

Golden 161

Chapter 161 Who took advantage of whom?

"Thirsty, water..."

Including this time, Zhuang Rui had only been drunk twice in his life, both times because he mixed baijiu (Chinese liquor) with other alcoholic beverages. Right now, Zhuang Rui felt a splitting headache, his mouth felt like it was on fire, and he was incredibly thirsty. Struggling to get out of bed, he felt as if something was pressing down on him, making it hard to breathe.

The headache caused by the hangover temporarily impaired Zhuang Rui's judgment. His memory was still stuck on what happened before he drank beer yesterday, after he had drunk two bottles of beer. Zhuang Rui had completely forgotten about it.

Lying quietly in bed, seemingly not thinking about anything, her mind actually cleared up faster. "Zhou Rui, right, it seems Zhou Rui arrived in Zhonghai today. Damn it, what time is it now? Can I even get up to pick him up like this?"

This question slowly brought Zhuang Rui, who was still in a daze, back to his senses. As he focused on the problem, his brain gradually returned to normal function. However, the dryness in his throat did not ease at all, and it felt like his throat was on fire.

Out of habit, Zhuang Rui stuck out his tongue and licked his lips, only to feel a little wetness. He turned his face away and began to suck on his lips. To his surprise, as soon as his tongue came out, it was immediately enveloped by a mouth. The other person seemed even thirstier than him. The moisture produced by the two fleshy tongues coming together made Zhuang Rui's mind clear a little, and he slowly opened his eyes.

The June sun was already very bright, shining directly on Zhuang Rui's face through the curtains that weren't fully drawn. Although the bright sunlight affected Zhuang Rui's vision somewhat, he couldn't possibly not see a face so close to his.

"Long eyelashes, a delicate and straight nose, lips... Oh right, the lips are even drooling over itself... Why does this person look so familiar?"

As Zhuang Rui was trying to figure out who the other person was, those big eyes suddenly opened. The two people staring at each other could clearly see their own faces reflected in each other's pupils.

Am I seeing things?

Zhuang Rui doubted his eyes, wondering if he had experienced another strange phenomenon. He quickly reached out his right hand to rub his eyes, only to find that his right arm was completely pinned down. "If I don't have my right hand, I still have my left hand. Fortunately, my left hand can move. It seems that all of this is an illusion."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to raise his left hand, he felt that he was tightly gripping something in his left palm. It was soft, elastic, and smooth. In short, he seemed to have felt this before, but as for where, Zhuang Rui's mind, which was in a semi-conscious state, really couldn't remember.

For some reason, Zhuang Rui was reluctant to pull his left hand out, and instead squeezed it a few more times. The feeling was just too comfortable. However, when he squeezed his left hand, the eyes on the face opposite him widened instantly. The two intertwined tongues suddenly withdrew due to one of them, and after smacking his lips a few times, Zhuang Rui had no choice but to withdraw them.

"This dream felt so real. Hmm, I'll be waking up soon, so I'll just have to touch it a few more times."

Zhuang Rui had just remembered that the place his left hand was holding was the source of life that nurtured humanity. Just as Zhuang Rui closed his eyes to continue enjoying it, a high note comparable to Pavarotti's "Nessun Dorma" suddenly rang in his ears, causing him to temporarily lose his hearing while his brain instantly became clear.

"Damn it, I'm not dreaming!!!"

Even though Zhuang Rui had never had such intimate contact with a woman before, his IQ was definitely above average, and he already understood what had happened!

"This is my house! What happened?"

Zhuang Rui turned his head and looked around the room. Yes, the floor-length curtains embroidered with the Chinese knot pattern were the ones he had personally chosen. The Simmons mattress beneath him was also familiar. And this person beside him? Was it Miao Feifei or Song Xingjun? Zhuang Rui remembered that he had been drinking with two girls yesterday.

Zhuang Rui tilted his head back with great effort and finally saw clearly. He secretly groaned in his heart that the girl opposite him was actually Miao Gege, whom he could not afford to offend. However, Gege did not seem to be very clear-headed at the moment. After letting out a dolphin-like sound, she remained in a dazed state.

Zhuang Rui had to admit that he was reluctant to get up, because the scene before him was so beautiful and so alluring.

Miao Feifei's delicate face was adorned with wide, open eyes, but in her dazed state, they seemed unfocused, giving her a bewildered and pitiful appearance. Her ponytail, which had been tied at the back, was now completely loose, draped over her white t-shirt in front of her chest. Only then did Zhuang Rui realize that his left hand seemed to be inside Miao Feifei's white t-shirt, grasping a soft yet elastic mound of flesh.

Just as Zhuang Rui was slowly pulling his left hand out with a sheepish grin, he noticed that the pupils of the person opposite him were gradually shrinking, while the cherry-like mouth that had been locked in a fierce struggle with him was gradually growing larger. Zhuang Rui believed that if he didn't stop it, his ears would probably suffer some more torment.

As the saying goes, "If you're willing to risk your life, you can even pull the emperor off his horse." Zhuang Rui didn't know if it was because the aftereffects of the Wuliangye liquor he drank yesterday hadn't worn off yet. Alcohol emboldened the coward, and in a moment of madness, he steeled his heart and, with perfect accuracy, grabbed back his left hand, which was originally pulling outward. This caused the loud cry that was about to reach the other party's throat to turn into a low groan.

Simultaneously with his left hand, Zhuang Rui's body flipped slightly to the right, landing on top of Miao Feifei. His large mouth accurately pressed against Miao Feifei's half-open lips, completely eliminating the possibility of her unleashing a high-pitched scream to torment his ears.

Miao Feifei was going crazy. She never expected that after waking up, she would be lying in bed with a man, and before she woke up, she seemed to have been having some kind of intimate contact with that man.

What Miao Feifei found even more unacceptable was that, even though she was fully conscious, she was still taken advantage of by the other party. Not only was that hateful big hand roaming over her body, but even her lips, which were about to utter a sound of protest, were silenced by the other party. At this moment, it seemed that her identity as a people's police officer could not help her in the slightest. Miao Feifei could only weakly pound Zhuang Rui's back with her right hand.

"Is this what men smell like? It doesn't seem so unbearable..."

A minute passed, and Miao Feifei's mind, which had been clear, became somewhat confused again. A strong masculine scent kept assaulting her. Her right hand, which had been pounding Zhuang Rui's back, suddenly began to pinch the muscles on Zhuang Rui's back through his clothes. Her clenched teeth loosened, and Miao Feifei, somewhat confused by passion, began to respond without knowing the full extent of her desire.

Zhuang Rui, feeling incredibly hot and restless, wondered how the PhD couple who had been living together for three years had managed. He even thought of that joke, but the thought only flashed through his mind before being overwhelmed by the lustful fire in his heart. Apart from swimming naked in the river as a child, this was the first time in his life that Zhuang Rui felt his clothes were so superfluous.

While continuing to enjoy the other's fragrant tongue, Zhuang Rui began to tear at his clothes. However, after several rounds, he gave up because he sadly discovered that he had loosened several belts while drinking the day before, and now he couldn't undo them. He now hated those American gold miners for inventing jeans, which tightly bound his almost bursting, engorged manhood.

However, his actions made Miao Feifei tremble all over in his arms, and her eyes became more and more dazed. The power that his arm behind Zhuang Rui was so strong that even Zhuang Rui felt his breathing become rapid and he could not take it.

"What are you doing?"

A gasp came from the half-open door, like a bucket of ice-cold well water being poured over one's head on a sweltering summer day. It instantly brought Zhuang Rui, who was still lustful, back to his senses. He quickly released Miao Feifei from his tight embrace and looked up. Song Xingjun's figure had just disappeared through the doorway.

"You...I...we..."

Zhuang Rui swallowed hard, managing to utter these few incoherent words. His body had rolled to a corner of the large bed, his hands tightly clutching a pillow, looking exactly like a girl who had just been raped—well, calling him a boy would be more appropriate.

Even though Miao Feifei was filled with shame and anger, she was amused by Zhuang Rui's shameless behavior. It turned out that this guy had taken advantage of her and was still acting innocent. Miao Feifei pulled up her t-shirt, which Zhuang Rui had half taken off, and checked herself. Apart from being covered in sweat from the heat, it seemed that nothing had happened. Her clothes were still on, which made Miao Feifei breathe a sigh of relief.

"You are you, and I am me. There is no 'us' between us. Let me tell you, Xiao Zhuangzi, if you dare to spread even a single word about what happened today, I'll risk the police's job and never let you off the hook."

After tidying up her clothes, Miao Feifei looked at Zhuang Rui fiercely and said, as if the Big Bad Wolf was threatening Little Red Riding Hood.

"Who really got the better deal here???"

Watching Miao Feifei turn and walk out of the room with her head held high, Zhuang Rui had several big question marks pop into his mind.

Chapter 162 It Really Wasn't Intentional

"Dude, you didn't actually do anything yesterday, did you?"

Seeing Miao Feifei leave the room, Zhuang Rui quickly checked the bed. Thankfully, although the bed was a bit messy, there was no blood or anything like that, as rumored. Zhuang Rui also noticed that his rather restless little brother seemed a bit too weak to tear through his decent-quality jeans.

"Never mind, if Miao Feifei isn't afraid, why should I be?"

After staying in the room for a while, Zhuang Rui finally couldn't sit still any longer. It was already June, summer, and the morning's exercise had left him feeling sticky and uncomfortable. After finding a clean change of clothes, Zhuang Rui swaggered out of the room.

"Star Lord, making breakfast? Thank you. Uh, I drank too much yesterday, but we didn't do anything, don't overthink it..."

When Zhuang Rui saw Song Xingjun setting out porridge and other breakfast items on the table, he immediately tried to explain to her. However, his actions seemed a bit like he was trying to cover something up, and Song Xingjun blushed slightly. She lowered her head and didn't answer Zhuang Rui's question. The scene she had just witnessed was still making her heart race.

"Hey, Zhuang Rui, you...you can't go in, there are..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui holding clothes and about to push open the bathroom door, Song Xingjun suddenly remembered that someone was inside and hurriedly shouted loudly. However, it seemed that she was a little too late, as Zhuang Rui had already opened the glass door of the bathroom.

The previous owner of this house, for reasons unknown, had the bathroom door made a double-layered frosted glass door during renovations. There was also a beautiful painting of a lady emerging from a bath on the door, accompanied by lotus flowers and leaves. The door was a sliding door that could not be locked from the inside, so when Zhuang Rui pulled it, half of the door opened.

"I...you, I...I didn't mean to..."

As the door opened, a pale, white body appeared before Zhuang Rui. The person inside hadn't expected the bathroom door to be pushed open from the outside. Her hands were still rubbing the foam from her hair, revealing flawless, fair skin and high, firm breasts that showcased her beautiful figure.

Zhuang Rui was either terrified or stunned by the picture of beautiful women bathing inside; he just stood there at the door, staring inside.

There was a small roller on each side of the glass door. The workmanship was exquisite and the quality was very good. So when Zhuang Rui opened the door, he made almost no sound. The person inside was washing his hair with his eyes closed and did not notice anything.

However, Song Xingjun's call for Zhuang Rui was clearly heard by the person inside. Who else could be taking a bath but Miao Feifei, who had just come out of Zhuang Rui's room?

"I...I really didn't mean to..."

When Miao Feifei opened her eyes, she heard the shameless man in front of her say such a sentence, but his eyes were still wandering over her body, and his feet were as if they were nailed to the ground, not moving at all, showing no intention of leaving.

"roll!!!"

Miao Feifei grabbed the showerhead and threw it at Zhuang Rui, forgetting that it wasn't long enough. Then she grabbed a towel and threw it over Zhuang Rui's head. Instantly, the water from the wet towel flowed down Zhuang Rui's hair, which brought him back to his senses. Although the sight of a beautiful woman emerging from the bath was pleasing, it seemed that he couldn't afford the consequences.

Thinking of this, he reluctantly closed the door, still holding onto the sliding door. However, he was still reliving the scene from earlier, and he didn't even take off the towel on his head. Song Xingjun, who rushed over, was both amused and exasperated. What was wrong with Zhuang Rui, who was usually so composed?

Zhuang Rui didn't know what was wrong with him. Honestly, although he liked girls like Miao Feifei—the kind with a delicate and gentle appearance—he knew that Miao Feifei's personality and appearance were completely mismatched. He had always considered Miao Feifei a buddy.

However, since the nightmare that happened that morning, Zhuang Rui's mentality seems to have changed.

Zhuang Rui believed he understood the saying "Do not look at what is improper," but the lustful fire that had been suppressed in his heart for more than twenty years seemed to be stirring after this morning's passionate kiss. Coupled with the scene he had just witnessed, a certain part of Zhuang Rui's body completely disobeyed his brain's command, forcibly bulging his pants into a triangle shape at his lower abdomen.

"Zhuang...Zhuang Rui, what are you still standing there for? Move aside, I'm taking Fei Fei's clothes inside."

After seeing Zhuang Rui close the bathroom door, Song Xingjun remained standing there without moving, and she felt a little angry.

"I felt my breasts being touched at the hospital. Could it have been Zhuang Rui who did it?"

Thinking of this, Song Xingjun's gaze toward Zhuang Rui began to turn unfriendly; that incident was still fresh in her memory.

"I...I...sigh, please step aside, I'll go out right away."

Zhuang Rui was now suffering in silence, unable to express his bitterness. His swollen lower body was so unsightly that he was embarrassed to move around. Upon hearing Song Xingjun's words, Zhuang Rui decided to go all out. He leaned forward, bent over, and walked past Song Xingjun with his buttocks sticking out. However, Song Xingjun still saw his ugly behavior clearly, and her pretty face, which was originally filled with anger, instantly turned red.

"His mind is full of filthy things."

As Zhuang Rui passed by Song Xingjun, he heard a sentence that made him feel like he was dying. "I didn't want this either, but this little guy down there just won't listen to me!"

In fact, Zhuang Rui's physiological phenomenon was partly due to the stimulation he had just seen, and partly due to the urge to urinate. This is the phenomenon that most men experience when they wake up in the morning. He drank a lot of beer yesterday, and now it all had an effect on Zhuang Rui's little brother.

"Young Miss, are you taking a bath or asleep in there? Why aren't you coming out yet?"

Without external stimulation, Zhuang Rui could feel it now. His bladder was swollen, and the urge to urinate made his face turn red. Sitting on the sofa in the living room, his eyes kept glancing towards the bathroom. This furtive behavior deepened Song Xingjun's understanding of Zhuang Rui.

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to reach for the bathroom door again, the tightly closed glass door finally opened. Miao Feifei, holding a large bath towel, walked out while drying her hair. Her face was flushed, whether from the hot shower or from being embarrassed by Zhuang Rui seeing her naked, it was hard to tell.

As soon as Miao Feifei stepped out of the bathroom, she saw Zhuang Rui standing up from the sofa, with a small tent protruding between his legs. Miao Feifei was about to speak when she felt a gust of wind blow past her and Zhuang Rui's figure disappeared from her sight. Behind her, she heard the sound of the glass door being pulled shut. All of this happened in an instant, and Miao Feifei didn't even have time to close her open mouth.

"You, you wait a bit before you go in..."

Miao Feifei remembered that there was her old bra in the bathroom, and she hurriedly tried to open the glass door. However, as soon as she put her hand on it and opened it a crack, she heard the sound of running water coming from inside. She was so angry that she slammed the door shut.

"Shh..."

Zhuang Rui let out a long, comfortable breath, then shuddered a few times. It felt so good! Zhuang Rui felt that if he were back in his childhood and had a contest with Liu Chuan and the others to see who could pee the farthest, he would definitely be number one.

After taking care of his physiological needs, Zhuang Rui quickly took off his clothes. He was already feeling sticky, and he had been sweating profusely from the urgency. He was going to take a shower, and then it would be time to pick up Zhou Rui.

"Hmm, what's that?"

The bathroom was still filled with the steam from Miao Feifei's shower. After walking under the shower, Zhuang Rui noticed some dark objects on the shelf next to the shower. He reached out and picked them up. Upon closer inspection, he discovered they were women's shorts with black lace trim and cutouts in the front and back. This sight was enough to make his previously limp penis immediately stand erect again.

"Damn, that's a real weapon of mass destruction."

Not only that, Zhuang Rui's nose also felt a little itchy. He reached up and touched it, and his nose started bleeding. In the past, Zhuang Rui had read many novels about people who would bleed from their noses when they saw certain scenes. He had always scoffed at such stories, but today he believed it. This story was indeed true.

With immense willpower, Zhuang Rui didn't turn on the hot water; instead, he used the shower to pour cold water over his head.

However, the June weather made the shower water feel hot, and the black shorts swaying in front of him only fueled Zhuang Rui's wild fantasies. He stayed in the bathroom for a full twenty minutes before he finally managed to extinguish the lust in his heart.

"Zhuang Rui, come out! Come out now, or I'm going in..."

Miao Feifei had finished breakfast and wondered what Zhuang Rui was doing in the bathroom. Thinking of the bra she had left inside, Miao Feifei started knocking on the bathroom door again, but she didn't dare to open it and go in. When it comes to being a rogue, women can never beat men.

"Dude, I do want to get out..."

Zhuang Rui was pacing anxiously in the bathroom. In his haste to rush in, he had thrown all the clean clothes he had prepared onto the sofa in the living room, and the dirty clothes were already soaking in water.

Chapter 163 Arrival in Pingzhou

“Princess Miao, could you please get me the underwear from the sofa? I... I really can't get out of here.”

Zhuang Rui opened the glass door of the bathroom a crack, tilted his head and turned to the side to say to Miao Feifei, who was waiting outside, "It's inconvenient to have a woman in this house. In the past, Zhuang Rui would just wipe himself clean and walk out."

"Wait..."

Miao Feifei didn't make things difficult for Zhuang Rui. After saying a few words, she took Zhuang Rui's clothes.

The only clothes Zhuang Rui had on the sofa were underwear and beach shorts; he didn't have a shirt. When he finished dressing and opened the glass door, Miao Feifei's gaze couldn't help but linger on Zhuang Rui's naked upper body.

"Little Zhuangzi, you've got quite a bit to offer even with your clothes off."

Zhuang Rui's appearance is not outstanding; he's the kind of person who wouldn't attract attention in a crowd. However, Zhuang Rui has a very well-proportioned physique. He was good at various sports in college, and even though it's been almost two years since he graduated, he still maintains a great physique. His deltoid muscles and pectoral muscles are very well-developed, making him comparable to some models.

"Unexpectedly, unexpectedly, compared to you, I am far inferior, Princess Miao, could you please let me pass..."

Honestly, Zhuang Rui had no intention of comparing his chest muscles with Miao Feifei when he said those words. However, Miao Feifei interpreted them completely differently. She had been observing Zhuang Rui with interest, but her face immediately tightened.

"Little Zhuangzi, let me tell you, you must not tell anyone about what happened today. Just pretend it never happened, or I will not let you off the hook."

As Miao Feifei spoke, she stepped aside, but just as Zhuang Rui passed her, he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his waist, and at the same time, he heard Miao Feifei's warning voice in his ear.

"Fine, I won't tell anyone, I'd rather die than tell anyone, okay? Besides, nothing happened between us this morning..."

"You...you bastard!"

Although she had told Zhuang Rui not to say it, Miao Feifei was still annoyed to see him pretending nothing had happened. She stomped her foot, angrily pushed Zhuang Rui away, and went into the bathroom.

"Damn, this woman is ruthless..."

Zhuang Rui looked down and saw a bruise on the soft flesh of his waist, clearly from being pinched by Miao Feifei. Now Zhuang Rui could understand the look of excruciating pain that Liu Chuan often wore on his face.

"Zhuang Rui, come and have breakfast..."

It seems Miao Feifei said something to Song Xingjun, because Song Xingjun's attitude towards Zhuang Rui is much better than before.

"Phew, I forgot to eat, thank you so much! If I were picking someone up at the train station..."

Zhuang Rui picked up his phone, which was lying in the living room, glanced at it, and immediately jumped up. He quickly ran to his room to change into his outdoor clothes, found his car keys, and prepared to leave.

There were six missed calls on his phone, all from Zhou Rui an hour ago. Zhuang Rui checked the time; it was 7:30, meaning Zhou Rui had been off the bus for about an hour. As he walked out, Zhuang Rui dialed Zhou Rui's number.

"Hey? Wei Ge, what are you doing here?"

As soon as Zhuang Rui opened the door, a body slid into the room through the fake mahogany door. It was none other than Yang Wei. However, Wei seemed to be sleeping soundly at the moment, smacking his lips as if he was savoring something. There was a puddle of vomit outside the door, which emitted a foul stench.

Seeing this, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but smile wryly. He lived in a building with three apartments per floor. Luckily it was Sunday, and his neighbors probably hadn't gone out yet, otherwise they would have been very upset.

"Hey boss, I've arrived..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was wondering whether to deal with this mess first or go pick up Zhou Rui, the call he made to Zhou Rui went through. Zhou Rui's voice was as concise as ever. Ever since arriving in Pengcheng, he had refused to call Zhuang Rui and Liu Chuan by their names, always referring to them as "boss," which made Zhuang Rui very uncomfortable.

"I didn't hear the phone this morning, Zhou Ge, wait for me at the KFC next to the station. I estimate it will take me about forty minutes to get there."

Zhuang Rui couldn't just leave Viagra here unattended, so he decided to clean up the place first; the smell was truly awful.

"You don't need to pick me up. I'm at your building according to the address you gave me. I'll be on the elevator soon. I'll hang up now."

After failing to reach Zhuang Rui by phone in the morning, Zhou Rui found his way here by following the address. After all these years of being out in the world, it would be a joke if he couldn't even find Zhuang Rui's house.

Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment after hearing Zhou Rui's words, and then the phone went dead. This alcohol really caused trouble. Looking at Yang Wei, who was sleeping soundly on the ground, Zhuang Rui bent down and dragged him into the room. Why not carry him? Just kidding, how could someone weighing 160 or 170 pounds be carried?

"Zhuang Rui, why are you back again? Did you forget something? Isn't this Yang Wei? What happened to him?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui turn back from the entrance hall, Song Xingjun in the living room asked a question. Then she saw Yang Wei dragging on the floor and her expression was full of surprise.

Zhuang Rui didn't turn around, but called out to Song Xingjun behind him, "No need to go out, the person I'm picking up has come by himself. Come and help me lift him onto the sofa. He's sleeping so soundly, he won't wake up even after all this fuss."

"Hey, Brother Zhou, you came up quickly. Xingjun, we don't need your help anymore. Brother Zhou, give us a hand. Be careful, there's something dirty on his clothes."

Before Song Xingjun could even approach, Zhou Rui appeared at the door. Although he didn't understand what was going on, he still went inside after hearing Zhuang Rui's greeting, and together with Zhuang Rui, they lifted Yang Wei onto the sofa.

"Xingjun, it seems that Wei Ge slept outside yesterday. Check if he's alright. He's been lying on the ground all night; I hope he doesn't develop any health problems."

Although Yang Wei had a rosy complexion and was snoring from time to time, Zhuang Rui was still a little worried. Since Song Xingjun was a professional, he naturally asked her to come and take a look.

"Brother Zhou, you haven't had breakfast yet, have you? Go get something to eat first, then you can go take a nap while I clean up outside."

After greeting this person and that person, Zhuang Rui was a little overwhelmed. After giving Zhou Rui some instructions, he picked up a broom and mop and went to clean up the mess at the door.

Zhou Rui looked at Yang Wei on the sofa and said with a smile, "No need to sleep anymore. He slept on the train all night and got off as soon as he woke up. Your friend is fine. He just drank too much. He can wake up by wiping his face with a towel."

"Huh, how did I get back here again? Where's my mom?"

Just as Zhou Rui had predicted, after Song Xingjun wiped Yang Wei's face with a cool towel, Wei woke up groggily and immediately called out to Zhuang Rui.

"Stop yelling, boss. Go take a shower and find some clothes in my room."

Zhuang Rui's voice came from outside the door. Only then did Wei Ge realize that he was covered in vomit. Before Zhuang Rui could say anything, he rushed into the bathroom. Fortunately, Miao Feifei had already cleaned up and made room for him.

"Brother Zhou, this is Officer Miao, my friend. This is the nurse who took care of me when I was hospitalized. Please get to know each other."

After cleaning up the mess Yang Wei had made, Zhuang Rui returned to his room and introduced Zhou Rui to everyone. Zhou Rui, still with his cool personality, nodded and then remained silent. Although he also knew Qin Xuanbing, he clearly had no interest in Zhuang Rui's private life. If it were Liu Chuan, he would definitely have found out everything about these two women, including all their relatives.

"Zhuang Rui, we're heading back now. We won't see you off since you're leaving tomorrow. Oh, and I'm going back to Beijing next week. Be sure to contact me when you get there!"

Seeing that Zhuang Rui had a friend, Miao Feifei and Song Xingjun both got up to say goodbye. The things that happened in the morning were all misunderstandings. Although Miao Feifei had suffered a loss, she did not hold a grudge against Zhuang Rui. After spending more than two months together, she was a little sad to part ways.

Song Xingjun did the same, but she didn't say much. After giving Zhuang Rui a deep look, she left with Miao Feifei.

"Brother Zhou, it's been over two months, you've gained a little weight. Are you settling into Pengcheng?"

After seeing Miao Feifei and the other person off, Zhuang Rui and Zhou Rui sat on the balcony and chatted. Liu Chuan was a foodie, and Zhou Rui must have been eating very well since he was with him, as his complexion was much rosier than before.

"It's a habit. After the New Year this year, I'll bring my parents to Pengcheng. Boss, I really want to thank you and Boss Liu."

Zhou Rui's eyes showed gratitude, but his words were still dry and awkward, which was just his nature.

"Brother Zhou, when we go to Guangdong this time, please call me by my name. Look at me, I don't look like a boss at all. I'll feel uncomfortable if you call me that." Zhuang Rui really couldn't stand Zhou Rui calling him "boss" all the time.

"Okay, whatever you say. Hey, is this a white lion? How come it's grown so big? Those two little mastiffs aren't even half its size." Zhou Rui agreed, turned around and saw the white lion behind him. He was startled. The white lion had grown rapidly in the past two months, almost a meter tall. With its long, snow-white fur, it really looked like a majestic lion.

The white lion still remembered Zhou Rui. After rubbing its big head against Zhou Rui's leg, it obediently lay down at Zhuang Rui's feet.

"Hey, did I sleep outside your door all night yesterday? Why is my whole body sore?" At this moment, Yang Wei also finished showering and walked over wearing Zhuang Rui's clothes.

"This is my college classmate Yang Wei, and this is my friend Zhou Rui. They're coming to Guangdong with us this time. Please get to know them."

"Brother Zhou, right? I've heard Zhuang Rui mention you before. Welcome to Zhonghai. I'll show you around sometime."

Zhuang Rui had mentioned Zhou Rui to Wei Ge before. Wei Ge was like his mother, outgoing and talkative. He started chatting with Zhou Rui in just a few words, which made Zhou Rui have a very good first impression of him.

Zhuang Rui looked at Yang Wei, who was chatting enthusiastically, and said helplessly, "Alright, you two stop chatting and go get some sleep. We're leaving a day early and will depart tonight. We should arrive in Guangzhou by tomorrow morning."

"Anyway, I don't drive. By the way, hey, I noticed those two girls looked a bit off. Did you do anything bad yesterday?" Wei Ge pursed his lips and steered the conversation back to Zhuang Rui.

"Go to hell! I should have let you continue sleeping outside. Stop talking nonsense. You guys go get some sleep, I'm going out to buy some things." Zhuang Rui felt a little guilty and didn't dare to say much to Yang Wei. He grabbed his car keys and got up to go to the supermarket. He needed to prepare some food and drinking water on the way.

It's only about 1,700 kilometers from Zhonghai to Pingzhou, and it's all highway with excellent road conditions. The two of them can take turns driving, and it will only take about ten hours to get there. Since there's nothing else going on in Zhonghai, Zhuang Rui wants to find a way to get to Guangdong. His fourth brother was so excited when he heard that the two of them were going that he went to Guangzhou today to wait for them.

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Pingzhou, adjacent to Guangzhou, the largest jade market in China, and connecting Jieyang, Sihui, Sanshui, Shunde in Guangdong Province, as well as Hong Kong, has a long history of jade processing and has been a well-known distribution center for raw jadeite for nearly 30 years. In previous years, people from Pingzhou would go to Myanmar or Ruili, Yingjiang, and Tengchong in Yunnan to gamble on jadeite stones and then bring them back for processing.

Currently, several well-known jade trading groups in Myanmar have set up offices in Pingzhou to meet the growing demand for raw jadeite in the Chinese market. They directly transport raw jadeite to Pingzhou for sale, which not only benefits many Chinese manufacturers but also increases the value and economic benefits of the raw stones.

Therefore, several jadeite rough stone trade fairs are held in Pingzhou every year. These fairs attract raw material merchants from China as well as rough stone merchants from Myanmar and other places. Each fair attracts a large number of domestic jade manufacturers and jewelry companies, making it a grand event for the jadeite industry.

“Brother Wei, call Lao Si. We’re going straight to Pingzhou. We won’t stop in Guangzhou. Tell him to head to Pingzhou now.”

Zhuang Rui was driving on the highway. He had already passed Shaoguan and would be in Guangzhou in a little over two hours. It was just past 1 a.m., and Zhuang Rui wanted to go straight to Pingzhou to find a hotel to stay in, so as to avoid the hassle of going back and forth.

"Hey, are we a bit early? There's not a soul in sight. Where's Fourth Brother?"

After calling Lao Si, Zhuang Rui rushed all the way and arrived in Pingzhou before 4 a.m. However, apart from a few early-rising sanitation workers, the whole city was quiet.

Just as Wei Ge was about to call Lao Si again, a very flashy red Ferrari silently pulled up next to Zhuang Rui's car. The window rolled down, and a handsome face popped out, looking at Zhuang Rui excitedly and shouting, "Hey, it really is you, kid! Where's the boss?"

"Hey boss, I'm here. Damn, fourth brother, you're really dishonest. You're driving a Ferrari now, and you used to pretend to be poor in school. Damn it, I'm going to make you pay."

After the eldest brother rolled down the car window in the back seat, he saw the Ferrari driven by the fourth brother and his eyes widened. He immediately opened the car door and climbed into the fourth brother's car.

Chapter 164 Five Brothers

"The youngest, second, and third brothers will be coming in a few days. This time, we brothers are finally all together in Guangdong!"

The fourth brother had already booked a hotel. After checking in, the brothers were so excited because they hadn't seen each other for almost two years that they didn't go to their rooms. Instead, they sat in the hotel lobby and chatted.

Speaking of the five brothers from dormitory 108 of the Accounting Department of Zhonghai University, their fame resounds throughout the entire college. From ordinary teachers and deans to the principal, from freshmen to alumni, few people don't know them. The reason is simple: their names are just too famous.

Once, a professor was having dinner with the principal when he casually mentioned these five people. He then sprayed his drink in the principal's face. As a result, all five of them failed the professor's course and had to retake the exam.

The eldest brother goes without saying; although this Viagra is not the same as that Viagra, his fame is just as high.

The second son is a native of Beijing. The "you" that Zhuang Rui mentioned was influenced by him. The second son's surname is Yue and his given name is Jing. This name was given to him by his old revolutionary grandfather who came out of the cowshed. It is said to be in memory of an old comrade-in-arms who did not survive in the cowshed and died.

Since Yue Jingxiong understood the rich meaning of his name at the age of 12, he fought for more than 10 years to change it. His perseverance was comparable to that of his grandfather, a revolutionary, during the eight-year War of Resistance against Japan. However, it is clear that he is no match for the old man in the family.

Even after graduating from university, the second child still used this name. However, his skin had become as thick as a city wall as he grew older. During his self-introduction at the freshman orientation after military training, he once explained in great detail the correct pronunciation and spelling of his name, which shocked a group of girls.

The old revolutionaries in Yue Jing's family have already retired to the second line, but most of his father's generation are working in various departments in Beijing. In his own words, he was born under the emperor's nose and grew up under the red flag, so he can be considered a son of a high-ranking official. Young Master Yue did not disappoint his name. He joined the party in his third year of university, and as soon as he got his diploma, he returned to Beijing and immediately transferred his organizational affiliation to a certain ministry. I heard that he is now a section chief and has a bright future ahead of him.

Perhaps it's because Shanghainese and Beijingers are inherently incompatible. Yue Jing was only eight days younger than Yang Wei. In order to become the eldest son, Yue Jing once went back to Beijing to change his ID card. However, he was slapped back by his grandfather. In his words, "If you won't let me change my name, can't I just make myself come out of my mother's belly a few days early?" Under the old man's power, the second son could only say this in private.

From enrollment to graduation, Wei Ge and Yue Jing Xiong spent four years bickering and arguing, adding a lot of fun for everyone. However, despite their bickering, they still had a deep friendship. At the graduation party, they drank the most.

At that time, the second brother was pulling the eldest brother with tears streaming down his face, insisting that the eldest brother go to Beijing with him to develop his career. He ignored the tissue that Zhuang Rui handed him and wiped his snot and tears on the Montblanc T-shirt that the eldest brother had just bought for more than 3,000 yuan.

Wei Ge secretly took Yue Jing's phone, dialed a "Hong Kong chat service," and then stuffed it back into his back pocket. That day, the second brother was drunk, and his phone probably ran out of battery and shut down automatically. Back in Beijing, he discovered that his phone bill for the month was over 2000 yuan, and a new VIP mainland customer had appeared on the Hong Kong chat service's records.

As for the third brother's name, he is the most famous among the five brothers, but his fame is somewhat unjust.

The third son is from northern Shaanxi. His name is very ordinary, surnamed Liu, and his full name is Liu Changfa. Compared to names like Ergou, Sanmao, and Siyatou, it is relatively normal. The third son comes from a poor family. His parents raised him, a college student, in the barren loess soil of northern Shaanxi. What few people know is that the third son has a set of authentic Shaanxi Hongquan kung fu passed down in his family. According to him, he started practicing kung fu when he was still wearing open-crotch pants.

The third brother was about 1.8 meters tall and had the appearance of a typical Shaanxi man. He always had a simple and honest smile on his face. At least this simplicity helped him bring home a beautiful wife when he graduated, which was something the others did not do, and they were indignant about it.

It is said that one should become famous as early as possible. The third brother became famous the earliest among the five brothers, and it should be said that he was also the earliest among the students of his class.

It was the first day of freshmen military training after enrollment. The emergency assembly whistle that rang at 6 a.m. without prior notice filled the large playground of Zhonghai XX University with students who were disheveled and sleepy-eyed.

However, the boys quickly regained their senses. The numerous girls with their buttons undone and clothes mismatched made them as energetic as if they had been injected with hormones. Their thieving eyes searched everywhere for targets. With more girls than wolves, Zhuang Rui and his four friends were already dazzled by the more than 40 girls. The boys from other departments looked at Zhuang Rui and his friends with expressions of jealousy, envy, and a desire to take their place.

The military training instructor was a second lieutenant from a certain armed police detachment in Zhonghai. It was rumored that he was an outstanding soldier who won first place in the Zhonghai Armed Police Corps' major competition last year and was promoted to officer on the spot. However, after meeting this group of testosterone-fueled elites, the second lieutenant gave them a hard time. The boys first ran 10 laps around the large parade ground, while the girls tidied up their personal belongings and clothes.

One lap on the school track is 400 meters. After running 10 laps, which is 4000 meters, the tough guys, who were all panting and looking like stray dogs, were exhausted. Before they could even catch their breath, they immediately gathered to listen to the instructors' instructions.

"Hello everyone, for the next month, I will be your military training instructor. I myself have never been to university, or even high school. In my mind, university is sacred, and university students are the pride of heaven. In ancient times, they would all be top scholars in the imperial examinations, but..."

Although the second lieutenant had only been promoted to officer for a short time and had undergone three months of intensive training at the Nanjing Armed Police Academy, he already possessed the art

of public speaking as a leader. He used a technique of praising first and then criticizing, and his words were very simple and down-to-earth. If it weren't for the twist that followed the word "but," this speech would have been a success. However, it was the unexpected turn of events caused by that word "but" that led to countless discussions at XX University in the future, and it was also the culprit behind Professor XX spraying wine all over the president's face.

"But what I saw was a group of disorganized, undisciplined, pampered college students who, when called by name, were expected to respond with 'Present!' instead of 'Oh,' 'Ah.' If this were the military, you people would all be unqualified trash, cannon fodder on the battlefield..."

The instructor's words drew boos from the girls on the playground. The boys hadn't caught their breath yet, and having been slapped and beaten many times since childhood, they were relatively thick-skinned and could withstand this level of verbal abuse.

"What, you're not convinced? The regulations were issued the day before yesterday. Girls' hair should be ear-length, and boys' hair should be buzz cut. Look at you all, your clothes are messy, and you have long hair..."

At this point, the second lieutenant paused briefly, displaying great confidence.

"arrive!".

A loud, clear voice interrupted the lieutenant's speech.

The sudden sound brought the instructor's speech to an abrupt halt, greatly displeasing the lieutenant who was in the midst of a rare opportunity to discipline the college students and was in the climax of his lecture. More importantly, the abrupt "Here!" also made the lieutenant forget the words he had been memorizing for several days that he was about to say next.

"Who's speaking?" the lieutenant shouted sternly.

"Reporting, instructor, it's me."

The third brother's voice rang out from the front row of the team. His voice was so loud and his body so upright that the other animals, who had run four kilometers and were still not recovered, greatly admired his strength and courage.

"Damn it, this is a troublemaker. I specialize in dealing with troublemakers..."

Seeing the third brother's calm and composed answer, the second lieutenant, who had a lot of experience working in the company, immediately thought of the troublesome soldiers in the army.

The instructor, who hadn't fully transitioned from a platoon leader to a lieutenant, instinctively walked over to the third soldier. He raised his right leg, bent it slightly inward, and delivered a straight kick to the third soldier's abdomen. The force wasn't very strong; the lieutenant probably just wanted to give the third soldier a hard squat and a bit of pain. If it were one of his own soldiers, the lieutenant would have slapped him across the face long ago.

Unexpectedly, the third brother didn't move his feet at all, but just slightly turned his body to the side, thus dodging the instructor's right leg kick. While dodging, the third brother's right hand seemed to pull on the instructor's right foot (it was just a thought, because the third brother later denied that he had made a move). The instructor's body immediately flew forward from grazing the third brother's body and had a close encounter with the hard cement floor.

The instructor, feeling deeply ashamed, immediately reported the incident to the school, which caused a huge uproar. The fight between the freshman and the instructor attracted the attention of many bored students from freshman to senior year. Although an investigation revealed that it was a near-bloody incident caused by a misunderstanding of names (in fact, the third student was also wronged. He was first in the running and stood at attention the best. Why was he criticized and almost beaten up when he was first? It was purely bullying an honest person).

After this incident, Liu Changfa became one of the most famous and outstanding figures in the history of Shanghai XX College. In an unexpected incident after the end of military training, the guys in dormitory 108 fully realized that his motto was to play dumb to fool others.

As for the fourth brother, judging from his appearance, he was a rather thin but handsome young man, about 1.75 meters tall, and wearing glasses. He seemed like a typical refined gentleman, which was what everyone initially thought. When the fourth brother introduced himself, he never mentioned his family. It wasn't until the five brothers went out to celebrate after their first group fight that this guy, who had drunk too much, spilled everything without anyone pressing him for details. If this had

happened during wartime, there would have been no need for any seduction tactics; just a little alcohol would have made him confess everything.

The fourth brother's name is Bi Yuntao. He said that he was sickly when he was a child, and his family was afraid that they would not be able to raise him. So they specially asked Wong Tai Sin, a famous fortune teller in Hong Kong, to give him a name. I don't know if that Wong Tai Sin is still alive. Anyway, the fourth brother, who has been cursed with the nickname "Condom", has been cursed for more than ten years.

The fourth son is from the coastal area of Guangdong. Since the reform and opening up, the small town where he was born has been the most famous automobile, motorcycle and clothing trading center in the country. To put it bluntly, it has vigorously developed trade between Hong Kong and the mainland, and exchanged goods. The fourth son's family has been engaged in this trade since the late 1970s, from electronic watches to bell-bottoms to televisions and cars.

Over the course of more than 10 years, the Bi family accumulated a large amount of wealth. Because the fourth son was in poor health from childhood and could not work at sea, the family also consciously cultivated the next generation with knowledge and culture. Therefore, the fourth son became the only college student among the many brothers in the family.

Although he was on the fringes of the family business, the fourth brother, who had seen and eaten pork since childhood, was definitely the most ruthless among the five brothers. On the thirty-second day after the start of school, which was the first day after a month of military training, the fourth brother was the one who started the fight with a beer bottle.

The friendship between men is nothing more than going through thick and thin together, going to jail together, fighting together, and even visiting prostitutes together. Zhuang Rui and his friends' friendship started with fighting.

It was the day after the end of military training. After a month of arduous and outstanding struggle, Wei Ge, who finally defeated the second-place winner and won the title of the leader, decided to treat everyone to a meal at a restaurant outside the school to celebrate the end of military training. When they arrived at the restaurant, to their surprise, a group of girls who were always crying and shouting about losing weight had arrived earlier than them and had already ordered their food and were ready to eat.

The second and fourth brothers were the most shameless. They went up to the girls and called them "sisters" in a bunch of nonsense, which actually got the girls to agree to celebrate with the five guys. After a few rounds of drinks and a variety of dishes, the atmosphere became even more lively. Some other students were very envious, but since they didn't know them well, they were too embarrassed to go up and join in the fun.

Since military training had just ended and the freshmen had been cooped up for a month, the restaurant was packed with customers, mostly freshmen coming to indulge in some new experiences. Unfortunately, seven or eight members of the junior sports department's basketball team also came to eat. There weren't enough seats to begin with, and as the basketball team members were arguing with the owner and preparing to leave, they saw the second-in-command smugly toasting everyone among the girls. Suddenly, they had the idea to teach the younger students about the glorious tradition of respecting elders and caring for the young, and also to show off in front of the girls.

It was easy to pick a fight. A burly senior brother, who was over 1.9 meters tall, deliberately kicked the second brother. Then he began to warn everyone not to be too flamboyant and not to stretch their legs out too far. He warned that if they tripped the senior brother and injured him, the consequences would be severe. However, he did not expect that these junior brothers, who were more hot-blooded, had really bad tempers. Just as the second brother was about to reach for the beer bottle, the fourth brother, who was sitting next to him, had already stood on the chair and used the half-empty Tsingtao beer bottle in his hand to crack open the senior brother's head.

The senior students, used to being arrogant and domineering in school, had never suffered such a loss before. To make matters worse, they were humiliated in front of a group of attractive female students. Immediately, seven or eight people surrounded them. Lao San and Zhuang Rui tried to say a few words of advice, but after taking a few punches to the face, they gave up on trying to reason with them. Of the seven or eight senior students, five were taken down by Lao San alone. Wei Ge and Yue Jing worked well together and took down one of them. Zhuang Rui, who had been in many fights since childhood, also took down one by wielding a wine bottle.

After the girls left, the group, having won a great victory, went to another place to drink. The next day, they faced disciplinary action from the school. Fortunately, the fight took place off-campus, and the school knew that the freshmen would not provoke the upperclassmen. In addition, the leader was a local, and his family pulled some strings. In the end, the group only had to pay for medical expenses and the third member, who had knocked down the most people, received a demerit.

After this battle, the five brothers became famous throughout the school. In addition, the third brother even found love. A girl from Shaanxi who was present praised the third brother's kind act of striking back after the fact and his powerful fighting skills. A year later, the two somehow got together. This

made the fourth brother depressed for a long time. No one appreciated his cool and smooth action of standing on the chair and smashing the bottle.

After four years of being classmates, the second brother wanted to return to Beijing to inherit the family tradition of entering officialdom, the third brother wanted to accompany his girlfriend back to his hometown, and the fourth brother was even the family's designated accountant. Only Zhuang Rui was repeatedly fooled and coaxed by the eldest brother to stay in Zhonghai. He was stuck in a limbo, neither good enough for high positions nor good enough for low ones. Zhonghai is a Fortune 500 company, but no one else looked up to Zhang.

Fortunately, Zhuang Rui's hard times have finally come to an end. Although he doesn't have the same wealth as his brothers, he has the most disposable income.

The fourth brother and Zhuang Ruiwei hadn't seen each other for almost two years since graduating in 2002. They talked about their school days with great emotion, and they were wide awake. They chatted from a little after four o'clock until six o'clock, when it was already getting light outside.

After chatting for a while, Zhuang Rui learned that the second brother would be coming in a few days under the pretense of a business trip, while the third brother had taken leave to come. The fourth brother paid for all the airfare and other expenses, and the brothers might also bring their families. Now all five brothers would be together.

"The youngest is doing pretty well now, he even has bodyguards when he goes out. Impressive." After Zhou Rui went back to his room to rest, the fourth brother gave Zhuang Rui a thumbs up and said.

"Don't annoy me. Your Ferrari could buy two of my cars. Brother Zhou is my friend, so please don't say anything like 'bodyguard' or anything like that." Zhuang Rui quickly corrected Lao Si's words. It was fine for the rest of them to talk here, but it would be bad if Zhou Rui overheard them.

The fourth brother pointed at Zhuang Rui and laughed, "You don't know what humor is. You're still the same as before. By the way, brother, are you really planning to make a living in the antique business now? I've heard that there's a ghost market before every raw stone trade fair in Pingzhou. Don't you want to go check it out?"

"Is there a ghost market here?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback when he heard this. After following Uncle De for the past few months, he had learned a lot about the ins and outs of the antique business. Hearing what Lao Si said, he was really tempted.

Chapter 165 Ghost Market

Ghost markets were most prevalent two or three decades before the liberation. After liberation, a planned economy was implemented, and before the reform and opening up, few people dared to set up stalls on the street. Therefore, ghost markets disappeared from people's sight for a time. It was not until the 1990s that they slowly reappeared in people's view.

However, antique ghost markets are extremely rare. Apart from a few major cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing, and Xi'an, even Guangzhou does not have a ghost market. Although there is a term " (zou gui) in Cantonese, it refers to some unlicensed vendors and has nothing to do with antique ghost markets.

Even in cities where antique ghost markets exist, these markets don't occur every day. This is because the vendors in these markets often come from all over the country, are highly mobile, and have diverse backgrounds, encompassing all sorts of people. Therefore, in those cities, antique ghost markets only appear for one or two days a week.

"Fourth Brother, are you telling the truth? Is there a ghost market in Pingzhou?"

Zhuang Rui found it hard to believe that an antique ghost market, which is rare even in major cities, could exist in a small place like Pingzhou.

"My father said there was one. He came here last year, but I don't know the specifics. I'll ask someone later." Although Bi Yuntao is from Guangdong, this was his first time in Pingzhou. He had heard about the Ghost Market from his elders. He mentioned it casually because he thought Zhuang Rui was now involved in the antique business. But when asked for more details, he didn't know anything else.

The fourth brother was not fond of living in Pingzhou. In his eyes, Pingzhou was almost the same as the countryside. The hotel he was staying in now, although it was called a four-star hotel, was far inferior to a three-star hotel in Guangzhou. Moreover, due to the upcoming raw stone trade fair, the room rates were almost comparable to those of a five-star hotel.

The fourth brother just advised Zhuang Rui to stay in Guangzhou, since it's not far and he could drive there in less than an hour. However, Zhuang Rui and Song Jun were meeting at this hotel, and it's convenient to have Bai Shi (White Lion) in this small town; he can't possibly have a dog license for half the city every time he goes around.

"Hey, beautiful lady, come here for a second. Yes, it's you."

The fourth brother stood up from the sofa and called out to a waiter at the service counter. Zhuang Rui and the eldest brother looked up and then quickly lowered their heads again. They admired the fourth brother immensely. At this time, there were no monsters like Sister Feng yet. If there were, this waiter's appearance would be comparable to Sister Feng's.

"Beautiful lady, I have a question for you. I heard there are street vendors here early in the morning. Is that true? Do you know where they are? If you don't, it's okay. A beauty like you would never go shopping at a street stall."

The fourth brother was quite skilled. He watched as the waiter in front of him, with buck teeth and a face full of freckles, not only chatted and laughed freely, but also offered compliments without hesitation. Zhuang Rui and Wei Ge felt their food from the previous night nauseating, almost to the point of vomiting. They couldn't understand whether the hotel still wanted to do business, having such a person standing at the front desk.

"Hey kid, you've come to the right person. I know about this. Those people on daytime duty don't know anything about it. I'm on night duty, and some customers go out around four or five in the morning to that market you mentioned where the stalls set up early in the morning. I've heard that the people in that market aren't good people; they're all acting suspiciously, and..."

"Wait, tell me first where the market that's set up early in the morning is. It's already light out, and if we go too late, it'll be gone."

The buck-toothed waitress had probably worked a long night and was feeling quite pent-up. Seeing Lao Si, such a handsome young man, calling her "beauty," she immediately perked up. However, after rambling on for a while, she couldn't get to the point, and her spittle sprayed so much that Lao Si had to back away repeatedly. If he hadn't stood still, that huge, blood-red mouth would probably have been right on his face.

"Isn't it just on Jade Street? Go out from here, walk three hundred meters forward and turn the corner, and you'll get there. What's so great about that place? I heard it's all about selling junk. It's much more comfortable here with the air conditioning on. Hey handsome, wait... where is everyone?"

The buck-toothed waitress was having a great time when she suddenly realized that the three people who had been sitting on the sofa had all disappeared, and even the big dog that had been lying obediently on the floor was nowhere to be seen.

"He's crazy (Cantonese for 'mentally ill'), running around even when there are beautiful women chatting with him..."

The buck-toothed woman grinned, swayed her barrel-shaped waist, and turned back into the service counter. However, she was sure to be in a good mood today, since it was rare for anyone to call her "pretty girl" even once a year.

...

"Fourth brother, now I understand. If we're talking about shamelessness, second brother is definitely no match for you. You can still call a woman like that 'beautiful.' I admire you, brother."

The three of them were now walking on an empty street. Zhuang Rui was accompanied by Bai Shi, and Wei Ge's voice echoed loudly on the road.

The fourth brother curled his lip upon hearing this and said dismissively, "What's so special about that? That's how people from Guangdong talk. Even someone like Eric Tsang, who's almost fifty, can be called 'handsome guy.' What's wrong with me calling someone 'beautiful lady'? By the way, youngest brother, your dog doesn't bite, does it? Otherwise, it'll be easy to get into trouble here."

When the fourth brother saw that the white lion had also come out, he couldn't help but ask, "Although Guangdong does not prohibit keeping pets, the regulations on large dogs are still very strict."

Zhuang Rui rubbed the white lion's big head and replied, "It's okay, the white lion is very obedient and won't bite people randomly..."

When the white lion was a cub, it was very cute, and people might have teased it back then. But now, the white lion can only be described as fierce. Most people would avoid it like the plague and wouldn't dare to provoke it. The white lion is now immune to crowded places; at most, it will bare its teeth to scare people, but it won't actually bite.

Pingzhou Jade Street is located on Yong'an Road, Guicheng Subdistrict, Nanhai District, Foshan City, Guangdong Province. It had already begun to take shape in the mid-1970s and was quite famous in the industry. It had the largest production and sales volume of jade in the country and ranked first among the four major jade markets in China. It was well-known for processing A-grade jadeite and polished jade pieces.

Since the reform and opening up, individual businesses have sprung up like mushrooms after rain in Pingzhou.

The jade connoisseurs and skilled craftsmen scattered throughout Pingzhou raised funds to purchase Burmese jadeite from Tengchong, Yingjiang, Zhangfeng, Ruili, and Wanding along the Yunnan-Myanmar border. They then processed and sold finished jade pieces in family workshops. Because Pingzhou jade craftsmen excelled at making smooth, polished pieces—not only of high quality and excellent craftsmanship but also at low prices—they quickly gained renown in the jade industry of mainland my country, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.

Jade merchants from all over the country came directly to Duntou Village in Pingdong, Pingzhou to purchase finished jade products, thus forming the Pingzhou Jade Market. The Pingzhou Jade Market, which took shape in the mid-1980s, had increased its sales value to over 100 million yuan by the mid-1990s.

Pingzhou jade products mainly include jade bracelets, jade buckles, heart-shaped pendants, and jade garlands. Their processing techniques are exquisite, especially their jade buckles, which come in a wide variety of styles, making "Pingzhou buckles" famous far and wide. Every year, many tourists from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan come to visit.

It was only a few minutes' walk from the hotel to the jade street. After turning a corner, Zhuang Rui and his group saw this nationally renowned jade street.

The Jade Street stretches approximately 2,000 meters from east to west. Along both sides of this street are the homes of the residents and the jade shops they run. Almost every household in the hundreds of households on this street has a workshop for processing jade, a typical front-shop-back-factory marketing model. There are also professional processing workshops, such as those that offer services like cutting materials, carving, and polishing. Although few shops are currently open for business, the signs at the entrances of the shops all display these words.

It's only a little past six in the morning. Although it's already bright outside, the sun hasn't come out yet. Plus, it rained here yesterday, so there's a thin mist. Through this thin mist, you can vaguely see many people walking around on both sides of the jade market street. But there's none of the usual market noise here. It really feels like the gates of hell have opened, and little ghosts are setting up stalls.

"Hey, I have a feeling this place is a bit eerie. What good stuff could there be here? Besides, with this weather, you wouldn't be able to spot anything good. Let's go back and come back when the sun comes out."

Yang Wei has always been timid, and upon arriving at this somewhat eerie place, he couldn't help but feel nervous. He reached out and grabbed Zhuang Rui, standing at the street corner, clearly not wanting to go in.

"Boss, most of these vendors are grave robbers, and they're all tainted with the aura of the dead. Be careful, or some unjustly killed ghost might steal your soul."

The fourth brother knew that Wei Ge was timid and usually afraid of ghosts and gods, so he deliberately tried to scare him from behind. Wei Ge fell for it and clung tightly to Zhuang Rui's clothes, refusing to move forward no matter what.

"Hey Fourth Brother, stop scaring the Boss. This kind of ghost market opportunity is rare. Wei Ge, don't be afraid either. With White Lion, you'll be immune to all evil."

Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated by what Lao Si said. He was eager to get in because, normally speaking, there shouldn't be a ghost market in Pingzhou. It was probably just that the recent raw stone trade fair had attracted all sorts of antique collectors from all over the country to gather here.

It's important to understand that antiques and jade are inherently connected. Many jade dealers are also antique collectors and are among the most influential figures in the antique collecting world. As a result, antique dealers from all over the country gather at this location at this time.

As Lao Si said, these people have very complicated backgrounds. It's not surprising that some grave robbers would appear. And it's often these people who have found some of the finest antiques.

Chapter 166 Broken Porcelain Shards

"No, there are gods watching over us. The gates of hell haven't been open for long, safety first. I'm going back now, you two go explore..."

Ever since watching the Hong Kong version of the "Fong Sai-yuk" film series, besides learning the phrase "winning people over with virtue," Wei Ge also learned the importance of "safety first." Looking at the silent, shadowy street ahead, he still hesitated.

"Alright... Wei Ge, you should go back first, but we won't go back. As the saying goes, even ghosts are afraid of a crowd. Be careful when you go back to the hotel."

Zhuang Rui, too lazy to waste time with his boss, finished speaking and headed towards the jade market. He figured that once the sun came out and the fog dissipated, the ghost market would probably have to close up shop.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Yang Wei shuddered. Looking back at the deserted street he had come from, his face changed. He quickly followed, saying, "Wait, wait for me. I'll stay with you."

Actually, the fog was very thin. From a distance, it seemed hazy, but once you got closer, people could see each other very clearly. It didn't affect visibility at all. Wei Ge followed closely behind Bai Shi, and just as Zhuang Rui had said, no one dared to get close to him.

"Boss, Fourth Brother, if you see something you like, don't ask the price too easily. This place is different from ordinary markets. If you ask the price, you're going to get ripped off..." Zhuang Rui whispered to Yang Wei and Bi Yuntao as he walked ahead.

How can you buy something without asking the price?

The fourth brother asked, somewhat puzzled. They had just passed three stalls, all selling finished jade pendants and ornaments. Zhuang Rui wasn't very interested in these. Looking at jade and emeralds in Pingzhou's ghost market? Wasn't that crazy? If you wanted to buy jade, you could find it everywhere during the day.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the fourth brother observed carefully and noticed that at the stalls they had just passed, neither the buyers nor the sellers spoke.

“These sellers often offer several prices for the same item. If you ask a question but don't buy it, and someone overhears you, the seller will blame you, saying that you revealed their bottom price. This is a rule passed down from the older generation. But then again, you can negotiate the price without saying a word. Just watch their actions and you'll see.”

Zhuang Rui stopped in his tracks as he spoke, standing in front of an antique stall. The three-meter-square stall was filled with bronze porcelain, rare ancient books, and some copper coins. There wasn't much jade, only a few ornaments that looked somewhat like ancient jade, placed in the middle of the stall.

"Hey, this young man may be young, but he's a real expert. Come take a look, and I'll give you a discount if you see anything you like..."

Zhuang Rui's words were overheard by the stall owner, who grinned. In the antique business, one is not afraid of encountering knowledgeable people; the more knowledgeable the person, the easier it is to be fooled and pay the price. The Ghost Market is a place that truly tests one's eye for quality, and there are plenty of people who have stumbled in such a place without knowing the truth.

The stall owner spoke in a deliberately low voice, probably because he was an experienced vendor and wanted to maintain the mystique of the ghost market.

Many people, when in the environment of an antique market, seeing antiques everywhere, often develop some biases and unconsciously assume that these items are genuine. In fact, although the probability of finding genuine and rare items in these places is higher than in antique markets in various cities, it is still nine out of ten items are fake. If there is even one genuine item on a stall, that's already quite remarkable.

"Hey, are those people holding hands and negotiating a price?"

Viagra followed behind the white lion, his courage growing. He looked around and figured out what was going on.

"right....."

Zhuang Rui nodded, offering no further explanation. This method of bargaining is an ancient tradition. In the past, it was believed that wealth should not be flaunted; the price of an item was kept secret by both buyer and seller. Therefore, this method of negotiation was invented.

However, in ancient times, people wore clothes with wide sleeves, which could cover their hands when negotiating prices with gestures, making it impossible for outsiders to see. But now it's just a formality; even if this method is used to negotiate prices, discerning people can still discern something from the gestures.

"Little one, you stay here and watch over things, I'm going to go for a walk..."

The fourth brother also became interested in treasure hunting and excitedly turned around to go to another stall. This is the charm of the ghost market. Even if you don't know anything about antiques, you will feel like you are looking for a bargain in this environment. It's the same as going to a food street and looking at all the delicious food and snacks. Even if you are not hungry, you will feel tempted.

Yang Wei saw that Zhuang Rui was squatting on the ground and not moving. He was also a little bored standing there. At this time, he also knew that everyone here was an ordinary person like himself, so he was not so afraid. So he followed Lao Si to wander around.

Zhuang Rui knew that the two brothers came from families in business. Although they didn't know much about antiques, they had been exposed to business since childhood and were unlikely to suffer any major losses, so he didn't pay much attention to it at the moment.

"Boss, the items here are incredibly well-made replicas."

Zhuang Rui's legs were getting numb from squatting so long. He had looked at all the items that were close to him on the stall, but to his disappointment, there wasn't a single good one. He could tell the difference without even using his spiritual energy. However, he couldn't lie about how good he was, or others would get angry.

"Young man, you were just saying you knew the rules, but now you're talking like an outsider? Things in the ghost market are just for looking, don't talk about them. Take it or leave it. Goodbye."

Although Zhuang Rui spoke rather subtly, he still angered the stall owner, who immediately told him to leave. Zhuang Rui knew he had broken a taboo, so he smiled somewhat embarrassedly at the stall owner and stood up.

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to leave, his gaze was drawn to a pile of broken porcelain shards in the corner of the stall. Although it was called a pile, there weren't many, probably only thirty or forty pieces, scattered sparsely in one corner of the stall. If you weren't looking carefully, you wouldn't have noticed them.

Zhuang Rui has learned a lot from Uncle De during this time, especially about porcelain.

In recent years, with the broadcast of the Taobao program on CCTV-2, antique and ceramic collecting has become a "national movement." Since precious porcelain is out of reach, porcelain shard collecting has gradually attracted attention. Some porcelain pieces do not exist in their original form, making the shards even more valuable. For example, porcelain shards from the five famous kilns of the Song Dynasty, the official kilns of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and some special varieties (such as Yuan blue and white porcelain) are quite expensive. Good porcelain shards can be worth tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of yuan.

In porcelain collecting, it is very difficult for ordinary people to see genuine pieces, such as those from the five famous kilns of the Song Dynasty and official kilns of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, let alone "handle" them. Even when visiting a museum, one can only view them through glass and cannot see them up close, let alone hold them in one's hands for careful study.

Therefore, porcelain shards from Song Dynasty Ru, Guan, and Ge kilns have been sought-after treasures by collectors since the Song Dynasty. The saying "Even with a fortune of ten thousand pieces of gold, it's not as valuable as a single piece of Ru porcelain" speaks volumes about the value of rare porcelain

shards. Antique porcelain shards also have advantages such as large quantity, diverse styles, low price, high authenticity rate, and low risk, making them a shortcut for ordinary people to learn antique porcelain appraisal from books to practical experience.

In the world of collecting, many people know that there is a man in Beijing who specializes in collecting ancient porcelain shards, known as "Pian'er Bai"—Bai Ming. He not only collects them, but also runs the Muming Tang Museum, which specializes in exhibiting ancient porcelain shards. In addition, he has written monographs based on his collection and experience, becoming a "big name" in the collecting world.

Zhuang Rui had only heard that porcelain shard collecting was becoming increasingly popular, but he had never seen such a pile of broken porcelain shards before. He walked to the corner and squatted down to look at them. Although the stall owner had told him to leave, it was only out of anger and he had no reason to turn away business. So he didn't say anything at the moment.

In fact, compared to well-preserved antique porcelain, many people in the collecting circle believe that porcelain shards do not have high profit margins and little potential for appreciation. Zhuang Rui only wanted to use them as learning materials and auxiliary tools for identification, in order to identify ceramic fakes.

"There's no such thing as a good product at a street stall," that saying is really true.

Zhuang Rui shook his head as he fiddled with the broken porcelain shards on the ground. He had examined seven or eight pieces, and from the cross-section of the body and glaze, he could tell that the firing process was rough. He guessed that they were some everyday porcelain items and had no collectible value.

"They're selling something like this? Huh?"

Zhuang Rui picked up a small piece of porcelain, no bigger than a thumbnail, with two fingers. Just as he was about to laugh at the shop owner for being greedy, he discovered that this piece of porcelain was different from the ones he had seen before.

Because it was small, Zhuang Rui had been rubbing it with his fingers. The sensation from his fingertips was very smooth, and even the broken surface didn't feel prickly. Based on the feel, Zhuang Rui thought it should be a good piece of official porcelain.

Zhuang Rui quickly brought the porcelain shard to his eyes and examined it carefully. Judging from its appearance, it should be a celadon piece, with the glazed side displaying a light sky-blue color. The cross-section showed a fine and dense body. However, the object was too small for Zhuang Rui to discern which kiln it was fired from.

Zhuang Rui scanned the porcelain shard with the spiritual energy in his eyes and found that although the shard was small, it still contained some faint spiritual energy, and the color was purple. However, the spiritual energy inside was already very thin, and Zhuang Rui could feel that the spiritual energy was slowly dissipating. It was likely that the spiritual energy here would completely disappear before long.

Zhuang Rui placed the inconspicuous little porcelain shard in his hand beside the stall and continued searching through the pile of broken porcelain. To his surprise, he found another porcelain shard, which was the base of a porcelain vessel. However, it was only about one-fifth the size of a porcelain base. Judging from the color, it was exactly the same as the previous one. On the base, Zhuang Rui could vaguely see the character "士" (shi).

Chapter 167 A fortune of a thousand pieces of Ru porcelain is not worth a single piece.

This discovery energized Zhuang Rui. Instead of searching through the pieces one by one, he released the spiritual energy from his eyes, enveloping the small pile of broken porcelain shards.

After removing the seven or eight broken porcelain pieces he had initially examined, only about thirty pieces remained in this small pile. To Zhuang Rui's astonishment, he discovered that fourteen of these pieces contained a faint spiritual energy, and the color of this spiritual energy was exactly the same as the piece he had initially discovered.

"Could it be a piece of porcelain?"

A thought popped into Zhuang Rui's mind: it wasn't impossible; it was quite normal for the fragments of a broken porcelain piece to be stored together.

Zhuang Rui picked out all the porcelain shards that contained spiritual energy. Of course, while picking them out, he also mixed in some broken porcelain shards that had no collectible value. He was afraid that the stall owner would notice something fishy and ask for an exorbitant price later.

The prices of antiques are unpredictable. You can sell an item for 100 or 10,000, but the price bureau has no jurisdiction over that.

In fact, Zhuang Rui was overthinking it. After seeing him fiddling with the broken porcelain pieces, the stall owner didn't even glance in his direction. These broken porcelain pieces weren't his at all. A few days ago, there was a street vendor stall from Henan right next to his stall.

Just yesterday, the stall owner from Henan seemed to have some urgent family matter and had to rush back to Henan. At that time, he transferred all the items on his stall to this boss at a very low price at the ghost market. These broken porcelain pieces were not charged at that time; they were given to him for free. So now, this stall owner doesn't care much about those broken porcelain pieces at all.

Zhuang Rui carefully arranged the fragments of porcelain, imbued with spiritual energy, one by one in his palm. The fragments were all small, the smallest being the size of a fingernail, the largest no more than seven or eight centimeters, and varying in shape. It took Zhuang Rui a while to roughly arrange them into an object. After a cursory glance, he immediately scattered the fragments onto the stall.

"Boss, can I lend you a hand?"

Zhuang Rui piled up the sixteen porcelain shards that possessed spiritual energy, along with eight or nine worthless shards. Then he stood up, pointed at the pile of shards, and said to the stall owner.

Upon hearing this, the stall owner stood up from his small stool, walked to the pile of broken porcelain shards Zhuang Rui had placed together, squatted down, fiddled with them for a bit, and said, "These are sold by the piece..."

"I know the rules, you name your price." Zhuang Rui nodded and extended his right hand.

The boss also extended his right hand, spread his five fingers, then clenched them into a fist. After a few seconds, he opened his fist and stared intently at Zhuang Rui.

First, spread your five fingers, which naturally means five, then clench your fist. In other words, the stall owner is asking for fifty RMB per piece.

Zhuang Rui shook his head and used his right hand to close the stall owner's five fingers together, leaving only the index finger exposed.

As the saying goes, "If you ask for the sky, you'll have to bargain on the spot." Zhuang Rui's actions show that he is only willing to pay ten yuan per piece.

It was only 2004, and the porcelain shard exhibition hall in Beijing had only been open for a few years. At that time, the internet was not particularly developed, and the story of "Pian'er Bai" was only circulating in the Beijing-Tianjin area. Nationwide, there weren't many people who collected porcelain shards, and consequently, the price of these porcelain shards wasn't very high. If it were a few years ago, these porcelain shards would only sell for 50 cents or a dollar. Now, Zhuang Rui was offering 10 dollars per shard, which was already quite a high price.

As for the Jun and Ru kiln porcelain shards that rose to thousands or even tens of thousands of yuan per piece in the following years, finding genuine shards at these antique stalls became virtually impossible, because by then, even porcelain shards were being counterfeited.

"Anyway, these broken porcelain shards were all picked up..."

The stall owner thought for a moment, checked the number of porcelain shards again, nodded, shook hands with Zhuang Rui, and said, "It's the price you asked for, deal."

Zhuang Rui didn't show any joy upon hearing this. He reached into his wallet, took out two hundred-yuan bills and one fifty-yuan bill, and handed them to the stall owner. After the owner took the money, Zhuang Rui immediately squatted down. Ignoring the dirt on some of the porcelain shards, he carefully put the sixteen porcelain shards containing spiritual energy into his handbag. As for the matching broken porcelain, Zhuang Rui casually tossed them onto the stall.

"Thanks, boss, see you later..."

Suppressing his excitement, Zhuang Rui greeted the stall owner, who was somewhat bewildered by his actions, and then immediately left with the white lion. It was best not to meet again; otherwise, if the stall owner found out the value of these porcelain shards, he might even consider jumping into the river.

"Could there be treasures inside those porcelain shards?" the stall owner wondered to himself, but it was too late to say anything then, as the money and goods had already been exchanged.

Walking on the bluestone road of Jade Street, Zhuang Rui just wanted to shout a few times to vent his joy. Just based on the dozen or so broken porcelain pieces in his handbag, Zhuang Rui felt that this trip was worthwhile.

Some readers might not understand. It's just buying some broken porcelain shards, why be so happy? Even if these shards were produced by famous kilns like Jun, Ding, and Ru, they would only be worth a few hundred or a thousand. After four or five years, they would only be worth a few thousand or ten thousand. This oversight isn't that big.

That's true. Everyone knows that porcelain from the Five Great Kilns is valuable. However, porcelain shards from the Five Great Kilns are not very valuable. In 2004, even if you sold them to a shard dealer, he would only give you four or five hundred yuan per shard, depending on the size of the shard. However, the dozen or so shards that Zhuang Rui received, once put together, would be worth an immeasurable amount.

When Zhuang Rui saw the porcelain base fragment, he immediately recognized it as a fragment of Ru ware, specifically from the official kiln. He found several other base fragments among the broken pieces, and after piecing them together, the original character "士" (shi) was transformed into the characters "奉华" (feng hua).

As many people know, during the Song Dynasty, there was no system for writing marks on the bottom of porcelain. Only some porcelain pieces had marks. For example, the marks on Ru ware are generally divided into three types. The first type is numbered like A, B, C, etc., but these numbers were not written during firing; they were engraved later.

The second type of inscription only has one character: Cai. It's clearly a surname, no need to look it up, it's Cai Jing! Second only to the emperor, Cai Jing's status at the time meant he could easily use Ru ware.

Another type is like the one Zhuang Rui has, with very clear characters written on the bottom of the porcelain, and these characters often have special meanings.

To give an example, the characters "Feng Hua" pieced together from the porcelain shards in Zhuang Rui's hands refer to Feng Hua Hall, an auxiliary hall of the De Shou Palace in the Southern Song Dynasty. It was the residence of Consort Liu, the favorite concubine of Emperor Gaozong of Song. Many Ru ware pieces with "Feng Hua" written on them were used by Consort Liu at that time.

Historical records indicate that Consort Liu was quite talented and could paint. She had two seals, one large and one small, engraved with the characters "Feng Hua". She would stamp them on her paintings after finishing them. Ru ware porcelain with the "Feng Hua" mark should have been Consort Liu's private possessions. This is sufficient proof that the porcelain shards in Zhuang Rui's bag are definitely official kiln porcelain from the Southern Song Dynasty.

What excited Zhuang Rui the most was that these dozen or so broken porcelain shards were all from a single Ru ware porcelain piece, and not one more or one less. They were all here, which meant that Zhuang Rui could use these Ru ware porcelain shards to completely restore a complete Ru ware porcelain piece.

Ru ware has a history of over a thousand years since its creation. It ranks first among the five famous kilns of the Song Dynasty (Ru, Guan, Ge, Jun, and Ding). Due to its exquisite craftsmanship, superb technology, diverse shapes, and rich decoration, it was not only popular among the common people at the time, but also appreciated and favored by the imperial family in the late Northern Song Dynasty. During the twenty years from the Yuan You reign of Emperor Zhezong of Song to the fifth year of the Chong Ning reign of Emperor Huizong of Song, it was monopolized as an official kiln and made exclusively for the imperial court.

Because the period for making imperial porcelain for the court was very short, the requirements were extremely high, the output was limited, and even fewer pieces survived. By the Southern Song Dynasty, it had become a rare treasure that was "extremely difficult to obtain". For nearly a thousand years, it has been favored and admired by collectors. The famous painting master Li Kuchan once wrote: "No museum in the world can be considered perfect without Ru (porcelain)."

There are thousands of museums in the world today, but fewer than 10 have collections of Song Dynasty Ru ware. The total number of Ru ware pieces in these museums is less than 70. As early as the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there was a saying that "even with a fortune of ten thousand pieces of gold, it is not worth a single piece of Ru ware." Today, the price of Ru ware has skyrocketed.

In 1992, a Northern Song Dynasty Ru ware porcelain plate with a diameter of 8 centimeters, which had been lost to private hands, was auctioned in New York for US\$1.54 million. In a Hong Kong auction, a Song Dynasty Ru ware three-animal vessel changed hands for HK\$50 million. These were prices from more than ten years ago. Today, the value of a Ru ware treasure is immeasurable.

Modern collectors go to great lengths to find Ru ware porcelain, regarding collecting a piece as a lifelong pursuit and source of pride. Therefore, if Zhuang Rui's Ru ware porcelain can be restored to a complete piece, even if it has already been restored, its price will be hundreds or thousands of times that of a porcelain shard.

"Hey kid, what treasure did you find? You're all smiles."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to go find Wei Ge and Lao Si, Yang Wei suddenly appeared out of nowhere, seemingly holding something in his hand.

"Brother Wei, this ghost market wasn't a wasted trip today, let me show you..."

Zhuang Rui was excited for a long time and couldn't find anyone to talk to, so he grabbed Yang Wei, opened his handbag, and showed him the porcelain shards.

Seeing Zhuang Rui speaking so mysteriously, Wei Ge leaned over and was greatly disappointed. He said with a disdainful look, "Tch, it's just a few broken porcelain shards. I thought you'd found a gold ingot."

Chapter 168 Imperial Edict of the Western Han Dynasty

"Broken porcelain shards? Wei Ge, wasn't that piece your dad bought for over a million RMB also a broken porcelain shard? Let me tell you, these shards are more expensive than the one Uncle Yang bought.

Zhuang Rui didn't bother arguing with Wei Ge and said smugly that the satisfaction of finding a bargain at a street stall was something that ordinary people couldn't understand, and the wonderful feeling was beyond words.

Wei Ge was somewhat skeptical. He reached into his bag, took out a fragment of Ru ware, and examined it for a long time, but couldn't figure it out. He casually put the fragment back into Zhuang Rui's handbag and asked doubtfully, "Old man, it's broken like this, can it still be pieced back together? Are you sure you're not mistaken? Who told you this junk is valuable?"

"Go away... We have nothing in common. If you don't believe me, fine. When we get to Zhonghai, I can make your father come up with five million to buy this piece of junk you're talking about. Do you believe me?"

Talking to Viagra about this was like talking to a brick wall; Zhuang Rui found no satisfaction whatsoever, so he simply zipped up his handbag and tucked it under his arm, deciding not to waste any more words with him.

Zhuang Rui's interest in Ru ware porcelain stemmed from the Chenghua Doucai Chicken Cup that Yang's father had purchased. When Uncle De was repairing the chicken cup, he told Zhuang Rui a true story about Ru ware porcelain.

Although Uncle De entered the antique business through self-taught means, his skills in restoring porcelain are renowned throughout the country. He is a nationally famous expert in ancient porcelain restoration. When professional archaeological teams in China unearth broken porcelain shards, they would seek Uncle De's help. This is also the reason why Uncle De knows and has a good relationship with some archaeology professors at Peking University.

In 2000, a collector from Henan made a special trip to Zhonghai to find Uncle De. The man's surname was Xu, so let's call him Old Xu for now. Old Xu was a collector of ancient porcelain.

As collectors know, in the early 2000s, many collectors liked to travel to the countryside when they had free time. Collectors from Beijing and Tianjin especially liked to travel to Hebei and Shanxi. This Mr. Xu, being from Ruzhou, Henan, paid more attention to the legendary Ru kiln porcelain. Whenever he had free time on weekends, he would often wander around the rural areas around Ruzhou.

One weekend, Lao Xu drove his motorcycle to the neighboring Baofeng County. When he arrived at a village, the weather, which had been fine, suddenly turned into a downpour. He went to a farmhouse to take shelter from the rain. There was only a middle-aged woman with a child at home. She said that the men had gone to work in the fields. Lao Xu was too embarrassed to go inside, so he took shelter from the rain under the eaves outside.

It was summer then, and the rain came and went quickly, stopping in less than ten minutes. Just as Old Xu was about to leave, the male head of the household returned, but he was helped back by someone else.

In the summer, rural people sometimes go to work in the fields without shoes. This man was working barefoot when he saw it was raining heavily, so he hurriedly ran home. Just as he reached the roadside, he stepped on something and immediately cut his foot badly, bleeding profusely. Fortunately, there were other people working in the fields nearby who helped him back home.

The man was quite stubborn; before leaving, he insisted on digging out the thing that had cut his foot, and he was still holding it tightly in his hand when he entered the yard.

Once his foot was bandaged, the man looked at what he was holding and immediately became furious. It turned out to be a broken piece of porcelain, probably the base of a bowl, about the size of a child's palm. He wondered which heartless person had thrown it in the ground. The man had been cursing and throwing the broken piece of porcelain into the yard, right next to Old Xu's feet, where it broke in two.

Old Xu is a porcelain collector. He picked it up and examined it out of habit. Although the porcelain shard was still covered in dirt, the unique sky-green glaze of Ru ware immediately caught his eye. Old Xu quickly determined that it was definitely a fragment of Ru ware porcelain.

Suppressing his excitement, Old Xu put the Ru ware porcelain, now broken in two, into his bag, took out a cigarette, and struck up a conversation with the man who owned the piece. These days, nobody's stupid, and besides, people like Old Xu often come to the village to buy bottles and jars. If it were a whole piece of porcelain, the man would definitely be willing to pay a high price. However, he didn't care about the broken pieces and told Old Xu in detail about where he had pricked his foot.

Old Xu was so excited that he parked his motorcycle at the farmer's house, borrowed a shovel, and, disregarding the fact that it had just rained heavily and the roads were muddy, paid ten yuan to the person who brought the injured man back to take him to the place where the man's foot had been pricked, and began to search carefully.

Old Xu searched for more than five hours, getting covered in mud and with cuts on his hands, but he actually managed to collect all the fragments of the porcelain piece. There were twelve fragments in

total. He roughly pieced them together, and they were all in perfect order. It was a Ru kiln porcelain bowl.

Restoring ancient porcelain is a highly skilled task. Knowing his skills were lacking, Lao Xu sought help from Uncle De and traveled from Henan to Zhonghai to ask Uncle De to restore his Ru ware official kiln bowl. In 2001, at an auction in Zhonghai, this Ru ware bowl, restored from twelve porcelain shards, fetched a high price of 4.88 million yuan, far exceeding the price of Song Xingjun's Chenghua Doucai Chicken Cup.

It was only after learning this story that Zhuang Rui realized that even broken porcelain pieces were still very valuable. The sixteen broken porcelain pieces he had just found had a lustrous glaze, and through his spiritual energy, Zhuang Rui could see that the glaze contained sparse and orderly bubbles. If he wasn't mistaken, this should also be a Ru kiln piece from Qingliang Temple in Baofeng during the Northern Song Dynasty.

There are now two confirmed locations for Ru kiln: Zhanggongxiang Ru kiln and Qingliangsi Ru official kiln in Baofeng. Although both are Ru kilns, the price of the Northern Song Dynasty Qingliangsi Ru official kiln is more than ten times that of the Zhanggongxiang Ru kiln.

Zhuang Rui thought that after restoring his Ru kiln porcelain, it could sell for two or three million yuan, but he only spent a mere two hundred yuan. This was faster than robbing a bank. Moreover, he had initially recognized the value of the piece based on his eyesight. The sense of satisfaction he felt was indescribable.

However, Zhuang Rui's good mood was completely ruined by his boss, who didn't know what he was talking about.

When Wei Ge saw that Zhuang Rui was silent for a moment, he thought that Zhuang Rui had been discouraged by him. He raised his hand triumphantly and said to Zhuang Rui, "Old man, what do you think of this piece of porcelain I bought? Let me tell you, this is genuine Han Dynasty white porcelain. My old man has one exactly the same, but I think his is not as good as mine."

"Han Dynasty white porcelain?"

Zhuang Rui was stunned by Wei Ge's words. The Han Dynasty was basically all about celadon, and the firing was very rough. He had heard Uncle De talk about white porcelain, but that was done by reducing the iron content during the firing of celadon and firing it in an oxidizing flame. It was only possible to fire white porcelain by chance, and the quantity was pitifully small. Moreover, compared with the exquisite porcelain of later generations, its collection value was not very high. Such items are rarely seen today.

"Boss, you didn't know that porcelain jar in your house was fake, did you? This one of yours, tsk tsk..."

Zhuang Rui's meaning was self-evident. The thing Wei Ge was holding was an everyday water bottle. Its shape was quite ancient, and there was some mud on it. But if you said it was from the Han Dynasty, Zhuang Rui would never believe it.

"Hey, old man, don't be so skeptical. The stall owner just said that they dug this item out of a tomb, and now the police are watching it. That's why they sold it to me for a cheap price of 800 yuan. Look, there's even an inscription on the bottom of this pot. It shouldn't be fake, right?"

When the eldest brother first started speaking, he was full of confidence, but his voice gradually grew softer as he realized that the story was becoming more and more unbelievable.

"It has an inscription? Let me see it, so we can also see Han Dynasty porcelain with an inscription."

Zhuang Rui suppressed a laugh, took the porcelain pot from Wei Ge's hand, and turned it over to look at the bottom.

"Haha...hahaha..."

Upon seeing the inscription on the bottom of the pot, Zhuang Rui couldn't hold back any longer. Ignoring the fact that this was a ghost market, a place where loud noise was customary, he burst into laughter.

"Hey kid, what's wrong? What's making you so happy?"

The fourth brother heard Zhuang Rui's laughter and quickly ran over. This guy was holding something in his hand, but it was very small and looked like a jade artifact.

"No, it's okay, let's talk about this somewhere else. Wei Ge is really talented."

Zhuang Rui barely managed to suppress his laughter. He first handed the porcelain pot back to Wei Ge to avoid accidentally breaking Wei Ge's precious item. After looking around, Zhuang Rui led the two to an alleyway on the side of the street.

Stopping in his tracks, Zhuang Rui said to the bewildered fourth brother, "Fourth brother, take a look at the inscription on the eldest brother's porcelain teapot."

"Made by Emperor Jing of the Western Han Dynasty, what's wrong? Young master, is there something wrong with this?" The fourth brother took the porcelain pot and read the inscription on the bottom.

"Yes, Emperor Jing was Emperor Wu's father, and he's quite famous in history," the eldest brother continued. These guys were all pretty good at history.

"I didn't say that Emperor Jing of Han wasn't Emperor Wu of Han's father. But Wei-ge, if you lived in the Western Han Dynasty and made a piece of porcelain like this, would you write it like this on the inscription?" Zhuang Rui suppressed a laugh and asked Yang Wei a question.

"Don't official kilns always have the reign title written on them? Of course, they write it like this." Wei Ge actually knew about official and folk kilns, which shows that he was quite influenced by his father.

Seeing Yang Wei's confused expression, the fourth brother suddenly realized what was wrong and burst into laughter, even more exaggerated than Zhuang Rui. He actually squatted down laughing, which angered the eldest brother, who grabbed him and said, "What's wrong with you? Stop laughing and explain it to me."

"Boss... you are really... really amazing. People from the Western Han Dynasty can predict the future. How did they know that there would be an Eastern Han Dynasty in the future, so they wrote the inscription as Western Han Dynasty first?"

Upon hearing this, Wei Ge was stunned. His face turned as red as a pig's liver. He had really lost face big time.

Chapter 169 Han Jade

"Damn it, that kid tricked me. Let's go, guys, let's go back and find him!"

Yang Wei, feeling embarrassed by Lao Si's laughter, angrily snatched the "Western Han Dynasty white porcelain" from Lao Si's hand and turned to go back to the stall where he had bought it.

"No, Wei Ge, don't go. Let's just forget about it. 800 yuan isn't much. In the future, just observe more and do less in places like this."

Zhuang Rui quickly grabbed Yang Wei. "What a joke! Being fooled is embarrassing enough. If you go and make a scene, that would be truly shameless. Someone just made up a story about Western Han Dynasty white porcelain, and the boss believed it. This is all Wei's fault. You can't blame the stall owner. The stall owner didn't make up a story about his family being ruined and selling off his heirloom, which is already giving the boss enough face."

"No way, honey. If my father finds out about this, he'll laugh at me for years to come. No way, you come with me, let's get our revenge."

Wei Ge is mainly upset right now, and more importantly, his purchase of this porcelain piece seems to be a way of competing with his father. Judging from the current situation, Wei Ge is still better than his father. Why do I say that? Because every time Yang's father makes a mistake, the tuition fees he pays are at least several thousand yuan, and sometimes even tens of thousands of yuan. Compared to that, Wei Ge's 800 yuan is indeed nothing.

"Forget it, Wei Ge. In a place like the Ghost Market, if you make a mistake, that's your own problem. Going back to seek revenge would only make you lose face again. In the antique business, the last thing you can trust is other people's stories. Just be more careful next time."

Zhuang Rui held Yang Wei back tightly. Wei Ge also realized that he could only blame himself for being too easily swayed and trusting others. In addition, he didn't know much about antiques, so it was inevitable that he would be cheated.

"Hey kid, how come you always have such good luck? You manage to piece together all these broken porcelain shards into a whole piece. Why am I so unlucky?"

Wei Ge had calmed down by now and said to Zhuang Rui with a sour face.

In truth, Zhuang Rui knew in his heart that although he had spotted the first porcelain shard with his eyesight, he had used spiritual energy to find three or four of the remaining shards. These shards were covered in dirt, and one of them even looked like a clod of mud. If it weren't for the spiritual energy he could sense inside, he would have had to clean all the shards himself. Of course, the stall owner would never give Zhuang Rui such an opportunity.

"Boss, Uncle Yang doesn't know anything about the Western and Eastern Han dynasties anyway. If you take this thing back to him, the old man will definitely be happy, and he might even return the 800 yuan to you. Come on, little brother, look at what I bought..."

Seeing Wei Ge's dejected look, the fourth brother tried to comfort him. The brothers all knew about Yang's father's reputation for collecting antiques. However, his words made the eldest brother so angry that he almost jumped up. Yang's father always said that he could accept his mistakes and pay the price, but he couldn't stand Yang Wei spending money recklessly. If he found out about this, he would definitely teach Wei Ge a lesson for a few days.

"Fourth Brother, you bought a jade disc? How much did you pay for it?" Zhuang Rui asked casually as he took the item from his fourth brother.

"It's not expensive, only two thousand yuan. I just liked it because I saw it. I can't tell if it's real or fake, but it felt good, so I bought it. Honey, take a look, is this real?"

The fourth brother was more carefree than Yang Wei, but he was also afraid of losing face by buying a fake item, so he declared that he didn't care whether the item was real or fake. However, you could still tell from the slightly nervous look on the fourth brother's face that he cared a lot about the first antique he had ever bought.

Zhuang Rui found his fourth brother's expression somewhat amusing. Looking at the jade disc in his hand, he said, "Fourth brother, in the world of antiques, aside from ancient jade pieces, jade generally doesn't have a concept of 'real' or 'fake,' only 'quality.' This one you bought is a jade disc, which in

ancient times was used as a sacrificial and ritual object, often appearing in important national sacrificial ceremonies, such as sacrifices to heaven, gods, mountains, seas, stars, and rivers.

Later, some people of high status also used jade discs as gifts to each other. As a result, many people used them as ornaments to wear and play with, as well as as a symbol of different statuses. Wearing jade discs as ornaments was popular from the Warring States period to the Han Dynasty.

Hehe, there's another explanation, Fourth Brother, don't mind me, but these jade discs were often used to ward off evil spirits and prevent the body from decaying. They were burial objects for ancient emperors and ministers. Many jade discs have been unearthed in the large Han Dynasty tombs that have been excavated. They were usually placed on the chest and back of the deceased, some were placed between the coffins, and some were even inlaid on the surface of the coffin as decoration..."

"Wait, wait... bro, you're saying this thing of mine was taken from a dead person? Boss, give me a few sips of your water, damn, that's disgusting!"

Before Zhuang Rui could finish speaking, Lao Si interrupted him. Although Lao Si was much braver than Wei Ge, when he heard that the object he had been playing with for so long was actually taken from a dead person, he felt like he had swallowed a fly. He was extremely uncomfortable, and the undigested food in his stomach kept churning up. He quickly grabbed the mineral water from Wei Ge's hand and drank a few mouthfuls.

"Tch, is it really that big of a deal, Fourth Brother? These tombs are full of ancient jade, priceless treasures. People are practically fighting over them. But seriously, I never said your piece was ancient jade. Hmm? Fourth Brother, you're in luck..."

Zhuang Rui played with the jade disc in his hands, rubbing it back and forth. He hadn't expected his fourth brother to find anything good at the street stall, so he hadn't paid much attention. But upon closer inspection, he realized it was quite nice; it was actually a two-tone jade. Of course, many antique jade pieces were faked due to color variations, and Zhuang Rui didn't handle jade artifacts very well. Without using his spiritual energy, he really couldn't tell whether it was an antique jade or not.

In ancient times, jade was used as a symbol of honor and was used in court visits. There were six types of jade, which were later known as the "Six Auspicious Jades". Ancient books recorded that: the king held the Zhen Gui, the duke held the Huan Gui, the marquis held the Xin Gui, the earl held the Gong Gui, the viscount held the Gu Bi, and the baron held the Pu Bi. The different forms of jade objects were used to indicate the difference in rank.

The fourth brother bought what appears to be a cattail-shaped jade disc. It's not very large, only about six or seven centimeters in diameter, with a hole about the thickness of a little finger in the middle. The surface of the disc is engraved with cattail-shaped patterns, which symbolize lush vegetation and prosperity. The disc was originally carved from green jade, but now it has three colors on it. In addition to retaining some of the original green jade color, the surrounding jade is yellowish, and there is also an area that is ochre brown.

Based on the stains on the jade disc, Zhuang Rui determined that if these two colors were not added later, the jade disc must be an ancient piece of jade that was unearthed from a tomb.

"Hey, youngest brother, stop talking so fast. What's the quality of this jade? What era is it from?" the fourth brother said, displeased.

"I can't be sure about the age, but it should be Han jade, and it's two-colored jade. Not bad, Fourth Brother, you got a good deal for 2,000 yuan."

Zhuang Rui had already examined the jade disc with his eyes. It did indeed contain spiritual energy, and its color was purple, but there wasn't much of it. Zhuang Rui guessed that it might be because the jade disc wasn't made of very good material and few people handled it.

Upon hearing this, the fourth brother beamed with joy. He was now experiencing the thrill of finding a bargain at this street stall. Only Wei Ge was in a bad mood. He snatched the jade disc from Zhuang Rui's hand, looked at it in the rising sunlight for a while, and then pursed his lips, saying, "Little brother, are you trying to comfort the fourth brother? The color on this jade is so ugly, like soy sauce has been dripped on it. It's all grime and grime. And this piece of junk is worth a fortune?"

"Boss, you're just being a sour grapes. Didn't you hear what the youngest said? This is Han jade, much better than your Han Dynasty white porcelain..." The fourth brother and Wei Ge used to bicker all the time, and this sentence hit the boss's weak spot. Just as the boss was about to retort, he looked at the porcelain pot in his hand and shut his mouth in a huff.

"Brother Wei, you're being unprofessional with what you're saying, haha. But you are an amateur, after all. This is the patina, this is the charm of ancient jade," Zhuang Rui explained with a smile.

"What is 'secretion'? Secretions? This jade can secrete things on its own?" Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Wei Ge hurriedly shoved the jade disc in his hand into Zhuang Rui's hands, as if there was something unclean on the jade disc.

"Ugh, talking to you guys is so tiring!"

Zhuang Rui gave a dramatic sigh, though he actually thoroughly enjoyed the feeling of being a teacher.

However, seeing that his boss already looked unfriendly and was starting to rub his hands together, Zhuang Rui quickly explained: "This thing called 'qin' seems to be very profound, but in reality, it's just 'rust' on jade. Like copper and iron, it can also rust. However, the rust on jade is not produced by the jade itself, but is caused by external erosion."

In the world of collecting ancient jade, jade that has never been buried and has been passed down through generations is called "Shi Gu" meaning jade that was not a burial item, and is commonly known as "Zi Lai Jiu"

Jade artifacts that were buried with the deceased as funerary objects and later unearthed, or buried for other reasons and later reappeared, can all be called "earth-grown jade." This type of jade also has a common name: "unearthed jade." In fact, most of the ancient jade artifacts that have been passed down to us today are unearthed jade.

And almost without exception, unearthed jade will have a patina, which is what I just told you about as jade rust..."

"Wait a minute, old man, according to what you said, isn't this piece of jade unearthed from the ground? Then what are the colors on it...?"

The fourth brother couldn't continue speaking. He wasn't wrong. The stains on the unearthed jade were indeed caused by the soil, but most of them were stains from the burial objects that had been attached to the jade.

Chapter 170 Grave Robbery and Making a Fortune

"You're right, Fourth Brother. Where an ancient jade is unearthed and under what conditions it was unearthed will determine the type of patina it develops, much like a birthmark on a person's body."

Almost all unearthed jade artifacts bear traces of patina, which is quite important for jade artifacts. It serves as a crucial basis for studying the age of jade artifacts and the jade culture, arts and crafts, carving art, and funerary culture of the same period.

In the soil, especially in tombs, jade artifacts come into contact with very complex environments. The variety of soil or the abundance of burial goods gives the jade artifacts different patina colors.

The yellowish-brown color is mostly from soil or the scent of incense from the burial pillow; the bluish-green color is mainly from the staining of clothing; the black color is from the mercury erosion that sealed the coffin; and the white color is from the absorption of silica from the tomb. Hehe, Fourth Brother, there's a lot of knowledge involved here, and I don't really understand it either.

I can make some discernments from this jade disc. The yellow areas are likely due to soil staining, but the ochre-brown is probably from iron rust. It's quite possible that iron objects were placed next to this burial jade disc, resulting in this color.

Zhuang Rui's words confirmed Lao Si's idea: the stain on the jade disc was most likely caused by the clothing or something on the body of a dead person.

"Fourth Brother, there are many different interpretations of the color of the patina. For example, a single color is called 'unified and pure'. Your piece with two colors is called 'heavenly black and earthly yellow'. A three-color patina is called 'Oath of the Peach Garden' or 'Three Scholars Passing the Imperial Examination'. A four-color patina is called 'Fortune, Prosperity, Longevity and Happiness'. A five-color patina is called 'Five Blessings and Longevity'."

"Eldest brother, fourth brother's luck is much better than yours. Although this jade disc is made of ordinary material, just carved from green jade, with these two colors of patina, it can sell for at least twenty or thirty thousand yuan. It's a pity that both sides of this jade disc have a dragon pattern. If one side of this jade disc had a dragon pattern, it would be worth at least one hundred thousand yuan."

Zhuang Rui often mentioned that the color seeping into the jade disc represented good wishes, but for Lao Si, his first thought was about the reason for the color's formation, completely forgetting that jade itself was believed to ward off evil.

The fourth brother is from Guangdong, which can be said to be the province or city in the country that is most devout in worshipping ghosts and gods, especially in Chaoshan and Hong Kong. Every household there has a shrine to worship gods, ancestors, or Guan Yu. The local earth god and the god of wealth are also everywhere at the door. The fourth brother was exposed to this from a young age. Even though he did not believe in it, he still kept his distance from the objects taken from the dead.

"Pah! You dead thing, I wouldn't even take it if it were given to me."

Viagra's words left Zhuang Rui speechless. Leaving aside ancient jade, among all the antiques that have survived to this day, probably seven or eight out of ten were dug out of tombs. If Viagra's statement were true, then no one would collect antiques anymore.

Most of the antiques stolen from tombs are rare treasures. As you can imagine, those emperors and ministers, who held high positions in life, all hoped to continue enjoying wealth and honor in the afterlife. They buried their most beloved or most expensive items with them, which also demonstrated the honor of the deceased in life and after death.

The industry of tomb raiding has continued throughout history in search of the rich burial goods in those tombs. Driven by huge profits, countless tomb raiders have taken risks to excavate ancient tombs. Even today, there are still some tomb raiding families in places like Henan and Shaanxi, which are all documented.

In rural areas of Henan and Shaanxi, there is a common saying: "Digging up graves and robbing tombs will make you rich," which shows how attractive these tombs are to people.

Among the most well-known tomb raiding cases in modern times, the most notable is that of Sun Dianying, a former bandit who later joined the revolutionary ranks and usurped power. When Sun Dianying was stationed in Hebei, he excavated the entire Eastern Qing Tombs, completely looting the Yuling Mausoleum of Emperor Qianlong and the Dingdong Mausoleum of Empress Dowager Cixi. Not content with this, before leaving, he smashed the coffins, destroyed the remains, and collected the burial treasures of the Qing Dynasty's most extravagant rulers.

It's pitiful that Emperor Qianlong called himself the "Perfect Old Man" while he was alive, but after his death, because of these worldly possessions, he ended up with an incomplete corpse. Empress Dowager Cixi suffered an even worse fate; her body was stripped naked and left on the ground.

However, Sun Dianying's actions were not very secretive, and soon the Manchu loyalists found out. At that time, all the Manchu royal family members, led by Puyi, jointly reported Sun Dianying's crime of robbing their ancestors' tombs to Chiang Kai-shek. In order to quell their resentment, Chiang Kai-shek declared that he would thoroughly investigate the case.

After realizing the gravity of the situation, Sun Dianying, in order to protect himself, gave the most expensive and priceless Nine Dragon Sword he had looted from the tomb to Chiang Kai-shek. At the same time, he gave the enormous luminous pearl stolen from Empress Dowager Cixi's tomb to Soong Mei-ling. Soong Tse-ven also received the gold and jade watermelon from Cixi's tomb. In addition, government officials such as Kong Xiangxi, He Yingqin, and Yan Xishan received many valuable antiques, calligraphy and paintings. Thus, this sensational case was left unresolved.

Just imagine, even Soong Mei-ling could play with the luminous pearl that Cixi had taken out of her mouth, so what did Zhuang Rui have to be afraid of? Besides, Zhuang Rui didn't have any good feelings towards these people from ancient times. On the contrary, he had a great liking for those tomb raiders.

You say these emperors and generals are all dead, yet they still insist on leaving these treasures underground. Although many precious artifacts and antiques have been preserved because of their tombs, antiques such as calligraphy and paintings have almost all rotted in the tombs of these emperors and generals.

"Hey, you can keep this. If someone wants it, sell it. If no one wants it, keep it for yourself. Consider it a gift from your fourth brother. No, it's unlucky to give a dead person's item as a gift. Just consider it... just consider it..."

The fourth brother thought for a long time but couldn't come up with a name for it. However, he dared not keep the jade for fun. His good mood of finding a bargain was completely ruined by Zhuang Rui's words.

"Well, you two are lucky you were born in the new China and grew up under the red flag, yet you still believe in this stuff. Fourth Brother, are you really giving it to me?"

Zhuang Rui weighed the jade disc in his hand. He didn't have that kind of psychological burden. Zhuang Rui guessed that the spiritual energy in these antiques might be left over from being handled too much. He didn't care whether it had been handled by dead people. Besides, he was handling this thing now, and after he died in a few decades, this object would still be passed down.

"Here you go, really, let's go back, may you have good fortune..."

The fourth brother kept shaking his hands, as if touching the jade disc would taint him with the bad luck of the dead. He was even more anxious than Viagra at this moment, probably because he wanted to go back to the hotel to wash his hands and burn incense.

"No, Fourth Brother, it's not easy to find a ghost market like this. We don't even know if there will be one tomorrow. Let's go back later. You can take me to see the stalls that sell jade discs."

It was already past 7 a.m., and the number of pedestrians on Jade Street was gradually increasing. Some shops were already preparing to open, while most of the stall owners in the Ghost Market had packed up and left. Zhuang Rui wanted to try his luck and go to Lao Si's jade stall to buy some more jade.

These unearthed artifacts could very well have been sold by tomb raiders. Of course, they usually have regular customers. For example, most of the antiques in the grassland black market auction that Zhuang Rui attended last time were acquired from tomb raiders from various places.

However, some tomb raiders are not independent; their main job is to set up stalls and "street vendors" in various places, and tomb raiding is just a side job. These people often keep some of the precious items and then sell the remaining small, uncertain items. They mix genuine and fake antiques together, so whether they can find treasures depends on their own skills.

"I'm not going. You go by yourself, Wei-ge. Let's go back first."

The fourth brother pulled Yang Wei towards the hotel. Zhuang Rui saw that there were not many stalls left on the jade street, so he took Bai Shi and followed the two-person show back to the hotel. However, Zhuang Rui had already made up his mind to come back early tomorrow to browse around. There were many more good things in this ghost market than in those antique markets.

Back at the hotel, the buck-toothed waiter who was on night duty was no longer there. Zhuang Rui and the other two breathed a sigh of relief. Faced with such an extreme case, they probably wouldn't even be able to eat breakfast. However, Wei Ge and Lao Si were clearly not in the mood for breakfast either. They went back to their room to wash their hands as if their butts were on fire.

Zhuang Rui didn't mind. He ate breakfast at the restaurant and packed a portion for Wei Ge, Zhou Rui, and the others to take up with him.

Zhuang Rui was staying in a single room. After delivering breakfast to the others, he took a cold shower. The weather in Guangdong in June was already quite hot, and even a little activity would leave him covered in sweat.

Although he hadn't slept all night, Zhuang Rui was still quite excited. He lay in bed for a long time, unable to fall asleep, so he got up and took the dozen or so broken pieces of porcelain to the bathroom. He carefully cleaned the dirt off the porcelain pieces with a toothbrush. As the saying goes, old goods are not afraid of being new (clean), and new goods are not afraid of being dirty (aged). The glaze of this Ru kiln porcelain was very even. After Zhuang Rui cleaned it, each piece of porcelain emitted a faint, sky-blue glow.

Zhuang Rui placed the porcelain shards on the snow-white bed and began to piece them together. Although he was only roughly piecing together the broken surfaces, Zhuang Rui was still overjoyed. These sixteen broken porcelain pieces would just make up a Ru kiln brush washer.

A brush washer is a stationery item used to hold water for washing brushes. It is widely favored for its ingenious shape, variety, elegance, and exquisite craftsmanship. Among them, brush washers produced by Ru kiln are called Ru kiln washers. However, few of them have survived to this day. According to some statistics, there are no more than fifty intact Ru kiln washers in the world today. If Uncle De can restore this Ru kiln washer, it will definitely fetch a high price.

Zhuang Rui carefully wrapped the porcelain shards in a towel and decided that after attending the jade exhibition, he would immediately return to Zhonghai to have Uncle De repair the Ru kiln porcelain.

As for the Han Dynasty jade disc that Lao Si had found, Zhuang Rui didn't pay much attention to it and casually placed it on the coffee table in the room. Although the jade disc was quite valuable, it only had two colors and the jade quality wasn't very good. He had no interest in "playing with" it himself and would rather sell it when he had the chance.

