

Golden 271

Chapter 271 Yue Jing's Resentment

After Zhuang Rui left, he didn't rest. Instead, he found Zhang Dazhi and the others. These people were at the jade buyback center in the Jade Prince's Manor, waiting for professionals to appraise the jade they had mined.

Those who go into the mountains to mine jade own all the jade they find. They can sell it to the Jade King or keep it to sell at the market. However, the Jade King always buys jade at fair prices, so the jade miners are happy to sell their jade to him. Every year, the Jade King accounts for 80% of the Hetian jade raw materials flowing out of Xinjiang, which shows how powerful he is.

"Brother Zhuang, you're here! Perfect timing, the identification will be finished soon..."

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui approach, the group greeted him warmly, their faces beaming with barely suppressed joy.

The three best pieces of jade have just been appraised, and the other party has offered a price of 1.7 million. There are other jade miners in the hall, all looking at Zhang Dazhi and his group with envy.

"I have something else to tell you, but never mind, I'll tell you later..."

Zhuang Rui originally wanted to tell the group about his plan to go into the mountains to search for jade veins the next day, but seeing that these guys' eyes were glued to the jade on the table, and that they were even indifferent when greeting Zhuang Rui, he was surprised.

"Tiezi, the jade you mined this time is of very good quality. There are a total of 27 pieces of jade, including two pieces of top-grade white jade weighing 18.6 kilograms, six pieces of medium-grade white jade weighing 39.4 kilograms, and the rest are ordinary bluish-white jade. The total price is 1.98 million, but I, Lao Liu, have decided to make it 2 million. What do you think?"

After examining the last piece of jade, the old man sitting at the table took off his reading glasses, wiped them, and then slowly and methodically told Tiezi and the others the price.

Seeing that Tiezi and the others remained silent, the appraiser assumed they were dissatisfied with the price he had offered, and couldn't help but snort, "What's wrong? Not happy? Tiezi, you've been dealing with me, Old Liu, for a long time. My price is the fairest. Even if a prince came, this would be the price..."

"Uncle Liu, it's not...it's unfair, no...no, it's...very unfair. Ugh, look at my foul mouth! Dazhi, you tell him."

Upon hearing the price of two million, Tiezi, who was in his thirties, became incoherent. Before he could finish a sentence, he had already angered Old Man Liu across the table so much that his face turned black, and he was almost about to stand up and storm out.

"This...this, Brother Zhuang, you...you should say it." Looking at Zhang Dazhi's excited face, he couldn't utter a single word.

"Uncle Liu, they are just too happy. Please don't take offense. The price is fair, so we'll do as you say."

Zhuang Rui smiled and turned to the old man. When Uncle Liu heard Zhuang Rui's words, his previously angry face also showed a smile. He could also see that these young men were completely frightened by the price of two million.

It's no wonder that Tiezi and his friends were excited. Just a week ago, they were all penniless, homeless, and unmarried. It's normal for them to be excited when they suddenly heard about the huge sum of two million.

A single trip into the mountains can earn hundreds of thousands of yuan, turning someone from rags to riches. This is one of the main reasons why hundreds of thousands of people have flocked to Xinjiang to mine jade in recent years. Just like the American Gold Rush in the 19th century, there are no explicit regulations in the country regarding jade mining. Right now, whoever finds it owns it. However, this phenomenon will no longer exist next year, as relevant regulations are already being formulated.

"Alright, Tiezi, you've finally made it through. Who's the team leader? How's the money going to be distributed? Cash or deposited into the account?"

Uncle Liu has worked for the Jade King for decades and sees scenes like this every year. To be honest, finding two million worth of jade is rare, but not unheard of; he's seen even more.

Zhang Dazhi came to his senses and said repeatedly, "I, I'm the captain. There are five of us. Each of us doesn't have 400,000. Let's just transfer the money to the account."

Mengzi, who had been silent until now, suddenly said in a muffled voice, "Brother Dazhi, I don't have a bank account, what should I do?"

"I don't have a bank account either..."

Wang Fei, standing next to Mengzi, also looked embarrassed. Like Zhang Dazhi, he worked for Prince Yu to earn a little money. He received about a thousand yuan a month, sent a few hundred home, and the rest was not enough to live on, so he would never save it in the bank.

Seeing this, Zhuang Rui said, "Dazhi, Tiezi, I think you should both go to the bank and open a new account. I also have something to tell you."

"Okay, let's go to the bank together. Uncle Liu, can you give us a receipt? We'll come back to collect the money later."

After receiving the receipt from Uncle Liu, the group went outside. Zhang Dazhi drove the car out, and they went to a bank in Hotan, where they each opened an account using their own ID cards.

On the way, Zhuang Rui told the others about his plan to go into the mountains to search for jade veins the next day. They didn't take it too seriously, since they only suspected there might be a jade vein, and whether it actually existed was another matter.

Zhuang Rui declined the 400,000 yuan offer. Zhang Dazhi and the other three each received 100,000 yuan, which was enough for them. After the money was deposited into their accounts, Zhang Dazhi and Wang Fei decided to resign from their posts and return to their hometown in Sichuan. Tiezi, on the other hand, planned to buy a house in Hotan and marry the widow he had been dating for several years.

Only Mengzi was a little at a loss after receiving the money. He was an orphan who had grown up relying on the kindness of others. He was now suddenly rich and didn't know what to do with it. Zhuang Rui liked this honest and simple-minded big guy, so he simply asked him to go into the mountains with him tomorrow, and Mengzi agreed.

After dealing with these matters, Zhuang Rui carried the bag containing the colored jade back to his room.

Ignoring the dust covering his body, Zhuang Rui's first action was to find his phone charger so he could call home to let them know he was safe. His phone had lost signal on the first day he entered the mountains, and by the fourth day, it was completely out of power. Although he had told his mother beforehand, he was worried that his family would be concerned after a week without making a phone call.

After the call was connected, Mrs. Zhuang didn't say anything, only reminding Zhuang Rui to be careful. Zhuang Rui wanted to ask about the Ouyang family in the capital several times, but he held back the words.

Zhuang Rui tossed his phone onto the table and went into the bathroom. He hadn't showered in the past few days since leaving the mountain, and his clothes were soaked with sweat residue, and he had a strange smell.

Just as Zhuang Rui was taking a shower, his phone rang on the table. Although he heard it, he was too lazy to answer it. He was currently struggling with the thick layer of grime on his body. Even though he was going into the mountains tomorrow, he wanted to get himself ready today.

After more than ten minutes, Zhuang Rui came out of the bathroom and found that his phone was still ringing non-stop. He wondered who was so persistent.

"Hey, is this Second Brother? Sorry, I've been in the mountains these past few days and there's been no cell phone signal. You were just checking up on me, right?"

Seeing that it was Yue Jing calling, Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed. He thought he would be back in Beijing in three to five days, but he forgot to tell Yue Jing when he went into the mountains. He was afraid that Yue Jing wouldn't be able to find him and that he had made Yue Jing worry.

"I don't care about you at all, little one. What's going on between you and the fourth son of the Ouyang family? He's been coming to my workplace to wait for me every day. Am I supposed to go to work?"

It turns out Zhuang Rui was just being presumptuous. Brother Yue Jing wasn't here to show concern for him; he was here to interrogate him. Ever since the day he couldn't reach Zhuang Rui by phone, Ouyang Jun had been spending all his time in his office, saying that if he found Zhuang Rui, everything would be fine, otherwise he would pester you, Yue Xiaoliu.

"I have nothing to do with him, second brother. Before I met him, I had never even heard of his name. Don't blame me for this. Blame yourself. Why did you take me to that place..."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh. He joked with Yue Jing on the phone, saying that he had been having a tough but fulfilling time in the mountains these past few days and had long forgotten about Ouyang Jun.

"You heartless brat! I endured torture and pepper spray, but I didn't reveal your secrets, and you're making up stories about me like this..." The second brother said in a resentful tone on the other end of the phone, which gave Zhuang Rui goosebumps.

However, Yue Jing did help cover up some of the questions Ouyang Fourth Brother had about Zhuang Rui, only saying that Zhuang Rui was born into an ordinary family and had only recently resigned from Zhonghai. What Yue Jing said was essentially meaningless, because Ouyang Jun himself could find out. As for the fact that Zhuang Rui was worth hundreds of millions, he kept that a secret.

Although it's not necessarily true that Ouyang Si'er's visit to Zhuang Rui was intended to harm him, Yue Jing still managed to resist corruption and remain untainted without Zhuang Rui's consent. Ouyang Jun did find a second-tier celebrity to seduce him, and of course, Yue Xiaoliu accepted the sugar-coated bait but returned the bullet to Ouyang Si'er.

Actually, Yue Jing was actually hoping Zhuang Rui would come back later. Although Xu Da Mingxing wasn't part of the deal, Ouyang Si'er still had several A-list actresses in his grasp. Of course, you can't force them to get to know each other, but you can introduce them and then have a deeper conversation.

"Alright, second brother, I'm exhausted like a grandson right now. I'm not going to chat with you anymore. It'll probably be another ten days or so before I can get back to Beijing. We'll talk about it then."

After drying his hair and lying down on the bed, a wave of weariness washed over him. Zhuang Rui was too lazy to talk to his second brother anymore, so he hung up the phone immediately after speaking.

"Damn it, you hung up on me!"

The second brother on the other end of the phone, hearing the dial tone, cursed in annoyance, but after his eyes darted around, he dialed another number.

Chapter 272 Opening the Mountain to Mine Jade (Part 1)

Yue Xiaoliu naturally called Ouyang Jun. Although principles couldn't be disregarded, informing him that Zhuang Rui's phone was on seemed insignificant. Besides, Ouyang Jun could make the call himself, so why not do him a favor? Ouyang Jun had been quite impatient these past few days, showing signs of about to explode, and Yue Xiaoliu didn't want to provoke him, so she wanted to appease him a little.

Ouyang Jun was not only about to lose his temper, he was practically driven mad by Zhuang Rui. He had promised to return to Beijing in three to five days, but more than a week had passed and he hadn't come back. Not only that, his phone was also switched off. What Fourth Brother hated most in his life was people who didn't answer when he called or whose phones were switched off. If you can't handle the game, don't pretend to be something you're not.

What angered Ouyang Jun even more was that his own father gave him the comment, "A young man with no beard is unreliable." This was absolutely unfair! If it weren't for the famous actor Xu complaining that his beard was prickly and shaving him every day, Ouyang Jun would never have been described as a modern eunuch.

However, after investigating Zhuang Rui's family relationships, Ouyang Jun discovered the name Ouyang Wan. Although he did not know his aunt's real name, he guessed a little. However, the topic of his aunt had always been taboo in the family, and he dared not ask his father or the old man in the family.

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Zhuang Rui had been quite exhausted these past few days. Although the spiritual energy could help heal the soreness and numbness in his legs, there were several mountain paths with deep abysses and cliffs below, so he had to keep his mind on high alert. Now that he had returned to his residence, a wave of weariness washed over him.

After quickly drying his hair with a hairdryer, Zhuang Rui lay down on the bed and fell asleep within minutes. In his dream, he saw Qin Xuanbing arrive in Xinjiang and enter the Kunlun Mountains with him. He held Qin Xuanbing's slender waist and toured the scenery of the Kunlun Mountains. With such beautiful scenery and a beautiful woman, Zhuang Rui was deeply intoxicated.

Well, Zhuang Rui can swear that in his dream he only wanted a kiss, and absolutely did not put his hand inside Qin Xuanbing's clothes. However, he was woken up by a phone call the moment he had that thought.

"Damn it, I never had a chance before, not even in my dreams!"

Zhuang Rui now regretted not turning off the phone while charging it. Still half asleep, he picked up the phone from the bedside table, his eyes not even open, just to keep the thought alive, maybe he could dream about it later.

"Hello, who is this?" Although he was resentful, Zhuang Rui was not about to vent his anger on his phone.

"Who is this? This is Ouyang Jun. Don't you check caller ID when you answer the phone?"

The sound from the phone suddenly burst out like gunpowder, startling Zhuang Rui so much that he quickly took the phone away from his ear. He felt a surge of resentment. Why was he angry? Naturally, it was because the machine-gun-like sound had completely pulled Zhuang Rui out of his sleep.

"Sorry, you've dialed the wrong number..."

After saying that, Zhuang Rui immediately hung up the phone and turned it off.

After thinking it over for a while, Zhuang Rui was basically certain that his mother and the Ouyang family were definitely related, and might even be his mother's maternal family. However, they had not had any contact for decades, so something unpleasant must have happened. Seeing his mother's sad and tearful appearance every Spring Festival, Zhuang Rui naturally blamed the Ouyang family.

Zhuang Rui doesn't seek overwhelming power or immense wealth. Well, he doesn't even need to ask for the second point. Zhuang Rui already has a net worth of hundreds of millions. Although he can't compare to some powerful families, he can still be considered a young and promising successful person.

As the saying goes, "He who has no desires is invincible." Since I can't ask anything of you, why should I treat you like food? That's why Zhuang Rui hung up on Ouyang Jun, making up the excuse of dialing the wrong number. Zhuang Rui was too lazy to waste time arguing with Ouyang Jun and disturb his friend's sleep.

"Wrong number? Oh, I'm sorry..."

Upon hearing the other party say they had dialed the wrong number, Ouyang Jun habitually apologized. However, he quickly realized the voice sounded familiar. He checked the number again—yes, it was Zhuang Rui's phone number.

Ouyang Jun dialed again, only to find that the other party's phone was switched off. Fearing that he had the wrong number, he called Yue Xiaoliu to verify. He finally concluded that he had been tricked by Zhuang Rui, and that the kid had deliberately hung up on him.

This time, Ouyang Jun wasn't furious, but rather puzzled. Logically, since the other party knew his identity, why would they treat him like this? From childhood to adulthood, no one had ever treated him like this before. Even when he was in junior high school and was caught peeping into the girls' restroom by a teacher, he still smiled and didn't dare tell his parents. Of course, that young female teacher became the principal of that school ten years later.

"Fourth Brother, what's wrong now? Why are you spacing out so late at night?"

A fragrant breeze wafted over, and the room lights dimmed. Xu Da Mingxing, who had just come out of the bathroom, turned down the lights, stretched out her soft, boneless arms, and wrapped them around Ouyang Jun's body.

"I'll take you on a trip tomorrow. Let's postpone the filming for a few days..."

Ouyang Gongzi, who usually loves this kind of atmosphere, was not in the mood today. He stood up and made a phone call, booking two tickets to Xinjiang for tomorrow. He wanted to see if Zhuang Rui would still be so arrogant when he appeared in front of him.

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Zhuang Rui slept soundly. He hadn't slept in bed for over a week and slept for a full ten hours. If he hadn't been woken up, he probably could have slept all day.

"Xiao Zhuang, we're about to leave, come and have breakfast quickly."

As Zhuang Rui stepped out of the room, he saw Old Master Gu and Adila sitting in the living room eating. When Adila saw Zhuang Rui come out, she greeted him.

"Senior Uncle, are you going too?"

Zhuang Rui sat down at the table and asked Old Master Gu, who knew how difficult that road was. Although Old Master Gu looked healthy, he was definitely not as strong as Prince Yu, who often went into the mountains.

"I'm not going. I'm used to getting up early. I'll just see you off. By the way, when you come back this time, those pendants will be almost finished. There's enough material left to make two earrings. You can give them to Brother Wu then."

Old Master Gu's words reminded Zhuang Rui of something else. He swallowed a steamed bun, then ate some porridge and got up. He hurriedly ran back to his room, and when he came out again, he was carrying a tattered backpack.

"Uncle-Master, what do you think this piece of jade is suitable for? I found it in the mountains. I didn't take the money for mining it, I just want this piece of jade." Zhuang Rui took out the piece of colored jade from his backpack and placed it on the table.

It was still dark outside. By the light of the living room lamp, the old man took a quick look at the jade material. His expression changed slightly, and he said to Zhuang Rui, "Five-colored skin? Where did you find this treasure?"

"This thing is called Five-Flower Skin? It's the kind of material I found in Wild Buffalo Gully. I lost 400,000 yuan for this piece of material," Zhuang Rui replied casually, continuing to eat his breakfast.

"Four hundred thousand? You've made a fortune again, kid. Although I don't know the quality of the jade inside, just based on these colors, it's worth two million."

The old man kept rubbing his hands on the leather, looking as if he loved it dearly.

Zhuang Rui asked, puzzled, "Uncle-Master, aren't mixed-color materials not expensive?"

"Xiao Zhuang, it depends on the size of the material and the amount of color. If the material is small and there aren't many colors, it can't be made into a decorative piece, so the price will naturally be low. But a piece like this can be made into a large decorative piece. After being carved by Brother Gu, it's not impossible for it to sell for a few million..."

Adila, who was standing nearby, explained to Zhuang Rui that the piece of jade he had inadvertently left behind was actually the most valuable one. However, Zhuang Rui did not intend to bring the others back to clarify, as it had been agreed upon beforehand, and he himself did not understand the value of the jade at the time.

Unlike antiques, jade is not necessarily more expensive the older it is. New jade of good quality is often worth dozens of times more than old jade, especially jadeite. Nephrite is also a good example, although the price difference is not that great.

In recent years, jade ornaments have become very popular. For example, a white jade cabbage ornament carved by Mr. Gu in the 1990s was auctioned for a sky-high price of 14.8 million yuan two years ago, which shows how sought-after jade ornaments are in the market.

"Alright, I'll take a look at this material later. You go into the mountains with Brother Adila."

After finishing his speech, the old man skipped breakfast and took the jade material to the jade carving studio that Adila had prepared for him, intending to study it carefully. Zhuang Rui and Adila looked at each other in surprise, not expecting him to be so impatient.

This is not hard to understand. Good jade requires good craftsmanship, but even a good craftsman will feel a strong urge to work with good jade.

It's important to understand that for a master jade carver like Mr. Gu, the sense of satisfaction from creating a rare treasure is something outsiders can hardly comprehend. This piece of colored jade is extremely malleable; if the jade itself is of good quality, the finished product could be even more valuable than that piece of imperial green jade.

Adila glanced at the lucky kid beside her and said, "Eat up, we're about to leave, don't mind that Jade Madman."

"Jade Madman?" Zhuang Rui chuckled to himself. So Old Master Gu had such a nickname.

After breakfast, it was already getting light, and a dozen or so strong young men were waiting in the yard, including Mengzi.

Only two vehicles went into the mountains this time. The one in front was a minibus for passengers, while the truck behind it was loaded with all the equipment for quarrying and chiseling rocks.

The truck also carried a small diesel generator. Although it was small and not very big, it still weighed over a hundred kilograms. Zhuang Rui was puzzled when he saw it. How was this thing going to be carried up the mountain?

Chapter 273 Opening the Mountain to Mine Jade (Part Two)

After a bumpy five or six-hour journey, Zhuang Rui returned to the transit station at the entrance of the Kunlun Mountains. With the rainy season approaching, the mountain roads would become even more difficult, and there were fewer people heading into the mountains than he had seen the day before.

However, there were more than twenty donkeys at the transfer station, which made Zhuang Rui feel a bit novel. He had known the story of Afanti riding a donkey since he was a child by reading comic books. Could it be that he would also ride a donkey up the mountain?

Zhuang Rui's idea became a reality. Of the twenty-six donkeys, twenty were used to transport supplies, and the remaining six were for people to ride. After unloading the supplies from the trucks and placing them on the donkeys, the long procession entered the Kunlun Mountains.

While watching the cartoon, Zhuang Rui felt that Afanti rode the donkey very easily, and Zhang Guolao rode the donkey backwards, which seemed much simpler than riding a horse. After the Jade King gave him a donkey, Zhuang Rui was eager to try it out and rode it.

Donkeys are much smaller than horses, standing about 85 centimeters tall. They have a narrower chest, slender limbs, and a shorter torso, so their height and length are roughly equal. However, their hooves are small and sturdy, and the donkey caravan makes a constant "clattering" sound as it walks on the rocky mountain road.

Nationwide, Xinjiang has the highest distribution and usage rate of donkeys. Many people in the mountainous areas of Xinjiang cannot live without donkeys in their daily lives. For example, donkey-hide gelatin, which is made from donkey skin, is very valuable, but it is not as famous in Xinjiang as it is in Shandong. This is also why many people in Xinjiang regard donkeys as partners and friends.

Once on the donkey's back, Zhuang Rui felt awkward. The donkey's back was narrow and had little flesh, making it very uncomfortable to sit on. The swaying and bouncing as it walked made it even more uncomfortable. After riding for less than five minutes, Zhuang Rui gave up. However, seeing Adila sitting comfortably on the donkey's back, his body bobbing up and down with the donkey's movement, Zhuang Rui was filled with admiration.

"Attention, everyone in front! Keep walking straight ahead and don't look back. Don't shout when you cross the mountain path."

The road to Yeniu Gully involves traversing several extremely narrow mountain paths, with sheer cliffs dozens of meters high below. This presents a significant challenge for Zhuang Rui and his group. Experienced members have been organizing their efforts.

The mountain path was passable for humans, but it was rather narrow for donkeys. Every now and then, pebbles would be kicked off the path by the donkeys, making a series of crisp sounds.

"Ah, watch out!"

"Kamaiti, don't look back, keep going forward, keep going forward!"

Suddenly, a commotion arose ahead, and Zhuang Rui saw a donkey carrying supplies tumble down the cliff with a pitiful bray. Standing on it, he could clearly hear the sound of the donkey's body hitting the ground. The bloody and mangled sight made Zhuang Rui unable to bear looking at it a second time.

"Keep your donkey under control, don't look down, and get through quickly."

Because the team leader was experienced, there was no disturbance in the group ahead. After more than ten minutes, the entire group passed through the deadly path, and everyone was covered in a cold sweat.

You have to understand, the situation just now was really critical. If the leader hadn't been able to adjust and control the group in time, and the other donkeys had gone out of control, then everyone walking in front would likely have perished in this valley.

After this dangerous situation, the team's progress slowed down considerably, and it took them nearly four days to reach Yeniugou.

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To prevent sudden flash floods, the team did not set up camp at the river mouth, but instead went to a higher location about a kilometer away from the river mouth to set up camp. After resting for a few hours, Adila, along with two other people, and Zhuang Rui arrived at the river mouth.

"Uncle Tian, this is it. Look, the base of this rock is in the soil, so it definitely didn't come down from the mountain..."

Zhuang Rui put down his shovel, his breathing a little rapid. He had just cleared away the hard soil under that rock, no easy task.

Adila crouched down and carefully examined the rock for a while. Then she stood up, nodded, and said, "Hmm, I hadn't noticed it before. Let's go up a bit further."

Actually, it's perfectly normal to have a rock at the foot of the mountain; apart from Zhuang Rui, probably no one else would care.

The peaks of Yeniugou are mostly rocky with little soil, and only low shrubs can survive there. Tall rocks are everywhere. The group walked upstream along the edge of the river. Along the way, Adila observed the exposed rocks on the mountainside. After walking about forty or fifty meters, Adila stopped.

"It's somewhat like limestone formed by magma overflow after crustal movement..."

Having spent his entire life dealing with jade, Adila could be considered a geological expert without formal qualifications. After examining the mountains along the way, he drew his conclusion.

Due to long-term weathering, these rocks have long since changed shape and color, and it is really hard to see them without careful observation.

Zhuang Rui suggested this trip into the mountains, so Adila looked at Zhuang Rui and asked, "Zhuang, in your opinion, where should we start our survey?"

"Starting from the rock face at the river mouth, drill about ten meters into the mountain to take a look..."

Zhuang Rui blurted it out without thinking, only realizing afterward that it was inappropriate. However, seeing Adila nodding, he realized that Adila shared a similar opinion.

"I think that's a good idea, Engineer Zhao. Let's get the young men together and get to work..."

Prince Yu acted decisively; once the tone was set, he immediately prepared to begin work.

It should be noted that most of the jade veins in Kunlun Mountain are already being mined, and new jade veins are becoming increasingly rare. If a jade vein is discovered this time, Adila's reputation as the Jade King will be further solidified.

The roar of the diesel engine echoed through the river canyon. The diamond cutter, more than a meter tall, kept chiseling away at the rock face. Adila stood beside the diamond cutter, carefully observing the situation inside the rock face. Usually, the rocks close to the jade veins were easy to distinguish.

More than two hours later, a human-shaped opening appeared at the bottom of the huge rock wall.

Zhuang Rui stood not far away, watching as a hole was gradually carved out of the rock wall. He became nervous. In just over a meter of depth, a piece of jadeite weighing more than a ton would be revealed, and the jade vein would be exposed to the world.

"Wait, stop, stop now."

Suddenly, Adila shouted loudly, stopped the diamond machine, and crawled into the hole that was more than one meter high and two meters deep. When he came out, he was holding a palm-sized stone in his hand.

This stone doesn't look like a mountain rock, because the entire stone is white and crystalline, somewhat like coarse salt, and it reflects a dazzling light under the sunlight.

"There's jade, there really is jade. Let's get another diamond machine and make the opening bigger..."

After holding the stone and muttering a few words to himself, the old man immediately gave loud orders, and the progress of the rock carving immediately accelerated.

"Uncle Tian, what's the story behind this stone?"

Zhuang Rui went over and saw the old man holding a stone, examining it as if it were a treasure.

"This is dolomite, a by-product of jade. The presence of dolomite basically confirms the existence of a jade vein nearby. Xiao Zhuang, your assessment is accurate; there must be a jade vein here."

Adila smiled happily, the wrinkles on her face smoothed out, and she looked more than ten years younger. For Adila, who had spent her whole life mining and searching for jade, finding a jade vein was like an old man having the opportunity to carve a peerless jade. The sense of satisfaction was indescribable.

As the opening widened, both diamond drilling machines simultaneously drilled deeper, quickly breaking through a distance of over a meter. The experienced workers who were quarrying the rock immediately shut down the diamond drilling machines as soon as their miner's lamps found the jade. They scrambled out of the hole and shouted to Adila, "Your Highness, jade has been found! Jade has been found!"

The crowd gathered at the cave entrance immediately stirred. They all made their living from jade and understood the significance of discovering a jade vein. Excitement was evident on their faces. Even Grandpa Adila raised his right arm and clenched his fist.

When the jade stone weighing over a thousand kilograms was mined out of the cave, the crowd cheered. Apart from Zhuang Rui and Meng Zi, everyone present was a veteran jade miner who had followed the Jade King for over ten years. The discovery of a new jade vein would bring them considerable profits.

After circling the jade stone a few times, Adila said happily, "Not bad, not bad at all. This jade vein is no worse than the Taleksu mine, and the jade quality is even better..."

“Uncle Tian, this is just ordinary bluish-white jade, the material is only average, right? I’ve heard that mutton fat white jade has been mined from the Taleksu mine.”

Zhuang Rui knew that the Taleksu Mine was the one that had yielded more than 60 tons of jade. He believed that this jade vein would definitely surpass the Taleksu Mine in terms of output, but he didn't quite understand what the old man meant by the good quality of the jade.

"What do you know, kid? This is just the edge of the jade vein. The deeper you dig, the better the jade will appear..."

Adila glared at Zhuang Rui, but his face was full of smiles. He had a premonition that this mining site would become the largest jade mine in Xinjiang.

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"Fourth Brother, we've been here for five or six days now, when are we going back to Beijing?"

Sitting in a vineyard open to tourists, Xu Daming said to Ouyang Jun with a hint of resentment, "You know, although the scenery here is beautiful and the climate is cool, there are two film crews in Beijing waiting for me to go back to work."

"How should I know? I might stay here even if that kid doesn't come out of the mountains."

Ouyang Jun stuffed a grape into his mouth with a vicious shovel, forgetting to spit out the skin, and swallowed it whole, skin and seed.

Chapter 274 Avalanche

Ouyang Jun ultimately failed to meet Zhuang Rui. After spending ten days in Xinjiang, he finally returned to Beijing. He still ran a film investment company, and recently several major patriotic dramas had been produced, keeping him very busy. Furthermore, the famous actor Xu was eager to return to filming, so he had no choice but to head home.

Zhuang Rui had no idea that someone was waiting for him outside the mountains. He had been living a very carefree life. Since the mining operation didn't require him to work, he had nothing to do every day. Seeing that the mining team was armed with guns, Zhuang Rui would take Mengzi up the mountain to hunt during the day. He had caused quite a few damage to the wild goats in the Kunlun Mountains.

The mining of the jade vein is progressing smoothly. In just five days, the mine has been dug more than ten meters deep, and nearly twenty tons of jade have been extracted. As Mr. Adila said, the deeper you go, the higher the quality of the jade. The jade pieces that have been mined recently are all of medium to high quality and are quite valuable.

However, a heavy rain yesterday caused the water level at the river mouth to rise considerably. Although it hasn't reached the height of the rock wall mine, it's not far away. Now the mining team is facing the problem of diverting the stream. In the past two days, Adila has been taking Engineer Zhao to observe the terrain, preparing to use explosives to block the river mouth and open up another stream outlet.

The stream doesn't look very deep normally, only up to waist level, but during the flood season, it can spread to a depth of three or four meters above the waterline, so diverting or changing its course is not a simple matter.

After inspecting several locations on the mountainside, Adila decided to use explosives to blast away part of the mountain above the river mouth, causing the rubble to roll down and block the river mouth. Then, he would dig another ditch to divert the flash flood.

...

"When blasting begins, keep away from unauthorized personnel. When blasting begins, keep away from unauthorized personnel..."

The sound from the loudspeaker could be heard from four or five hundred meters away from the river mouth. Engineer Zhao and his men had set up more than twenty explosive points thirty meters above the river mouth. If they were detonated at the same time, the rocks would be enough to block the river mouth.

Although doing so would likely block the entrance to the mine, there was no other way. The terrain at the foot of the mountain is low, and if there is another heavy rain, the mine will probably turn into a waterfall, making it impossible to mine.

"Xiao Zhuang, here you go. There's something good to see later."

Standing next to Zhuang Rui, the elderly Adila casually handed him a high-powered military telescope.

"What do you need this for? You can see it clearly up close."

Zhuang Rui was puzzled. At a distance of four or five hundred meters, with clear weather and high visibility, he could clearly see the people placing detonators and explosives at several detonation points.

"You'll find out soon enough..." The old man smiled without saying a word.

More than half an hour later, a sharp whistle rang out, and the people who planted the explosives immediately ran from the mountain toward the camp.

"Time's up, detonate!!!"

Seeing that the workers had all run back safely, Adila shouted loudly. Upon hearing the order, Engineer Zhao pressed down hard with the remote control in his hand.

"Boom! Boom!! Boom!!!"

With a series of rhythmic, massive explosions, Zhuang Rui felt the earth shake. Hundreds of meters away, the mountainside seemed to have been cleaved in two, with countless rocks cascading down. Large and small stones flew everywhere, some even landing dozens of meters away from Zhuang Rui and his companions. If they had been any closer, they would likely have been left with bloodied heads.

The explosions were detonated one by one, and the sounds of explosions continued. Zhuang Rui quickly grabbed his binoculars and held them up to his eyes. Now he could see much more clearly. The hard

rocks, under the power of the explosives, were as fragile as tofu, breaking into pieces of varying sizes, all blocking the river mouth.

"One, two, three... twenty, twenty-one... Engineer Zhao, all the detonators have been detonated, no duds." Someone nearby was counting the explosions. After the explosions stopped, the person breathed a sigh of relief and immediately reported to Engineer Zhao, who was in charge of the diversion.

Using explosives to clear a mountain is no joke. Due to various reasons, a slight mistake can lead to a dud, which is the most difficult to resolve. When this happens, someone has to be sent to check it. However, during the check, the dud often detonates, and the fate of the person checking the malfunction is self-evident.

In some places where people rely on the mountains for a living, the use of explosives is commonplace, and every year a considerable number of people die from unexploded ordnance.

Hearing that all the explosive charges had detonated, Engineer Zhao breathed a sigh of relief. Clearing the duds was a job no one wanted to do; it was like risking your life.

At this moment, the originally low-lying river mouth seemed to have been instantly built into a dam, blocking all the water flowing down from the mountain. However, Zhuang Rui was puzzled. This was like drinking poison to quench thirst. Once the water level on the mountain rose and overflowed the rocks, wouldn't the water still flow down?

However, this situation was clearly within Adila's expectations. Just three or four minutes after the first round of explosions subsided, Engineer Zhao pressed a button on a remote control on his left hand. Immediately, a deafening explosion rang out again. This time, the blast points were laid in a long dragon shape, exploding downwards in a line from the foot of the mountain for fifty or sixty meters.

The situation through the telescope was different from before. This time, the blast point was relatively shallower. Zhuang Rui could only see that the land where the blast point had passed was plowed up, turning over to both sides, and a deep ditch appeared in his sight.

"Xiao Zhuang, look up." came the voice of Grandpa Adila from the side.

"above?"

Zhuang Rui, somewhat bewildered, raised the binoculars, and what he saw there left him completely stunned.

The place where Zhuang Rui and the others set up camp was already at an altitude of over 3,000 meters, while the peak in front of them was even higher, with an altitude of over 5,000 meters. The mountaintop was covered with snow all year round, and even in summer, only the snow on the mountainside was slowly melting and flowing into the Wild Buffalo Gully.

"avalanche?!"

Through the telescope, Zhuang Rui saw a crack appear in the ice and snow, which were frozen solid like iron, on the mountainside that was almost reaching into the clouds.

Zhuang Rui could almost hear the cracking sound of the ice breaking. Then, the huge snow began to slide. As it slid down, it quickly gained speed, and the avalanche became a white snow dragon that plunged almost straight down, riding the clouds and rushing down the mountain with fierce momentum.

The snow layer broke apart, and white, layered snow chunks and slabs rose up in response—as if a mountain god had suddenly unleashed his inner strength to shake off a white robe, or as if a white snow dragon was riding the clouds and roaring down the mountainside, like a white behemoth, devouring everything Zhuang Rui could see.

"Wild goat?"

Suddenly, Zhuang Rui spotted a group of wild goats running for their lives. However, their speed was far slower than the snow, and within a few seconds, the dozen or so wild goats disappeared from Zhuang Rui's sight.

The avalanche lasted for more than half an hour until the slope of the mountain became gentler, at which point the speed at which the snow fell down slowed down. However, the bushes that were originally on the mountainside had all disappeared and were completely covered by thick snow. It is believed that in a few days, all of this snow will melt into water and flow down.

Zhuang Rui knew a little about the principle of avalanches. On snow-capped mountains, there is always a contest: gravity will pull the snow down, while the cohesive force of the snow will try to keep it in place. When this contest reaches its climax, even the slightest external force, such as an animal running, a rolling rock, wind, a slight tremor, or even a shout in the valley, is enough to trigger a catastrophic avalanche if the pressure exceeds the cohesive force that binds the snow particles together.

For example, when the wind blows, it not only causes a large accumulation of snow, but also causes snow particles to condense and form a hard and brittle snow layer, which allows the upper snow layer to slide along the lower snow layer, causing an avalanche.

This avalanche was clearly caused by human error. The enormous explosion far exceeded the cohesive force of the snow particles, causing the years-old snow on the mountain to succumb to the pressure and resulting in this avalanche.

The power of nature left Zhuang Rui speechless and deeply moved, making him feel powerless. Humanity seemed so insignificant in the face of such natural power, and life seemed so helpless.

"Get to work. Clear the rocks at the mine entrance. You guys, come with me up the mountain."

An hour later, no more rocks fell. Engineer Zhao organized people to start clearing the mountain. The explosion was very successful. The original river mouth was completely blocked. A gap appeared more than ten meters to the right, and the melting snow on the mountain turned into a stream that flowed down from it.

The water in the stream was even colder. Zhuang Rui put his hand in the water and felt a bone-chilling cold. Every now and then, ice blocks the size of millstones would rush down from the new river mouth.

The original mine entrance was now completely blocked by rubble, but clearing these rocks was much easier than excavating the mine. By noon the next day, the area outside the mine had been cleared, and the deafening sound of the diamond drilling machine began to echo through the canyon again.

Today is the day to head back. Zhuang Rui and the others have been in the mountains for half a month. The jade vein has been identified and mining has begun. Adila decided to take the mined jade back first

and then send some more people over. After all, there are only seven or eight people working right now, and the mining progress is too slow.

Apart from the donkeys used to transport the jade, all the other tools and supplies were left behind. As the person in charge of the mine, Engineer Zhao also stayed there, while Zhuang Rui followed the Jade King out of the mountains.

Chapter 275 Notarization

Besides the seven or eight mining workers, the remaining personnel included five armed security guards equipped with live ammunition.

There has never been peace in Xinjiang. Not to mention before liberation, even after liberation, Xinjiang was the place with the highest concentration of heavy prisons in the country, gathering serious criminals from all over the country. Some prisoners were imprisoned for more than ten years, and many stayed here after their release.

In addition, Xinjiang is vast and sparsely populated, which makes it a hiding place for many criminals, so the public security has never been very good. Hotan region, in particular, is a mixed bag, with all kinds of people. Jade mines, such a lucrative commodity, are often targeted by some people with ulterior motives, so the existence of mine protection teams is very necessary.

To Zhuang Rui's surprise, Mengzi was unwilling to leave the mountain and instead chose to join the mine protection team. In his words, the outside world was too complicated, and he was always being schemed against. It was better to stay here, hunt, and drink.

Because there was no heavy machinery to cut the mountain, and the jade was cut open and placed evenly on the backs of more than twenty donkeys, the journey down the mountain was much smoother and there were no accidents. Four days later, the group arrived at the transit station in a grand procession.

The car driven by Prince Yu had been waiting here. Without delay, everyone got in the car and returned to Hotan. The jade mine had only just begun to unearth the tip of the iceberg, and there was still much to be done. Gathering the miners, strengthening the security forces, and so many other things to do, Adila was still busy non-stop when she returned to the manor, even though it was already evening. She didn't even have time to see the old man.

Zhuang Rui was naturally of no help. Although he hadn't done anything for the past two weeks, he was exhausted. He simply went back to his room, took a shower, and slept soundly.

He slept for quite a while, and when he woke up it was already noon the next day. Zhuang Rui picked up his fully charged phone, called his family and Qin Xuanbing to let them know he was safe, and then went out of his room to find Grandpa Gu.

"You still remember your martial uncle, kid?"

Sitting in Adila's vineyard, sipping his own homemade wine, the old man had a contented expression, but what he said wasn't very pleasant.

"Uncle-Master, I came here to see you as soon as I got up."

Zhuang Rui had no idea what was wrong with the old man's temper, so he carefully apologized.

"Yesterday I was sitting in the living room watching you go into your room without even saying hello. Do you even respect me as your senior brother?"

"Huh? The lights were off then, and there didn't seem to be anyone in the living room, right?"

Zhuang Rui was dumbfounded when he heard this. He was also very tired yesterday and went straight upstairs to sleep. He didn't even notice that Grandpa Gu was sitting in the living room in the dark.

"Alright, take a look at these pieces I've carved." The old man was just teasing Zhuang Rui. His old friend hadn't been around lately, and he had nothing to do besides carving jade, so he was just bored.

"Is it done?" Zhuang Rui asked in surprise.

Gu Tianfeng didn't answer, but instead handed over a palm-sized box. Zhuang Rui took it, opened it, and saw three emerald green Maitreya Buddha pendants.

With a broad forehead, a large belly, a perpetually smiling face, and sitting cross-legged, the folds in his clothes were clearly visible. His eyes, narrowed to slits, made Zhuang Rui feel as if this Maitreya Buddha was smiling at him.

What's even more amazing is that the three pendants have three different shapes and expressions: one is smiling at people, one is dozing with its eyes half-closed, and the other is lazily stretching its waist. They are all so lifelike that they seem to be alive, and Zhuang Rui couldn't put them down.

Next to the three jade Maitreya Buddhas, there are two pairs of earrings with a unique design. They are leaf-shaped, about three centimeters long and one and a half centimeters wide, with a hollow center. The veins of the leaves are carved so realistically that they look like real leaves. At one corner of the earrings, a stud is set in platinum, making them complete pieces.

The last piece of jade, about the size of a little finger, was completely uncarved. It was left by the old man to his old friend; it could still be polished into a cabochon. (69 new items)

"So, kid, are you satisfied?" the old man asked jokingly from the side.

"Satisfied, of course I'm satisfied. Your craftsmanship is superb; even the craftsmen from Yangzhou can't compare to you..."

Praise is free, so Zhuang Rui showered the old man with compliments. Zhuang Rui knew that this was only because of him; if someone else had brought materials to the old man, he would probably have been charged at least several hundred thousand yuan for jade carving.

Zhuang Rui's words weren't entirely flattery of the old man. The craftsmanship of these pendants was indeed superb. They didn't use many knives, but they perfectly captured the expressions of the figures. Compared to the Guanyin pendant that Qin Xuanbing had given him, the knife work was far superior.

The old man pointed to an object covered with a red cloth on the table and said to Zhuang Rui, "It will take several months to carve this. I will study it carefully when I get back to Beijing before I start carving."

What is this?

Zhuang Rui lifted the red cloth with some curiosity, and immediately understood. It was the piece of jade with colored skin that he had brought, but the old man had already removed the colored skin, and the whole piece of jade was exposed.

“You’re just lucky, kid. This piece of material alone is worth this much...” Old Gu held up one finger to Zhuang Rui.

"One million? That can't be that cheap, Uncle Gu. The quality of this jade is quite good."

Zhuang Rui frowned. Was it because the material had too many impurities that its value was reduced?

"You can't be so sure about your guess! Let me tell you, this piece of jade, even without any carving, can sell for ten million." The old man's words made Zhuang Rui's mouth drop open in surprise. He could believe it if it was three or five million, but ten million seemed a bit much.

Zhuang Rui naturally didn't doubt the old man's words, and picked up the jade to examine it carefully.

"Uncle-Master, these colors are too chaotic. How can you possibly carve anything out of this?"

This piece of jade is quite a hodgepodge. In the middle, there are two fist-sized pink areas that look a bit like garnets. Surrounding those pink areas are purple, green, yellow, black, white, and orange—almost everything. Zhuang Rui was dazzled by it. He couldn't understand why this thing was worth ten million.

"You wouldn't be able to tell with your discerning eye. Don't ask anymore. Come and pick it up when it's finished. As long as you're not short of money, you're not allowed to sell this thing."

Gu Tianfeng valued this piece of jade even more than that of the imperial green jade of the glass type, which filled Zhuang Rui with curiosity. However, no matter how much he asked, the old man refused to say anything more.

"You little rascal, you actually came here! I've been looking for you everywhere."

Adila's voice came from the vineyard, and then the three of them walked through the maze-like grape trellis and came to Zhuang Rui.

"Uncle Tian? What do you want with me? I can't be of any help, we already agreed on that."

Zhuang Rui was somewhat confused, and when he looked behind Adila, he saw two people in uniforms following behind, which made him even more bewildered.

"Hey kid, I'm asking you for money."

Adila unceremoniously pulled Zhuang Rui up from the chair and sat down himself. Actually, there were plenty of chairs around, but Adila couldn't stand Zhuang Rui's leisurely manner. Why should this old man have to do so many things?

"Here, take a look first. If there are no problems, sign it, and then sign the notarized document."

Adila tossed a document to Zhuang Rui, then gestured for the two people behind her to sit down. A Uyghur woman immediately brought over tea.

Zhuang Rui opened the document and found it to be an equity agreement, which specified the approximate mineral content and total value of the jade mine, his shareholding, and of course, the corresponding amount of capital he was obligated to contribute.

According to Jade King's estimate, the total amount of jade that can be mined from that jade vein should be over 100 tons, and its value is around 1 billion to 1.5 billion RMB. The initial investment is 20 million RMB, and an additional 30 million RMB will be added later. Zhuang Rui holds 50% of the shares, so he needs to put up 10 million RMB first, and then add another 15 million RMB later.

In fact, the additional money later was just a formality. The jade mine is already profitable, and the money can be spent from the profits.

Adila's shareholding agreement was very detailed and there was nothing to criticize. After carefully reviewing it, Zhuang Rui signed his name and then, in front of the notary, wrote a check for ten million and handed it to Adila.

After the notary read the notarization statement, all three parties signed the notarized document and kept a copy for themselves. The whole process took no more than half an hour. Zhuang Rui had to admire the connections that Prince Yu had in Hotan, as he was able to invite a notary to his home.

After the notary left, Gu Tianfeng said to Adila, "Brother, I've stayed here for over a month, it's time to say goodbye. I'll be going back to Beijing tomorrow."

"Okay, after I'm done with this busy period, I'll go to Beijing for a few days. Xiao Zhuang, are you still going to the mine?"

With a new jade mine to be mined, Adila didn't try to persuade his old friend to stay, but instead looked to Zhuang Rui.

"I'm not going. I'd only be a hindrance there. I'd rather go with my senior brother. I'll leave the rest to you, Uncle Tian." Zhuang Rui shook his head. This trip had taken quite a while, and now that he had achieved his goal, he wanted to return to Pengcheng.

"Come back to Beijing with me?" Old Gu turned his head and asked Zhuang Rui.

"Should we go back to Beijing first, or go straight back to Pengcheng?"

To be honest, Zhuang Rui hadn't made up his mind yet. He learned from Yue Jing's phone call that Ouyang Jun had chased him to Xinjiang, and he wanted to put an end to this matter, understand what happened back then, and see if he could resolve his mother's inner conflict. He couldn't let his mother remain unhappy forever.

"Uncle-Master, I'll go back to Beijing with you first. I have some things to take care of." Thinking of his mother secretly shedding tears during holidays, Zhuang Rui made up his mind.

Chapter 276 Not Right

As July drew to a close, the weather in Beijing grew increasingly hot. Zhuang Rui got off the plane at noon, just as a thunderstorm was breaking out. However, the summer weather is unpredictable; the rain had barely stopped when the sun came out, quickly evaporating the rainwater on the ground and creating a suffocating feeling of not being able to breathe.

Grandpa Gu's little courtyard was also unbearably hot and stuffy. Apart from Grandpa Gu's master bedroom, none of the other rooms had air conditioning. After staying inside for a while, sweat dripped down his forehead as if it were free.

The courtyard, which was originally somewhat cool, became uninhabitable because the points on the ground had evaporated. It was impossible to sleep in the same room as the old man, so Zhuang Rui told the old man and moved back to the hotel.

"Hey, you've arrived in Beijing? Where are you? I'll come pick you up, let's have dinner together tonight..."

Yue Jingxiong had been keeping a close eye on Zhuang Rui's whereabouts. As soon as Zhuang Rui settled into the hotel, he called.

After telling his second brother the name of the hotel, Zhuang Rui wanted to take a nap. He had been exhausted this past month. He had spent almost a month in the mountains, only returned to Xinjiang the day before yesterday, and then rushed to Beijing today. Even an iron man would be worn out.

Just as Zhuang Rui finished showering and came out, before his hair was even dry, his phone rang again. He glanced at the number; it was a local landline. Zhuang Rui guessed it was probably Ouyang Jun calling again, so he pressed the answer button.

"Hey, Zhuang Rui, you've disappeared? I haven't been able to find you for a month. If I can't get through to you again, I'm going to call the police."

A crisp, machine-gun-like sound came from the phone, but there was a hint of concern in the voice. Zhuang Rui felt inexplicably relieved when he heard it wasn't Ouyang Jun.

"Officer Miao, do you need to call the police if you want to investigate me? Aren't you a police officer yourself?"

Zhuang Rui always felt relaxed around Miao Feifei. Perhaps this beautiful policewoman's personality was perfect for being friends. He never felt restrained around her.

Previously, Zhuang Rui would call Miao Feifei every three to five days to exchange jokes, but during his time in Xinjiang, there were simply no other options, so their contact was interrupted for over a month.

"Hmph, don't think I don't know what you've been up to all this time. Last month you went to Xi'an first, then got involved in a case of robbing a Tang Dynasty emperor's tomb, and then came to Beijing. Oh, and you dared not call me when you came to Beijing..."

Miao Feifei's voice rose considerably on the phone, clearly indicating her dissatisfaction that Zhuang Rui hadn't informed her of his trip to Beijing.

"Officer Miao, I'm here on official business. I didn't even stay in Beijing for a day before leaving, I didn't have time. By the way, how did you know about that tomb raiding case in Xi'an?"

Because he didn't want his family to worry, Zhuang Rui didn't mention a word about what happened in Xi'an to anyone outside the family. Although Miao Feifei was also in the public security system, it was impossible for her to know about such a small case in Xi'an.

"Yang Wei told me."

Officer Miao made no attempt to cover for the informant. If Brother Wei heard this, he would definitely slap himself a few times for being so talkative. However, if the beautiful woman inquired about any information later, Brother Wei would still be the one to chime in.

"There's always the risk of an inside traitor..." Zhuang Rui chuckled on the phone.

"You still haven't explained what you went to Xinjiang for? Why haven't you turned on your phone for a month?"

Miao Feifei pressed her for details over the phone, explaining that she had gone to great lengths to find Zhuang Rui's boarding records and knew that he had flown from Beijing to Xinjiang.

How did you know I went to Xinjiang?

Zhuang Rui found it strange. He hadn't told Wei Ge that he was going to Xinjiang, and Miao Feifei didn't seem to know Yue Jingxiong either. How could she know so much about his whereabouts?

"I checked your boarding records."

"How could you do this? This is an invasion of personal privacy!"

Zhuang Rui knew Miao Feifei had a powerful background, but he was still somewhat displeased that his whereabouts were being monitored, so his voice unconsciously rose a little.

"It's because you haven't been heard from for a month that people are worried something happened to you. You're like a dog biting Lü Dongbin, not recognizing a kind heart." Miao Feifei was also angry. She was only asking around because she cared about you. If someone else had told her where she went, she wouldn't have cared.

"Alright, I admit I was wrong. Please be magnanimous. I'll treat you to dinner tonight. Would you do me the honor?"

Zhuang Rui has had two women in his family since he was a child. Over the past twenty years, he has learned a truth: don't argue with women or try to reason with them. Just lower your head and let things pass. Harmony in the family brings prosperity. However, Zhuang Rui forgot that Miao Feifei is not part of his family.

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the phone. Zhuang Rui thought Miao Feifei was busy, and just as he was about to speak, Officer Miao's voice came through: "You're free. Where are you tonight?"

"Come to my hotel first, then we can go out together."

Zhuang Rui told him the hotel name over the phone. He had no idea where his second brother was taking him to dinner, but he figured that bringing one more person, especially a beautiful woman, would surely please Yue Jing.

"Damn, are you sure you're going to Xinjiang, not Africa?"

Less than two hours after lying down, the second brother smashed open Zhuang Rui's room door. When he saw Zhuang Rui's appearance, he almost didn't recognize him.

"I even went to Bermuda and saw a sea monster, do you believe me?"

Zhuang Rui replied irritably, went to the bathroom and looked in the mirror. He was almost unrecognizable to himself. His hair had grown long enough to cover his ears, and his beard covered half his face. Well, his eyes were still his own, so he wouldn't mistake himself.

This appearance was a bit shabby. If Miao Feifei saw it, she would definitely be shocked. Zhuang Rui quickly used the hotel's razor to shave, but that thing was some cheap knock-off from a street vendor, and it left several cuts on his face before he could finally shave cleanly.

Knowing that Miao Feifei was coming soon, Zhuang Rui didn't dare to stay in the room wearing only his underwear. However, he was scratching his head when he was looking for clothes to wear. The clothes he was wearing today were full of sweat and definitely couldn't be worn anymore. But the jeans he bought for thirty-nine yuan at a supermarket had two holes worn through at the knees from climbing mountains. Wearing them out to eat seemed a bit impolite.

"Zhuang Rui, I'm at the hotel. Which room are you staying in?"

Just as he was about to ask his second brother to buy him some clothes, Officer Miao called. Zhuang Rui simply put on his ripped jeans and a bright red t-shirt. With his medium-length hair, he looked a bit like an artsy young man from the 1980s.

"Yue Xiaoliu? What are you doing here?"

"Miao Feifei?! What are you doing here?"

Upon hearing that a beautiful woman had arrived, Yue Jing, who volunteered to open the door, heard two exclamations from the other side.

"Tsk tsk, that's rare. Officer Miao actually wears a skirt?"

"Are you looking for death? Didn't you get enough beatings when you were a kid?"

The conversation by the door was tense; the two seemed to be at odds.

Zhuang Rui picked up his handbag, but felt it didn't quite match his outfit, so he simply stuffed his wallet into his back pocket and walked over empty-handed, holding only his phone.

"Hey, Officer Miao, judging by your outfit, I bet a lot of people bumped into telephone poles on the way here, right?"

When Zhuang Rui saw Miao Feifei, he was also somewhat amazed. She, who always wore a uniform, was wearing a white dress today. Her fair skin and delicate face made Zhuang Rui's eyes light up.

"Is it really that beautiful?" Miao Feifei blushed slightly, looking a little shy. Yue Xiaoliu, who was standing to the side, was quite surprised. When had he ever seen Miss Miao like this before?

"Well, it's the same as wearing a uniform, each has its own merits. By the way, do you two know each other?" Zhuang Rui replied casually. It is said that every man has a little bit of a uniform complex.

"I've known Yue Xiaopang since we were kids."

The second brother has quite a few nicknames, and Zhuang Rui learned another one from Miao Feifei.

"Crazy girl, call me Sixth Brother." Judging from Yue Jing's words, the two were quite familiar with each other.

"Alright, we all know each other, no need for introductions. Second brother, where are we going to eat? Let's go, I didn't eat enough on the plane at noon." Zhuang Rui called out to Miao Feifei, who was glaring at Yue Jing, and walked out of the room first.

"Hey kid, how do you know this girl? Don't let her refined and delicate appearance fool you, she's no pushover..." Yue Jing whispered to Zhuang Rui as they left.

"Yue Xiaopang, if you talk bad about me again, I'll make sure you can't get out of bed for three days."

Officer Miao has always been straightforward. Anyway, there's no point in hitting him; a man who gets beaten up by a woman and can't get up is too embarrassed to brag about it.

"How could I dare? By the way, brother, I'm not treating you to dinner today..." Yue Jing shuddered and immediately changed the subject.

Zhuang Rui raised an eyebrow slightly and asked casually, "Ouyang Jun?"

"It's him, honey. What's your relationship with him? He even chased you all the way to Xinjiang the other day."

In Yue Jing's circle, there is no shortage of gossip, but there is also a great lack of gossip. The level of gossip is no less than that of a famous British tabloid. Whatever happens in a family can be discussed for a long time. People in Beijing are also bold. Stories about certain actresses and high-ranking officials all come from these circles.

"It's nothing, he just has some things he wants to ask me." Zhuang Rui didn't want to say more about his family matters.

"Ouyang Jun, how come you even know that womanizer?" Miao Feifei looked at Zhuang Rui with some hostility.

"I don't know him, he's my second brother's friend," Zhuang Rui quickly distanced himself from the relationship.

"It's just a meal, what's the big deal? Are you coming or not?" Yue Jing was getting a little embarrassed and angry at Miao Feifei's gaze.

"Go, why wouldn't you go? If you dare to do anything dirty, I'll take you all to the station." After returning to Beijing, Officer Miao resumed his work in criminal investigation, and his tone was unusually arrogant.

The place where Ouyang Jun treated them to dinner was still his club, but this time the treatment was better than last time, and Zhuang Rui and the others went directly into Building No. 1.

Chapter 277 Flies

The clubhouse opened by Ouyang Jun is relatively formal and low-key, without any of the shady dealings. Its existence simply provides a place for leisure and relaxation for a fixed circle within Beijing. Behind the clubhouse is a small six-hole golf course.

It's just that this circle is quite small, so small that most people in the world don't even know that such a place exists in Beijing.

It's not just men who come here; there are quite a few female guests as well. The beauticians here are rare to find outside, and they can even hire the personal stylists of big stars. So many socialites like to come here to get their hair done. Miao Feifei has been here before and is quite familiar with the place.

However, Officer Miao has always had a strong sense of justice, and his eyesight seems to be a bit lacking. After breaking up several normal social activities where both parties were willing to participate in the fight for justice, he became less popular here. Of course, Officer Miao himself didn't really care to come here.

There weren't many people in Building 1 at the moment. Usually, it only gets lively here after 10 p.m. Now, there were only six or seven people sitting in two different places chatting.

People come here to relax, and no one is dressed in suits and ties despite the hot weather. However, even the simple casual clothes are quite expensive and look very classy. When Zhuang Rui and his group came in, they immediately attracted everyone's attention.

Yue Jing and Miao Feifei were dressed appropriately, but Zhuang Rui's outfit was rather eye-catching. The edges of the two ripped holes in his jeans revealed fuzzy threads, making it clear that they were genuinely worn out and not something he had cut himself to be fashionable. Coupled with his hair, which hadn't been trimmed for over a month, it drew everyone's attention.

However, the people who come here have high standards and a lot of experience. Although they are somewhat disapproving of Zhuang Rui's attire, no one goes up to provoke him or do anything ridiculous. Besides, most people know the Miao family's little girl, so why bother making a fool of themselves? I heard that last year, a certain young master was beaten up by her here and lost face, so he had no choice but to leave the capital.

"Oh my, isn't this Sister Miao? I heard you went to work at Zhonghai a while ago. What brings you back? Did you beat someone up again there?"

Just because men don't want to mess with Miao Feifei doesn't mean women are afraid of her too. Just as Zhuang Rui and his two companions stepped into Building No. 1 and were about to look for Ouyang Jun, a woman walked over with a glass of red wine. Although she was greeting Miao Feifei, the tension between them was palpable.

Miao Feifei was not wearing her police uniform today, which was unusual for Zhang Xinyu. It took Zhang Xinyu several glances to recognize her. The resentment that had been building up for more than a year suddenly surged into her heart.

Zhang Xinyu's grandfather also lived through the war years, but he didn't survive those turbulent ten years. After the reform and opening up, the family switched from politics to business. With some connections left over from the past, they were quite successful in the business world. Zhang Xinyu showed her business talent at a very young age, opened several top-notch beauty salons, and was a socialite in Beijing. With the connections left over from her elders, she was naturally qualified to enter Building No. 1.

Zhang Xinyu's purpose in coming to this club was naturally different from that of those female celebrities. Doing business requires connections, and this is the best place to socialize. Of course, if there are men she finds attractive, there's nothing wrong with hooking up with a rich guy. These days, no one is a virtuous woman, and none of the men who come here are saints. Everyone is just playing along.

However, last year, Zhang Xinyu was truly humiliated by Miao Feifei. At that time, Zhang Xinyu had just met the son of a minister who had been newly transferred to Beijing and was preparing to get to know him better when she ran into Miao Feifei.

The minister's son was new to Beijing and didn't know the complexities of the city. He spoke carelessly and was severely beaten by Miao Feifei, who also scolded Zhang Xinyu, almost calling her a high-class socialite.

Zhang Xinyu, always concerned with her reputation, couldn't swallow this insult. However, Officer Miao was subsequently transferred out of Beijing, leaving her powerless. She couldn't very well go and reason with Officer Miao's elders; she didn't have the authority. Besides, she knew that Miao Feifei never relied on her family's elders; otherwise, Zhang Xinyu wouldn't have dared to cause trouble for Miao Feifei.

"Where I go is none of your business."

Miao Feifei glanced at Zhang Xinyu, a look of disdain on her face. The woman in front of her, who was covered in several pieces of cloth on her front and back, was, to put it nicely, a socialite, but to put it bluntly, a prostitute. Miao Feifei despised this kind of woman the most.

"Sister, I'm just concerned about you. Girls should be gentler, otherwise they'll easily scare men away. Hey, Feifei, you really have good taste. Your friend has quite a personality."

Zhang Xinyu didn't dare to provoke Miao Feifei too much. This girl had a fiery temper, and if she was pushed too far, she might even bring people to smash up her shop. She glanced at Zhuang Rui and couldn't help but look at him for a moment before extending her hand and saying, "Hello, my name is Zhang Xinyu. May I ask your name?"

Zhang Xinyu was almost obsessed with fashion. She could tell at a glance that Zhuang Rui's clothes were all brand-name except for his sneakers, which were worth three or five hundred yuan. She felt

contemptuous. However, seeing that Zhuang Rui was walking in the middle of the three and did not seem to be Miao Feifei and Yue Xiaoliu's follower, she, who had been in the business world, did not show it on her face. Instead, she wanted to find out more about Zhuang Rui.

"Second brother, shouldn't this invitation to dinner show some sincerity? We're all here, but the host still hasn't shown up..."

Zhuang Rui seemed not to see Zhang Xinyu's outstretched hand, and instead turned to talk to Yue Jing. Miao Feifei was his friend, so Zhuang Rui naturally sided with her. As for the woman in front of him, although she was pretty, judging from her clothes, her private life was probably similar to that of a public bus, or at most a slightly more upscale Mercedes-Benz.

"I'll give him a call; he should be here by now."

Yue Jing was also very dissatisfied with Zhang Xinyu. "You're just a businessman, and your ancestors are all gone. How dare you be so arrogant as a woman?" Most importantly, Yue Jing's elders were still in their seats, yet they were ignored just now. This was the most unbearable thing for him. So Yue Xiaoliu continued talking to Zhuang Rui, completely ignoring Zhang Xinyu.

"You...you all..."

Zhang Xinyu's outstretched hand froze in mid-air, hardly believing her ears. She hadn't expected to be ignored by the man in front of her. Her body trembled with anger, and even the top-quality whitening cream on her face couldn't hide her blushing face from shame.

Zhang Xinyu could accept Yue Xiaoliu's rudeness, after all, he had the confidence to do so. However, being ignored by Zhuang Rui in front of everyone made Zhang Xinyu furious and ashamed. She was certain that there was no such person as Zhuang Rui in the capital. Zhang Xinyu's face turned from white to red, and her high breasts trembled with excitement.

"Calm down, calm down..."

Zhang Xinyu kept reminding herself that others were clearly ignoring her, and no matter how she responded, she had already lost face today. However, she was too angry to calm down, and Zhang Xinyu

couldn't help but point at Zhuang Rui and say, "How could someone like you come in here? You have no manners at all. Are you a gigolo?"

"What did you say?"

Zhuang Rui suddenly raised his head, his eyes, which had been hidden by his hair, staring intently at Zhang Xinyu.

If you say Zhuang Rui is a kept man, he might laugh it off, but if you say he's ill-mannered, that's an insult to his mother, and that's something Zhuang Rui can't tolerate no matter what.

"Apologize!"

A cold glint flashed in Zhuang Rui's eyes. He took a step forward, his eyes still fixed on Zhang Xinyu.

"Security, security! What's going on? You're letting just anyone in. Look, this guy is even trying to hit me."

Zhang Xinyu took a step back, startled by Zhuang Rui's gaze. She hadn't expected this ordinary-looking man to have such sharp eyes, as if he could pierce through her body—not in the way of piercing through her clothes, of course.

As soon as Zhang Xinyu shouted, two men in black suits walked in from outside the door.

"Sir, please do not cause trouble here."

Two men in black suits quickly stepped between Zhuang Rui and Zhang Xinyu, separating them. They didn't know Zhuang Rui, but they were very familiar with Zhang Xinyu, a regular customer here, and their words were somewhat biased towards her.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the two people in front of him and said in a deep voice, "Make her apologize..."

"What, you want to make a move?"

Miao Feifei, worried that Zhuang Rui would be taken advantage of, also came over, but her high heels and dress today weren't really suitable for a fight.

Seeing Miao Feifei's eager expression, Zhuang Rui laughed, but then felt a little bored. He turned to Yue Jing and said, "Second Brother, let's go. We can skip this meal. You guys pick a place, and I'll treat you."

"You poor wretch, this isn't a place you can afford to eat. Go back and eat at a roadside stall..."

Seeing the two security guards standing beside her, Zhang Xinyu felt much more at ease and couldn't help but make a few sarcastic remarks about Zhuang Rui.

"you....."

Miao Feifei was about to turn around in anger, but Zhuang Rui stopped her and said, "There are a lot of flies in summer, don't bother with her. Let's go, finding a place to fill our stomachs is the important thing." His voice wasn't loud, but it reached the ears of everyone in the room.

"Tell Ouyang Jun that I've been here. If he wants to see me, he can come find me himself."

Zhuang Rui then raised his voice and said to the two men in black suits, "I'm fed up with this kind of place. Everyone is wearing a mask and acting all superior."

Zhuang Rui's words made Zhang Xinyu, who was about to chase after him to argue further, stop in her tracks. She was a regular customer here and naturally knew that Ouyang Jun was the owner. His background and influence were not something a businesswoman with a little bit of resources and looks like her could afford to offend.

Chapter 278 Passing on a Message

"Ouyang Jun's guest?"

Everyone in the room had the same question in their minds. It wasn't surprising that this person knew Ouyang Jun; after all, everyone has a few relatives who aren't doing so well. But the way Zhuang Rui spoke, as if Ouyang Jun had been eagerly seeking him out, was what made people curious.

Those who can enter Building No. 1 all have backgrounds no less impressive than Ouyang Jun's. Among the six or seven people here, two are even the children of the core members. They all look at Zhuang Rui's background with curiosity, wondering about his origins.

Some friends might say that Zhang Xinyu's family doesn't have much influence in politics and she's a businesswoman, so how could she get into Building No. 1? It's not surprising. Her elders have connections, she's rich, and she's beautiful. It's normal for her to be able to get into this circle. Women have privileges these days.

Needless to say, Zhang Xinyu stood there awkwardly. She had come so early today because she wanted to ask Ouyang Jun for a favor, but she hadn't expected to offend his guest before even meeting the person in question. Ouyang Jun wasn't exactly an easy person to talk to.

The two security guards in black suits were also at a loss. They had driven away their boss's friend, so how could they expect to get away with it? For a moment, they didn't know whether to call Zhuang Rui back. Their gazes toward Zhang Xinyu also became somewhat unfriendly. If it weren't for this woman, how could they have offended Zhuang Rui?

"Yue Xiaoliu, what's wrong? Where are you going?"

Just as Yue Jing opened the door to leave, Ouyang Jun walked in. Seeing Yue Jing's somewhat unfriendly expression, he asked curiously.

"Fourth Brother, the water here is too deep. Let's go eat somewhere else."

Yue Xiaoliu was also holding back a lot of anger today. He was a low-key guy, which was his basic principle. But being ignored by Zhang Xinyu, a social butterfly, made him feel very embarrassed. So when he spoke to Ouyang Jun, he wasn't very polite.

"What's going on? Zhuang Rui, don't go yet..."

Ouyang Jun then noticed Zhuang Rui behind Yue Jing. Without even greeting him, he beckoned over the two men in black suits in the room.

Before Ouyang Jun could even ask what had happened, Miao Feifei jumped out from behind Zhuang Rui and pointed at Ouyang Jun without any mercy, saying, "Ouyang Ke, this place of yours is really boring, and the people who come here have no manners."

Well, seeing Miao Feifei, and then glancing at Zhang Xinyu standing in the arena with an unyielding expression, Ouyang Jun immediately understood what had happened.

"Little aunt, my name is Ouyang Jun, not Ouyang Ke. Give me some face and stop making trouble. Tomorrow, your fourth brother will send you a nice car."

Ouyang Jun also had a headache with Miao Feifei. The two families had a very good relationship and were allies on some level. He really didn't dare to offend this little girl. Last time, after that incident, he was summoned by his father and given a good scolding.

He just couldn't understand how this girl got involved with Zhuang Rui. After glancing at Yue Xiaoliu, he could only assume that she had come with Yue Xiaoliu.

"She didn't offend me, why do you need my face? That woman said Zhuang Rui was ill-mannered. Oh, sorry, Zhuang Rui, I didn't say that. I'm just repeating it."

Miao Feifei stuck out her tongue at Zhuang Rui shyly, then ignored Ouyang Jun and instead grabbed Xu, the big star behind him, saying, "Sister Xu, your skin is getting better and better, so fair." Not content with just saying it, Miao Feifei also pinched the big star's face.

"Find a man to pamper you, and your skin will naturally improve." Xu, the big star, was no ordinary person; with just a few words, he made Miao Feifei blush. The two women playfully bickered and went to the side to whisper amongst themselves.

"Fourth Brother, we'll talk about this later. We're leaving now. Officer Miao, let's go. You really want to stay here for dinner?"

Zhuang Rui greeted Ouyang Jun in a lukewarm manner, calling out "Miao Feifei." He assumed Ouyang Jun would definitely protect that woman's reputation.

"No, it's not you who should leave, Zhang Xinyu. Mr. Zhuang is my friend. I don't think this place is suitable for you today. Please go back first."

Ouyang Jun's behavior surprised everyone present. They had thought that Ouyang Jun would go with the flow and let those people leave first to ease the awkwardness in the room. Who knew that Ouyang Jun would state his position right away? This didn't seem to be the usual slick Ouyang Gongzi's style.

Actually, Ouyang Jun had already given Zhang Xinyu face by saying those words. What he heard from Miao Feifei earlier had enraged him. Zhuang Rui's lack of manners was an insult to the Ouyang family. If this weren't in his own club, Ouyang Jun would have gone up and slapped her.

Yesterday, Ouyang Jun mustered up his courage and asked several old men. According to them, if nothing unexpected happened, Zhuang Rui was Ouyang Jun's cousin, and Zhuang Rui's mother was his aunt. Ouyang Zhenwu didn't say what exactly happened, but this answer was enough to make Ouyang Jun's resentment towards Zhuang Rui disappear.

"I was wrong today, and I offended you in any way. I'll apologize to Fourth Brother another day..."

Zhang Xinyu hadn't expected that Ouyang Jun was openly protecting Zhuang Rui. Her face turned pale as she gave a brief explanation. When Ouyang Jun waved at her dismissively, her eyes reddened, and she lowered her head and walked out.

Ouyang Jun didn't take Zhang Xinyu seriously at all. Although Zhuang Rui didn't know about their relationship, Zhang Xinyu was not someone who could be easily insulted.

"Zhuang Rui, come in. Let's eat first. I'll talk to you later if I need anything..." Ouyang Jun patted Zhuang Rui on the shoulder and led the way inside.

Zhuang Rui stood at the door for a moment, then turned around and followed him inside. In any case, Ouyang Jun had already given him face today, and if he insisted on leaving, it would be a bit too disrespectful to Ouyang Jun.

"Si'er, I haven't eaten either. Shall we eat together tonight?"

A middle-aged man wearing glasses sat in the room and greeted Ouyang Jun in a grand manner, but it was probably just a pretense that he wanted to eat; he was really curious about Zhuang Rui's identity.

"Brother Wu, I have some personal business to attend to today. Let's do it another day, another day we'll all get together."

Ouyang Jun politely declined with a smile. He was still curious. Judging from the conversation between Zhuang Rui and Miao Feifei, the two were obviously familiar with each other. However, given Zhuang Rui's status, it seemed that he had never been able to come into contact with someone of Miao Feifei's level before.

The group left the hall and entered a private room on the second floor. The floor of the room was covered with a red carpet, and in the center was a large round table with a diameter of more than two meters. Some platters of cold dishes had already been set out. Ouyang Jun invited the group to sit down. He noticed that Miao Feifei did not sit next to the big star, but instead sat next to Zhuang Rui, which made him even more curious about his little cousin.

Ouyang Jun whispered a few words to Xu Damingxing, who then stood up and sat down in a chair next to Miao Feifei. She had been instructed by Ouyang Jun to find out how Miao Feifei and Zhuang Rui had gotten to know each other.

The meal proceeded uneventfully. Although Zhuang Rui had never tried many of the dishes before, his mind was elsewhere. With Miao Feifei and Yue Xiaoliu present, Ouyang Jun found it difficult to say certain things. Even Miao Feifei noticed something was amiss. Half an hour later, the banquet ended.

Seeing that no one was touching their chopsticks, Ouyang Jun stood up and called to the big star, "Take Xiao Liu and Fei Fei downstairs to play. Zhuang Rui and I have something to discuss..."

"Let's go to my office to talk."

Zhuang Rui nodded, and the two went up to the third floor. Ouyang Jun opened a door to a room.

"Fourth Brother, you still like playing with this kind of thing?"

As soon as Zhuang Rui entered the room, his eyes were drawn to a large screen placed in the center of the room.

This is a twelve-panel rosewood screen, about two meters high. In the center of each panel is inlaid a golden phoenix about fifty centimeters long. Although it is carved from bluish-white jade, all twelve phoenixes are carved from a single piece of material, making them quite valuable. Moreover, the value of these large-leaf sandalwood pieces alone is in the tens of millions.

"People gave me this office because they thought it looked a bit empty, but I know nothing about these things..."

Ouyang Jun waved his hand modestly, but his face was full of pride. This screen was originally made by an official stationed in Yunnan at the end of the Qing Dynasty, who intended to present it to Empress Dowager Cixi.

However, this item was very time-consuming to make. By the time it was completed after several years, Empress Dowager Cixi had already passed away. Later, during the chaos of warlordism, this screen was revealed to the public. Coincidentally, the person who collected this screen needed something from Ouyang Jun, so he used this item as a stepping stone.

"The item is not bad, but it's a bit recent and the materials are average. However, for such a large piece, it can be worth thirty to fifty million." Zhuang Rui looked it over and casually gave his evaluation.

"You've also studied this? Oh right, I forgot you used to work at a pawnshop. I'll introduce you to that guy in a few days; he's got quite a collection of good stuff."

Ouyang Jun had already found out everything about Zhuang Rui's past, but he didn't know about Zhuang Rui's later experiences, nor did he know that his younger cousin was no less wealthy than him.

"Alright, Fourth Brother, just tell me who wants to see me..."

There were only the two of them in the room, and Zhuang Rui didn't want to beat around the bush, so he changed the subject and asked directly.

"It's my father. He said your mother, who might be my aunt, is someone he wants to meet..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was about to speak, Ouyang Jun waved his hand and continued, "Don't ask me what happened. I don't know a thing. The older generation never mentions this. If you want to know the reason, you'll have to meet my old man tomorrow. I'm just a messenger..."

After Ouyang Jun finished speaking, he looked at Zhuang Rui, also wanting to know what had happened before.

"Okay, I'll go!"

Zhuang Rui remained silent for a while, then nodded heavily. He also wanted to know what the reason was that his mother had not had any contact with her family for decades.

Chapter 279 Care

"Zhuang...brother, listen to your fourth brother. Any conflicts or difficulties the elders have are none of our business. If your mother is my aunt, then you're my cousin. We should visit each other more often and not be so distant.

When Zhuang Rui nodded in agreement to meet his father, Ouyang Jun was very happy. It wasn't that he had completed his mission, but rather that he was the youngest in his generation, and now that he had a younger brother, he wouldn't have to be called the youngest at family gatherings anymore.

"Yes, I understand, Fourth Brother, but there are some things I still need to consult Mother about..."

Zhuang Rui saw that Ouyang Jun's attitude was very sincere, and after these two meetings, he felt that Ouyang Jun did not have the habits of those spoiled brats. His words had also become much warmer. Zhuang Rui was very happy that his family of three had grown up and now he had an older cousin.

Ouyang Jun nodded and said, "That's only right. I'm busy preparing to film a few movies right now, so I don't have time for a while. Otherwise, I would have gone back to Pengcheng with you to see my aunt. By the way, brother, I have a movie that's about to start filming, but I haven't chosen a producer yet. How about you come and help me out?"

"Producer? I'll do that?"

Zhuang Rui was bewildered by Ouyang Jun's wildly imaginative ideas. He rarely went to the cinema, and knew absolutely nothing about the film industry. Asking him to be a producer was just a joke.

"Fourth Brother, I can't do this, no, no..." Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment, and quickly declined.

Upon hearing this, Ouyang Jun curled his lip and said nonchalantly, "What can't you do? You studied finance, so you just need to manage the investors' money. I am the investor, so you're basically managing the money for me."

Bro, let me tell you, producers have a lot of power. Even directors have to listen to you, not to mention the actors. If you tell them to go east, they won't dare go west; if you tell them to do something else... In short, this job is in high demand.

Ouyang Jun winked at Zhuang Rui ambiguously, thinking that his younger cousin looked quite inexperienced and would definitely be very popular with the female celebrities on set.

In fact, the job of a producer is not as simple as Ouyang Jun said. A producer must understand film art creation, know audience psychology and market information, be good at raising funds, and be familiar with business management.

Most films nowadays are commercial films, and the producer is the master of a film. They have the right to decide everything about making a film, including what kind of script to use, hiring directors,

cinematographers, actors, and sending a film supervisor to manage the production funds, review the shooting budget, and control the entire filming process.

After the film is completed, the producer still needs to process the film, promote and market it. Therefore, the producer of a film has already determined the success or failure of the film in advance.

In regions where commercial films are thriving, many experienced and successful producers can decide the direction and style of a film, even surpassing the director to become the dominant force in the film's content, making them the most powerful person in the filmmaking process.

The reason Ouyang Jun chose Zhuang Rui as the producer was largely to take care of his younger cousin. Judging from Zhuang Rui's clothes and resume, his family background couldn't be considered wealthy.

Ouyang Jun also wanted to help Zhuang Rui out. As long as he became the producer, he could earn several hundred thousand yuan from each film he made.

As for the responsibilities that a producer needs to fulfill, we can simply find an experienced assistant producer.

"Forget it, Fourth Brother, please spare me. I don't know how to do that kind of work and I have no interest in it. If you want to help me, just introduce me to the person who gave you this screen when you have time."

Zhuang Rui knew Ouyang Jun meant well, but he had absolutely no interest in that line of work. Besides, he didn't care about the money; with that free time, he could easily earn more by finding an acquaintance to take him for a stroll around Liulichang.

"Whatever you want. How many more days can you stay in the capital?"

Ouyang Jun didn't force him. Anyway, after acknowledging this cousin, he wouldn't let him suffer any losses. He would just lend him a hand if there was anything that would make money in the future.

Ouyang Jun stood up, took out a pack of cigarettes from his executive desk, opened it, handed one to Zhuang Rui, and after thinking for a moment, stuffed the entire pack into Zhuang Rui's hand.

"Let's talk about it next time. I'll be going back to Pengcheng in a few days. Fourth Brother, what kind of cigarettes are these?"

Zhuang Rui took the cigarette and glanced at it. Goodness, the filter tip took up two-thirds of the cigarette, and there was a panda logo on it. Looking at the packaging of the cigarette box, it was white with no pictures or designs. He took out a lighter, lit it, and took a puff. The taste was quite unusual, a faint flavor that invigorated him.

"Not bad, right? Giant panda cigarettes are reserved for ministerial-level leaders and above; even city-level leaders aren't eligible to smoke them..."

Even ministerial-level leaders don't have access to cigarettes that are readily available. He had to beg his father for this pack of cigarettes. Ouyang Jun felt that he had never felt superior to his younger cousin, but now a single cigarette had stunned him, and he couldn't help but feel a little smug.

Seeing his cousin's expression, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but find it amusing. He simply stood up, took the special cigarette pack in his hand, and said, "Fourth Brother, give me these cigarettes. I can show them off when I get back."

"That won't do. I can only give you half at most. Fine, I'll give you six packs."

Ouyang Jun was surprised that Zhuang Rui was going to take all his stock. He quickly snatched it away, and with a pained expression, he took out four packages from it. After thinking for a moment, he took out another package and placed it on the table.

"Hehe, then six packs it is. I'll give you something nice to give you when I have the chance."

Zhuang Rui smiled and went deeper down. He felt that his cousin was a good person, without any airs. Actually, it depends on the person. If it were one of those people who came to ask for favors, Young Master Ouyang would have acted like a big shot.

"Brother, wait a minute, let me call the old man. If he's home, let's go over now."

Ouyang Jun dared not let Zhuang Rui stay here any longer. He had many good things in his room, and if Zhuang Rui took a fancy to that bottle of 1916 Lafite, he would truly be devastated.

Ouyang Jun made a phone call in front of Zhuang Rui, briefly explained the situation on the phone, said "uh-huh" a few times, and then hung up. After checking the time on his phone, he said to Zhuang Rui, "The old man is about to go home. Let's go over there too. We'll be home around the same time."

"Alright, if I can resolve this today, I'll head back to Pengcheng tomorrow."

Zhuang Rui nodded, looked around, found an empty gift box, and put the packs of cigarettes inside. Zhuang Rui acted very naturally, as if he were at home, which made Ouyang Jun's eyes twitch. This little cousin of his really doesn't treat him like an outsider.

"Let's go, don't keep the old man waiting."

Ouyang Jun quickly opened the door. He was afraid that if Zhuang Rui stayed any longer, he might take a fancy to something else in the room, which he had collected with great effort. He could only feel at ease if he asked Zhuang Rui to leave as soon as possible.

Finding Miao Feifei chatting with the big star, Zhuang Rui said somewhat apologetically, "Officer Miao, I don't have time to keep you company today, I have some things to take care of..."

"It's okay, I'll make an appointment with you another day."

Miao Feifei was very understanding. She pulled Yue Xiaoliu along, indicating that he should take her home. Poor Yue Jing rarely came to Building No. 1. He was chatting enthusiastically with that female celebrity who was known for her pure image. He was quite depressed and walked towards the lobby on the first floor with Zhuang Rui and the others.

It was already around 10 p.m., and there were more people on the first floor. As soon as the group came downstairs, they saw seven or eight people gathered together, talking loudly about something.

Just as Zhuang Rui stepped downstairs, a gap suddenly appeared in the crowd, and a golden shadow pounced on him.

"Golden Lion, come back..."

A familiar voice rang out, but the golden figure did not obey its master's command. Instead, it pounced on Zhuang Rui and stuck out its tongue to kiss him affectionately.

"Holy crap, that scared me to death! I thought this guy had gone crazy."

Following the sound, Song Jun parted the crowd and walked over with a dog leash in his hand. When he saw Zhuang Rui playing with the golden lion, he couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. If the golden lion had bitten someone here, even with his background, it would have been difficult to resolve the situation.

"You brat, what are you doing here?" Song Jun put the golden lion on a leash and pulled it to his side before he remembered that Zhuang Rui was here.

"Brother Song, you...you know each other too?"

Ouyang Jun found that his brain was becoming increasingly inadequate; Zhuang Rui's range of characters was far too wide.

It goes without saying that Zhuang Rui and Yue Xiaoliu are classmates, and it's understandable that he met Miao Feifei in Zhonghai. But Song Jun and these two are different. Ouyang Jun is very familiar with Song Jun. He debuted more than ten years earlier than him, and his influence in the business world is unmatched. Moreover, his father is still alive, and he is not to be underestimated in the political arena.

Song Jun glanced at Ouyang Jun and said, "Hmm, Zhuang Rui is your guest? Si'er, this is my little brother, don't you dare bully him."

"How could I dare, Brother Song? I'll find you for tea later and we can have a good chat. I have other things to do today, so I can't make it up to you."

Ouyang Jun gave a wry smile. He was completely outmaneuvered by Zhuang Rui today, and he didn't even know who was bullying whom. His curiosity about Zhuang Rui was growing, and he planned to ask Song Jun about his little cousin's background tomorrow.

"Go ahead and get busy. Brother Zhuang, stay and play for a while. Let me tell you, this Tibetan Mastiff of mine was found by Brother Zhuang from Tibet. He has quite a few purebred Tibetan Mastiffs there, and they can have puppies this year. If you need any, you can reserve them in advance."

Song Jun casually waved to Ouyang Jun, but then pulled Zhuang Rui aside and started promoting his mastiff kennel.

Chapter 280 Past Events

Although Ouyang Jun was curious about Zhuang Rui's dog kennel, now was not the time for stories. He quickly said, "Brother Song, let's talk about this later. Zhuang Rui has some things to take care of with me."

Song Jun turned to Zhuang Rui and asked, "What time is it? Are you still on business?"

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "Brother Song, there is something I need to take care of. I'll be going to Beijing frequently during this period. We'll have plenty of time to talk later."

After Zhuang Rui finished speaking, he pulled Song Jun aside and took a few steps, whispering, "Brother Song, I don't really like dealing with these people. I'll have Da Chuan come to Beijing later and leave this to him. By the way, don't tell these people about my jade gambling."

Zhuang Rui really didn't like this circle. Besides, these people were very knowledgeable. If someone could see something from his rise to power and start keeping an eye on him, that would be quite troublesome.

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"You're so low-key, you don't seem like a young man in his twenties at all. Alright, I got it, you can go now."

Song Jun nodded, without asking Zhuang Rui what he was going to do. Having been in this circle for a long time, he naturally knew what he should ask about and what he shouldn't.

...

"Brother, what brings you to Tibetan Mastiffs? Oh, right, I forgot who told me the other day, but someone owns a Tibetan Mastiff worth forty or fifty million."

As Ouyang Jun drove, he casually asked Zhuang Rui, "Judging from Song Jun's attitude towards Zhuang Rui, Zhuang Rui shouldn't be in such a poor state. Even a little bit of money from Song Jun could make Zhuang Rui a fortune."

"It's something I did with my classmates. I don't manage anything; I just own a small share."

Zhuang Rui smiled, naturally not saying that the snow mastiff was his, but after hearing Ouyang Jun mention it, he really missed the white lion.

Although Zhuang Rui had asked Zhuang Min to put the phone to Bai Shi's ear to say a few words these past few days, Bai Shi had been inseparable from him for more than half a year, and he hadn't seen him for more than a month, so he was really not used to it.

"If you have any purebred mastiffs, please reserve one for me. Money is no object."

Ouyang Jun was quite envious when he saw Song Jun's Tibetan Mastiff. It would be nice to keep one at the club.

"Yes, they can mate by the end of today. There will be mastiffs next year, and I'll save one for you then."

Zhuang Rui received a call from Liu Chuan yesterday, saying that at the Tibetan Mastiff exchange meeting in Shanxi, Renqing Cuomu's Golden Lion King mastiff shone brightly, not only winning the title of King of Mastiffs but also signing more than a dozen breeding contracts.

Liu Chuan, that kid, was asking for an exorbitant price, charging at least 200,000 yuan per breeding session. Even so, many mastiff farms were eager to arrange breeding, and before the puppies were even born, the farms had already made millions in profit.

"By the way, let me tell you about our family situation. My grandparents, who are your maternal grandparents, are still alive. It's just that my grandfather's health isn't very good. He'll be turning ninety in a few months, and I don't know if he'll make it to that time."

"I have two uncles who are currently working in other cities, and three cousins who are also pursuing official careers and are not in Beijing. Oh, and you also have two older cousins, but they've been married for seven or eight years and rarely come to Beijing." Ouyang Jun felt it was necessary to explain his family structure to Zhuang Rui.

"Your grandfather's name is Ouyang Gang?"

Zhuang Rui asked in a deep voice. He had a feeling that his mother's experiences over the years were inseparable from this resounding name. Although he was his maternal grandfather and a respected founding father, Zhuang Rui still addressed him by his first name.

"Yes," Ouyang Jun replied, glancing thoughtfully at Zhuang Rui.

As the two were talking, the car entered the city. After driving for another half hour, the car entered the entrance of a residential area. The guards at the gate were two armed police officers. After carefully checking Ouyang Jun and Zhuang Rui's documents, they allowed them to pass.

"More than twenty ministerial-level officials live here, so the inspection is more thorough. Look, this is where Miao's father lives, but I heard that the girl doesn't live here."

This community consists of individual villas, surrounded by lush greenery. Although the houses are somewhat old, the environment is excellent and exceptionally quiet.

Ouyang Jun parked his car in front of a small building. Seeing that there were lights on in the rooms inside, he didn't park the car in the garage. Instead, he got out of the car and led Zhuang Rui into the building.

Upon entering, one is greeted by the living room, brightly lit. An elderly man in his fifties sits on the sofa, wearing glasses and reading documents. Opposite him sits a man in his thirties, who nods to Ouyang Jun as he enters.

"Brother Wang, you're here too. Have you eaten yet?"

Ouyang Jun greeted the man in a rather loud voice, causing Ouyang Zhenwu, who was focused on reading documents, to look up. Upon seeing Zhuang Rui behind Ouyang Jun, he immediately threw the documents in his hand onto the coffee table and stood up as well.

"Xiao Wang, that's enough for today. You can go home now."

Ouyang Zhenwu didn't speak to Zhuang Rui, but instead sent his secretary away first; it wasn't good for outsiders to know about this family matter.

"Okay, I'll pick you up on time tomorrow."

Wang Yu agreed, stood up and walked out. As he left, he glanced at Zhuang Rui and felt a little strange. His boss was most opposed to Ouyang Jun bringing people home. Usually, Ouyang Jun would go through him first if he had anything to do. Today, he brought people home without informing him. This was a bit unusual.

Regardless of Wang Da's mood, after he left, Ouyang Zhenwu took a few quick steps forward, sized up Zhuang Rui for a while, and muttered to himself, "He looks just like... just like my little sister..."

"Dad, let him sit down first. We can talk things over slowly." Ouyang Jun rarely saw the old man lose his composure, so he quickly tried to smooth things over.

"Yes, child, come with me to the study. Xiao Jun, pour two cups of tea."

Ouyang Zhenwu regained his composure, waved to Zhuang Rui, and turned to walk towards the study.

"Please sit down and order whatever you like. Make yourself at home."

Upon entering the study, Ouyang Zhenwu noticed that Zhuang Rui seemed somewhat reserved. He assumed that his official demeanor had intimidated him, and his expression became even more amiable.

"Um."

Zhuang Rui nodded and sat down opposite Ouyang Zhenwu. He wasn't being reserved, but rather he was excited about the history about his mother that was about to be revealed.

"Xiao Jun, the tea is fine here, you can go out now." After seeing Zhuang Rui sit down, Ouyang Zhenwu said to Ouyang Jun, who brought in the tea.

"What? I'm going out? Dad, you're kicking me while I'm down!"

Ouyang Jun had finally managed to invite Zhuang Rui to his home, but the old man wouldn't let him listen in, which immediately made him angry, and he started shouting loudly.

"Get out. You need to work on your temper..."

Although Ouyang Zhenwu's voice was not loud, it was full of authority. Ouyang Jun shuddered and obediently retreated.

"Your name is Zhuang Rui, and your mother's name is Ouyang Wan, right? Your mother may not have mentioned to you that you have an uncle like me. Sigh, it was because we brothers didn't dare to stand up for you back then that you suffered for so many years."

Ouyang Zhenwu didn't beat around the bush with Zhuang Rui and directly revealed his identity. Seeing Zhuang Rui's attire, he felt a little bitter. It seemed that his younger sister's family wasn't living a very good life.

“Uncle Ouyang, please tell us what happened back then. We didn't have a hard life. Apart from Mother being in a bad mood sometimes, we were happy most of the time.”

Zhuang Rui hesitated for a moment, but still couldn't bring himself to call him "uncle." After all, he had been used to living with his mother and sister for more than 20 years, and the sudden appearance of such an elder was a bit hard for Zhuang Rui to accept.

"This is all because your grandfather was too stubborn, and your little sister's personality is most like his. Otherwise, things wouldn't have come to this. That was more than thirty years ago, when your mother had just turned nineteen..."

As Ouyang Zhenwu recounts his experiences, a secret of the Ouyang family, which had been buried for over thirty years, is revealed once again.

The story is quite cliché. It takes place during a particularly chaotic period in the country. A great man made a statement that was misinterpreted by those below, leading to a large number of veteran cadres or founding heroes being sent to local areas for labor reform.

At that time, Ouyang Gang was sent down to a rural area in Pengcheng to participate in labor reform, while Zhuang Rui's maternal grandmother was also a women cadre and was sent down to a place in Fujian. Because the capital was too chaotic at that time, her sons and husbands had all gone to other places, so Ouyang Gang insisted on taking his most beloved youngest daughter with him.

Coincidentally, Zhuang Rui's grandfather, also a "stinking intellectual," was sent down to that rural area and received even worse treatment than Ouyang Gang. He was imprisoned in a cowshed. The two were in the same boat and became friends over time.

Although Zhuang Rui's father was also implicated, he fared better off. He often secretly went to the countryside to visit his father, who was imprisoned in a cowshed, and brought him some food. After doing this many times, he became friends with Ouyang Wan.

Later, Ouyang Gang felt that the rural environment was too harsh and not suitable for a girl's life, so he asked Ouyang Wan to stay at Zhuang Rui's old house in the city. However, he did not expect that his decision would cause Ouyang Wan and Zhuang Rui's father to develop feelings for each other and secretly get together.

Zhuang Rui's grandfather didn't make it through those days and passed away in the third year after being imprisoned in the cowshed. After five years in the countryside, Ouyang Gang was recalled to Beijing. Just as he was about to leave with his daughter, he discovered that his most beloved daughter had secretly married Zhuang Rui's father.

This enraged Ouyang Gang. You see, he had betrothed his daughter to the son of one of his old comrades when she was young. If that old comrade were still alive, this matter would be easy to resolve. After a few drinks, he would at most lower his head and admit his mistake.

However, Ouyang Gang's old comrade-in-arms passed away two years ago, and the descendants are not living well. If he breaks off the engagement now, others will think that he is a snob and kicks someone when they are down, and that he looks down on this marriage. This is absolutely unacceptable to Ouyang Gang, who has been a man of his word and a veteran of many battles.

At that time, Zhuang Rui's older sister had not yet been born. Enraged, Ouyang Gang ordered his daughter to return to Beijing with him. However, Ouyang Wan was gentle on the outside but strong on the inside. Once she made up her mind, no one could change it. She insisted that she was right and had not done anything wrong. Even after her father said that he would disown her if she did not return to Beijing, Ouyang Wan still stayed in Pengcheng.

After returning to Beijing, Ouyang Gang was not assigned a job at first. It wasn't until the late 1970s that he was able to start working again. His three sons also returned to Beijing one after another and learned about this incident.

Ouyang Zhenwu's eldest brother, who is also Zhuang Rui's maternal uncle, had the best relationship with Ouyang Wan. He couldn't help but run to Pengcheng to see his sister, only to find that she already had two children, the youngest of whom, Zhuang Rui, was still breastfeeding. He left all the money he had with his sister and returned to Beijing to confront his father.

Who knew that as soon as the matter was mentioned in front of the old man, Ouyang Gang flew into a rage, not even giving his wife any face. After hitting his son with his cane, he fainted on the spot and almost couldn't be saved.

After regaining consciousness, Ouyang Gang told everyone that he had chosen his own path and had to bear the consequences. No one in the family was allowed to contact Ouyang Wan again, or they would be expelled from the family. Faced with the choice between his sister and his father, the brothers gave in.

However, after Zhuang Rui's eldest uncle learned of Zhuang Rui's father's death, he secretly went to Pengcheng again. But the well-informed old man found out and was so angry that he was hospitalized. Moreover, he sent his eldest son to work in Qinghai. From then on, for the sake of the old man's health, the family never dared to contact Ouyang Wan again.

Zhuang Rui's mother was also a stubborn person. Although Ouyang Zhenwu and his brothers tried to help their younger sister through various channels, Ouyang Wan refused. She raised her children alone, including Zhuang Rui and his siblings, and never told anyone about her family background.

"Sigh, my little sister is too stubborn. If she could just humble herself, Grandpa would have brought you all to Beijing long ago."

Xiao Rui, your grandparents have gotten older and their health has deteriorated in recent years. I contacted your younger sister once to ask her to come to Beijing, but she refused. Your grandfather's 90th birthday is in a few months, and I'd like you to persuade her to come. Otherwise, I don't know if we'll have another chance."

Ouyang Zhenwu's words made Zhuang Rui fall into deep thought. In that special era, it was difficult to say who was right and who was wrong. The old man's temper and his mother's stubbornness were among the reasons why the two sides had no contact. Zhuang Rui did not know what his grandfather was thinking now, but he knew that his mother always cared about her parents.

Moreover, the uncles were also helpless in this matter. It wasn't that they didn't want to help their mother, but their stubborn mother refused. The uncles hadn't done anything wrong in this matter.

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui said, "Uncle, I'll go back to Pengcheng tomorrow and persuade Mother to come to Beijing..."