

Golden 28

Chapter Twenty-Eight: An Unexpected Intervention

"I'll offer 150,000..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to agree to the deal, Qin Xuan's icy voice rang out.

Upon hearing this, everyone in the shop turned their attention to Qin Xuanbing. Qin Xuanbing ignored everyone's gazes and simply looked at Zhuang Rui, waiting for his reply. The focus, however, shifted back to Zhuang Rui, the owner of the item. Zhuang Rui, unsure of what the woman was planning, remained silent, and the shop fell silent for a moment.

"Miss, you...you also like to collect these items?"

Grandpa Lü couldn't hold back any longer and asked, his face somewhat unpleasant. In his opinion, this delicate young girl didn't seem like someone in this line of work at all. Although Liu's gourds from Sanhe were rare and their prices had been rising year by year, the 80,000 RMB he had offered was already slightly above the market price. This girl had shouted out a price of 150,000 RMB, which was either a joke or a deliberate attempt to stir up trouble.

"Everyone can make an offer, why can't I? 150,000, Mr. Zhuang, you can consider it..."

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Qin Xuan replied crisply, leaving the final decision to Zhuang Rui with just one simple sentence.

Qin Xuanbing's words, though somewhat harsh, were undeniable. She was right; in business, the highest bidder wins. Since Zhuang Rui wanted to sell, she naturally had the right to buy. However, she hadn't considered that her actions had offended the others and smacked of throwing money around.

Zhuang Rui frowned and pondered for a while before finally speaking, "Miss Qin, this was the first item that Manager Lü took a liking to. He has been looking for this item for a long time. As the saying goes, a gentleman does not take what others love. What do you think...?"

Although there was no explicit refusal, the meaning was clear: if Miss Qin couldn't give a reason, the item would still have to be sold to Manager Lü.

Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Xuanbing was slightly moved. She had been a guest at Zhuang Rui's home and could tell that his family was only of average means. More than 100,000 yuan was already a huge sum of money for an ordinary family in Pengcheng, not to mention how easily he had obtained the gourd from Sanhe Liu, which had increased more than 150 times in a short period of time. She really couldn't understand why Zhuang Rui would refuse.

Another point is that, although Qin Xuanbing has never had everyone go along with her in all her life, being rejected by a young man of similar age is something she has never experienced before. This has made Qin Xuanbing somewhat surprised or uncomfortable, and has also made her a little curious about Zhuang Rui.

What Qin Xuanbing didn't know was that after revealing this, Zhuang Rui was also in a dilemma. It wasn't that he didn't want to earn the extra 70,000 yuan; nobody in this world has too much money to spare. It wasn't that he didn't believe Qin Xuanbing couldn't come up with the 150,000 yuan; given her wealth, she probably didn't even care about those 100,000 yuan.

Zhuang Rui was in a dilemma because Shopkeeper Lü had just stated that he had his eye on the gourd yesterday and hadn't used that to pressure for a lower price. Instead, he had given the most suitable price in the current market, acting with reason and justification. If Zhuang Rui sold the gourd to Qin Xuanbing simply because she offered a higher price, he would definitely offend Old Master Lü and Shopkeeper Song Wang. In that case, not only would he be unable to establish himself in the Pengcheng antique collecting world, but Liu Chuan, who also did business in this market, would likely be implicated.

This outcome did not align with Zhuang Rui's original intention. He had initially agreed to transfer the gourd from Liu of Sanhe, partly because he was short of funds, and partly because he wanted to cultivate good relations with these big names in the Pengcheng art collecting world.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Grandpa Lü and the two bosses, Wang and Song, nodded slightly, their tense expressions easing. They secretly praised Zhuang for his good manners. They were both well-off and didn't care much about a few hundred thousand, but there were occasions where saving face was important. Wang and Song withdrew at 80,000, but Qin Xuanbing's bid of 150,000 was clearly a slap in the face. Naturally, the few people who were still trying to raise the price for this gourd were quite uncomfortable.

Seeing Zhuang Rui's determined expression, which seemed to imply that he wouldn't sell the item to her unless she gave him an explanation, Qin Xuanbing finally spoke up, her delicate lips uttering softly: "My grandfather is from Tianjin. He went to Hong Kong before the liberation and has never returned to the mainland since. I've often heard him mention these things from old Tianjin, and I want to buy them to give to him."

Qin Xuanbing's words stunned Manager Lü and the others. Collecting is all about orderly inheritance and promoting traditional culture. Filial piety is the most important virtue, and Qin Xuanbing's reasoning was very convincing. Moreover, the price she offered also reflected her filial piety towards her grandfather. Filial piety cannot be measured by money, so there was no intention to use money to bribe people. Manager Lü and the others naturally had nothing to say, and this matter could not be blamed on Zhuang Rui. They could only blame their bad luck.

"Manager Lü, what do you think of this..." Zhuang Rui looked at Old Master Lü. Qin Xuanbing's reasons for buying the cricket gourd were sufficient, and he had no reason not to sell it, unless Manager Lü also had a grandfather to offer as a gift, but obviously that was impossible.

"Alright, alright, these days not many young people know how to respect their elders. Little girl, this old man won't fight you for it anymore. Okay, Xiao Zhuang, let's meet at Xiao Song's Jingxuan Teahouse at 10 a.m. tomorrow. We'll take our leave now..."

Old Master Lü was having a rough day, and he was so angry he had nowhere to vent. He didn't want to stay any longer, so he exchanged glances with Boss Song and Boss Wang, and then said goodbye to Zhuang Rui and the others.

As the group bowed and prepared to leave, Zhuang Rui grew anxious and quickly called out, "Manager Lü, gentlemen, ever since I obtained that manuscript, I've developed a bit of an interest in these rare ancient books. Tomorrow, we can't just look at my manuscript, can we? This tea tasting and treasure appraisal can't be too monotonous. Do you gentlemen have any good items you'd like to show me? Would that be alright?"

Zhuang Rui's main intention in readily agreeing to transfer the cricket gourd was to get these leading figures in Pengcheng's collecting circles to share their treasures, so he could take advantage of the situation and see if he could replenish his spiritual energy. However, Qin Xuanbing interfered today, and the outcome was not satisfactory, so Zhuang Rui had no choice but to shamelessly bring it up.

The group exchanged glances and nodded. Although they hadn't managed to acquire the gourd from Sanhe Liu that they'd seen at Zhuang Rui's place today, leaving them slightly disappointed, they still admired Zhuang Rui. At the very least, he was steady, not impetuous, and unmoved by money, which was enough for them to value him.

In today's society, young people in their early twenties are all obsessed with money. Let alone tens of thousands of yuan, they would sell themselves for even a few tens of thousands of yuan. Therefore, Zhuang Rui's qualities are highly regarded by some people who adhere to traditional culture. This is also why Uncle De of the pawnshop treats Zhuang Rui differently.

"Alright, since Xiao Zhuang has made the request, then everyone must not keep anything to themselves tomorrow. Show off any good items you have. You two lads must have hidden quite a few good things, right? You must bring them out tomorrow..." With these words, Grandpa Lü agreed to Zhuang Rui's request.

"But Xiao Zhuang, if I take a fancy to your manuscript tomorrow, you have to give me, this old man, priority."

Old Master Lü's last words as he left the shop stunned Zhuang Rui. As expected, he was shrewd with age; the old man had suffered a loss today, but he was already thinking of making up for it tomorrow.