

## Golden 281

### Chapter 281 Buying the Box (Part 1)

Zhuang Rui stayed at Ouyang Zhenwu's ministerial building that very day. For him, this feeling of kinship was wonderful. Ouyang Zhenwu awkwardly changed his sheets and pillowcases himself, putting on sheets he'd never used before. Lying on the brand-new sheets, looking at the unfamiliar furnishings, Zhuang Rui felt an immense sense of warmth.

When he was young, Zhuang Rui often envied other people's families with many relatives. Every year during the Spring Festival, children of the same age could receive a lot of brand-new lucky money and many clothes to change into. Now, he also feels the warmth of being cared for by his elders. That feeling is really good.

"Uncle, this...this is too much trouble."

Zhuang Rui slept soundly all night. He was woken up early the next morning by Ouyang Zhenwu knocking on the door. When he saw that fried dough sticks and soy milk had been laid out on the dining table outside, Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed. How could he let his elders buy him breakfast?

"You silly child, you said you feel right at home, why are you being so polite? Did you sleep well last night? Eat up, I have to go to work soon. I'll have Xiaojun take you to the airport. Xiaojun, can you book a flight for the morning?"

Ouyang Zhenwu smiled with satisfaction. Although he hadn't talked with Zhuang Rui for long yesterday, he could tell that Zhuang Rui was an obedient and sensible child, much better than his own son.

"Dad, don't worry. In your heart, I can't even do such a small thing?"

Ouyang Jun, who had just come downstairs, said unhappily that he was very hurt by being kicked out of the study by his father yesterday, and his face was still not very good.

"You brat, you're so unreliable. From now on, spend more time with Xiao Rui and stop going out and messing around all day." Ouyang Zhenwu didn't give his son any face at all.

Just then, the doorbell rang. Zhuang Rui quickly put down the fried dough sticks he was holding and rushed to open the door. It was Secretary Wang who had come to pick up Ouyang Zhenwu. There was also a driver in the car outside. However, both of them stared wide-eyed at Zhuang Rui. They hadn't expected that there would be an outsider staying at Minister Ouyang's house.

"Xiaojun, you're in charge of getting him delivered to me. Xiaorui, next time you come to Beijing, come stay at my place. I'm going to work now. Sigh, if I weren't so busy lately, I would have gone by myself..."

Ouyang Zhenwu finished the soy milk in his bowl in one gulp, wiped his mouth with a tissue, and got up to walk outside. Secretary Wang picked up his briefcase from the table and followed him out, not forgetting to nod and greet Zhuang Rui. Even if he was stupid, he could tell that this young man had a close relationship with the boss, and it would not hurt to get along with him.

"Our flight is at 12:50, it's still early, let's go out later, it's as hot as a sauna today."

Seeing his father leave, Ouyang Jun relaxed. His body, which had been sitting upright, immediately slumped back in the chair as if he had no bones.

Summers in Beijing are hot and dry, the air feels completely dry. If you weren't in an air-conditioned room, your clothes would probably be soaked with sweat if you stood outside for a while.

Ouyang Jun wasn't very interested in the breakfast on the table, so he leaned closer to Zhuang Rui and asked, "Brother, what exactly did my old man say to you yesterday?"

This matter involves a conflict between the elders, so Zhuang Rui couldn't go into details. He vaguely replied, "It's nothing. My mother and grandfather had some misunderstandings before, and my uncle asked me to go back and persuade my mother to come to my grandfather's 90th birthday celebration."

"The conflict between my aunt and my father? It must be my father's fault. You don't know, he's a stubborn old man. Back then, when I didn't want to work in the government, he almost shot me. Luckily, all his antique collections were out of bullets."

Ouyang Jun rarely went to his grandfather's place unless there was something wrong. If he did, he would just get scolded. In any case, his grandfather couldn't stand him. The incident back then scared him so much that he ran to his uncle's place in the south and hid for more than half a year before he dared to return to Beijing.

"Let's not talk about this anymore. We can't interfere with the elderly's affairs; we can only try to mediate. By the way, Fourth Brother, could you take me back to my hotel first? I still have some things there. After I check out, I'd like to trouble you to take me to a jewelry store; I want to buy something.

Zhuang Rui's several jadeite pendants are still in the safe in his hotel room. He also wants to buy a few jewelry boxes to store the pendants separately. Although they are gifts for his mother and older sister, he can't be too casual about them.

"Okay, after I take you back to your hotel, we'll pick up Xu Qing. As for where to buy jewelry, we'll have to ask her..."

Ouyang Jun readily agreed. He assumed Zhuang Rui wanted to bring some gifts back to his aunt, and he had already made up his mind that he would pay for the jewelry himself, mainly because he was afraid that Zhuang Rui would buy something that was not high-end enough.

After Zhuang Rui finished breakfast, the two went out. The house was taken care of by a specially arranged housekeeper. When they arrived at the hotel, Ouyang Jun did not go upstairs, but waited in the car for Zhuang Rui to collect his things and check out of the room.

On his way to pick up the big star, Zhuang Rui called Grandpa Gu, Song Jun, Yue Jing, and Miao Feifei, telling them to come to Beijing a few days later. Grandpa Gu didn't say much, knowing that Zhuang Rui had been away for quite some time. However, Song Jun and Miao Feifei threatened Zhuang Rui on the phone, telling him to make sure to inform them next time he came to Beijing.

These phone calls made Ouyang Jun quite surprised. Although his little cousin was poor, he had a really good network of connections. Ouyang Jun was a little envious of his close relationship with Song Jun, who was like brothers to him.

"Here, this is my cousin. If any good girls join the sect in the future, please introduce them to him."

After meeting the famous star Xu, Ouyang Jun casually introduced her to Zhuang Rui, which made Zhuang Rui blush. This famous star was someone Zhuang Rui had admired before.

The big star didn't give Ouyang Jun any face, replying with the same words Miao Feifei had used to tease him yesterday: "Fourth Brother, do you think everyone is Ouyang Ke?"

These celebrities may look glamorous on the outside, but they are actually quite tired. The big star in front of Zhuang Rui was wearing a pair of large sunglasses, and the sun hat on his head covered half of his face, which had a comedic effect similar to the appearance of a big star in the movie "Party A, Party B" that Zhuang Rui watched back then.

"Cough...cough cough..."

Zhuang Rui couldn't stand the two flirting and coughed a few times. To be honest, he was still a pure virgin who had never been with a woman, and this made him feel conflicted whenever he thought about it.

"Uh, stop with the nonsense. My younger brother wants to buy some jewelry. Which store do you think is suitable?"

Ouyang Jun glanced at the time; it was almost 9 o'clock. He figured he'd buy the things and then head to the airport, which would be just about the right time. Without further ado, he started the car.

"I don't want to buy beads..."

"Let's go to Qin Ruilin, it's a higher-class place and less crowded..."

Before Zhuang Rui could finish speaking, Xu Qing interrupted him. It was his fault for not making things clear beforehand. If he wasn't going to buy jewelry, what was he going to do at the jewelry store? Was he going to rob it?

Ouyang Jun drove directly to Qin Ruilin Jewelry Store, located in the bustling Xidan area. After parking the car and going inside, he found that there were indeed very few people. In the huge store, which was

several hundred square meters in size, there were no customers except for the store staff and security guards.

The staff at this jewelry store were very professional. When the big star took off his sunglasses, they didn't make a fuss. Instead, they dutifully introduced the store's most prized jewelry to the group. In their minds, as a big star, he should naturally buy the best.

Zhuang Rui checked the time and realized he still had enough. He was also impatient to listen to the introductions from those people, so he simply left Ouyang Jun and the big star and started wandering around the store by himself.

"Is this Qin Xuanbing's family's restaurant?"

At the entrance, Zhuang Rui saw a gold plaque hanging on the wall with a detailed introduction to Qin Ruilin Jewelry Store. When he saw that the jewelry store's headquarters were in Hong Kong, he understood a bit. What a coincidence!

"Brother, if you want to buy jewelry, why are you running to the door? Come here, I've found one I like, it would be perfect for your aunt. I also picked out a necklace for my little sister. Come take a look."

Zhuang Rui was lost in thought when he heard Ouyang Jun shouting, so he quickly went over.

Ouyang Jun chose a jadeite bangle for Zhuang's mother. The jadeite was quite good, reaching the icy variety, with fine green floating patterns inside. It was an icy variety bangle with floating patterns, and it was very dazzling and beautiful under the light. After looking at the price, it was marked as 1.18 million.

This left Zhuang Rui speechless. It wasn't that he couldn't afford it; he had sold this kind of material by the kilogram before. However, the price was more than 300,000 yuan higher than he had expected. It seemed that this famous storefront was quick to rip people off.

Looking at the jewelry that Ouyang Jun had chosen for his older sister, it was a pair of openwork pearl-shaped earrings, also made of jadeite, set in platinum. The jadeite was of high-quality icy green. The price tag next to it was 380,000 yuan. For such a small piece, Zhuang Rui probably wasted several times more material when he cut the stone.

Seeing Ouyang Jun's look that said he'd pay as long as Ouyang Jun nodded, Zhuang Rui scratched his head and said helplessly, "Fourth Brother, I already said I'm not here to buy jewelry. I just want to buy a few empty jewelry boxes. I have a few items that I need to wrap up."

"You have your own jewelry? Can it be better than this? Alright, don't be polite with your fourth brother, just choose these two pieces as gifts for my aunt and little sister." Ouyang Jun didn't quite believe Zhuang Rui's words. Any item here would cost over 100,000, definitely more valuable than Zhuang Rui's own things.

"Yes, sir. The jewelry boxes we use are custom-made and not sold separately. They may not even fit the size and specifications of your jewelry."

When the shop assistants nearby heard that Zhuang Rui wanted to buy a jewelry box, they looked a little dismissive, but they were all professionally trained and spoke very politely.

Chapter 282 Buying the Box (Part Two)

"But... I really don't need your jewelry..."

Zhuang Rui was somewhat helpless. His friend only wanted to buy a few jewelry boxes of similar size. If he were to buy the million-dollar jade as well, wouldn't that be like buying the box and returning the pearl? Only a fool would do that.

"Alright, brother, stop talking. Can't I, as the nephew, buy things for my aunt? Miss, I'll take these two items. Please keep them safe for me..."

Ouyang Jun assumed Zhuang Rui was embarrassed, so he took out his card as he spoke, preparing to swipe it to pay the bill.

"Fourth Brother, no, wait a minute..."

Zhuang Rui was now anxious. In his eyes, the jadeite here was only mid-to-high-end quality. In other words, Zhuang Rui didn't even look down on it, and the price was ridiculously high. As an industry insider in the jadeite business, it would be embarrassing to spend money on this stuff.

"Miss, could you come here for a moment and help me take this jewelry...box out so I can take a look?"

Zhuang Rui stopped Ouyang Jun from paying the bill, then walked to the counter selling pendants, pointed to one of the jade pendants, and beckoned the shop assistant over.

"No, that's not it. I already said I wanted to see the box..."

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the shop assistant simply took out the pendant. Zhuang Rui was a little annoyed. Wasn't this forcing him to take out his own things? They would only embarrass themselves later.

Zhuang Rui put the backpack on the counter, took out the box that Old Master Gu had given him, took out a Maitreya Buddha pendant and a pair of earrings, and said to the shop assistant, "I already said that I have my own jade. I just want to choose a few boxes for packaging. If you don't sell them separately, I can go to other jewelry stores."

"Hey bro, you actually have something of your own. Alright, let's buy the box then."

When Ouyang Jun saw Zhuang Rui take out the pendant, he realized his little brother wasn't joking. He turned to the shop assistant and said, "Your shop's service motto is to satisfy all reasonable customer requests, right? Go check the size of that pendant and find a few boxes."

"Okay, sir, please wait a moment..."

Putting aside the fact that Ouyang Jun himself exudes an air of superiority, just seeing the famous Xu nestled beside him, how could any shop assistant not have a discerning eye? Without even mentioning that jewelry boxes weren't sold separately, they immediately reached out to take the jade from Zhuang Rui's hand, preparing to measure its size so they could choose the appropriate box.

Be careful not to fall.

Zhuang Rui placed the pendant on the counter with some unease. The pendant wasn't tied with a cord yet, and if it were accidentally broken, he could afford the financial loss, but where could he find another piece of imperial green jadeite?

There weren't many people in the jewelry store that morning, and several sales clerks gathered around, wanting to see what grade of jade Zhuang Rui had brought out.

For these young girls, facing exquisite jewelry that doesn't belong to them every day is a kind of sorrow, just like the mint workers who can see and touch the jewelry but can't take it with them. However, these girls do have a good eye for jewelry since they deal with it all day long.

A round-faced girl touched Zhuang Rui's pendant, then gave him a disdainful look and whispered to the girl who had just served Zhuang Rui, "Sister Xia, this...this looks so fake! Where can you find jade like this?"

"Don't talk nonsense, if you don't understand, don't speak..."

Sister Xia turned around and scolded him, but she was also a little unsure whether the jade was real or fake. In any case, she had never seen jade with such pure texture and color before. Not only was the texture almost transparent, but the green color was so rich that it was hard to look away.

Xia Jie has worked at this shop for three years, rising from sales clerk to supervisor. She's handled countless jadeite sales, but she's never seen jadeite jewelry with such captivating allure.

"Dude, is that thing made of glass?"

Ouyang Jun also came over, grabbed the Maitreya Buddha pendant in his hand, examined it carefully for a long time, and then said something that made Zhuang Rui both laugh and cry.

Although Ouyang Jun often accompanied women to buy jewelry, he knew too little about the professional knowledge involved. When he saw this pure pendant without a single flaw, his first thought was that it was made of glass.

"You just love to talk nonsense. How could something Xiao Zhuang took out be made of glass..."

The big star took the item from Ouyang Jun's hand and looked at it for a while. His face was full of surprise and doubt. If this thing was really made of jade, what grade would it be? He had never seen anything like it before.

"Xiao Zhao, go and call Manager Wu over..."

Sister Xia turned her head and whispered some instructions, then continued to pick out boxes to package the pendants for Zhuang Rui.

"It's glass, but add 'seed' to make it glass type."

Zhuang Rui scratched his head helplessly. Top-grade imperial green jadeite was described as glass, even though there was only a one-word difference, its value was worlds apart.

"Glassy type? What's that?"

Ouyang Jun frowned. He wasn't in this business and didn't really know the terminology. But Xia Jie, who was standing next to him, was different. Her mouth was wide open as she looked at Zhuang Rui in surprise.

"Sir, please...please put your things away first..."

Sister Xia didn't care that the pendant was in the big star's hands. She almost snatched it from the star's hand and placed it on the counter along with the earrings. This item had been passed through her hands. If it really was glass-type jadeite as Zhuang Rui said, she wouldn't be able to afford to pay for it if it broke.

"Is glass-type jadeite very valuable?" Ouyang Jun asked the big star in a low voice after seeing the shop assistant's appearance.

"I've heard that glass-type jadeite is the highest quality. I also have a glass-type jadeite bracelet, but the color isn't as beautiful as this one." The big star is quite knowledgeable about jadeite materials. She used to endorse jewelry, so she naturally knows a bit from what she's heard. However, if you asked her to identify jadeite, she wouldn't be qualified.

"How much is it worth?" Ouyang Jun's voice was even lower.

"My bracelet cost three million, but the color is nowhere near as good as this one."

The big star's words made Ouyang Jun grin from ear to ear. It turned out that his little cousin wasn't short of money, but rather hiding his true wealth. According to Xu Qing, those few ornaments must be worth at least several million.

"This is our store manager, Mr. Wu..."

At this moment, a middle-aged man in his forties walked over. Sister Xia introduced him to Zhuang Rui and the others. The middle-aged man nodded politely to them, but his eyes were drawn to the pendant and earrings on the counter. This made the big star feel a little embarrassed. In the past, no matter where she went, men's eyes would always be on her first.

"Xiao Zhang, what's going on here? Is this gentleman here to sell?"

A hint of joy appeared in Store Manager Wu's eyes. His knowledge far surpassed that of this supervisor. After examining the pendant for more than a minute, he was able to determine the material used in it.

"No, this gentleman wants to buy a few boxes to package these two jade ornaments."

Xia Jie's words brought a look of disappointment to Manager Wu's face. He could tell that the jade ornament in his hand was not only made of top-quality material, but the carving was also the work of a

master. Manager Wu had thought that Zhuang Rui was here to sell it, and he had already made up his mind to buy it no matter what.

"It's not two items, it's five. There are three Maitreya Buddha pendants and two pairs of earrings. Please prepare five jewelry boxes," Zhuang Rui interjected.

"Sir, please come inside and have a seat. I'll have someone help you choose a suitable box."

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui had several more of these items, Manager Wu's eyes lit up again. It seemed that this matter could still be discussed.

Upon entering the VIP room of the jewelry store, tea was quickly served. After a moment's hesitation, Manager Wu said to Zhuang Rui, "Sir, could you please show me your other pieces as well?"

Zhuang Rui nodded, took the box out of his backpack, and handed it over.

"Exquisite, absolutely exquisite! I've never seen jade of this quality even abroad. This must have been carved from a single piece of jadeite rough, right?"

Shop manager Wu fiddled with the pendants, looking quite fond of them. After carefully placing them back into the box, he looked up and said, "Sir, would you be willing to sell us one of these pendants or earrings? You can name your price..."

"Just open it up? I'd pay five million for a pendant and you'd buy it?" Ouyang Jun joked from the side.

Upon hearing this, Manager Wu's eyes lit up, and he said, "Five million? I can make the decision to buy it."

Ouyang Jun's eyes widened immediately. He hadn't expected that someone would pick up on his casual remark, especially since it wasn't his.

"I'm sorry, I'm giving these items to my family. Besides, the pendant was personally carved by Master Gu Tianfeng. Five million, hehe..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head and politely declined Manager Wu's offer. Given the current soaring prices in the jade market, the craftsmanship and material alone would cost more than five million.

"We can discuss the price further..."

"Manager Wu, there's no need to discuss this further. I know Ms. Qin Xuanbing from your company. If it's not a gift for a family member, selling you one is fine. We can talk about it another time."

Before Manager Wu could finish speaking, Zhuang Rui interrupted him. He checked the time and realized it was almost time to get to the airport, so he didn't want to dawdle any longer.

"You know the young lady?"

Store Manager Wu, being from Hong Kong, naturally knew Qin Xuanbing. He couldn't help but re-evaluate Zhuang Rui, sighing inwardly. These mainland tycoons are truly low-key. If all Hong Kong people were like this, who knows who Cheung Tze-keung would have kidnapped.

Chapter 283 The Knot in My Heart (Part 1)

"Yes, Miss Qin and I are very good friends and have kept in touch. She's still in England. By the way, my name is Zhuang Rui."

Zhuang Rui's words dispelled Wu's doubts. He was sent to Beijing from the Hong Kong company headquarters, so he was naturally very familiar with the company's current design director, Miss Qin, and knew that she was designing a batch of jewelry for the British royal family.

"Alright, these boxes are just right. Manager Wu, how much do you need? I'll buy these."

While they were talking, Sister Xia had already selected five suitable jewelry boxes and delivered them to the VIP room. Zhuang Rui put several pendants and earrings into them one by one.

"These are mass-produced and not worth much, Mr. Zhuang, please don't be so polite. Xiao Zhang, go and get a few more hanging ropes. Mr. Zhuang, our hanging ropes are specially made; they're very durable and won't fade..."

Judging from Zhuang Rui's tone, he seemed very familiar with Qin Xuanbing. Manager Wu didn't mind doing him a favor, since he was the top dog at this Beijing branch and could make decisions about such a small matter.

"Thank you, Manager Wu. I won't be polite then. Perhaps we can collaborate sometime in the future. Here's my business card. I have to catch my flight, so I'll take my leave now..."

Zhuang Rui admired the gentlemanly shop manager. The gift he casually gave away was nothing special, but it was exactly what he needed. He hadn't even thought of it before. This pendant had no cord, so it was impossible to wear.

As for the business card that Zhuang Rui took out, it was given to him by Old Master Gu. After all, Zhuang Rui is now a director of the Jade Association, which is a respectable title.

"Okay, Mr. Zhuang, welcome to visit our store again..."

Since it was clear that the other person wasn't selling the item, Manager Wu didn't press the matter further. He handed Zhuang Rui a business card with both hands and then saw the group out of the jewelry store.

"Hey bro, can I have one of your business cards?"

As soon as he got into the car, Ouyang Jun started chattering. However, after taking the business card Zhuang Rui handed him, he became even more curious about Zhuang Rui. While being a director of the Jade Association wasn't necessarily a great position, Zhuang Rui's age seemed incongruous with it. He wondered how Zhuang Rui had gotten there.

As Ouyang Jun was examining the famous film, he suddenly felt a pain in his waist. He turned around, glared at the big star sitting next to him, and said to Zhuang Rui, "Hey bro, we only have my aunt and

little sister at home. Could you spare one of your things for me? I won't take yours for nothing. I'll give you what you owe me."

Zhuang Rui had seen everything the two people sitting in front of him had done. After hearing Ouyang Jun's words, he said with a half-smile, "My mother and sister each have a pair of earrings. The other pendant is for my niece. What's wrong, Fourth Brother? You're even eyeing the little one's things now?"

Ouyang Jun felt a little embarrassed by Zhuang Rui's words, and his face turned red. He glared at the big star and said, "You have so many pieces of jewelry at home that you never wear, but you made me ask you to. Isn't that embarrassing?"

"Hehe, Fourth Brother, put it down. I've partnered with someone to open a jade mine in Xinjiang. In a while, I'll find you something good..."

Seeing Ouyang Jun's embarrassed expression, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh. Since Ouyang Jun could find out about the jade mine later anyway, Zhuang Rui simply told him himself.

Do you still have jade mines in Xinjiang?

Upon hearing this, Ouyang Jun's eyes widened immediately. There are currently no explicit regulations from the state regarding the mining of Hetian jade, which means that all the jade mined belongs to private individuals. This is a business that can lay golden eggs!

In Ouyang Jun's circle, there were also people who had long coveted the jade mines in Xinjiang. However, the ethnic minorities there were very powerful, and they had no way to get involved. They never expected that their little cousin would be able to get a share of the pie. Now they understood why Zhuang Rui was in such a hurry to go to Xinjiang. If it were him, he would also go as soon as possible.

However, he was wronging Zhuang Rui. Before going to Xinjiang, Zhuang Rui never imagined he could find a jade mine for free. Besides, if he hadn't been able to come up with ten million in cash, and if it weren't for the connection between Old Master Gu and the Jade King, even if he had discovered the jade mine, he wouldn't have gained a single benefit from it.

"Well, I'll just take a small share and receive dividends; I won't participate in the actual operations..."

Zhuang Rui had been through a lot in Xinjiang recently, and he had already made up his mind that he would never go there unless absolutely necessary.

"Hey kid, you've really surprised me a lot. You're even fatter than me. Can't you buy some nice clothes and dress yourself up a bit so you can find a wife?"

Ouyang Jun's words carried a hint of envy. He knew that rare mineral deposits were the most profitable. Although he had a net worth of several hundred million, it was mostly in the form of shares in various companies or real estate. In terms of wealth, he was definitely not as good as his unassuming little cousin in front of him.

Zhuang Rui smiled but didn't say anything. Having money is his own business; why should he announce it to the whole world? As for clothing, Zhuang Rui believed that as long as it was clean, decent, and comfortable, that was enough. Bill Gates wore ordinary casual clothes bought online, so would you say he was poor? It's not that you have to wear designer clothes to have good taste.

...

"Fourth Brother, your cousin is quite something. He's young, rich, and not at all arrogant. Have those old men in your family been secretly taking care of him?"

After seeing Zhuang Rui off at the airport, the big star said thoughtfully to Ouyang Jun that she had been studying film acting since she was a teenager and was quite confident in her judgment of people, but she had misjudged Zhuang Rui.

"Impossible. My father may know of his existence, but he definitely did not help him."

Ouyang Jun immediately dismissed Xu Da Mingxing's conjecture, because his old man's private matters were usually handled by Wang Da Mi, and Wang Da Mi's behavior last night and this morning clearly showed that he did not know Zhuang Rui.

Thinking of Zhuang Rui's achievements, Young Master Ouyang felt a little ashamed. His wealth was accumulated years ago by smuggling permits. Even his current club was built on the back of his family's

influence. Otherwise, it would have been devoured long ago. Zhuang Rui, on the other hand, had achieved such success without any background. Ouyang Jun admired him greatly.

Putting aside Ouyang Jun and the big star's speculations about Zhuang Rui, Zhuang Rui, sitting on the plane at this moment, was also filled with thoughts. He was thinking about how to persuade his mother after returning home. Zhuang Rui knew his mother very well. Once she made up her mind, it was difficult for others to persuade her. Even if she was heartbroken, she would face it alone.

"Never mind, I'll discuss it with my older sister first."

Zhuang Rui thought for a long time but couldn't come up with a good idea. Anyway, there were still more than four months until his cheap maternal grandfather's birthday. He would wait until his mother was in a good mood before trying to find a solution.

Beijing is very close to Pengcheng. Zhuang Rui felt like the plane had only been off the plane for a short time before it landed at Pengcheng Airport. Before boarding the plane, Zhuang Rui had already called his mother. They would be going to the villa that night. After leaving the airport, Zhuang Rui took a taxi straight to Yunlong Villa.

"White Lion!"

When Zhuang Rui was still fifty or sixty meters away from his villa, he saw a white shadow dart out from the gate and run quickly toward him. When it got close, the white lion suddenly pounced forward, pinning Zhuang Rui to the ground and pressing its big head against his chest.

"Hey buddy, all better now?"

Zhuang Rui lifted the white lion's head, and his spiritual energy flowed into its body. The white lion groaned comfortably, and the man and the dog lay on the grass in perfect harmony.

"Xiao Rui, I knew it was you coming back. Hurry up and come home. What are you doing outside?"

His mother's voice came from the front door. Zhuang Rui quickly jumped up, picked up his backpack, patted the white lion's head, and walked towards his home.

"My dear child, you've been gone for over a month. Don't you want to come home?" Looking at her son, who was much thinner and darker than before he left, Mrs. Zhuang felt a pang of heartache.

"I spent a few days in the mountains of Xinjiang, which took up some time. Mom, I'm not tired, I can carry it myself." Zhuang's mother tried to help Zhuang Rui carry his things, but Zhuang Rui dodged her.

"The white lion waits for you at the gate of the yard every day, but it doesn't eat much. Next time you go out, you should take the white lion with you."

Zhuang's mother complained to her son, saying that she had watched the white lion grow up since it was a cub, always pitifully lying at the door waiting for Zhuang Rui, which made her feel sorry for it.

"Okay, I understand, Mom. Don't worry, I'll take you all with me when I go out again."

For the next few years, Zhuang Rui will likely be living in Beijing. He has already made plans in his mind: the next time he goes to Beijing, he will buy a courtyard house, the kind with its own entrance, and it shouldn't be a big problem to keep the white lion there.

"You little rascal, you're talking nonsense. Mom is in Pengcheng, I'm not going anywhere, and I don't want to go anywhere else."

Zhuang's mother gently patted her son, but her eyes were somewhat glazed as she spoke.

"Mom, look at the Maitreya Buddha pendant I made for you. It was personally carved by Master Gu. Here, let me put it on you."

Seeing that his mother was in a bad mood, Zhuang Rui quickly changed the subject. Zhuang Min also came out of the villa to greet them. Nannan shouted and grabbed the jade from Zhuang Rui's hand. The once quiet courtyard suddenly became lively.

Zhuang Rui originally wanted to leave a pendant for Qin Xuanbing, but his older sister, who had only said she wanted earrings, saw the extra pendant and naturally snatched it away without hesitation. Zhuang Rui didn't care, as he still had a piece of top-quality red jade hidden away, and the material wasn't necessarily inferior to imperial green jade.

"Sis, I need to tell you something while I'm washing the dishes." After dinner, Zhuang Rui pulled his older sister aside.

"Xiao Rui, come here for a second, Mom has something to ask you."

Originally, Zhuang Rui wanted to discuss the situation with Zhuang Min first, but before he could even speak, his mother called him into the study.

Chapter 284 Heart Knot (Part Two)

"Mom, what do you want? Oh, right, I have to tell you, when I went to Xinjiang this time, we came across a Death Valley in the mountains. It was terrifying! The valley was filled with skeletons, and..."

Zhuang Rui was unsure of his mother's intentions, and feeling somewhat guilty, he went into the room and started talking to her about mining jade in the Kunlun Mountains. His mother listened quietly, a smile occasionally appearing on her face.

"Are you tired of talking? Here, have some water. Tell me, what are you hiding from me?"

Mrs. Zhuang poured her son a glass of water and said with a smile, "Although this son doesn't cause trouble, he's been cunning since he was little. However, Zhuang Rui has a problem: when he does something wrong, he doesn't dare to look her in the eye when he speaks. That's why Mrs. Zhuang asked this question."

This book is being published for the first time, providing you with a reading experience free of errors and disordered chapters.

"Mom, what could possibly be wrong? I haven't even been in Beijing for very long."

Zhuang Rui realized something was wrong as soon as he said it, and his eyes darted away, avoiding his mother's gaze.

"Sigh, you child, you can fool others, but do you think you can fool me? Did you see someone from the Ouyang family?"

Since Zhuang's mother had agreed to let Zhuang Rui go to school in Beijing, she had somewhat anticipated this. However, she did not expect that Zhuang Rui would run into his own family members on his first trip to Beijing.

"Mom, I ran into... Uncle. Please, please don't be angry. They're the ones who brought me here."

Zhuang Rui mustered his courage and looked up after speaking, only to find that his mother's eyes were filled with tears and her expression was somewhat dazed. This frightened Zhuang Rui, and he quickly went over to prepare to use his spiritual energy to help his mother calm down.

"It's alright, it's alright, silly son, sit there, Mom is fine."

Zhuang's mother pushed away her son's hand that was massaging her back, pointed to the chair in front of her, and gestured for Zhuang Rui to sit down and talk.

"Mom, are you really alright? Don't scare me. At most, I'll just ignore them from now on. O..."

Zhuang Rui couldn't stand seeing his mother sad since he was a child. No matter how naughty he was when he was young, as long as his mother shed tears, Zhuang Rui would obediently go and write a self-criticism.

"Mom is really alright, is your brother... alright?"

Zhuang's mother patted her son's hand and spoke almost to herself, her eyes filled with memories.

Ouyang Gang had four children in total. The first three were sons, so he doted on his daughter after she was born. In addition, she had three older brothers. Her childhood was like that of a princess. She was pampered and protected. Her childhood and adolescence were carefree.

But everything changed when the unprecedented movement that swept the entire country began. Her beloved mother was urgently evacuated to Fujian, and her brothers were scattered in various places. Only her father was still by her side. At that time, the still naive Ouyang Wan did not doubt the revolution, but instead treated it with a positive attitude.

At that time, Zhuang Rui's father, Zhuang Tianyu, appeared. He was a thin man, but he was very strong inside. Back then, the saying was that if the father was a hero, the son was a hero; if the father was a reactionary, the son was a bastard. As the son of a "stinking intellectual," Zhuang Tianyu had to do more than ten hours of high-intensity labor during the day, but at night he would often walk dozens of miles to visit his father, who was locked up in a cowshed.

Ouyang Wan met Zhuang Tianyu around that time. She was deeply attracted by the man's strength and optimism. Later, they had more contact at his family's old house. Five or six years was enough for them to get to know and love each other.

Ouyang Wan knew that her father had arranged a marriage for her, but she took it as a joke her father made with his old comrades after drinking. In the circle where Ouyang Wan used to live, she could come into contact with many literary classics that were considered poisonous weeds at the time. The belief in pursuing her own love naturally took root in the girl's heart.

Her father's fury was something she hadn't expected. She couldn't understand why her father, who had always doted on her, had become so domineering and unreasonable. The reason she turned against him was something Ouyang Gang had said to Zhuang Tianyu.

After failing to reach an agreement with his daughter, Ouyang Gang went to Zhuang Rui's father and questioned him: "What ability do you have to support my daughter? Can you provide her with a good life? If you are a man, then don't stop my daughter from coming back to Beijing with me."

Ouyang Gang was unaware that his daughter had overheard his words outside the door. This led to Ouyang Wan choosing between returning to the capital or staying in Pengcheng. She immediately chose the latter and said some rather harsh words, which enraged Ouyang Gang and intensified the conflict between father and daughter.

Actually, Ouyang Wan regretted saying those heartless words to her father at the time. When her eldest brother first found her, she was already thinking of finding an opportunity to apologize to her father. However, some things that happened later made her resent Ouyang Gang for decades.

Zhuang Rui's father was a strong-willed man. He was originally a teaching assistant at his father's university, but when the turmoil ended, many people were not able to get resettlement. Because of his father-in-law's words, Zhuang Tianyu did not let Ouyang Wan suffer any grievances. He worked hard outside, doing everything from hauling coal briquettes to loading and unloading goods.

However, Zhuang Tianyu's health was already weak, and he had suffered some hidden injuries during that turbulent era. This overwork caused him to fall ill and never recover. Two years later, when Zhuang Rui was four or five years old, he passed away. This devastated Ouyang Wan, and she also harbored resentment towards Zhuang Tianyu's father who had provoked her in the past. This was the main reason why Ouyang Wan resolutely refused when her elder brother approached her for the second time to offer her help.

Actually, there was some misunderstanding between the two sides in this matter. Ouyang Gang originally thought that his daughter would change her mind and apologize to him, so he would go along with it and agree to the marriage. After all, Zhuang Tianyu's father had gone through hardships with him.

Who knew that the people he sent didn't hear Ouyang Wan's apology, but instead said something even more hurtful, which enraged him. It was a case of love turning into hatred. Ouyang Gang never imagined that his angry words back then would provoke his son-in-law and make his daughter unable to forgive him.

Of course, the parties involved could never know the misunderstandings involved. However, over the decades, Ouyang Wan's resentment towards her father gradually turned into longing for her mother and brothers. They had not done anything wrong, and her refusal of their help was actually a way of showing her father that she could live well without anyone's help.

However, when holidays come around, Ouyang Wan still thinks of her family, but she can't confide in her children. Especially in the past few years, she would occasionally catch a glimpse of her father's aged face on television, and her longing for him would intensify. But the resentment she felt gradually dissipated.

"Mom, my uncle is doing well, but he misses you terribly. Mom, are you listening to me?"

Zhuang Rui's voice snapped Ouyang Wan out of her reverie, her face already streaked with tears.

"I'm listening, Xiao Rui, how are your grandparents doing?"

Ouyang Wan mustered up her courage to ask the question. She hadn't heard any news about her parents for several years and was afraid they were no longer alive. She looked at Zhuang Rui with trepidation.

"My maternal grandparents are still alive, but their health is not very good. This year is their 90th birthday, but my uncle said that my maternal grandmother may not be able to live to see that day."

Zhuang Rui repeated Ouyang Zhenwu's words. He didn't want his mother to have any regrets, and it would be best to see her before her birthday.

Upon hearing this, Ouyang Wan's face turned even paler, and she looked several years older. Her body swayed slightly as she sat in the chair, which startled Zhuang Rui, who quickly supported his mother and said, "Mom, don't worry, we'll go to the capital tomorrow. I guarantee that the two elders will be cured as soon as they see you."

Zhuang Rui's words made Ouyang Wan's eyes light up, but then they dimmed again. She said, "Your maternal grandfather is very stubborn. He always means what he says. Even if I go, he won't see me."

Zhuang Rui smiled wryly upon hearing this. What was going on here? Why was he saying such things? So he comforted her, "Mom, Grandpa regrets it. He keeps talking about you. It's mainly because you refused to accept Uncle's help. He thought you were still angry."

Zhuang Rui's words were all nonsense; he just wanted to coax his mother to come to Beijing first. However, he didn't expect that what he said was not much different from Ouyang Gang's thoughts.

"Okay, okay, let's go to Beijing..."

Upon hearing the news of her parents' poor health, scenes of their love for her during her childhood flashed before her eyes, and Ouyang Wan's heart was in turmoil. She grabbed Zhuang Rui and stood up impatiently.

"Mom, there's no rush. Let me make some arrangements before we go. Otherwise, if Grandpa and Grandma get too excited when they see you, something bad might happen to them."

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Ouyang Wan calmed down and said, "Okay, let's go to Beijing next week. Let's bring Xiaomin and Nannan along, and let Guodong come too."

"Okay, Mom, don't worry. I'll go to Beijing first to make arrangements, and then you can go."

Zhuang Rui actually wanted to visit his maternal grandparents first, and then use his spiritual energy to cleanse their bodies. Otherwise, it was very likely that, as he said, a good thing would turn into a bad thing.

"Alright, Xiao Rui, go and rest. You must be tired from the flight today. Mom needs some peace and quiet too."

Ouyang Wan had returned to her usual self, presumably having resolved her inner conflict, which put Zhuang Rui at ease. After sending his mother back to her room, Zhuang Rui called his older sister over.

Are you telling the truth?

Zhuang Min's eyes widened in disbelief. She had watched many soap operas, but she never expected that the scenes on the screen would actually happen in her own home.

"Why would I lie to you? Tomorrow... no, the day after tomorrow I'll go to Beijing again. After everything is arranged, you and Mom can come together."

Zhuang Rui originally wanted to say tomorrow, but then he remembered that he still needed to give the jade to Grandpa Wu, so he postponed the date by one day.

Chapter 285 The Jade Carver

"Hey sis, why would I lie to you? Why would I bother finding myself a few cheap uncles?"

Seeing his older sister's surprised expression, Zhuang Rui laughed. He had felt the same way when he received Ouyang Jun's invitation, only then there was an element of speculation involved, but now it was confirmed.

"Xiao Rui, I think... I think life is pretty good now. Look, Guo Dong's repair shop is starting to make money. We don't need to go to Beijing, do we?"

Zhuang Min's words made Zhuang Rui laugh out loud. It turned out that his older sister was not only surprised, but also worried about moving the family to Beijing. It wasn't until Zhuang Min became a little annoyed by Zhuang Rui's laughter that Zhuang Rui said, "Sister, we're just going to Beijing to visit relatives and see the elders. We'll still go back to Pengcheng to live. At most, we'll visit each other more often. Why are you worrying about this..."

Zhuang Rui spent a few days in Beijing and found it difficult to adjust to life there. The weather was too hot and the traffic was terrible. Of course, this is a common problem in major cities. Although the subway has diverted a large number of people, improving traffic conditions remains a major issue that cities must face.

During the next few years of his postgraduate studies, Zhuang Rui will definitely be staying in Beijing most of the time. He is already thinking about buying a house. He can't keep living at his uncle's or grandfather's house forever, can he? As for what Uncle De said about living at Professor Meng's house, Zhuang Rui rejected it without even considering it.

Hearing her younger brother's words, Zhuang Min finally felt relieved. She wasn't an ambitious girl. Her daughter, husband, and mother were the most important people in her heart. As for her uncles and maternal grandfathers, although they held high positions, could you expect Zhuang Min, who had never had such a concept in her mind, to have any deep feelings for them?

"By the way, sis, don't let Nannan go to kindergarten these next few days. You should all stay here in the villa and spend more time with Mom. She'll be back in Beijing in four or five days at most."

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment, then gave Zhuang Min some more instructions. His mother would definitely be very anxious these next few days, and having his granddaughter by her side would help ease her mind and prevent her from overthinking.

As the siblings were talking, the door was pushed open, and Nannan was practically dragged in, clinging to the white lion's neck. The little girl refused to let go, getting herself covered in dust. Zhuang Min scolded Nannan a few times and then took her out to take a bath.

The white lion walked to Zhuang Rui's side and rubbed its head against him. It seemed to know that Zhuang Rui was going out again, and its eyes showed a look of reluctance. Zhuang Rui felt very sorry for it and used his hand to comb the long mane on the white lion's head. He said, "Don't worry, I will definitely take you with me this time."

The white lion seemed to understand Zhuang Rui's words and happily licked Zhuang Rui's hand with its tongue. However, Zhuang Rui's promise brought more trouble. It wasn't just about driving to Beijing; the most important thing was how to settle the white lion in the capital. After thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui picked up the phone.

"Hey, Brother Song, this is Zhuang Rui." Zhuang Rui dialed Song Jun's number.

"You're back in Pengcheng, right? I'll be in Beijing for a while, so I haven't had time to come over. When are you coming to Beijing?" Song Jun's voice came through the phone.

"Brother Song, I'm going to Beijing the day after tomorrow, but I have something I'd like to ask you. What documents do I need to bring the Golden Lion to Beijing?"

"Of course I'll do it. Besides, I live far from the city center and don't usually take it out. What, you're bringing the white lion over? Hey, once your big guy arrives, it'll definitely keep those bastards in the capital in check."

Song Jun was somewhat excited. Although his golden lion was purebred, it was too young and small. That day, it was outshone by a Tibetan mastiff brought by someone else, and Song Jun was still a little unconvinced.

"Yes, you know Tibetan Mastiffs are very attached to their owners. I'm going to school in Beijing next year, and I'll need to take it with me. I don't know how easy it is to get the necessary permits. Do you have any connections, Brother Song?" Given Zhuang Rui's relationship with Song Jun, he could just be direct.

Upon hearing this, Song Jun laughed on the phone and said, "This is easy, but it will take me three to five days to process. Don't you know Miao? Have her handle it for you, and you can get it on the same day. That girl has strong connections in the Ministry of Public Security."

"Oh, I'll call her later. There's something else, Brother Song, are courtyard houses still available in Beijing? I need a place to stay when I get there."

"Don't come to me about this. Go find Ouyang Si'er. He's been doing this for a few years now, and he should still have a few sets left. I suggest you go further away and buy a estate. It'll be quiet and spacious."

Song Jun did not do any of the things Zhuang Rui asked him to do, but he did point out the way.

Zhuang Rui didn't want to drive for hours every day in the future, so after thinking about it, he decided to buy a courtyard house. He chatted with Song Jun on the phone for a while longer before hanging up.

Then Zhuang Rui called Miao Feifei and Ouyang Jun. Miao Feifei was very happy to hear that Zhuang Rui would be coming to Beijing again the day after tomorrow. She immediately agreed to help Bai Shi with his documents and promised that Zhuang Rui would get the documents on the day he arrived in Beijing, which reassured Zhuang Rui a lot.

As for the courtyard houses, Ouyang Jun has already sold all the ones he had, but he can still find a few more if he tries. However, he has to go and see the houses in person, and Zhuang Rui can't make a decision right now. They can only wait until he goes to Beijing to see them.

After checking the time, Zhuang Rui found Wu Jia's phone number and arranged to meet her the next morning. Zhuang Rui was not only there to deliver the jade to her, but also to ask Old Master Wu for some other favors.

...

"Sir, this is all the material left. Is it alright?"

Sitting in the VIP room of "Stone Studio", Zhuang Rui took out the jadeite the size of a fingernail. He felt a little embarrassed. He had originally said that he would also ask the old man to polish the earrings, but who knew that Master Gu would make them all in one go.

"That's quite a lot. It's enough to make a ring face. Xiao Zhuang, thank you. I'll offer 1.8 million for this piece of material. Is that alright?"

Wearing his reading glasses, Mr. Wu carefully examined the piece of jade with trembling hands for a while, his face beaming with joy. This grade of jade is extremely rare and hard to come by. If he could polish a cabochon out of it and set it in a ring, it would become the prized possession of "Stone Studio".

"Mr. Wu, one million will do, there's no need for so much..."

"That won't do, Xiao Zhuang. To be honest, after this ring face is polished, I won't sell it for less than three million. One million eight hundred thousand is already a lot of money for you, so please don't refuse anymore."

Before Zhuang Rui could finish speaking, he was interrupted by Old Master Wu. This item was priceless; if a wealthy customer came along, it might sell for five million. Such items were never priced in stores.

"Mr. Wu, please let me finish speaking. I have something to ask of you."

"Oh? Tell me, if it's about carving objects, this old man isn't very strong right now..."

The old man's words revealed a sense of desolation in the twilight of a hero. Now, apart from making some simple trinkets by hand, he can no longer carve pendants.

"Well, Mr. Wu, I have a piece of jade that I'd like to have made into a few bracelets. You mentioned last time that you could find a jade carving master to help me. I wonder if that's still possible?"

The red jade in Zhuang Rui's hand was of average quality at the edges, but if carved into a bracelet, it could barely be considered a mid-to-high grade red jade bracelet, although its quality was much lower than that of the blood jade bracelet carved from the inner material.

Zhuang Rui planned to have several pieces made, both good and bad, polished up so he could give them to his mother as gifts. He thought that these items wouldn't look shabby when taken out.

"Is this what you're talking about? I wonder what kind of item you want to make and how long it will take? I'd like to tell my apprentice about it." Old Master Wu didn't bother to find out what kind of material Zhuang Rui was; he couldn't carve it himself anyway, and asking would only make him feel bad.

"Let's make seven or eight bracelets first. I don't know how long it will take to make these items. Could you give me an estimate, Mr. Wu?"

There are seven or eight bracelets, which should be enough for my mother to give away. You know, these blood jade bracelets are not cheap. Zhuang Rui plans to only take out one good one and use the inferior materials for the rest.

"Making bracelets is relatively simple, it's just that polishing takes a bit of time. Seven or eight bracelets should take about twenty days. You wait here, I'll go make a call."

Having received such a huge favor from Zhuang Rui, the old man was still uneasy. After finishing his conversation, he went out of the house to call his apprentice. Zhuang Rui, on the other hand, handed the jadeite material to Wu Jia and completed the transfer procedures. This 800,000 yuan was not given away for nothing. The person introduced by Old Master Wu could carve a bracelet worth tens of millions.

"Xiao Zhuang, it's done. One of my former apprentices, who has been with me for over ten years, has agreed to take this job. He can take a month off from his current job at the jewelry company, but the pay he's asking for is quite high—two hundred thousand a month. What do you think?"

After Zhuang Rui finished his business, the old man, leaning on his cane, also entered the house.

"Two hundred thousand?" Zhuang Rui pondered for a moment.

"If your material is average, this price is high. But if it's good material, this price isn't high. My apprentice is very honest and won't leak any client information. You can use it with peace of mind." Old Wu explained to Zhuang Rui. He knew his apprentice very well, and he was now a well-known sculptor in Yangzhou.

"Alright, two hundred thousand it is. Elder Wu, have him come to Pengcheng in fifteen days. I will provide him with food and lodging."

Zhuang Rui calculated that he should have fifteen days to finish dealing with things in Beijing and return to Pengcheng.

#### Chapter 286 Share Transfer

Carving jade also requires some equipment, such as a wheel grinder. Zhuang Rui asked about the model numbers and wrote them down on paper. He'd have his brother-in-law buy these later; fifteen days should be enough time.

After leaving "Stone Studio", Zhuang Rui drove straight to the mastiff kennel. As the second boss of the mastiff kennel, he had never worried about anything from beginning to end. He had been harassed quite a bit by Liu Chuan on the phone. Since he had nothing to do today, he decided to come and take a look. In addition, he had some things to discuss with Liu Chuan.

The former wasteland is now surrounded by high walls. On the path leading to the mastiff kennel, there are several "Keep Out" signs. Zhuang Rui drove his car to the entrance of the kennel, honked the horn a few times, and immediately a few low, angry roars came from inside the kennel. Although the sound was not very loud, it gave people a feeling of unease.

"You scoundrel, is this still a mastiff kennel? It feels like a prison to me! What kind of bad thing have you been doing in here?"

The doors and windows of the security booth at the entrance were all welded together with thick steel bars, which made Zhuang Rui look at them with a sidelong glance. He smiled and greeted Liu Chuan, who came out to greet him.

"Get out of here! The Tibetan mastiffs here even bite me. If we don't take precautions, will I be running to the hospital all the time?"

Liu Chuan was also a bit frustrated. The Tibetan mastiff kennel had been built, but its management was extremely difficult. All the Tibetan mastiffs in the kennel were brought from Tibet and were not yet trained to be wild. They could not be kept in captivity and needed to be given space to roam.

This is where the problem arises. Without an owner, these Tibetan mastiffs are difficult for ordinary people to control. In the first two or three months, there were two incidents of Tibetan mastiffs injuring people. Even Liu Chuan was almost bitten once. Therefore, the safety protection for the staff here was increased, and a free-range area was specially built.

"Why didn't you keep Brother Renqing Cuomu here? If he were here, these Tibetan mastiffs would probably behave..."

Fearing the noise would disturb the Tibetan mastiffs inside, Zhuang Rui parked the car at the main gate and walked into the kennel with Liu Chuan. The area from the gate to the office area was very safe; the free-range area of the mastiffs had been cordoned off.

"Brother Renqing Cuomu was too attached to the grasslands and only stayed here for a little over a week before going back. But that's fine. Every year around the time winter approaches, Renqing Cuomu will help us find some good Tibetan mastiffs in the pastoral areas. True breeding Tibetan mastiffs must have wild instincts; otherwise, after two or three generations, they'll all turn into lapdogs..."

Standing in the Tibetan Mastiff kennel he founded, Liu Chuan felt a great sense of accomplishment, especially after attending the International Tibetan Mastiff Exchange Conference in Shanxi, where Pengcheng Tibetan Mastiff Kennel shone brightly and stole the spotlight from many well-known kennels. Now, Liu Chuan is considered a well-known figure in the Tibetan Mastiff breeding circle.

"Where's Brother Zhou? My sister said he's living here now?"

When Zhuang Rui was chatting with Zhuang Min yesterday, he learned that the apartment upstairs from his own is now occupied by Zhou Rui's parents and younger sister, while Zhou Rui has moved to the mastiff kennel.

"There's nothing I can do. Do you still remember that golden mastiff king?"

After seeing Zhuang Rui nod, Liu Chuan continued, "That Tibetan Mastiff only gives Zhou Rui a little face; it won't do the same to anyone else. Moreover, all the Tibetan Mastiffs here listen to it. Since Zhou Rui moved in, there hasn't been a single incident of a Tibetan Mastiff biting anyone."

As the two were talking, a roar suddenly came from the free-range area about 30 meters to their right. Then a golden figure jumped down from the wall, which was more than two meters high. Zhuang Rui recognized it at a glance as the golden lion king he had seen in the grassland mountains.

"Brother Zhou, Brother Zhou, come quick! Golden Retriever has gone crazy again."

Liu Chuan has raised Tibetan Mastiffs for a long time and understands their habits very well. When these dogs go berserk, they can tear a person to pieces. Although this golden retriever recognizes him, it's hard to guarantee it won't be in a bad mood and might bite him.

Upon hearing Liu Chuan's voice, Zhou Rui hurriedly ran out of the small office. Seeing the Golden Lion King rushing towards Zhuang Rui and the other man, he was quite frightened and shouted as he ran towards them.

To Zhou Rui's surprise, after the golden lion ran up to Zhuang Rui, it simply rubbed its head against him—a gesture of affection from a Tibetan Mastiff. Then, it mischievously barked at Liu Chuan, who took several steps back in fright. Only then did the golden lion raise its head high and saunter off to the free-range area, completely ignoring Zhou Rui as he approached, its expression one of extreme pride.

"Damn, this golden retriever only acts like this when it sees Brother Renqing Cuomu. Woody, did you give it some kind of drug? Why is it being so affectionate towards you?"

Liu Chuan's words carried a hint of sourness. He was treated to lavish meals every day and was still occasionally frightened by the golden retriever, while Zhuang Rui had only met it once on the grassland, and more than half a year had passed, yet it still remembered him.

"That's called fate, you know? My character is better than yours, buddy."

Zhuang Rui shamelessly mocked Liu Chuan, then went to greet Zhou Rui. The three of them chatted and laughed as they walked back to the office.

"Wood, Zhou's whole family is here. I've already given him that house. Shouldn't you do something too?" After the three sat down, Liu Chuan put Zhuang Rui in a difficult position. He was working himself to the bone all day while Zhuang Rui was enjoying a carefree life outside, which made him resentful.

"Da Chuan, don't joke around. We're already doing well enough. We can't trouble you any more."

Zhou Rui's dark face showed anxiety as he waved his hands repeatedly, saying that his sister was now in high school in Pengcheng, and the money for his brothers' college education was not a problem. He also had a car and could drive home whenever he wanted. Compared to his parents' life in a cave dwelling in Shaanxi, it was like heaven and earth.

Zhuang Rui didn't speak immediately. He lowered his head and thought for a moment before saying, "How about this, Brother Zhou? I probably won't have much time to come here in the future. After Da Chuan gets married, he probably won't have much time either. You'll have to put in more effort for this mastiff farm. I'll transfer 19% of the shares to you."

Zhuang Rui's words startled Liu Chuan. Zhuang Rui himself only had 30% of the shares. If he gave Zhou Rui another 19%, he would have very few shares left.

In the initial shareholding distribution of the mastiff farm, Liu Chuan held 40%, Zhuang Rui held 30%, Renqing Cuomu held 25%, and Zhou Rui held 5%. If Zhuang Rui were to transfer 19% to Zhou Rui, Zhou Rui would immediately become the third largest shareholder of the mastiff farm.

You have to understand, the Tibetan Mastiff kennel is not what it used to be. Not to mention these fixed assets, other very powerful Tibetan Mastiff kennels also want to invest in Liu Chuan's kennel and take

some shares. That long-distance running coach who didn't do his job even offered five million for a 20% stake, but Liu Chuan rejected them all.

Zhuang Rui giving up 19% is equivalent to giving Zhou Rui five million, a sum Liu Chuan couldn't afford.

"Wood, I was just kidding. How about we each give five percent to Brother Zhou?"

Liu Chuan thought Zhuang Rui was angry because he had provoked him, but judging from Zhuang Rui's expression, he didn't seem angry.

"Brother Zhou, don't speak yet, let me finish speaking before you decide."

Seeing that Zhou Rui was about to speak, Zhuang Rui waved his hand and continued, "Brother Zhou, Da Chuan will be going to visit clients in the future, so he probably won't come here much. If you have more shares, it will be more legitimate for you to manage it. However, I didn't give you these shares for free. I put up three million in cash to get 30% of the shares. Now I'm transferring 19% to you. You have to put up two million to buy them. How about it?"

"Zhuang Rui, stop joking with Brother Zhou. Even if those 19% of the shares were worth more than two million, I still couldn't afford it."

Zhou Rui smiled bitterly. In the past six months, he had earned about 100,000 yuan from various sources, but he had spent most of it on moving his family from Shaanxi, his younger siblings' schooling, and the transfer of Liu Chuan's house. He couldn't possibly come up with two million yuan; two hundred yuan would be more like it.

"Brother Zhou, this money isn't for you to pay right now. It's two years. Give me this two million in two years. How about it? Are you confident?"

"Zhuang Rui, are you telling the truth?"

Zhou Rui was confident, of course. He knew that in a few months, the female mastiffs would be able to get pregnant. He and Liu Chuan often estimated that they could make at least ten million in profit next year.

"Hehe, of course it's true. You can hand over your work here, and then we'll go to the city to complete the formalities. Oh, and you need to send me the IOU for the two million."

In fact, Zhuang Rui initially set up this mastiff kennel largely to help Liu Chuan. Now that he has a jade mine in Xinjiang, a business that lays golden eggs, he really doesn't want to be distracted by the mastiff kennel. If he wasn't afraid that Liu Chuan would disagree, he wouldn't even want to keep this eleven percent of the shares.

"Brother Zhou, go and give the instructions. We'll go to the city later and do as Mu Tou said."

Liu Chuan was a straightforward person, so when he saw that Zhuang Rui was determined to do so, he let him have his way. Anyway, he wouldn't suffer any loss, and he could keep Zhou Rui tightly tied to the mastiff kennel.

After Zhou Rui left, Zhuang Rui said to Liu Chuan, "Da Chuan, I'll take the eleven percent of the shares. I really won't have time to manage things here anymore."

"Come on, you can keep it. As long as our combined shares exceed fifty percent, that's fine."

It turns out that Liu Chuan also saw through Zhuang Rui's intentions. The reason he kept 11% was to gain control of the company.

Seeing that Liu Chuan disagreed, Zhuang Rui didn't force him and said, "I'm going to Beijing tomorrow. Why don't you come with me? There are a few people who might want to buy Tibetan Mastiffs, but I'm not in charge of the sales."

Chapter 287 The Grand Mansion (Part 1)

To give potential buyers a more direct feel for Pengcheng Mastiff Kennel's capabilities, Zhuang Rui specifically asked Liu Chuan to bring Black Lion along. Actually, bringing the Golden Lion King would have

been even more convincing, but without the Lion King's presence at the kennel, Zhou Rui probably wouldn't have been able to maintain order.

Zhuang Rui and Liu Chuan each drove a car, departing from Pengcheng in the morning and arriving in Beijing around 9 p.m. the next day. Having informed Ouyang Jun in advance, Zhuang Rui drove directly to the club. The security guards at the entrance had already been notified, and both cars drove in smoothly.

After exiting the parking lot, the white lion and the black lion immediately attracted the attention of the men in black suits at the entrance. The white lion, in particular, with its fluffy fur and large size, looked just like a small lion. It walked with its head held high, like a king inspecting his territory.

"Wood, how did you manage to get here? This place is pretty high-class."

Looking at the surroundings and the security guards in black suits, Liu Chuan knew this must be a private club, much better than the ones he had been to before, especially the luxury cars in the parking lot that cost millions, which further highlighted the extraordinary nature of this place.

"It's a friend's club; I'll try to get you a membership card sometime..."

Zhuang Rui didn't say much; he didn't want to make his relationship with the Ouyang family public knowledge.

"Wow, that's awesome! Damn, they even have a cigar lounge?"

As we walked from the parking lot, we heard Liu Chuan praising the place all the way. Zhuang Rui wasn't very familiar with the area either. He had no idea that buildings one, two, and three were purely used for socializing or hosting private parties. In addition, there were restaurants, swimming pools, golf courses, horse farms, bars, and a newly built cigar lounge, which could basically satisfy anyone's hobbies and needs.

"Da Chuan, you can't act like a hooligan here," Zhuang Rui reminded him with a smile.

"Damn, I've been around in the underworld for years, do you need to tell me?" Liu Chuan gave Zhuang Rui a disdainful look.

Zhuang Rui was quite confident in Liu Chuan. In terms of morality and interpersonal skills, Liu Chuan was far superior to him, regardless of wealth or poverty. Otherwise, how could he have made friends with someone like Song Jun?

"Xiao Rui, is this your Tibetan Mastiff? Goodness, keep him away from me."

Ouyang Jun was waiting at the entrance of Building No. 1. When he saw Zhuang Rui coming, he went to greet him from afar. However, before he got close, he saw the majestic white lion and quickly took a few steps back.

"It's alright, white lions don't usually bite."

"No, it's better to stay away from me." The size of the white lion made Ouyang Jun a little scared.

"Hey bro, that snow mastiff that people were talking about the other day, worth over 40 million, could it be yours?"

People often bring valuable Tibetan mastiffs to the club. Ouyang Jun is quite discerning. Looking at the white lion's snow-white fur, he immediately thought of the rumor from a few months ago.

"It's this one. A boss from Shanxi offered me a price, but I didn't sell it. White Lion, come back..."

Zhuang Rui called Bai Shi behind him, then said to Ouyang Jun, "Fourth Brother, let me introduce you. This is my childhood friend, Liu Chuan. You can get him a membership card here later."

Zhuang Rui's temperament is similar to Song Jun's. Once he gets along with you, he never beats around the bush. Of course, if you ask him for a favor, he will definitely do his best. He has a good impression of his cousin Ouyang Jun, so he asked for a card right away.

"Alright, this is the first time you've asked Fourth Brother for help, how could I not give you face? Liu Chuan, right? Bring me your ID card later."

Ouyang Jun didn't show much enthusiasm towards Liu Chuan. He was only doing this out of respect for his cousin; otherwise, he wouldn't know who Liu Chuan was.

"Thank you, Fourth Brother..."

Liu Chuan smiled and nodded to Ouyang Jun. He knew this man was someone of importance, and he also knew this was the way these privileged young masters behaved. He didn't feel slighted, but he was curious about how Zhuang Rui knew this person.

"You haven't had dinner yet, have you? I've had it prepared. Go eat first. Brother Song and the others are waiting for you in Building 1." Ouyang Jun didn't lead Zhuang Rui into Building 1, but instead walked to a building next door. Once inside, Zhuang Rui realized that it was actually a restaurant.

"Fourth Brother, didn't Yue Jing say there were no restaurants when he came last time?"

Zhuang Rui was a little puzzled. Last time he came with Yue Jing, they only ate some fruits and vegetables. Then Ouyang Jun treated them to dinner, which was also in Building No. 1. Why not in this restaurant?

"Yue Xiaoliu? That kid came here to pick up women. You actually expected him to bring you here?"

Ouyang Jun curled his lips. There weren't many people eating in the restaurant, so he didn't go to a private room and sat down directly in the main hall. Although it was called the main hall, there were only three or four tables. It seemed that the restaurant had prepared everything in advance. As soon as they sat down, cold dishes and cooked dishes were served together.

Zhuang Rui was speechless. He remembered that Yue Jing was also quite hungry when he came here last time. It seemed that he would rather have a beautiful woman than his stomach.

Zhuang Rui and Liu Chuan weren't exactly pampered either, so their meals were simple and casual. After quickly eating two bowls of rice, they barely touched the dishes before following Ouyang Jun back to Building No. 1, where a group of people were still waiting. It turned out that Song Jun had already announced that several people had brought Tibetan mastiffs today to compare them.

"Wow, what a big thing." This woman's voice easily aroused men's fantasies.

Shh, goodness, this is terrible.

"Yun Lao Er, your Tibetan Mastiff isn't up to par."

"Where did this huge thing come from? It looks like a lion!"

As soon as the door was pushed open, more than twenty pairs of eyes in the hall focused on the white lion next to Zhuang Rui. Instantly, a gasp filled the entire room. After the initial shock, everyone started discussing among themselves.

In this hall, besides Liu Chuan's black lion, there were three other Tibetan mastiffs. When Song Jun's golden lion saw the white lion and his brother, it immediately went over and rubbed its big head against the white lion's neck to show affection. However, the white lion still ignored it and followed closely behind Zhuang Rui.

As for the other two Tibetan mastiffs, their performance was not so good. When the white lion first came in, the two of them were a bit defiant and bared their teeth at the white lion. However, the white lion glared at them and let out a low growl, which scared the two Tibetan mastiffs, which were not of purebred origin, so they tucked their tails between their legs and hid behind their master, which drew a burst of laughter.

"Zhuang Rui, Liu Chuan, come here, let me introduce you to some friends..."

Song Jun's voice came from the crowd. He was the one who had just mocked Yun Lao Er. Zhuang Rui bringing Bai Shi today had given him a lot of face.

“Brother Song, Zhuang Rui will be down in a bit. I have some things to discuss with him...” Ouyang Jun pulled Zhuang Rui aside, gesturing for him to come with him to the second floor.

"Go on, come down soon, everyone. See? Now you believe me, right? This is just a puppy. When it grows up, it will be about the same size as that snow mastiff."

Behind him came the boasting of the Song army, and several people next to him started chatting with Liu Chuan. It was true that this place had high thresholds and required status, but if you had the ability, you would be welcomed.

...

Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun entered a well-soundproofed room. The white lion lay at Zhuang Rui's feet, making Ouyang Jun extremely envious. Bringing this big guy into the venue would definitely steal the spotlight from all the female celebrities.

"Fourth Brother, have you talked to Uncle about that? I've persuaded Mom. As long as Grandpa agrees, she can come to Beijing anytime..." After sitting down, Zhuang Rui asked directly.

"Grandpa hasn't been feeling well lately, he's basically bedridden. My dad was afraid that my aunt's visit would upset him, so he didn't dare mention it. But Grandma was so happy to hear that my aunt was coming, she talked about it for ages yesterday..."

Ouyang Jun went back to the old man's place yesterday. Although he hasn't mentioned this to Ouyang Gang yet, Zhuang Rui's maternal grandmother already knows about it.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui lowered his head and pondered for a moment before speaking, "Fourth Brother, could you arrange for me to meet my maternal grandparents? If they're willing to accept me as their grandson, it would mean they've forgiven my mother. Otherwise, my mother wouldn't need to come to Beijing..."

Zhuang Rui's words were just an excuse. When he saw his mother's sad appearance, he made up his mind to make sure that his mother and parents could meet. He wanted to see his maternal

grandparents so that he could use his spiritual energy to help the two elderly people to improve their health, which could be considered as fulfilling his filial duty to his mother.

"No problem at all. Grandma was overjoyed when she found out you were coming yesterday. How about this, we'll go together tomorrow night. Sigh, if it weren't for you, I really wouldn't dare to see Grandpa. Although he can't hit people with his cane anymore, his glare is still quite intimidating..."

Ouyang Jun grew up with his grandfather and was often scolded by the old man, which left him with a psychological scar. This was one of the reasons why he was unwilling to enter officialdom. Being an official meant having to keep a straight face all day, which was too tiring.

"Okay, I'll go buy some gifts tomorrow during the day. What kind of things do Grandpa and Grandma like?"

"Don't buy anything. The old man likes guns. Can you even buy them?" Ouyang Jun was right. The old man was sick, and there were many people visiting him. He shouldn't lack anything.

"Well... wait a minute, I need to take this call."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to speak, the phone rang. It was Miao Feifei who had arrived. Of course, she also brought her Beijing dog license. Although Beijing does not allow large dogs, it depends on the person.

"Tell her to come up."

Ouyang Jun said from the side, "The important business is over. We don't need to worry about others hearing what we're about to say."

"Here you are, this is the courtyard house you're looking for. I've brought all the photos. Take a look first. If you have time tomorrow, I'll take you to a few more places."

While Miao Feifei was coming up, Ouyang Jun took out a file folder and tossed it to Zhuang Rui. In 2004, although courtyard houses were in high demand, they could still be found if Ouyang Jun asked for one.

## Chapter 288 The Grand Mansion (Part Two)

"You found a place so quickly?"

This matter, which was only discussed on the phone yesterday, was already resolved today. Zhuang Rui, clearly unaware of the power these privileged sons of officials in Beijing wielded, took the document bag with some astonishment and began to peruse it.

There aren't that many courtyard houses in Beijing, as years of demolition have greatly reduced their number. However, there are still quite a few that remain. A few years ago, the government designated more than forty historical and cultural conservation areas in the city, preserving them as cultural heritage.

Thirty of these protected areas are located in the inner city, where emperors and generals lived in ancient times. They surround the Forbidden City and are in relatively good locations. These courtyard houses are protected by policy and are generally not demolished unless there are very special circumstances.

With over forty hutong areas, there are quite a few old houses left, and with a local strongman like Ouyang Jun around, it wouldn't be too difficult for Zhuang Rui to buy a courtyard house.

However, Zhuang Rui had previously researched the situation of courtyard houses in Beijing. His requirements were quite high. He didn't like small courtyard houses like the one with only one courtyard, but rather a complex courtyard house with several courtyards, the kind that wealthy families used to live in.

A typical small courtyard house consists of a main house facing north, plus east and west wing rooms enclosing the courtyard. It is a relatively simple courtyard house and is the most common type of courtyard house nowadays, just like the one that old men used to live in.

There are also medium-sized courtyard houses, which are separated by a wall and connected by a curved moon gate. The main house and side rooms of a medium-sized courtyard house are naturally twice as many as those of a small courtyard house. In ancient times, they were generally inhabited by people with relatively wealthy families.

What Zhuang Rui wanted to buy, however, was a large courtyard house, typically the residence of high-ranking officials and nobles in ancient times. These houses had numerous front and back courtyards and were extremely particular about their architectural layout. They were usually complex courtyard houses, consisting of multiple courtyards connected in a longitudinal direction.

Large courtyard houses have numerous courtyards, including front courtyard, back courtyard, east courtyard, west courtyard, main courtyard, side courtyard, cross courtyard, study courtyard, enclosed courtyard, stable, first courtyard, second courtyard, third courtyard, etc., with covered walkways connecting all parts of the courtyard, covering a very large area.

It should be like the mansion where Bai Laoqi lived in the TV series "The Grand Mansion Gate," a grand mansion with artificial hills and gardens.

Zhuang Rui wanted just this kind of place. In recent years, he had wanted his mother to live permanently in Beijing. A larger place would be more suitable for growing flowers and plants, birds, and fish, which would be much more cost-effective than buying a high-rise apartment building or a villa in the suburbs.

Zhuang Rui isn't particularly demanding when it comes to food and clothing, but he's very picky about his living environment. He used to be in a cramped situation, even living in a tiny rented room in the Zhonghai shantytown. But now that he has money, his first priority is housing, which is actually a form of investment.

The apartment Zhuang Rui bought in China Overseas for one million yuan six months ago has now appreciated to one million eight hundred thousand yuan, and the price is still rising. So, spending money on a house not only makes him feel comfortable, but also increases its value. Therefore, Zhuang Rui is definitely willing to spend money on buying a house.

However, the prices of these courtyard houses vary greatly depending on their size. Small and medium-sized courtyard houses are generally 10,000 to 20,000 yuan per square meter, and you can buy one with a few million yuan. But large courtyard houses are much more expensive and are extremely rare. You should know that there are quite a few wealthy people who like this kind of architecture.

Zhuang Rui took a closer look. The materials that Ouyang Jun brought contained eight courtyard houses scattered throughout the capital. The materials included the layout, location, and even a simple floor plan of the courtyard houses, which was very detailed.

The largest of these courtyard houses covers an area of over 5,000 square meters, practically a small estate. However, the price is astonishingly high, requiring 200 million RMB, which is beyond Zhuang Rui's current financial means.

"Fourth Brother, are these government houses being put up for auction too?"

Some of these courtyards were sold by real estate agencies, some were listed with auction companies, and two others belonged to government agencies, which puzzled Zhuang Rui.

"There was no government before. These courtyard houses were just assigned to some departments as offices after liberation, and then somehow ended up belonging to those units. Now all government offices are unified, so these courtyard houses are vacant. But they don't plan to sell them. I brought them here for you to see first, and we'll talk about it if you like them..."

Since Ouyang Jun was able to obtain all the information, he must be confident. While he might not be able to intimidate ordinary businessmen, his influence is evident when dealing with government officials. Besides, it's not their own property; why would they bother offending Ouyang Jun?

"This price is way too expensive. Even if you like it, you have to have the money to buy it." Zhuang Rui pointed to the courtyard house, which was over 5,000 square meters, and smiled wryly.

"Hmm? You're still short of money? Isn't that jade mine a golden egg?"

"Fourth Brother, that mine has only been open for a few days, how can we expect to make money so quickly..."

Zhuang Rui skipped over the large courtyard and continued looking down. He had just been saying that more than 5,000 square meters was too big. It was too spacious for just the two of them, mother and son.

"Zhuang Rui, I'm here! Wow, White Lion, it's been so long..."

Zhuang Rui, who was looking at the documents, heard Miao Feifei's voice. He looked up and saw that Officer Miao had already run to the side of the white lion and was stroking the white lion's fur with her hands. The white lion opened its eyes and saw that it was a familiar person. It lazily lay down on the ground, closed its eyes, and enjoyed itself very comfortably.

Miao Feifei's actions made Ouyang Jun extremely envious. He said to Zhuang Rui, "Brother, can you tell it so I can touch it too?"

Before Zhuang Rui could reply, the white lion opened its eyes and let out a low growl at Ouyang Jun, startling him so much that Ouyang Jun waved his hands repeatedly, shouting, "Fine, fine, I won't touch it anymore..."

"Zhuang Rui, here you go. This is the first time I've ever asked someone for a personal favor." Miao Feifei said as she took out a green ID card from her bag and tossed it to Zhuang Rui, but Ouyang Jun, who was sitting nearby, snatched it away.

"City dog ownership license?"

When Ouyang Jun saw the name on the ID, his gaze turned somewhat strange as he looked at Zhuang Rui and Miao Feifei. He knew that Miao Feifei, who appeared gentle and charming, was actually a female tyrant inside, and had an excessive sense of justice. He had never heard of her doing favors for private individuals before.

"There must be something going on, something untoward."

Seeing the tone of Miao Feifei's voice when she spoke to Zhuang Rui, Ouyang Jun was also full of admiration for Zhuang Rui. His little brother was really a hidden talent, actually managing to handle this little firecracker.

However, Zhuang Rui's mind was focused on the documents in his hand, and without looking up, he said, "Feifei, I'll treat you to a big meal later."

"I don't need you to treat me to dinner. I have the day after tomorrow off. How about you come with me to Panjiayuan? If we can find a treasure, we'll have made a profit."

Miao Feifei wasn't very interested in shopping for clothes, but she had a deep impression of her experience visiting the antique market in Zhonghai last time.

"the day after tomorrow?"

Zhuang Rui glanced at the documents in his hand, then turned to Ouyang Jun and asked, "Fourth Brother, I've taken a liking to two courtyards. Can we go see them tomorrow during the day?"

Which two places?

When Ouyang Jun saw the photos Zhuang Rui pointed to, he nodded and said, "Okay, this one is a house in Xuanwu District, which used to be used as a street office. The other one is listed with an auction company because the owner went abroad. I'll drive you there first thing tomorrow morning, and we'll go take a look."

"Okay, Feifei, I have time the day after tomorrow, but you can't go shopping in your police uniform."

In places like antique markets, the origins of the goods are diverse, and many items are unearthed from tombs. Therefore, whether you own a shop or set up a stall, you are very wary of the police.

"Zhuang Rui, you're buying another house? I'm going tomorrow too..."

Miao Feifei released Bai Shi and sat down next to Zhuang Rui. She took the stack of documents from his hand without any politeness and started flipping through them. Her actions made Ouyang Jun increasingly believe that the two were having an affair. He was thinking about whether he should go back and tell his father that it would be a great thing if the two families could get married.

When Zhuang Rui heard that Miao Feifei was also going, he asked curiously, "Don't you have to work tomorrow? Is the criminal investigation team so free? By the way, aren't you a deputy captain?"

After Miao Feifei was transferred back to Beijing from Zhonghai, she became the deputy captain of the Criminal Investigation Brigade of the XX District Branch. Since Beijing is a municipality directly under the

central government, its level is higher than that of a provincial capital. So she is already a deputy director. If she were in a prefecture-level city, she could be the director of a branch bureau.

Zhuang Rui's words must have offended Miao Feifei for some reason. Officer Miao glared at her and said fiercely, "What do you care if I'm busy or not? If you don't want me to go, then forget it."

In fact, Zhuang Rui did not understand Officer Miao's current situation. Although he had been promoted after his training, he was still in the training phase. The fastest promotion in the public security system was in the criminal investigation team. If he stayed in the branch office for another two years, he could be promoted to the position of director, and then his career development would be even greater.

However, Miao Feifei's family couldn't let her spend all her time staking out and arresting people with a bunch of men. So, Miao Feifei's duties as deputy captain were to be responsible for logistical support and file management. These tasks were originally handled by specialists, so she didn't have much to do at work now.

"Alright, let's go together tomorrow then. Fourth Brother, I'll stay at your place tonight..."

Zhuang Rui glanced at the white lion at his feet, thinking that bringing this big guy into the hotel was probably impossible. He decided to stay at his uncle's house for the night instead.

"Zhuang Rui, what exactly is your relationship?"

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui was going to stay at Ouyang Jun's house, Officer Miao showed a hint of suspicion.

Chapter 289 The Grand Mansion (Part 3)

"Zhuang Rui is my cousin, my aunt's child.

Before Zhuang Rui could speak, Ouyang Jun suddenly interjected. Zhuang Rui gave him a strange look but didn't say anything more. It was the truth, and there was no need to deliberately hide it. Once it was said, it was said.

"You have an aunt?"

Miao Feifei opened her mouth in surprise. Given the status of the Ouyang family, their family members were basically known to others. Miao Feifei only knew that their grandfather had three sons, but she did not expect that there was also a daughter, who was Zhuang Rui's mother.

"Yes, my aunt has always lived in another city. Okay, let's go downstairs."

Ouyang Jun didn't say much this time. Since it concerned someone else's family privacy, Miao Feifei didn't press the matter further.

After descending into the hall, Zhuang Rui saw Liu Chuan boasting about his adventure in Tibet, his spittle flying everywhere. The group of people surrounding him were completely stunned. Although these people often went hunting and exploring, they had never encountered a pack of wild wolves before. They looked at Liu Chuan with envy in their eyes, wishing they were the protagonist in his story.

"By the way, could you arrange a place for my friend to stay?"

Zhuang Rui asked Ouyang Jun beside him, and Liu Chuan, who had a Tibetan Mastiff with him, was obviously not suitable to stay in a hotel.

"Let's stay at the club. The rooms here are no worse than those in a five-star hotel, and..."

Ouyang Jun glanced at Miao Feifei but didn't continue. Zhuang Rui naturally understood that what Ouyang Jun wanted to say was that if Liu Chuan was capable, he might even be able to hook up with a female celebrity to warm his bed.

"Fourth Brother, why don't I stay here too? Arrange a room next to Liu Chuan's..."

Zhuang Rui was a bit tired after driving all day. More importantly, he wanted to keep an eye on Liu Chuan to prevent the kid from getting carried away with his lust and actually hooking up with a minor celebrity. Otherwise, he would have let his old classmate down.

"Okay, the old man might not be free today either. Do you want to play for a while before going to rest, or do you want to go now?"

Ouyang Jun readily agreed. If Zhuang Rui went home to live, he would go back with him. Home was not as comfortable as the club where he could live.

"I'm going to rest first. I'm a little tired today. Fourth Brother, could you find someone to take Feifei home?"

Zhuang Rui wasn't particularly interested in the noisy crowd; he figured Liu Chuan could handle things like that. Like his mother, he preferred quiet.

"No need, I drove here. Zhuang Rui, call me first thing tomorrow morning. Miao Feifei waved her car keys, said goodbye to Zhuang Rui, and left on her own.

"Brother, I didn't realize you could tame this little firecracker. Impressive, truly impressive."

After Miao Feifei walked out the door, Ouyang Jun gave Zhuang Rui a thumbs up with a smile. In terms of appearance and family background, Miao Feifei was one of the best in Beijing. There were quite a few people who wanted to marry into the Miao family. However, Miao Feifei was known for her strong personality. She had been arranged to go on several blind dates by her family, but she didn't like any of them. No one dared to force her.

"Fourth Brother, you can't say things like that. I'm fine with it, but Officer Miao is a good person. It's not good for his reputation if this gets out." Zhuang Rui quickly denied it after hearing Ouyang Jun's words.

"Still not admitting it? That girl's eyes are all wrong with you. Keep up the good work and win her over, I support you, brother..." Ouyang Jun chuckled, with a knowing look on his face.

"Don't talk nonsense, Fourth Brother. I have a girlfriend. You go ahead with your work, I'm going to take a shower and go to bed..."

After Zhuang Rui entered the room, he pushed Ouyang Jun out. If he let his cousin continue talking, who knew what unpleasant things he might say.

"I said you... Fine, I'll leave, I'm going to sleep with the big star."

Ouyang Jun wanted to say a few more words, but when he saw the white lion blocking the door, he became a little timid. However, before leaving, he couldn't help but tease Zhuang Rui, saying that people are prone to getting a sore throat in this hot weather.

Zhuang Rui was indeed provoked. Ouyang Jun's concubine was the dream lover of everyone from children to the middle-aged and elderly. Although Qin Xuanbing was no less beautiful, she was far less charming in her demeanor. Zhuang Rui had to go to the bathroom and take a cold shower to calm down.

"Damn it, if Xuanbing doesn't come back before the New Year, I'm going to England..."

Zhuang Rui lay in bed and made up his mind. Although they talked on the phone every day, and Qin Xuanbing was more open than before, often kissing on the phone, it was too late to solve the immediate problem. Every time they finished talking, Zhuang Rui had the urge to trouble the Fifth Sister.

...

The next day, Zhuang Rui got up very early, went to the restaurant for breakfast, and took the white lion for a walk. There weren't many people staying there, and Zhuang Rui was the only one in the restaurant besides the staff.

After dinner, Zhuang Rui woke Liu Chuan up. The guy probably slept very late last night, as he opened the door with dark circles under his eyes.

How was the harvest yesterday?

Zhuang Rui took a bottle of drink from the refrigerator in the room, his eyes scanning the room. Thankfully, there didn't seem to be any traces of a woman's presence.

"Hey, Wood, we're rich! Do you know how many people ordered our Tibetan Mastiff puppies yesterday?"

Liu Chuan, who was brushing his teeth in the bathroom, excitedly ran out with a mouthful of foam after hearing Zhuang Rui's words.

"Get lost, stay away from me..." Seeing the foam splattering from Liu Chuan's mouth, Zhuang Rui kicked him in the butt.

"Listen to me, I got two breeding orders yesterday, 300,000 for each breeding. Also, eight people have ordered puppies for next year. We'll see if they're purebred. As long as they're similar to my black lion, each one can sell for three million. How about that, Wood, you're rich now!"

Liu Chuan ran back to the bathroom, quickly rinsed his mouth, and then rushed back to tell Zhuang Rui about it as if it were a treasure.

"Holy crap, really? There are so many?"

Zhuang Rui was also startled by Liu Chuan's words. This deal, all things considered, was worth more than 20 million yuan, which was no less than what he made from gambling on stones.

"What's wrong? Regretting it now? Who told you to be so generous and give all your shares to Brother Zhou? Otherwise, the dividends from this deal alone would have been over six million. How about I give you some of my shares?"

Liu Chuan knew that Zhuang Rui transferred his shares to Zhou Rui largely to keep Zhou Rui tied to the mastiff farm. However, this was a huge loss for Zhuang Rui, so Liu Chuan wanted to make up for it for him.

"Forget it, just transfer my 11% share to my account after you make money."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand. Although six million was a lot, it was far less than the jade mine in Xinjiang. Zhuang Rui had spoken with the Jade King yesterday. The mining was going very smoothly. More than

fifty tons of jade had already been mined, and the quality was quite good, with a value of around three hundred million.

Moreover, the jade content of this mine seems to be much higher than expected. The old man estimates that it can be mined for another two years, but the speed will not be as fast after that, and additional investment will be needed in mining equipment. If the jade market can maintain the current price, the total profit of this jade mine should be over 1.5 billion.

However, the money won't come so quickly. Such a large batch of jade raw materials will be released into the market gradually. Otherwise, it will have a significant impact on the jade raw material market, which is something the Jade King absolutely does not want to see.

Compared to the 150 million yuan he was about to receive, Zhuang Rui wasn't so concerned about the 10 million yuan from the mastiff farm. Given Zhou Rui's character and their friendship, Zhuang Rui was willing to give up that share.

While the two were chatting, Ouyang Jun called. Since Liu Chuan had nothing else to do, he decided to go with Zhuang Rui to look at houses.

...

Zhuang Rui couldn't afford the 5,000-square-meter four-bedroom apartment for the time being. What he had his eye on was a large duplex courtyard house of more than 2,000 square meters, located in a historical and cultural protection area in Xuanwu District, very close to Liulichang, just a few minutes' walk away.

This courtyard is composed of five small courtyards, which would definitely be considered a grand mansion in ancient times.

Judging from the floor plan, this courtyard house includes five courtyards and two gardens, covering an area of more than 500 square meters. It has everything from rockeries and fish ponds to pavilions. The courtyards are connected by covered corridors, which is a very clever design. As for what other facilities are inside, you will have to see it in person to find out.

As for the other courtyards, Zhuang Ruixian's location wasn't good, and they were also a bit small, so he decided to look at this one first. If he was satisfied, he would make a purchase. After all, it's not like you can just buy a place and move in right away; you'll definitely need to renovate it.

After going downstairs, the three of them got into a car. Ouyang Jun first picked up Miao Feifei before heading towards Xuanwu District. When they arrived, before even getting out of the car, Zhuang Rui had already fallen in love with the place.

Coming from the outside, the road is lined with two-story buildings, mostly teahouses and taverns, as well as some well-organized shops selling souvenirs. Cars rarely pass through here, but when Ouyang Jun drove by, he attracted a lot of curious glances.

Upon entering the protected area, Zhuang Rui discovered that this place was even quieter than the courtyard house where the old man lived. Everywhere there were alleyways, blue bricks and yellow tiles, mounting stones at the entrance of the houses, and bright green moss in the cracks of the alleys, all revealing a sense of the vicissitudes of time.

Walking here, Zhuang Rui felt as if he had returned to the old house where he lived in his childhood, and his expression became somewhat dazed.

"Come on, what are you staring at?"

Liu Chuan gave Zhuang Rui a push from behind, which brought Zhuang Rui back to his senses. He looked ahead and saw Ouyang Jun talking to a middle-aged man, with a man in his thirties standing next to him. Zhuang Rui quickly walked over.

"Zhuang Rui, this is Director Zheng from Xuanwu District. This courtyard belongs to their district. Let Director Zheng introduce it to you. Director Zheng, this is my younger brother..."

When Ouyang Jun spoke, his eyes darted around and he didn't look at Director Zheng at all. As for the people next to Director Zheng, he didn't even introduce them. He was putting on airs.

"No, no, Mr. Zhuang, you can just call me Xiao Zheng..."

Zhuang Rui didn't know who Director Zheng was, but in front of Ouyang Jun, he obviously couldn't stand up straight. After hearing Ouyang Jun's words, he quickly stretched out his hands, shook hands tightly with Zhuang Rui, and handed over his business card.

"Office Director?"

So this guy in front of me is actually a division-level cadre. One step up and he'll be a department-level cadre. If it weren't for this business card, Zhuang Rui would have thought he was just a gofer. They say you don't know how small your official position is until you go to Beijing, and that's absolutely true.

"Director Zheng, would you please introduce us to him?"

As Zhuang Rui was speaking, he handed over a cigarette. Ouyang Jun, who was standing next to him, immediately recognized that it was the giant panda that had been taken from his own place. He couldn't help but feel annoyed. Using his brother's things to do favors, this cousin was really not kind.

Anyone in Beijing who works within the system knows this cigarette brand. Director Zheng's eyes immediately lit up. It turned out that this ordinary-looking young man in front of him also had connections. You know, this cigarette brand is exclusively for leaders at the ministerial level and above; ordinary people can't get their hands on it.

"Mr. Zhuang, you're too kind. This is Xiao Li from our nature reserve. He knows the details better. Let's look around and talk as we go..." Director Zheng said, as he walked to the front of the group with an agility that seemed disproportionate to his size.

"Mr. Zhuang, everything inside this walled compound belongs to this courtyard house. The main gate is ahead, please follow me..."

Xiao Li had been instructed beforehand and knew that these people were of great importance. He was very respectful and led the way while introducing the place: "According to records, this house was built during the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty. It was inhabited by high-ranking officials of the Six Ministries and above. Moreover, it has been renovated throughout the ages and is still in relatively good condition..."

As they spoke, the group had already arrived in front of the gate. Zhuang Rui looked up at the gate, feeling a slight surge of excitement. This was truly... magnificent.

Zhuang Rui had seen the gate of this courtyard house in the TV series "The Grand Mansion Gate," but only now, being there in person, could he truly feel the awe this ancient architecture evoked in him.

The two large doors, each over three meters wide and high, resemble a wall. The gatehouse, threshold, door frame, door nails, doorposts, door knockers, animal-face door knockers, and couplets on both sides are all present. Zhuang Rui could imagine the grand procession of officials in ancient times when they walked out of these doors.

The gate is surrounded by brick walls painted with colors. There are also painted decorations on the beams, pillars, doors, windows, eaves, and rafters. However, it seems that no one has lived here for a long time, as the colors have faded and the walls look a bit dilapidated.

"Mr. Ouyang, Mr. Zhuang, please come in and have a look..."

Director Zheng held a key that looked like a hydraulic rod and struggled for a long time to open the large lock that could be considered an antique. He then pushed open half of the heavy solid wood door with great difficulty and let everyone in.

Chapter 290 Not Enough Money!

Upon entering through the main gate, you are greeted by a small courtyard. Passing through the courtyard, you enter through a central gate—an exquisitely crafted hanging flower gate, its design delicate and quite ornate. Behind the hanging flower gate, near the eaves pillars, is another door, called a screen door, also known as a central gate. Its function is similar to a ceremonial gate; it is normally closed, and people enter through the side corridors in front of it. It is only opened for important events or the arrival of distinguished guests.

The eaves and rafters of this screen door are painted blue-green, while the gable ends are painted red. The round rafter ends are painted with a blue, white, and black pattern resembling a halo of pearls, while the square rafter ends are painted with a blue background and gold swastika or diamond pattern. The center of the front eaves features brocade patterns, flowers, antique motifs, etc., and the hanging lotus column heads on both sides are painted in a variety of colors according to the carved patterns.

Although the colors on these doors have faded slightly over time, the former glory is still faintly visible, and this place has witnessed the rise and fall of a dynasty.

As soon as they entered, the white lion and the black lion darted into the yard and disappeared in the blink of an eye. Zhuang Rui wasn't worried; the yard was clearly abandoned, the gate was locked, and there was probably no one inside.

Xiao Li, who was following closely behind Zhuang Rui, spoke up: "Mr. Zhuang, this is the central gate, which is usually not opened. It's just a formality. In ancient times, when an imperial edict arrived or a distinguished guest came, the so-called 'opening the central gate' meant opening this gate, which was more of a courtesy..."

"In the courtyard house, all the doors connecting the different courtyards are hanging flower gates. This design imitates the shape of the archway, which is both gorgeous and practical."

As Xiao Li led the way, he explained things to everyone. At this moment, Xiao Li didn't seem like a government employee, but rather a tour guide. He knew this courtyard house like the back of his hand. From the feng shui layout of the courtyard to an inconspicuous decoration on the hanging flower gate, he could explain everything in detail, citing classical texts and speaking eloquently, which Zhuang Rui and the others listened to with great interest.

After passing through the exquisitely crafted hanging flower gate and gatehouse, you enter the front courtyard, a typical layout of a small courtyard house: main house, east and west wing rooms, and a hanging flower gate on the east side leading directly to the middle courtyard. Entering the middle courtyard reveals a large garden, but it has long been neglected and is now abandoned.

Beyond the middle courtyard is the back courtyard. These three courtyards were all places for people to live. Generally, servants lived in the front courtyard, younger generations lived in the middle courtyard, and the eldest generation lived in the back courtyard. Some side rooms were even converted into studies, living rooms, and kitchens. In ancient times, large families had separate kitchens for each branch of the family, so there were several kitchens.

Zhuang Rui roughly counted along the way and found that there were more than twenty rooms that could be used as accommodations, enough to open a small inn. And these rooms were only half of the entire courtyard. There was also a garden in front and back, with ponds and pavilions. It was clear how luxurious the lives of officials in ancient times were.

"Mr. Zhuang, what do you think of this courtyard? Many people have wanted to buy it in the past two years, but it's not available for sale in the district. However, if you're interested, we'll definitely give it priority..."

Actually, Director Zheng wasn't very clear about Zhuang Rui's background, but the district leader had specifically called him over yesterday and given him some instructions, telling him to treat the man well and that if he really liked the house, he should agree to it as long as the conditions weren't too unreasonable.

Director Zheng knew that this courtyard was the boss's prized possession. Although it had been vacant for several years, he had never been willing to sell it. Now, his attitude had taken a complete 180-degree turn, and he even asked Director Zheng to personally receive the leader. It is said that the office director is very busy. Director Zheng has to take care of the leader's eating, drinking, sleeping and other needs.

Upon arriving today, Director Zheng's first sight of Ouyang Jun stirred up a commotion within him. Beijing is a vast city, and most people wouldn't recognize Ouyang Jun. However, Director Zheng had happened to have dealings with him before—the kind of dealings where he remembered Ouyang Jun, but Ouyang Jun didn't remember him. Seeing Ouyang Jun's attitude towards Zhuang Rui, Director Zheng became even more cautious when speaking to Zhuang Rui.

"The courtyard is quite nice and quiet, but it seems like no one has lived there for a long time, hasn't it?"

Zhuang Rui frowned when he saw the overgrown weeds in the garden, some of which stretched along the stone path and even to the door of the house. He thought that if he bought it, he probably wouldn't be able to move in for a while.

"Mr. Zhuang, this place has been vacant since the district office building was built. As you can see, it's such a large area, it would be too much trouble to maintain, and the budget is also quite tight, so it has been left unused..."

Director Zheng was speaking the truth. If such a large courtyard were to be repaired every year, it would cost at least tens of thousands of yuan. Although the amount of money is not much, it should be used wisely. Subsidizing such an idle courtyard is not as good as giving each person a few hundred yuan bonus during the Spring Festival.

Since entering, Miao Feifei had been touching and exploring everything with great excitement. Hearing that Zhuang Rui seemed somewhat dissatisfied, she quickly said, "Zhuang Rui, this place is nice. I used to live in a courtyard house when I was a child, but later we moved to Xinchihua Garden. That villa wasn't as comfortable as the courtyard house at all..."

"New World Garden?"

Director Zheng was stunned again. That was the location of the ministerial building, where no official below the ministerial level lived. It turned out that this ordinary-looking girl had a very important background.

"Mr. Zhuang, rest assured, if you decide to buy it, we will send someone to clean and tidy it up, and we guarantee that you will have a brand new feeling."

Countless people wanted to buy this courtyard house, but the district government had been reluctant to approve it. However, the situation has now reversed, and it seems that Director Zheng is begging Zhuang Rui to buy it. This is understandable, as Zhuang Rui buying the house would create a positive connection, since the cultural protection zone is still under the district's jurisdiction, and there will naturally be opportunities for interaction in the future.

"Hmm, let me check again. White Lion, come back..."

Zhuang Rui nodded noncommittally, but didn't say whether he would buy it or not. With his shout, the white lion darted out from a hanging flower gate and ran to Zhuang Rui. Its big head kept rubbing against Zhuang Rui, clearly very satisfied with the environment.

Zhuang Rui hesitated slightly. The mansion had been uninhabited for a long time and looked somewhat dilapidated and lacked a sense of human presence. Especially during the rainy summer months, the overgrown weeds made Zhuang Rui feel uncomfortable. Moreover, all the rooms were empty. Zhuang Rui had just gone into one of the rooms to take a look, and the roof seemed to be leaking. Renovating it would be no small project.

"Fourth Brother, what do you think of that courtyard you mentioned?"

Zhuang Rui thought about it for a moment and decided to look around more and compare prices from different vendors.

“Okay, let’s go take a look.” Ouyang Jun didn’t mind; he was here today to support Zhuang Rui.

"Mr. Zhuang, which courtyard are you referring to?" Director Zheng asked hurriedly as he saw Zhuang Rui and the others about to leave.

“It’s a courtyard house in Xicheng, a bit smaller than yours. It’s a house in Xicheng District,” Zhuang Rui replied casually as he walked out.

"Hey, Mr. Zhuang, which one are you talking about? That one isn't even as good as this one. Several families have lived there for over ten years and refuse to move out. The West District government can't take it back, and they've made a fuss about it several times. Even if you buy that house, I'm afraid you won't be able to move in..."

"What? Director Zheng, is this true?"

Upon hearing Director Zheng's words, Zhuang Rui stopped in his tracks; he had no desire to get involved in those disputes.

"Mr. Zhuang, would I lie to you about this? You can find out anytime you ask," Director Zheng said confidently.

"Fourth Brother?" Zhuang Rui looked at Ouyang Jun, guessing that he didn't know about this either.

"Let me ask him for you..."

Ouyang Jun walked to the side and made a phone call. After a few minutes, his face turned angry, and he cursed a few times. After hanging up the phone, he walked over and said, "Old Zheng was right. That bastard didn't even tell me. I'll deal with him later."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui turned around and went back into the courtyard. He had also inquired with Song Jun and found out that there were indeed not many large courtyard houses available now. If he didn't buy one, he was afraid he would miss this opportunity.

After standing there and pondering for a moment, Zhuang Rui made up his mind and said, "Director Zheng, I want this land, but the price..."

The information given to Zhuang Rui included the price of the property: 40,000 RMB per square meter, totaling 2,100 square meters and 84 million RMB. Once this money was spent, plus the cost of repairs, Zhuang Rui would be almost penniless again, which was one of the reasons for his hesitation.

"Mr. Zhuang, this house has been in disrepair for a long time. If you buy it, you'll be helping the district solve a problem. Naturally, we'll give you the best price. How about 35,000 yuan per square meter?"

Thirty-five thousand?

Zhuang Rui was a little taken aback. Wasn't Director Zheng being too easy to talk to? He gave him a discount of over ten million yuan with just a few words.

"Mr. Zhuang, to be honest, we need to give an explanation to all parties involved after selling this house. But please don't worry, let me discuss this with Secretary Liu. Please wait a moment..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui's noncommittal expression, Director Zheng also picked up his phone and went to the side to make a call. Only then did Zhuang Rui realize, "Dude, I didn't say anything. I just repeated your price."

After about five or six minutes, Director Zheng came over and said, "It's not a good idea for these houses to remain unsold in the district. Secretary Liu just gave instructions that the price is 30,000 yuan per square meter. Mr. Zhuang, do you think this price is acceptable?"

"Sixty-three million? Fourth Brother, what do you think?"

Zhuang Rui turned to Ouyang Jun. He hadn't expected that these few words would bring the price down by more than 20 million compared to the initial quote. However, judging from the dilapidated state of the house, he estimated that the renovation would cost at least 10 million. After calculating, he wouldn't have much money left.

Zhuang Rui only now realized that the more than 100 million yuan he had left in the bank didn't seem to be enough.