

Golden 14

Chapter Fourteen: The Incense Ancestor's Notes (Part 1)

Winter days always seem to pass too quickly. It was only around five o'clock in the afternoon when darkness began to fall. Looking out through the transparent glass door, the streets, swept in the morning, were now covered with a thick layer of snow. The white snow, reflected in the darkness, looked dazzling.

Zhuang Rui let out a long sigh and carefully placed the tattered, almost falling-off book on the coffee table in front of him. To be precise, it should be a manuscript written by an ancient person. After a rough look, Zhuang Rui could confirm that it was a notebook of an ancient person, dating back to the early Qing Dynasty. This was because the reign titles of the Kangxi and Shunzhi emperors appeared many times in the manuscript. And the character on the cover, if Zhuang Rui was not mistaken, should be the character notebook). Due to the damage, only half of the character remained.

The manuscript is not well preserved. In the first half, there is obvious mold caused by insects, sweat, oil stains, dust and other substances. Many characters have become blurred and difficult to recognize. The second half is in better condition, but the language is written in classical Chinese, which is obscure and difficult to understand. Zhuang Rui does not recognize many traditional characters either. He can only guess and read through it. He can understand the general meaning, though. The content is extensive and mostly consists of the author's arguments and expressions of personal feelings.

The last few pages of the manuscript were entirely composed of poems, mostly seven-character quatrains. Zhuang Rui found them somewhat frustrating, as he had always been somewhat unbalanced in his studies, excelling in science but weak in humanities. His knowledge of poetry was limited to reciting lines like "Hoeing the fields at noon" or "The bright moonlight before my window," and he couldn't discern the quality of the poems in the manuscript. Although each poem on the later pages had a red seal in seal script below it, Zhuang Rui didn't recognize the characters and couldn't identify the author.

With a quick glance, Zhuang Rui saw Liu Chuan struggling with the computer, grimacing in frustration. He stood up, walked over, and shoed Liu Chuan aside. He then exited the game, opened a webpage, typed in "Baidu," and pressed enter. After waiting for a while, he found that the computer displayed a message saying "Page cannot be opened."

"Hey, you rascal, can't your computer connect to the internet?" Zhuang Rui turned to Liu Chuan beside him and asked.

"Go online? What kind of online? How do you go online? Oh right, I heard they say you can play games online, but I don't know how." Liu Chuan scratched his head, clearly finding the question too profound for him.

"Damn it, why did you buy a computer if you're not going to go online? It's like a pig sticking a scallion in its nose, trying to look like an elephant."

Zhuang Rui couldn't help but swear. He had been reluctant to buy something worth over ten thousand yuan, even after making several tough decisions. This guy bought it just to play games, and such low-level ones at that.

"Several shops on this street have already bought some. If I don't buy any, people will look down on me. We can't lose this one. By the way, Wood, how do I go online?"

Hurry up and get this set up for me, let's get internet access too. I heard from some of them that playing games online is really fun, there's this game called Legend, it's incredibly popular, those guys always brag about it to me, now I can play too.

When Liu Chuan heard Zhuang Rui mention internet access, he perked up. Usually, he was too proud to ask the shop owners on the street, but now that he heard Zhuang Rui knew about it, he grabbed Zhuang Rui and insisted that he set up internet access for him right away.

"Get lost. If you want to go online, you need to go to the telecom company to activate your internet service first. Haven't you ever been to an internet cafe before?" Zhuang Rui replied, both amused and exasperated.

"Sigh, I'm only a little free during the Chinese New Year. I don't have time to go to internet cafes. Do you think money is so easy to earn? By the way, Wood, what do you want to do online?" Liu Chuan was deflated when he heard that he couldn't go online now, and then he remembered to ask Zhuang Rui why he wanted to go online.

"There are some poems in this manuscript, but I don't know who wrote them. I want to search online to see who the author of this manuscript is..."

Zhuang Rui had actually wanted to call Uncle De earlier, but he held back. He had never cared about these things before, but now he was asking Uncle De for advice one after another, which would inevitably arouse Uncle De's suspicion. So he thought it would be easier to find out the author of the manuscript first and then inquire about the price of the author's works. Although he could no longer absorb spiritual energy from the manuscript, he had still spent 20,000 yuan to buy it, and Zhuang Rui was really feeling the pinch.

Liu Chuan had even less interest in poetry and the like. After thinking for a moment, he said, "Ask my mom. She taught history before she retired, so she should know. Let's skip the sauna tonight and have dinner at my house."

There was nothing else to do in the shop, so the two tidied up, pulled down the roller shutter, and got into Liu Chuan's car. However, Zhuang Rui took back the pack of cigarettes he had brought for Liu Chuan, saying that it was for his grandfather and that Liu Chuan shouldn't even think about taking it.

Liu Chuan's family lives in a dormitory building built by the Public Security Bureau in the early years. Now it has all been bought out and turned into private houses. The house has three bedrooms and two living rooms, with an area of more than 100 square meters, which is much larger than Zhuang Rui's house. Liu Chuan's father has not yet retired. He is the deputy director of a branch of the Public Security Bureau and is busy all day long. He is not at home at the moment.

Like Zhuang's mother, Liu Chuan's mother took early retirement in her fifties and usually lived alone at home. When her godson Zhuang Rui came to visit, she was overjoyed and busied herself preparing dinner.

After dinner was ready, Liu's father returned. He already knew about Zhuang Rui's trip to Shanghai from Zhuang's mother. He praised Zhuang Rui to the skies and took the opportunity to teach his idle son a lesson. Liu Chuan, who was standing by, was so angry that he immediately started complaining and revealed that Zhuang Rui had spent 20,000 yuan on a worthless book.

When Liu's parents heard about this, they were only slightly surprised. They took the book, looked at it, asked a few questions, and then didn't say much more. They knew that Zhuang Rui had always been very opinionated and generally wouldn't spend money recklessly. Liu's mother even went to the study to look up information for Zhuang Rui. Liu Chuan, who was watching from the side, was dumbfounded, and

then burst into tears. He remembered that when he had only spent a little over 10,000 yuan to buy a computer, his mother had lectured him for a whole day.

After dinner, Zhuang Rui was happily escorted home by a resentful Liu Chuan. It wasn't just that he got a free meal; more importantly, his godmother had found a book called "Biographies of Qing Dynasty Figures" which contained the poems. Now, Zhuang Rui had the book in his hands, ready to read it carefully at home.

After taking out 20,000 yuan and throwing it to Liu Chuan, Zhuang Rui kicked the guy who was complaining to his mother out of the house. He then told his mother that he had bought the manuscript that day. Zhuang's mother knew that her son worked in a pawn shop and often came into contact with antiques and calligraphy, so she didn't say anything. She just told Zhuang Rui to be careful in the future and not to be cheated by others.

After dealing with his mother, Zhuang Rui retreated to his room and carefully placed the manuscript and the couplet left by his grandfather into a wooden box. The wooden box left by his grandfather was made of camphor wood, which was used in ancient times to preserve calligraphy, paintings and rare books. If this manuscript had always been kept in a camphor wood box, it would never have become so worn out.

After tidying up, Zhuang Rui crawled into bed and opened the "Biographies of Qing Dynasty Figures" that he had gotten from his godmother.