hall in Nanjing where the jewelry exhibition was being held.

"Hey, Mu Tou, here you are! Come help me, Lei Lei. Why are you two girls doing this kind of work?"

Liu Chuan was now a worker, climbing a ladder to put up banners. Standing high up, he could see far, and he accidentally saw Zhuang Rui standing at the entrance of the exhibition hall. He shouted at the top of his lungs and almost fell off the ladder.

Zhuang Rui didn't want to go in, but he was stopped by security guards. Jewelry exhibitions are different from ordinary trade fairs. Most of the jewelry pieces are small in size, but they are very valuable. Even a slight mistake could result in huge losses. Therefore, since the various jewelry companies moved in, security guards have been patrolling the area 24 hours a day. Only staff members can enter.

Zhuang Rui didn't seem like a bad guy, and he even had a dog with pure white fur. But these days, bad guys don't put signs on their heads. The security guard was very responsible; Zhuang Rui had been talking for several minutes, but he still wouldn't be allowed in. He was just about to take out his phone to call Qin Xuanbing.

At this moment, Qin Xuanbing, who was standing in a corner of the exhibition hall, also saw Zhuang Rui. She quickly ran over, explained the situation to the security guard, registered Zhuang Rui's ID card, and issued him a temporary access pass before letting him in.

The venue used for this jewelry exhibition was very large, but it was divided into several small, open rooms and booths. These rooms and booths were quite exquisite, some of them were even shaped like jewelry pieces. Several companies even made large-screen displays for showcasing their jewelry. It seemed that Qin Xuanbing's company wasn't the only one working late into the night; there were people busy working in many rooms and booths.

"Xuanbing, you must have invested quite a bit to participate in this trade fair, right?" Zhuang Rui asked casually as he walked with Qin Xuanbing.

"Of course, the admission fee isn't very high, but the cost of just the booth decoration alone is over a million yuan. This doesn't even include the cost of depositing our jewelry with the bank. Once the exhibition starts, the bank will need to pick us up and drop us off every day, which will cost money."

Qin Xuanbing was also having a headache. She had only been in charge of jewelry design before and had never done management before. She never expected that just attending an exhibition would keep her so busy. Lei Lei was a little better off, having done a few days of management at her grandfather's company, but she was still a novice. The two of them working together were unusually inefficient.

Perhaps it was the elders of both families who wanted to test the two girls' abilities, as they did not send anyone familiar with these operations to assist them. Poor Qin Xuanbing and Lei Lei had to do everything themselves, even ordering custom-made brochures and inkjet prints. During the day, it was fine, as the company responsible for setting up the booth had someone to help, but at night, all the workers left, and there were still a few inkjet prints that had not been put up properly, so these two young ladies had to take matters into their own hands.

"You're not going to hire models again, are you?"

Zhuang Rui arrived next to Qin Xuanbing's booth and was surprised to see that there was even a T-shaped stage. He asked in surprise.

"If you don't come up here soon, I'll make you a model tomorrow."

Liu Chuan shouted from the ladder. The five- or six-meter-long printed picture was too much for him to hang by himself. He had boasted earlier and refused to let Lei Lei climb up another ladder to help. He was now sweating profusely with anxiety.

There wasn't much work to do; it was just a matter of pasting up a few jewelry prints. After Zhuang Rui helped out, the job was finished in less than half an hour.

"Zhuang Rui, thank you so much for today. If it were just Lei Lei and me, I don't know how long we would have had to work. By the way, why don't you come to our first day of the exhibition tomorrow?"
After finishing her work, Qin Xuanbing extended an invitation to Zhuang Rui.