

Golden 291

Chapter 291 Grandson (Part 1)

"Brother, this price is pretty reasonable. How about it, do you have the money? Want your fourth brother to help you out?"

Ouyang Jun was fully aware of the shady dealings involved. Secretary Liu belonged to his family's faction, so of course he'd give him face over such a small matter, since he wouldn't have to pay a single penny out of his own pocket.

"Sixty-three million... Fourth Brother, how much do you think it would cost to renovate this house?"

Zhuang Rui did some mental calculations. The total amount he had earned from gambling on stones and finding some bargains in antiques was over 116 million. He also had a million from selling that cabochon, and several hundred thousand from the money his brother-in-law had recently transferred to his account. These were negligible.

However, he spent 16 million yuan to buy a villa in Pengcheng, and then transferred another 10 million yuan to the Jade King for investing in a jade mine in Xinjiang. Now, roughly speaking, he should still have more than 90 million yuan in cash on hand, which is more than enough to buy this house.

However, the house needs major repairs. Zhuang Rui is not familiar with the current market prices for renovations. He wants to know how much it would cost if he were to completely renovate this courtyard house.

"Don't ask me about this, I'm not a contractor..."

Ouyang Jun rolled his eyes at Zhuang Rui. "I'm just here to back you up. Do you really think I'm an expert?"

"Mr. Zhuang, there are several good renovation companies in our area. I can introduce them to you, and I'll definitely give you the most favorable price..."

Director Zheng, the head steward, has handled renovations many times. He even found the renovation company for the district office building, so he's quite familiar with the industry. Of course, there were benefits to helping renovation companies find work in the past, and if he were to introduce Zhuang Rui to this, he really wouldn't dare to pull any tricks.

Xiao Li, who was in the cultural preservation area, remained silent until Director Zheng was about to introduce a renovation company. Only then did he speak, saying, "Director Zheng, I'm afraid those renovation companies can't handle this job."

"Nonsense, if we can renovate the buildings in our district, why can't we renovate this apartment?"

Director Zheng looked at Xiao Li with some displeasure. A bookworm is a bookworm; he actually undermined his own efforts at a crucial moment.

Xiao Li realized that he had been too direct and quickly explained, "Director Zheng, that's not what I meant. The company you introduced must be of high quality."

However, most renovation companies are divided into commercial and residential renovations. This type of courtyard house must be renovated according to traditional antique restoration procedures to preserve its original character; otherwise, the renovated courtyard house might become a mishmash of elements.

Xiao Li still had some bookish habits, and his words gradually went astray, without noticing that Director Zheng's expression was getting increasingly unpleasant.

"Brother Li, what kind of people do you need to renovate this house?"

Zhuang Rui won't spend money on something worth tens of millions without getting to the bottom of it. If he buys it, renovates it, and it turns out to be a complete mess, then there's no way to get justice.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Xiao Li pushed up his glasses and said, "Generally, buildings like these require professionals in ancient building preservation to design the plans and supervise the entire construction process. Otherwise, the finished decoration will easily lose its original character."

There's a foreigner who bought a courtyard house in this protected area, and after the renovation, it looks completely different from what we expected. But since he's a foreigner, we can't really tell the difference. If Mr. Zhuang wants to live there himself, I think he should hire someone specializing in the restoration of ancient buildings. However, the profession of ancient building restoration has always been relatively niche, and many renovation companies don't have that kind of expertise..."

Zhuang Rui thought about it and realized it was true. He himself was a university graduate and knew that different disciplines were highly specialized. With the home and commercial decoration markets booming, specializing in ancient building restoration, as Xiao Li mentioned, was probably not a viable option. Besides, apart from the temples in the mountains, how many ancient buildings were left in the city? ~~69shux.com~~

"Fourth Brother, what do you think of this matter?"

Zhuang Rui turned to Ouyang Jun. He was unfamiliar with Beijing and didn't know anyone there. Where could he find an expert in ancient architecture?

"Brother, are you really going to buy it?" Ouyang Jun asked.

"purchase!"

Zhuang Rui nodded affirmatively. House prices have risen rapidly in recent years, and this is a courtyard house, which is becoming increasingly rare. Buying it will definitely not be a bad deal.

"Alright, I'll tell Secretary Wang about this later. Even if you want the top ancient building restoration experts in the country, we can bring them here."

Ouyang Jun's words reminded Zhuang Rui of his uncle's position, which was indeed the case. However, after thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui shook his head and said, "Fourth Brother, this is not appropriate. I think we should find some people with this major from universities."

Zhuang Rui is a very self-disciplined person. He didn't want to bother his uncle with such a small matter. If his mother found out, he would definitely be scolded.

"Okay, I'll take care of it for you. I'll find you a few professors from universities later, and you can pay for it..."

Ouyang Jun thought about it and realized that it was indeed a bit inappropriate to bother Secretary Wang with such a small matter. However, with his connections, finding a few teachers in this field would not be a problem. At most, he would just have to pay them a little money. After all, how many professors these days don't earn extra money on the side?

"Fourth Brother... it's up to you, just find me people who can produce blueprints and handle construction."

Zhuang Rui originally intended to find a few college students, but he didn't expect Ouyang Jun to have a higher goal. However, as long as it could be solved with money, Zhuang Rui didn't care much. Spending some money was better than owing favors.

The rest of the time was quite complicated. Miao Feifei had to go to work in the afternoon, so she left first. Ouyang Jun was also impatient to follow Zhuang Rui around doing these things. After handing Zhuang Rui over to Director Zheng, he also drove away. Zhuang Rui simply asked Liu Chuan to take Bai Shi back to the club. It was probably not suitable to take Bai Shi with him to the places they were going to today.

Zhuang Rui first followed Director Zheng to the district to sign the purchase contract, and then went to the housing management bureau to complete the transfer procedures. Zhuang Rui felt a little pained by the taxes. The stamp duty that both parties had to pay was not much, only 0.05%, which only amounted to more than 30,000 yuan. However, the buyer had to pay 3% deed tax and some other miscellaneous taxes, which added up to more than 2 million yuan.

"Mr. Zhuang, how about I have someone calculate the area to be smaller during the assessment, and we can also sign a new contract to lower the price?"

Director Zheng followed Zhuang Rui around, running errands. If it weren't for him, Zhuang Rui wouldn't even have been able to get close to the housing management bureau. Not to mention Zhuang Rui, even Director Zheng was a little shocked when he saw the tax money. You know, even in Beijing these days, more than two million yuan can buy a decent house.

"Fine, let's just calculate it based on the actual area..."

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment and decided it was best not to play any tricks. The assessed and measured area would be written on the property certificate. If the area was smaller now, it would definitely cause trouble if he wanted to sell the house in the future.

After swiping his card to pay, Zhuang Rui checked his bank balance and found he still had over 20 million yuan left. He couldn't help but smile bitterly to himself. He didn't know how much the renovation would cost. Should he ask Master Wu's apprentice to make a few more top-quality blood jade bracelets and auction them off to recoup some funds?

With Director Zheng accompanying them, the procedures went very smoothly. Usually, the housing management bureau's surveyors would take fifteen days to measure the house area, but the director had already said that he would send someone to the house tomorrow and try to hand over the land certificate and property certificate to Zhuang Rui within a week.

This was exactly what Zhuang Rui wanted to do. He also wanted to resolve these issues before returning to Pengcheng. After spending time with Miao Feifei tomorrow, Zhuang Rui planned to find a renovation company to move in, hoping to be able to move in before his next trip to Beijing.

...

"Mr. Zhuang, you've solved such a difficult problem for the district. How about I treat you to dinner tonight?"

After the matter was settled, Director Zheng extended an invitation to Zhuang Rui. In his view, if he could establish a relationship with Zhuang Rui, he would naturally have more dealings with Ouyang Jun in the future. Isn't that how relationships are built?

Zhuang Rui looked at his watch; it was almost five o'clock. He shook his head and said, "Director Zheng, it's not possible today. I have an appointment with my elders for dinner. I'll definitely invite you another day, after my new house is renovated."

"Okay, Mr. Zhuang, where are you going? I'll give you a ride."

Zhuang Rui didn't drive today. He had agreed to call Ouyang Jun after he finished his business, and Ouyang Jun would come pick him up.

"No need, Fourth Brother will pick me up later. Oh, by the way, Director Zheng, I need to trouble you with something. Could you have someone tidy up that yard, clear away the weeds, and also move everything out of the house? You see, I can't manage it all by myself..."

Zhuang Rui meant that everything in the house, except for the main building and the overall layout, should be cleared out. When he looked at it yesterday, there were still some broken pieces of furniture left inside. Those pieces of furniture were from the 1960s and 70s. If they were antiques, Zhuang Rui would have kept them.

"Okay, Mr. Zhuang, don't worry, I'll bring people over tomorrow and they'll definitely take care of it properly for you."

Upon hearing this, Director Zheng readily agreed. What's the purpose of this office? Isn't it just for doing odd jobs? Of course, Director Zheng wouldn't do it himself. There are plenty of idle people in there. If all else fails, he can hire a few cleaning staff; it won't cost much.

After Director Zheng left, Zhuang Rui called Ouyang Jun and then stood waiting at the entrance of the Housing Management Bureau. After more than half an hour, a Hongqi car slowly pulled up beside Zhuang Rui.

"Xiao Rui, get in the car..."

After the car window was rolled down, Zhuang Rui saw Ouyang Zhenwu sitting in the back seat, waving at him. Secretary Wang, whom he had met once before, got out of the passenger seat and opened the back door for Zhuang Rui.

"Thank you, I can do it myself."

Zhuang Rui greeted Secretary Wang, got into the car, and looked at Ouyang Zhenwu, saying, "Uncle, what brings you here?"

Chapter 292 Grandson (Part Two)

Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed seeing Ouyang Zhenwu. He had arrived in Beijing yesterday but hadn't visited his uncle yet; now it was his uncle who had come to pick him up.

"My workplace isn't far from here. I got a call from Xiaojun, so I came over on my way. Let's go..."

After seeing Secretary Wang get into the car, Ouyang Zhenwu signaled to the driver in front that they could watch the car, and the car slowly drove into the rush hour traffic.

"Xiao Rui, I heard from Xiao Jun that you bought a house and are looking for someone to renovate it, right?"

Ouyang Zhenwu didn't hide his conversation from his secretary and driver; Zhuang Rui's earlier use of the term "little uncle" had already clearly indicated their relationship.

"Renovation is easy enough; most renovation companies can do it. But the courtyard house I bought is a building from the Qing Dynasty. I'm worried that the renovation company might mess it up in some places, so I want to find someone who knows about ancient building restoration to supervise me. Why are you telling me all this, Brother Jun?"

Zhuang Rui had told Ouyang Jun before that he didn't need his uncle's help with this matter, but he didn't expect Ouyang Jun to still tell his father.

"What's wrong? Why aren't you contacting your uncle? Are you afraid he'll abuse his power?"

Ouyang Zhenwu saw through Zhuang Rui's thoughts and said with a smile, "I'll handle this privately. I have an old friend who teaches architecture at Peking University and is also an expert in the restoration of ancient buildings. He's in charge of the annual restoration work at the Palace Museum."

However, Professor Zhou is getting on in years. He can only offer guidance and suggestions; he might not be able to supervise the actual construction. I'll ask him again later and have him find one of your students to be the project supervisor.

When Secretary Wang and the driver, who were sitting in the front seat of the car, heard Ouyang Zhenwu's words, they were both stunned. They had never seen their boss ask for favors in private before. He would actually ask for help for his nephew over a mere house.

Ouyang Zhenwu's words warmed Zhuang Rui's heart. His uncle had even considered such small things. He could feel Ouyang Zhenwu's heartfelt care for him. It would be too pretentious for him to refuse. So Zhuang Rui said, "Uncle, thank you very much. I will give them some subsidies later..."

"Okay, I'll call Professor Zhou tomorrow. That's all I can do for you, I don't have any money."

Ouyang Zhenwu joked with Zhuang Rui. He knew more about his nephew's situation than Ouyang Jun did. He knew that he earned his money honestly and was not afraid of gossip. At his level, he was no longer someone that could be shaken by rumors.

Zhuang Rui wasn't very familiar with Beijing. He sensed that after leaving the bustling city center, the car entered a not-so-wide road with very few cars. The driver increased the speed, and after nearly forty minutes, the car arrived at the foot of a mountain with six peaks connected and stretching from north to south.

"Your maternal grandmother likes the tranquility of Yuquan Mountain, so they spend most of the year living here," Ouyang Zhenwu casually explained to Zhuang Rui.

Yuquan Mountain is located five or six miles west of the Summer Palace. Because it is nestled against the mountain and faces the water, and is not far from Beijing, it has been favored by rulers throughout history. Emperors of all dynasties built palaces here. However, due to many wars, many gardens were destroyed. They were only renovated and used for residence after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Since the early days of liberation, Yuquan Mountain has always been an important residence for Party and state leaders. Deng Xiaoping, Liu Shaoqi, and Ye Jianying all lived here for a long time. Many veteran revolutionaries liked to retire here and recuperate.

After the car passed through a mountain road, a gate appeared ahead. On either side of the gate, an armed police officer stood straight. Upon seeing the car approaching, the officer stopped it, first

checked the pass, and then verified the ID card and grade of everyone inside the car. This level of inspection was much stricter than that at Ouyang Jun's club.

After the inspection, an armed policeman returned to his post, made a phone call inside, and then allowed the vehicle to pass.

After passing through the gate, the road on both sides was lined with lush trees. After driving for another hundred meters or so, a row of independent small buildings came into view. Most of these buildings were two stories high and were far apart. Ouyang Zhenwu's driver was very familiar with the area and parked the car directly outside the courtyard of one of the buildings.

"Xiao Wang, you guys go out and get something to eat first, then come pick me up in two hours. Xiao Rui, get out of the car..."

Ouyang Zhenwu first gave instructions to Secretary Wang, then picked up some things from beside him, and beckoned Zhuang Rui to open the car door and get out. The car then turned around and drove away.

"Uncle, you're here! Give me the things..."

As soon as the two got out of the car, a middle-aged man in his forties wearing a military uniform walked over to the gate of the courtyard. The man was burly, with thick eyebrows and big eyes, and stood up straight. However, what caught Zhuang Rui's eye the most was that the man was wearing the rank of major general on his shoulder.

It is important to know that there are regulations for the promotion of military ranks in the Republic. At each level, one must serve a certain number of years. The promotion from captain to major is a threshold, and many people who cannot be promoted end up transferring to civilian jobs. The promotion from senior colonel to general is an even higher threshold, and many officers in the military retire at the senior colonel position.

Only by being promoted to general can one secure a place in the military and be provided with a personal attendant for life.

During wartime, there were quite a few major generals in their thirties, but it is much more difficult in peacetime. Many people are promoted after the age of fifty. A general as young as Zhuang Rui is extremely rare in the Republic, if not unique.

"Xiao Lei, what are you doing here? My brother didn't mention you were coming when I called yesterday?"

When Ouyang Zhenwu saw the general, a look of surprise appeared on his face, clearly somewhat taken aback by his presence.

"Uncle, I'm going to Beijing for a meeting today and I have to leave early tomorrow morning. I wasn't supposed to have time to come, but my dad said my aunt's younger brother is coming and he insists that I meet him no matter what. Uncle, is this Zhuang Rui?"

As he spoke, Ouyang Lei transferred the object in his right hand to his left and extended his right hand to Zhuang Rui.

"Xiao Rui, let me introduce you. This is Ouyang Lei, the eldest son of your maternal uncle's family. He's a general at such a young age, and he's your maternal grandfather's favorite person..."

When Ouyang Zhenwu spoke, his gaze toward Ouyang Lei revealed undisguised admiration. Ouyang Gang was a founding general who had fought his way up from the battlefield, and the foundation of the Ouyang family lay in the military.

However, none of the Ouyang brothers joined the army. Although they all became high-ranking officials in both local and central government positions, their control over the military was much weaker than when their grandfather was in power. It wasn't until Ouyang Lei distinguished himself in the army that the Ouyang family regained its voice in the military.

However, this also brings up a problem: the Ouyang family is too powerful. It should be noted that the separation of military and political power is a fundamental principle and a basic condition for those in power to maintain balance with those below. Having power and military force has always been a major taboo. Now that the old man is still alive, no one dares to say anything.

However, if Ouyang Gang were to pass away, the Ouyang family's power would likely be significantly diminished. Not to mention, they would certainly not be eligible to keep the house on Yuquan Mountain.

The Ouyang brothers also recognized this problem, so they always disciplined their children very strictly. In addition, while their grandfather was still alive, they also arranged for Zhuang Rui's eldest brother to enter the central government. This way, when Ouyang Lei grew up, they could give up some resources to ensure that he could have his own voice in the army, so that the Ouyang family could continue to prosper.

"I often hear my father mention my aunt, but... sigh, never mind, it's all in the past. Come in and let's talk..." Ouyang Lei squeezed Zhuang Rui's hand tightly, turned around, pushed open the courtyard gate, and went inside.

"Grandma, what are you doing here?"

Zhuang Rui, who was walking behind Ouyang Lei, heard Ouyang Lei's shout as soon as he entered the courtyard. However, his view was blocked by Ouyang Lei's body. Zhuang Rui quickly took a step to the right and saw an elderly man with white hair sitting in a wheelchair pushed by a nurse in white in the middle of the courtyard.

The old lady's full head of white hair was neatly combed. She sat there with her back straight and her complexion was rosy. However, her eyes seemed to have some problems. After hearing Ouyang Lei's words, she stretched out her hands and called out, "Wan'er, where is Wan'er? That heartless brat, she hasn't come to see her mother for so many years. I want to see you, but I can't..."

"Mom, my younger sister hasn't arrived yet. She'll come to see you in a few days, but your grandson is coming..."

Ouyang Zhenwu took a few steps forward, grabbed the old lady's hand, and whispered in her ear while gesturing to Zhuang Rui to come over.

"Brother Lei, what's wrong with Grandma?" Zhuang Rui didn't step forward immediately, but looked at Ouyang Lei beside him.

“Grandma’s eyesight has been failing since last year. It’s cataracts. Although it’s just a minor problem, the doctor recommended surgery, but for some reason, Grandma just won’t agree. She says... she says...” Ouyang Lei seemed to have something he couldn’t say, and he didn’t finish his sentence.

"I don't want to see that old man! Where is Wan'er's child? Where is my grandson? Come, let Grandma touch him..."

The old lady's eyesight wasn't very good, but her hearing was excellent. She heard Ouyang Lei's words clearly, and loudly continued the conversation. She let go of her son's hand and tried to stand up shakily.

Zhuang Rui quickly went over, squatted down in front of the old woman's wheelchair, and called out, "Grandma!"

For some reason, after Zhuang Rui uttered those two words, his nose tingled, and tears streamed down his cheeks.

"Good child, don't cry, don't cry, it's all that old man's fault..."

The old lady stroked Zhuang Rui's face, tears welling up in her cloudy eyes.

Chapter 293 Grandson (Part 3)

"Mom, the doctor said you can't let your eyes tear up, wipe them quickly..."

Seeing the old lady's distress, Ouyang Zhenwu quickly stepped forward to comfort her. The nurse behind her took a handkerchief and carefully wiped away her tears.

"Okay, don't cry, don't cry. I need to have surgery. I want to see what my grandson looks like..."

The old lady stopped crying and said something that made Ouyang Zhenwu extremely happy. You see, the sooner the cataract surgery is done, the better. But the old lady wouldn't listen to anyone's advice, no matter who said it. But today, as soon as she saw her grandson, she changed her mind, which made Ouyang Zhenwu, who had always been very worried about his mother's eyes, very happy.

"Nurse Jin, could you please report this to your superiors and say that the old lady needs eye surgery, and ask them to arrange it as soon as possible..."

While the old lady was talking to Zhuang Rui, Ouyang Zhenwu walked over to the nurse pushing the wheelchair and whispered something to her. He then stood behind the wheelchair, signaling her to hurry up and report, lest the old lady change her mind later.

"Child, how have you and Wan'er been all these years? That heartless girl, if she doesn't come to see me soon, she might never see me again..."

As the old lady spoke, she became sad again. She had argued with her husband countless times because of her daughter. If it weren't for her husband's poor health, and her reluctance to upset him too much, she would have had Ouyang Wan brought to Beijing long ago. Zhuang Rui's uncle's previous visits to Ouyang Wan were actually at the old lady's behest.

"Grandma, we're doing well. I came to see you and Grandpa first. Mom will come to see you in a few days. Please take good care of yourself..."

Zhuang Rui wiped away his tears, and as he lowered his head, a wisp of spiritual energy overflowed from his eyes and seeped into the old woman's legs. The amount of this spiritual energy was small, and perhaps because the old woman's physiological functions had deteriorated significantly, she did not feel it very clearly.

"Mom, where's Dad?"

Standing behind the old lady, Ouyang Zhenwu leaned down and whispered a question in her ear.

"The old man is in bed, it's alright. He's hard of hearing, he can't hear you. Child, get up quickly, you haven't eaten yet, have you? Are you hungry? Let's go eat..."

The old lady's longing for her daughter transformed into her love for her grandson at this moment. She held Zhuang Rui's hand tightly and wouldn't let go, leaving Ouyang Zhenwu, who was pushing the wheelchair behind her, somewhat helpless. "Grandma, how am I supposed to push you with someone holding your hand like that?"

"Mom, please let go of Xiao Rui so we can get through."

"No, I want to go with my grandson..."

The old lady was quite stubborn; she grabbed Zhuang Rui's hand and wouldn't let go, while simultaneously pushing off with her feet and forcefully standing up.

"Mom, Grandma, please be careful."

The old lady had injured her leg when she was young. Although she could stand up and walk around normally, she would feel pain after walking only a few steps. So when they saw the old lady stand up, Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei became nervous. Ouyang Zhenwu even pushed the wheelchair aside, stepped forward, and prepared to lend a hand.

"I don't need your help, I can still walk..."

The old lady shook off her son's hand and actually started walking quickly, going from the yard into the house, but her right hand was still tightly gripping Zhuang Rui, because she couldn't see him.

Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei exchanged a glance, their eyes filled with disbelief. They knew that the old lady used to suffer unbearable pain from her old leg injury after only a few steps, but just now... Ouyang Zhenwu rubbed his eyes, realizing he hadn't misread it.

"Grandma, please sit down. I won't leave; I'll sit next to you."

When Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei rushed into the room, Zhuang Rui was helping the old lady sit down at the dining table. The old lady's complexion was normal, and she didn't seem to be faking it; her old leg injury probably didn't hurt at all.

Little did they know that just as the old lady got up, Zhuang Rui, fearing she might fall, channeled another surge of spiritual energy into her knee. This surge of energy was several times greater than before. While it couldn't heal the old lady's injured leg, it would certainly alleviate the pain.

"Mom, does your leg still hurt? Should we call a doctor to check it out?"

Ouyang Zhenwu was still a little worried, so he walked over to the old lady and asked her carefully.

"It doesn't hurt. Hmm? That's strange. Walking feels much easier today..."

Hearing her son say this, the old lady was also a little surprised. She patted her thigh and immediately felt it. In the past, she would only feel something if she twisted it hard.

"Grandma, are you really alright?" Ouyang Lei also came over.

The old lady was sitting in the main seat, and with the two of them coming over, the space became a bit cramped. Zhuang Rui stood up to move aside, but the old lady waved her hand and said, "You two sit over there. I want to take a good look at my grandson."

Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei retreated with wry smiles. "Old man, you can't even see the road clearly, how are you going to see people?"

The old lady didn't care about anything else. She turned her face towards Zhuang Rui and stared intently. To be honest, cataracts don't completely blind you, but the lens in your eye has become cloudy and opaque, causing blurred vision. The old lady's condition had been going on for a while, so it was more serious. Even when she looked at Zhuang Rui under the light, she could only see a blurry shadow and couldn't see his eyes at all.

When the old lady looked at him, Zhuang Rui's heart stirred. It was clear that the spiritual energy he had just used had been very helpful to his grandmother's legs. He wondered if it would work on her eyes.

Since acquiring spiritual energy, it seems to have only brought benefits and no drawbacks to both humans and animals. After this thought popped into Zhuang Rui's mind, he secretly released a wisp of spiritual energy while looking at the old lady, which seeped into her eyelids.

"My child, you look just like your mother. When your mother was young, she had the same face as you. Back then, everyone said my daughter was pretty. This brat, does she not want her old mother anymore?"

The old lady watched Zhuang Rui ramble on and on, pouring out all her longing for her daughter over the years. Her son and grandson, standing nearby, couldn't help but laugh. They couldn't even see the person, so how did they know she looked like her? They'd never heard of the old lady knowing any of those folk tricks like bone reading.

"You child, what's that scar on your forehead? Were you naughty when you were little? You don't take after your mother, Wan'er is very quiet..." The old lady was still muttering to herself, but Ouyang Zhenwu and his nephew didn't pay attention and chatted about other things.

"Grandma, you...you can see the scar on my forehead?"

Zhuang Rui naturally knew that he had a scar the size of a little fingernail on his forehead. It was from an accidental fall when he was a child, but it was usually covered by his hair. You couldn't see it unless you completely swept your hair back.

Zhuang Rui's slightly surprised voice also startled Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei, who were chatting. The two quickly walked behind the old lady and looked at Zhuang Rui's forehead. Sure enough, there was a scar, but it was not very noticeable. Moreover, after so many years, the scar was very flat and felt no different from his scalp when touched.

"I...I saw it, what's going on today?"

As people get older, their reactions become slower. It wasn't until Zhuang Rui called out that the old lady realized that she hadn't been able to see clearly for over a year. How could things have suddenly gotten better?

"Doctor, come quick..."

Ouyang Lei reacted quickly, strode to the door, pressed a red button, and shouted at the doorbell-like device.

"Minister Ouyang, what happened? Is the old man feeling unwell?"

Less than three minutes after Ouyang Lei pressed the button, an ambulance pulled up at the gate of the courtyard. Several middle-aged doctors, dressed in summer military uniforms with white coats over them, carried a small metal box and quickly walked into the room. Behind them were two young men carrying a stretcher.

They were all the health care doctors stationed here to serve the leaders. They were part of the military and acted very efficiently. After asking the question, the leader rushed into the courtyard without waiting for Ouyang Zhenwu's reply. They thought that pressing the emergency treatment switch meant that the old man's illness had relapsed, because the old lady was sitting peacefully in the house and did not seem to be sick.

"Oh, oh... Dr. Dou, it's not that the old man is in trouble, it's my grandma... I can't explain it clearly, you'll see when you take a look, my grandma's eyes can see again."

Ouyang Lei grabbed the leading doctor and explained the situation, but he himself didn't understand what was going on and was still confused.

"An old lady? That can't be right, she was just checked a few days ago..."

Dr. Dou was stunned by what Ouyang Lei said. He had personally examined the old lady's eyes the day before yesterday and knew that surgery was necessary. Otherwise, if it went on any longer, she would likely go completely blind. How could she suddenly be able to see?

However, facts speak louder than words. Why not just have an examination? Dr. Dou quickly opened the metal case he carried with him, took out a small flashlight, walked to the old lady's side, and said, "Grandma, let me examine you. See if the light is bright in a moment."

"No need to check anymore. Take the flashlight away, it's too bright. You're Xiao Dou, you've been working here for seven or eight years, how could I not recognize you?"

The old lady's words almost petrified Dr. Dou. There really was no need for an examination, because the old lady's hand accurately pushed his hand holding the flashlight aside.

"Minister Ouyang, please come out with me for a moment. Young man, you come out too..."

Dr. Dou called Zhuang Rui out as well, wanting to know what exactly happened here before the old lady's eyesight was restored.

Chapter 294 The Doctors' Dilemma

"You should ask Xiao Rui about this. He was the closest to the old lady just now..."

After questioning Ouyang Zhenwu and Ouyang Lei, Dr. Dou received no useful information, which puzzled him. While cataracts are a common ailment among the elderly and easily treatable with current medical technology, he had never heard of a cataract clearing up without treatment.

"Uncle, I was with you just now. Grandma was a bit agitated at first, but she calmed down gradually. Oh, and Grandma cried a bit and rubbed her eyes for a while. I wonder if that's the reason?"

Zhuang Rui certainly couldn't say that he cured himself; even if he did, no one would believe him.

"That's strange. There have been cases of retinal detachment caused by severe blows, but has anyone ever heard of a case where emotional excitement could lead to the healing of cataracts?"

Dr. Dou frowned and looked at his colleagues beside him. They all shook their heads. These people were dedicated to serving the leader. If this were ancient times, they would be imperial physicians. Each of them was highly skilled and knowledgeable, but none of them had ever heard of the situation that had happened to the old lady.

"Dr. Dou, perhaps it's not a complete cure but rather a temporary relief? I think we really need to give the old lady a thorough examination..."

One of the doctors in the room said, and Dr. Dou nodded in agreement. They were all trying to find the answer from a medical perspective, but none of them could have imagined that the person who made the old lady regain her sight was Zhuang Rui, who looked completely bewildered.

"Child, come quickly to Grandma's side..."

Seeing the group enter the room, the old lady quickly waved to Zhuang Rui. The nurse who had been holding her back also breathed a sigh of relief. In that short time, the old lady had asked seven or eight questions about where her eldest grandson was.

Zhuang Rui obediently walked over and sat down next to the old lady. Old people, having reached a certain age, often have personalities similar to children; the term "old child" refers to them. Having seen through the ways of the world, they return to their true selves.

Seeing that Dr. Dou kept winking at him, Zhuang Rui said to the old lady, "Grandma, can you really see me?"

"You silly child, your grandmother is so old, would she lie? Why didn't your mother come with you this time? Sigh, she's suffered so much over the years..."

The old lady missed her daughter terribly. Before she could finish three sentences, she mentioned Zhuang Rui's mother again, and a sad look appeared on her face. Meanwhile, Dr. Dou, who was standing next to her, became anxious when he saw that Zhuang Rui had not mentioned the eye examination. He stood behind the old lady and kept gesturing to Zhuang Rui.

Zhuang Rui gave Dr. Dou a reassuring look and said, "Grandma, my mom will be coming to see you in a few days, but are your eyes really better? What if you can't see again when my mom comes? Grandma, you should let Dr. Dou and the others check you out..."

"Yes, yes, it's been a whole year since I could see anything. It's really awful. Grandma's going for a checkup tomorrow. Third son, look at you all, you're not as sensible as your eldest grandson. You knew Wan'er was coming and told me to protect my eyes..."

The old lady was overjoyed to hear that her daughter would be coming back in a few days. However, her thoughts were rather disjointed, and somehow she started talking about Ouyang Zhenwu, and even gave him a lecture.

"Mom, you're right, you're right. Let's eat first, and I'll bring my little sister over to you in a few days..."

When Ouyang Zhenwu heard the old lady's words, he was naturally both amused and exasperated. Over the past year, he had tried countless times to persuade her to have the surgery, but she had always ignored him. Now, she was the one blaming him.

"Dr. Dou, let's have Grandma go for her check-up tomorrow morning. She's not in the mood right now..." Ouyang Lei said to the doctors. It was lunchtime, and they probably hadn't eaten before coming; waiting here wasn't a good idea. 0000000.0000

"Okay, Commander Ouyang, you must tell the old lady to get plenty of rest. I'm afraid this is just a temporary recovery caused by her emotional distress. We'll have to wait until tomorrow's examination to find out the exact result."

Dr. Dou overheard their conversation and knew that the old lady was seeing her grandson for the first time and probably had a lot to say. So he didn't urge her to do the examination. After giving some instructions to Ouyang Lei, he took his leave.

After Dr. Dou and the others left, the housekeeper started serving the dishes. The old lady knew that her grandson was coming today. If she weren't blind, she probably would have gone into the kitchen to cook herself. Even so, she stood by the kitchen and gave instructions for a long time before Zhuang Rui arrived.

Zhuang Rui noticed that most of the dishes were quite light, which was his mother's favorite. He knew that his grandmother had put a lot of thought into them, and he was touched. Indeed, there are no bad parents, only bad children.

"Child, eat more, these are all Wan'er's favorite foods..."

"Grandma, please let go of Xiao Rui. How can he eat if you keep him like this?"

Seeing the old lady holding Zhuang Rui's hands and urging him to eat, Ouyang Lei smiled.

"Yes, yes, look, Grandma is getting senile. Xiao Lei, serve your brother some food. He's not as lucky as you guys." The old lady let go of Zhuang Rui's hand and instructed her grandson.

"Grandma, I can do it myself."

At this moment, Zhuang Rui was deeply surrounded by a strong sense of family affection. Apart from his mother, he had never felt this kind of love and care before, and he felt very relaxed.

Although it was the first time Zhuang Rui had met his grandmother and his cousin, who was a division commander in a special forces unit, he felt no restraint. He ate heartily the food that Ouyang Lei had put on his plate, but before he knew it, tears were welling up in his eyes.

"Good boy, eat slowly." The old lady didn't touch her chopsticks, but kept smiling at Zhuang Rui with a kind expression.

"Um....."

Zhuang Rui agreed, but lowered his head, not wanting the old lady to see the tears in his eyes.

The old lady looked around and saw that her youngest son and eldest grandson hadn't touched their chopsticks. She said, "You guys should eat too. You're all staring at my grandson like that. He's getting embarrassed..."

"Yes, yes, we'll eat too, Mom, you should eat too..."

Ouyang Zhenwu brought a bowl of porridge to the old lady. Elderly people have poor digestion and can only drink porridge in the evening. In other words, this whole meal was prepared for Zhuang Rui.

"You little brat, you're already inside and you're trying to run out again? Do you want me to hit you with my cane?"

The old lady was sitting directly opposite the room door when she suddenly called out, making Zhuang Rui look up. Following the old lady's gaze, he saw a head peeking out from the doorway. The head looked around furtively before pushing the door open and walking in.

Of course, according to Ouyang Jun, this was called reconnaissance, so that he could make a quick escape if the old man got up. In this family, Ouyang Jun was not afraid of anything except the old man.

"Grandma, your eyesight is really good..."

Ouyang Jun walked in with a smile, but before he could say "good," he suddenly remembered that the old lady's eyes had been failing for over a year. He opened his mouth wide and stood there stunned.

"You brat, are you out of your mind? Come sit down and eat..."

Ouyang Zhenwu's cold snort jolted Ouyang Jun awake. Forgetting about dealing with his elder brother and Zhuang Rui, he rushed to the old lady, held out a hand, and said, "Grandma, how many is this? Can you see it?"

"You little rascal, you're so unsteady. Learn from your brother. Look how good my grandson is."

The old lady tapped Ouyang Jun on the head, then looked at Zhuang Rui with a smile. The old lady was in the same mood as a child who had finally gotten a toy he had been wanting for a long time, and couldn't help but praise and show it off to everyone he met.

"Grandma, are you being unfair to me? Am I not good enough?"

Ouyang Jun grabbed the old lady's arm and said persistently that he just wanted to make a joke. He had been raised by his grandparents since he was a child and was the most spoiled by the old lady among his grandchildren.

"Okay, all good. Come on, sit down and eat. Go check on that old man later..."

The old lady couldn't stop smiling. She took Ouyang Jun's hand and made him sit on her right. The room was instantly filled with the joyful scene of her children and grandchildren surrounding her.

Ouyang Jun agreed and sat down. His quick wit made the old lady laugh, but he barely touched his chopsticks. He was afraid that the old man would be there, so he deliberately ate outside before coming.

"Mom, please don't spoil him so much." Ouyang Zhenwu couldn't stand it anymore. His son had lacked discipline since he was a child, and he would always hide with his mother whenever something happened, making it impossible for him, as the father, to manage him.

"My grandson, I'm happy to..." Everyone says that grandparents love their grandchildren more, but what the old lady said was a bit unreasonable. It's true that he's your grandson, but he's also Ouyang Zhenwu's son.

Ouyang Zhenwu was speechless with anger at his mother's words, but thinking that his son hadn't done anything outrageous except for liking a celebrity, he kept quiet.

With Ouyang Jun there, the atmosphere in the house became much livelier. While coaxing his grandmother, he also took the time to chat with Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Lei, making for a very pleasant meal.

"Child, have you eaten? I'll take you to see your grandfather. I haven't seen this old man for over a year." After the meal, the old lady held Zhuang Rui's hand tightly, as if afraid he would run away, while her other hand held Ouyang Jun.

Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun helped the old lady up on either side and walked towards the backyard.

"The commander is asleep, so please keep your voices down..."

Led by the old lady, the group entered the main house in the backyard, where a special nurse in his thirties immediately came to greet them.

Chapter 295 The Tiger's Heroic Spirit Remains

The room had air conditioning and a dehumidifier on, but the temperature wasn't very high. Zhuang Rui had just eaten and felt a bit hot after entering the room.

The room was simply furnished: a wardrobe, a table with a pair of reading glasses and a newspaper on it, a recliner by the door, and a single cot where an old man was lying on his back, snoring softly.

"Keep your voice down, don't wake the old man..."

Ouyang Jun whispered to Zhuang Rui that he was not that filial, but he was afraid that he would be scolded after the old man woke up. Ever since the old man sent him to the army more than ten years ago and he secretly discharged himself, the old man had never given him a good look. He would scold him every time he came. Even if he was in a good mood and forgot to scold him one day, he would make up for it next time.

Neither Ouyang Lei nor Ouyang Zhenwu came in; they were talking outside. Only the old lady led Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun to the bedside. By the soft light of the table lamp, Zhuang Rui could clearly see his grandfather's face.

The old man was a bit overweight, wearing a white undershirt. The muscles in his arms looked loose and drooped slightly. Age spots had appeared on his face. His eyes were closed and his eyebrows were raised. He looked like an ordinary old man with nothing special about him.

Seeing the old man fast asleep, Zhuang Rui was secretly delighted. He had once used his spiritual energy to cleanse his niece's body while she was asleep. When she woke up, she only said that she had slept very soundly and comfortably, but she knew nothing about the spiritual energy entering her body.

In fact, most people are quite sensitive to spiritual energy. When spiritual energy enters the body, the cool and comfortable feeling produced is something that most people can sense. If it weren't for the fact that the old lady's physiological functions had deteriorated so much, Zhuang Rui wouldn't have dared to use spiritual energy on her just now, because he might accidentally reveal his secret.

However, with his sleeping grandfather, Zhuang Rui could act freely. He deliberately took a step forward, pretending to carefully observe his grandfather's appearance, while his eyes channeled a considerable amount of spiritual energy into the old man's feet, calves, waist, chest, and head. As this spiritual energy seeped into the old man's body, Zhuang Rui's eyes became somewhat dry, and the long-absent stinging sensation returned.

Zhuang Rui knew that this was due to excessive use of spiritual energy, but there was no need to worry. The spiritual energy was slowly increasing all the time. Although it would reach a certain level and become saturated, it would automatically replenish itself after the amount decreased. He no longer needed to absorb spiritual energy from antiques as before. This was a pleasant surprise brought to him by his trip to Tibet.

Some readers might be thinking, "This old man's illness must be quite serious. What if you infuse him with so much spiritual energy at once and cure him?"

In fact, Zhuang Rui had no other choice. Judging from Ouyang Zhenwu's words, the old man might not be able to hold on at any time. Now that he was asleep, Zhuang Rui naturally did his best. Otherwise, if he waited until the old man was awake to treat him, the secret of his eyes might be revealed.

Another point is that, based on Zhuang Rui's experience treating the injured white lion, it seems that spiritual energy is not as effective in treating the internal organs of living beings as it is in treating external injuries.

In addition, after the spiritual energy entered his grandmother's body, his grandmother's reaction was slow. Zhuang Rui had an idea in his mind that the effect of spiritual energy on natural aging should be average. That's why he increased the amount of spiritual energy used on the old man.

From the moment Zhuang Rui approached the old man to the moment he channeled his spiritual energy into him, only a dozen seconds passed. When he felt a stinging pain in his eyes, Zhuang Rui withdrew. The old lady, seeing Zhuang Rui with tears streaming down his face, patted him and said, "Child, don't be sad. Your grandfather is already incredibly lucky to have lived this long."

The old lady was quite philosophical about it. She herself had lived through the era of gunfire and bloodshed; many of her comrades had sacrificed their lives, and few of her contemporaries remained.

She knew that day would come sooner or later, and her husband had been ill for many years; she had long been mentally prepared.

Zhuang Rui nodded, wiping away his tears. To be honest, he didn't have much affection for this old man. Although he was his maternal grandfather, he was the culprit who had driven his mother out of the house. If he hadn't been afraid of upsetting his mother, Zhuang Rui might not have treated him.

Now that he had met his grandfather, Zhuang Rui was about to go out when someone grabbed his arm and hid behind him.

"Fourth Brother, what are you doing?"

Zhuang Rui asked, somewhat puzzled. When he looked ahead, he found that the old man on the bed had already woken up and was staring at him with his eyes wide open.

The old man glared at Zhuang Rui and shouted, "Boy, if you chase me away again, I'll break your legs. Come here!" The old man was furious at the sight of Ouyang Jun, but he forgot that he was the father of the father, which made the generational order a bit messy.

Zhuang Rui was somewhat baffled. This old man was being incredibly unreasonable! No wonder his mother had severed ties with him. Feeling angry, Zhuang Rui ignored the old man and turned to walk out of the house.

"Hey kid, come back here right now! You think you're so tough?"

In his excitement, the old man braced himself on the bed frame and sat up. He stretched his legs out to look for his shoes, but didn't notice that his wife was standing at the head of the bed, dumbfounded.

"What are you doing standing here? That little brat is spoiled rotten by you, and that girl too..."

The old man searched for a long time but couldn't find his shoes. He looked up and saw his wife standing at the head of the bed. He muttered a few words of dissatisfaction, but his voice was very loud, as if he were arguing.

"You old fool, Wan'er is so angry with you that she doesn't want to come home. If you drive my grandson away too, I won't stay here anymore. I'm going with my daughter..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui seemed angry, and hearing the old man's words, the old lady became even angrier. She turned and walked out, while the old man called after her, "Hey, I said, find my shoes for me!"

Hearing the commotion inside, the people outside came in one after another. When the special nurse saw the old man sit up, he quickly went over and said loudly, "Sir, you should lie down first. Just tell me what you need and I'll do it."

"Why are you shouting so loudly? It's not like you can't hear me..."

The old man didn't realize that his voice was louder. He had hearing problems and had to use a hearing aid, so people around him had to raise their voices so he could hear them clearly. Over time, he also started to speak louder.

"Dad, Grandpa, you should lie down first."

Ouyang Zhenwu and his nephew also entered the house and tried to persuade the old man.

"Oh, Xiao Lei is here. Why didn't you wake me up?" The old man's expression improved when he saw Ouyang Lei, but his eyes immediately darted into the house. When he saw Ouyang Jun, he immediately called out, "Xiao Jun, come here."

Ouyang Jun couldn't avoid it any longer, so he walked over hesitantly, bowing his head and calling out, "Grandpa..."

Ouyang Jun's fear of his grandfather has a story behind it. Ouyang Gang only had one son, Ouyang Zhenwu, in Beijing. Ouyang Zhenwu was usually busy, so he left Ouyang Jun with his parents to take care of him.

The old man had led troops all his life, and when he had some free time, he felt extremely bored. So he started training Ouyang Jun. He made the three- to five-year-old Ouyang Jun stand at attention, stand at ease, and march in formation all day long, which filled Ouyang Jun's childhood with a shadow. This was one of the main reasons why he dared to disobey his grandfather and not join the army.

"Hey, weren't you wearing these clothes just now? Who was that person just now?"

The old man was very sharp-minded; he realized that the person he had glared at earlier wasn't his grandson.

Ouyang Jun trembled slightly when the old man glared at him, and said obediently, "That's my aunt's child, your grandson..."

As soon as Ouyang Jun said this, the room fell silent. Everyone knew that Ouyang Wan was a taboo subject in the old man's heart. Usually, apart from the old lady, no one dared to mention her. Now that she was suddenly brought up, no one could guarantee how the old man would react.

"My grandson?"

Ouyang Gang was taken aback. He was unfamiliar with the term. He had quite a few grandsons, but it seemed that only those born to his daughters counted as grandsons from his mother's side.

"Are you Xiaowan's son?"

Ouyang Gang looked at Zhuang Rui, not angry, but his eyebrows stood up. Coupled with the murderous aura of a veteran of countless battles, he exuded an imposing presence without anger. The old tiger's majestic spirit was perfectly suited to this old man.

The atmosphere in the room suddenly became oppressive.

"You old fool, you dare to lay a finger on my grandson?" The old lady blocked Zhuang Rui's way.

"yes!"

Zhuang Rui didn't call him "Grandpa," nor did he back down. Instead, he stepped aside from his "Grandma," took a step forward, and stared intently at the old woman in front of him.

Two or three minutes passed like this, and Ouyang Zhenwu and the others were on tenterhooks. They weren't afraid that the old man would do anything to Zhuang Rui, but they were worried that the old man's health wouldn't hold up and that something bad might happen to him, which would be a real problem.

"Good, good lad, you look like your mother, and you look like your father too. That's how your father looked at me back then..."

The old man suddenly reached out and slapped the edge of the bed heavily, but what he said made everyone breathe a sigh of relief.

The old man was silent for a moment before speaking, "How...how is your mother?"

"My mom is doing well. Can she come to see you?"

Zhuang Rui explained the purpose of his trip: if the old man disagreed, he would arrange for his mother to only meet with his maternal grandmother, so as to avoid the father and daughter arguing again. Zhuang Rui knew that his mother was gentle on the outside but strong on the inside. Although she agreed to come and see her maternal grandparents, she might not necessarily apologize to them.

Chapter 296 Strange Things Continue

The old man did not answer Zhuang Rui's question, but instead asked, "Although your father's health was a bit weak back then, it wasn't a terminal illness. Why did he die so young?"

Although Ouyang Gang had severed ties with his daughter, he still cared deeply for his youngest child. For the first five or six years after returning to Beijing, he wasn't given any work and lived a near-retired life. Therefore, he wasn't well aware of what had happened to Ouyang Wan during that time. He only learned of Zhuang Rui's father's death after his son's second trip to Pengcheng.

In fact, parents' feelings towards their children are quite strange, especially fathers towards their daughters and mothers towards their sons. They are always reluctant to hand them over to their daughters-in-law or sons-in-law, which is one of the main reasons for discord between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Ouyang Gang has always been domineering. His daughter made a private engagement without consulting him and was willing to break off their friendship because of it. This was the main reason for Ouyang Gang's anger. As for the marriage arranged in his early years, Ouyang Gang didn't care much about it. Of course, he would rather keep these thoughts to himself than mention them to others.

"My father's health was not good after I was born. At that time, our family was struggling financially. My father seemed to do a lot of work. He passed away when I was five years old..."

Zhuang Rui doesn't remember the past very clearly anymore, as he was too young at the time, but he remembers his father always being busy.

"Did you do a lot of jobs?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Ouyang Gang's facial muscles twitched. He could naturally guess that it was his words from back then that had provoked Zhuang Rui's father. At this moment, he also understood why Ouyang Wan had said such heartless words when her eldest son went to find her later.

"You...won't you even call me Grandpa?"

After the old man said this, everyone in the room realized that Zhuang Rui hadn't called out "Grandpa" once.

"Grandpa, you're not feeling well, you should rest first. Here, let me help you lie down..."

Although Ouyang Lei had just met Zhuang Rui, he could tell from their conversation that Zhuang Rui was the type who would respond better to gentleness than force. Fearing that Zhuang Rui would quarrel with the old man, he quickly stepped forward to smooth things over. However, he was also worried that the old man's health might not be able to handle it.

"Get out of the way, he hasn't answered me yet!" To everyone's surprise, the old man who always doted on Ouyang Lei showed no respect for his eldest grandson this time.

"You haven't said whether or not my mother can come to see you?"

Zhuang Rui stared directly into the old man's eyes, refusing to back down an inch. The meaning behind his words was clear: if you don't acknowledge your own daughter, why should I acknowledge you as my grandfather?

"Come on, if you don't come now, you might never see this old man again..." As Ouyang Gang said this, his imposing aura faded, and he looked very tired. He no longer resembled the majestic general, but just an ordinary old man.

Suddenly, Ouyang Gang raised his head, a glint of something unnoticed by others flashing in his eyes, and said, "Now you can call me Grandpa, right? If you acknowledge me as your grandpa, you won't regret it..."

Zhuang Rui raised his head, looked at the old man in front of him, and said very seriously, "My father once told me a saying: 'Earn your own bread with your own sweat. Relying on heaven, earth, or parents doesn't make you a true hero.' I call you Grandpa only because you are my mother's father, not because you are the general I see on TV."

As a child, Zhuang Rui didn't quite understand those words, but he always kept them in mind. When he first graduated from university, his job in Pengcheng wasn't ideal. His mother suggested he stay home and find a suitable job later, but Zhuang Rui decided to head south to Zhonghai, all because of those words his father had spoken years before.

Upon hearing this, the old man fell silent. In those words, he seemed to see the stubborn young man from years ago, who stubbornly insisted, "I can take care of Wan'er. I have the ability to take care of her. We don't need anyone's help; we can live just fine."

In Ouyang Gang's eyes, Zhuang Rui's image slowly overlapped with that of the young man from back then. The old man never imagined that the words he had said in anger back then would hurt his son-in-

law so deeply and cause his daughter to cut off all contact with him for decades. At this moment, the old man felt a trace of regret.

“Good, good boy, you have ambition. You have to rely on yourself. I joined the revolution with a sickle back then. This huge family business was all built by me. You’re right. At home, I’m just your grandfather, not some great general.”

When the old man said these words, his eyes were full of admiration as he looked at Zhuang Rui. In the past twenty years, very few people had spoken to him in the same tone as Zhuang Rui. However, even Ouyang Gang himself did not realize that his appreciation for Zhuang Rui was actually mixed with a trace of guilt towards his daughter and son-in-law.

Seeing that the relationship between the grandfather and grandson had eased, Ouyang Zhenwu quickly gave Zhuang Rui a wink, telling him to persuade the old man to rest. Ouyang Zhenwu was also very puzzled. The old man had been lying in bed for almost half a year, only coming out to bask in the sun when the weather was nice. Today's energy was the first time. Could it be... a final burst of energy before death?

Upon realizing this, Ouyang Zhenwu could no longer stand still and quickly stepped forward, saying, "Dad, let's rest for a bit before we talk. Xiao Rui will stay here tonight."

"Okay, child, bring a chair for your grandma, come and sit here."

Ouyang Gang sat for a long time and also felt a little tired. After all, Zhuang Rui's spiritual energy was not omnipotent. He had been sick for so long, how could he get better so easily?

"Hey, old woman, doesn't your leg hurt?"

Ouyang Gang then realized that his wife had been standing for quite some time; normally, her legs would ache after just a few steps.

"You old codger, you're only just noticing me now?"

The old lady grumbled in dissatisfaction, but then had Ouyang Jun bring over another chair, pulled Zhuang Rui to sit down next to her.

At this moment, Ouyang Zhenwu was called out by the special nurse. When he came back in, he was followed by a group of people, led by Dr. Dou. It turned out that the special nurse had seen the old man was in a high spirit and was afraid that something might happen, so he called Dr. Dou and the others back.

"Xiao Dou, I feel great today, so I don't need any injections or medicine, right? Alright, you can go back now. Let my grandson keep me company." The old man looked a little awkward when he saw Dr. Dou.

"Commander, have you been secretly drinking again?"

Dr. Dou walked over with a smile. This old man was easier to take care of than the old woman, but he often couldn't resist his drinking habit and would secretly drink some baijiu.

"No, absolutely not. I said I'd quit, and I really did. Sigh, I only drank a tiny bit..."

The old man denied it outright, but Dr. Dou suddenly pulled out a two-ounce liquor bottle from the bedside table. The old man lost face and looked sullen.

"Please step out for a moment, we need to check on the commander..."

Dr. Dou turned to Zhuang Rui and the others and said that Ouyang Gang wanted to stop it, but he had just been caught red-handed and could only accept it helplessly.

Zhuang Rui helped his grandmother out of the room and sat down in the courtyard. Even in summer, the nights at Yuquan Mountain were not so hot. Everyone waited in the courtyard for the doctor's examination results.

About half an hour later, Dr. Dou came out first, his face full of doubt and confusion, which made everyone present except Zhuang Rui feel a little uneasy.

"Dr. Dou, how is my father's health?"

Ouyang Zhenwu went to greet him. He had already suspected that his father had experienced a sudden surge of lucidity after hearing the news about his daughter, and seeing the expression on Dr. Dou's face confirmed his suspicions. His face turned very ugly.

"The commander... how should I put it, he's a bit strange..."

"Hey, Dr. Dou, what's wrong with my grandfather? Can you give me a straight answer?" Ouyang Jun interrupted Dr. Dou when he saw him speaking hesitantly.

While speaking, Dr. Dou had been lost in thought, only looking up after hearing Ouyang Jun's words. Seeing everyone's anxious expressions, he realized he had been presumptuous and quickly said, "Hey, don't worry, the commander is fine, and some of his functions are recovering very well..."

"Dr. Dou, please explain more clearly, what exactly is wrong with my grandfather's health? What part of his health is recovering well?"

Ouyang Lei stepped forward and pressed on, saying that the old man's health was the most important thing for the Ouyang family. As long as the old man could make it through this year, and Ouyang Lei's father could take over after the plenary session, then the overall situation would be settled.

"It's hard to say. Some tools can't be carried around. The examination just now wasn't very thorough, but the commander's hearing has recovered, and the numbness and tingling on the right side of his body has disappeared."

I just tried helping the leader walk a bit, and I noticed that his leg function seems to be improving. Of course, this is just our preliminary diagnosis, and it's too early to draw any conclusions. I hope both the leader and the old lady can come for a check-up tomorrow.

When Dr. Dou said these words, he was really puzzled. Although the old man did not have any terminal illness, he was old and his old injuries and ailments could be fatal if they relapsed. But when he was examined just now, most of the organs had recovered their function.

This left Dr. Dou and the others completely baffled. Coupled with the old lady's inexplicable restoration of her eyesight, one strange thing after another happened today.

Chapter 297 Picking Up the Airport

"Okay, okay, I'll definitely take the old man for a check-up tomorrow. Dr. Dou, you go ahead with your work..."

Upon hearing this good news, Ouyang Lei and the others didn't even bother to greet Dr. Dou and the others. They rushed into the room. To them, the fact that the old man could recover his health and even just walk around the courtyard was a powerful deterrent.

Don't underestimate these elderly people who came from the war years. Although they have seemingly retired to the mountains, their influence is far beyond your imagination. Their students and old friends are spread throughout the entire country. Even the current rulers have to be wary of them.

Zhuang Rui didn't go inside. He stayed outside and called his mother, knowing she must be anxiously waiting at home. When the call connected, his mother's slightly trembling voice came through the phone: "Xiao Rui, have you... have you seen Grandma?"

Zhuang Rui could imagine his mother's anxiety, so he quickly said, "Mom, I'm at Grandma's house right now. They're all fine, so don't worry..."

"Don't worry, Mom isn't worried..."

Ouyang Wan's voice choked up on the phone. As a child, how could she not worry about her parents' health?

"Child, is this Wan'er? Give the phone to your grandmother."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to say a few more words to his mother, he heard his grandmother's voice beside him. It turned out that while the group of people were crowding into the house to see the old man, the old lady had been paying attention to Zhuang Rui, her grandson whom she was meeting for the first time.

"Mom, Grandma wants to talk to you," Zhuang Rui said into the phone before handing it to the old lady.

"Wan'er, is that you?"

There was a moment of silence on the phone. The old lady asked a question cautiously, but then she heard a heart-wrenching cry from the other end: "Mom, your daughter is unfilial and I'm sorry."

The old lady's eyes also welled up with tears, and she said repeatedly, "Good child, don't cry, come to Beijing to see your mother soon. Your mother has missed you so much these past decades..."

As she spoke, tears streamed down the old lady's face, and her voice trembled with sobs. This stopped Ouyang Wan's crying, and she said, "Mom, I'm going to Beijing tomorrow, taking your granddaughter and great-granddaughter with me.

"Okay, okay, Mom will be waiting for you..."

The old lady couldn't continue speaking, so Zhuang Rui quickly took the phone from her. The old lady's emotions shouldn't be too strong, and if something happened, it would all be his fault.

"Hey, Xiao Rui, what's wrong? What did you say on the phone? Why is Mom crying so hard?" Zhuang Rui had just answered the phone when Zhuang Min's accusatory voice came through.

"It's alright. Try to comfort Mom and tell her not to be too sad. Oh, and book your plane tickets for tomorrow morning. Bring your daughter and brother-in-law along too."

Zhuang Rui wanted them to come to Beijing as soon as possible to keep the two elderly people company, otherwise his grandmother would definitely stop him and he wouldn't be able to do anything.

Zhuang Rui still has a lot of things to do in Beijing. Yesterday, he received a call from Uncle De, who said that Professor Meng had returned to Beijing and asked him to pay a visit. This is only right and proper. There's also Grandpa Gu's place; he can't just not go when he's in Beijing.

In addition, the house needs renovation, and I also need to keep an eye on it. Tomorrow, Miao Feifei is going to Panjiayuan with me. Good heavens, Zhuang Rui wished he had the ability to be in two places at once, so he could split his body into several pieces to use.

"Xiao Rui, I can't go to Beijing tomorrow. The equipment you requested will arrive tomorrow. Also, the factory is too busy, I can't leave." The voice on the phone had changed to Zhao Guodong.

"Brother-in-law, it's okay if you can't come, but you must see Mom and the others off at the airport tomorrow. Call me after they get on the plane so I can pick them up."

Zhuang Rui knew that Zhao Guodong's business was doing well, so he didn't insist. Anyway, there was plenty of time in the future, and it wouldn't be too late to come when the old man turned 90.

"Uncle, why are you all out here?"

After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui noticed that Ouyang Zhenwu and the others had all come into the courtyard.

"Grandpa's asleep, Xiao Rui, are you on the phone with your little sister?"

The "little sister" that Ouyang Zhenwu was referring to was naturally Ouyang Wan.

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "Yes, my mom's flight is tomorrow morning, and she should arrive in Beijing around 10 a.m."

Ouyang Zhenwu thought for a moment and said, "Tomorrow morning? Hmm, I'll see if I have time to go to the airport then..."

"Uncle, how about I arrange for a plane to bring Aunt over? I'm leaving Beijing first thing tomorrow morning." Ouyang Lei had never met his aunt; he had only heard his father mention her often.

"Nonsense, can't you see me next time?"

Ouyang Zhenwu glared at his nephew, but this was only because the old man's health had improved. If the situation were reversed, Ouyang Zhenwu would probably have agreed to the suggestion.

"Mom, you should go and rest too. You'll see your little sister tomorrow morning."

When Ouyang Zhenwu saw his mother sitting in the yard, she was already dozing off. The old lady usually had a very regular life and went to bed around nine o'clock every day. Ouyang Zhenwu and Zhuang Rui had to talk to her and persuade her to go back inside to sleep.

After running around all night, Ouyang Zhenwu was a bit tired. He looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Xiao Rui, why don't you stay here tonight? You can keep the old folks company tomorrow morning."

"Uncle, I have things to do tomorrow. Sigh, everything's crowded together. Besides, I have to pick up my mom, so I won't be staying here tonight."

Zhuang Rui was having a headache. His mother was coming tomorrow, and he insisted on going with her. He figured his promise to go to Panjiayuan with Miao Feifei would fall through again. Besides, he wasn't too comfortable with Liu Chuan taking Bai Shi with him, since Bai Shi didn't really respect him.

Ouyang Zhenwu didn't insist. He would pick up Ouyang Wan tomorrow, and Zhuang Rui would indeed have to come along. It wasn't very convenient to get to the airport from here. After saying goodbye to Ouyang Lei and exchanging contact information, Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun left and headed straight for the club.

When Zhuang Rui arrived at the club, he discovered that Liu Chuan was indeed no match for Bai Shi. He could only lock Bai Shi in Zhuang Rui's room, and Bai Shi didn't even get dinner. Fortunately, the club's restaurant served food 24 hours a day, so Zhuang Rui went to the restaurant to get some food for Bai Shi. By the time he finished, it was already past midnight.

...

The next morning, Zhuang Rui was woken up by his phone ringing. He picked it up and saw that it was Miao Feifei calling. He didn't want to answer, but then he thought about the consequences and reluctantly pressed the answer button.

"Zhuang Rui, get up quickly, come pick me up, I'll treat you to soy milk..." Miao Feifei's clear voice came from the phone.

"Officer Miao, well, I might not be able to go to Panjiayuan with you today. My mom and sister are coming to Beijing, their flight is this morning, and I need to pick them up."

"Oh, then you go pick up your aunt, I'll go wander around by myself..."

There was a moment of silence on the phone, but Miao Feifei wasn't as unreasonable as Zhuang Rui had thought; her voice was just a little lower, and she was clearly not in a good mood.

Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed. After all, Miao Feifei had helped him, and it would be a bit unkind to stand her up. On impulse, he said, "How about this, you come with me to the airport first, I'll take my mom back to my grandma's house, and then I'll go to Panjiayuan with you."

After saying that, Zhuang Rui felt something was wrong. Miao Feifei was just a friend of his, so why was she going with him to pick up his mother? But since he had already said it, he couldn't take it back. He could only hope that Miao Feifei on the other end of the phone would refuse.

"Okay, come pick me up, I'll go with you."

Miao Feifei's words completely thwarted Zhuang Rui's plans. Helpless, he could only get up, wash up, prepare breakfast for Bai Shi, and then take Ouyang Jun with him. They drove to the minister's building where his uncle lived, where Miao Feifei's family also lived.

"You're taking that girl to pick up your aunt?"

Ouyang Jun sat in Zhuang Rui's car, and the smiling look in his eyes made Zhuang Rui very uncomfortable.

"I agreed to her yesterday, what can I do? Can you give me some advice?" Zhuang Rui replied helplessly.

"Come on, I can't afford to mess with that girl, but you'd better think it over carefully. If she meets your parents, then things will get complicated." The big star is away filming these days, and Ouyang Jun is bored and just wants to stir up trouble.

"It's not as scary as you say. We're just friends, understand? Friends!"

Zhuang Rui emphasized his tone, but he was also a little nervous. He wondered what his mother would think after meeting Miao Feifei. After all, he had said that his girlfriend was Qin Xuanbing.

"Yes, friend, friend."

Ouyang Jun repeated Zhuang Rui's words with a wicked grin, but his face showed an expression that said, "No one would believe you."

When the car arrived outside the Minister's Building complex, Miao Feifei was already waiting there. She wasn't wearing a skirt today; instead, she wore a white t-shirt and jeans, looking clean and refreshing while showing off her stunning figure. Coupled with her delicate and pretty face, even Ouyang Jun was momentarily stunned.

As soon as Miao Feifei got into the car, she squeezed Ouyang Jun, who was sitting in the passenger seat, into the back.

The three of them ate some breakfast on the way to the airport. When they arrived at the airport, there was still more than half an hour before Ouyang Wan's plane was to land.

Just as they parked the car at the airport exit, Ouyang Jun's phone suddenly rang. After answering the call and saying a few words, he hung up, glanced back, pointed to a car that had driven past, and said to Zhuang Rui, "Follow that car, let's go in and pick up Auntie."

Zhuang Rui saw in the rearview mirror that the car was Ouyang Zhenwu's Hongqi, and quickly followed it.

Following Ouyang Zhenwu's Hongqi car, Zhuang Rui entered the airport smoothly. He parked his car behind the Hongqi car, and the group got out of the car. Ouyang Zhenwu, who got out first, was stunned when he saw Miao Feifei. It seemed that his son had no contact with this girl from the Miao family.

"Hello, Uncle Ouyang."

Miao Feifei stepped forward to greet him, then stood next to Zhuang Rui. Seeing this, Ouyang Zhenwu seemed to understand something.

Chapter 298 Father and Daughter Reunite, Tears Fill Their Eyebrows

The plane landed on the airport runway with a loud roar. Zhuang Rui looked at the people getting off the plane one by one, and finally, his mother's familiar figure appeared in his sight.

"Mom, I'm here..."

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Zhuang Rui waved his hand and shouted loudly. At the same time, everyone who got off the plane looked at Ouyang Wan with envy. Being able to drive a car into the airport to pick someone up meant that she must be someone important. Although the world talks about equality for all every day, you can still see the existence of privileges without realizing it.

Ouyang Wan glanced at Zhuang Rui, then immediately noticed Ouyang Zhenwu standing beside him. She quickly walked over, and Ouyang Zhenwu went to meet her.

"Brother, sister..."

After holding Ouyang Zhenwu's large hand, Ouyang Wan finally couldn't hold back her tears and they flowed down her cheeks. Ouyang Zhenwu's body also trembled, his eyes filled with tears. The two hands were tightly clasped together, a testament to the deep bond between siblings bound by blood.

"Young man, your hair has all turned white..."

Looking at the young man who was only two years older than her, Ouyang Wan said in a sobbing voice, "Although Ouyang Zhenwu's hair was dyed, you could still see the white hairs from the roots. Is this still the handsome and talented young man I remember?"

"Little sister, you have gray hair now. We're getting old. If you don't come soon, I'll really be angry with you."

Ouyang Zhenwu gently smoothed his sister's wind-blown hair with his hand, filled with emotion. An old man once said that twenty-seven years had passed in the blink of an eye, which was almost exactly the time they had been separated. The lively and intelligent little sister who used to wear two braids was now a mother.

"Grandma, why are you crying again? Are you scared of the plane? I wasn't scared, Grandma, don't cry, I'll give you candy."

Zhuang Rui and the others didn't approach to disturb the siblings who hadn't seen each other for decades. However, a childish voice rang out, and a small, delicate hand was clutching a piece of candy. Zhuang Min noticed that her daughter, who had been beside her, had now run off to her mother.

Ouyang Wan wiped away her tears somewhat embarrassedly, reached out and pulled Nannan closer, saying, "Call him Grandpa..."

The little one was a bit shy and hid behind her grandmother, timidly peeking out her little head and calling out, "Grandpa!" But in her heart, she was trying to figure out what her relationship with her grandpa was, but judging from her furrowed brows, she obviously hadn't figured it out yet.

Taking advantage of Nannan's momentary lapse in attention, Ouyang Zhenwu scooped her up in his arms, took out an exquisite gold pen from his pocket, placed it in Nannan's hand, and said, "This is a gift from your great-uncle, so that our little princess may grow up to be a female scholar."

As they were talking, Ouyang Zhenwu led Ouyang Wan over to where Zhuang Rui and the others were standing. He introduced his son to his younger sister. As for Miao Feifei, she was Zhuang Rui's friend, so Ouyang Zhenwu didn't say anything.

"Get in the car, Mom and Dad are waiting at home."

Ouyang Zhenwu's words made Ouyang Wan's eyes redden again, and her face showed an expression of expectation and slight fear. The saying "the closer one gets to home, the more timid one becomes" probably describes Ouyang Wan's current state of mind.

Ouyang Zhenwu, carrying Nannan and Ouyang Wan, got into the minister's car, while Zhuang Min, Ouyang Jun, and the others naturally got into Zhuang Rui's Grand Cherokee. The two cars drove away from the airport one after the other, heading towards Yuquan Mountain.

As Zhuang Rui drove, he said to Miao Feifei, who was sitting in the passenger seat, "Feifei, it seems I really don't have time today."

Zhuang Rui had originally planned to pick up his mother and then go shopping at Panjiayuan with Miao Feifei. However, seeing how excited his mother was, and considering his grandparents' age, Zhuang Rui was a little worried. With him around, if something happened, their spiritual energy could save lives. He decided to wait until his mother and grandparents calmed down before leaving.

Miao Feifei's eyes were a little red when she saw the scene of the brother and sister meeting. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, she quickly said, "It's okay, you drive. I'll go to Yuquan Mountain to see Grandpa too."

Zhuang Rui nodded and didn't say anything more. It was the first time he had learned that Miao Feifei's grandfather also lived in Yuquan Mountain. He thought that if he had time in the afternoon, he would take Miao Feifei there for a walk. Once his mother came, his grandmother should stop nagging him.

The two cars arrived at Yuquan Mountain and drove into the quiet and elegant courtyard one after the other. Before Zhuang Rui even got out of the car, he saw two elderly people supporting each other at the entrance of the courtyard where his maternal grandfather lived. They were looking in his direction, and their aged figures looked somewhat desolate in the shadow of the big tree next to them.

Ouyang Zhenwu's car stopped a dozen meters away from the elderly couple. Ouyang Wan opened the car door and rushed towards them. When she was five or six meters away from her parents, she knelt down with a thud, tears streaming down her face, unable to utter a single word.

"Wan'er, you heartless girl, you're finally back."

The old lady was also in tears. She walked to Ouyang Wan's side, and the mother and daughter hugged each other and cried bitterly. Fortunately, each courtyard here has an independent space that is dozens of meters deep, so this scene would not be seen by outsiders.

"Child, get up, get up, go see your father." The old lady stopped crying, just like she had done with Ouyang Wan'er, wiped her daughter's tears with her sleeve, and pulled her up.

"dad....."

Ouyang Wan did not stand up, but looked at her old father. Through her teary eyes, she saw her father's aged appearance, and her heart ached as if it were being torn apart.

Ouyang Zhenwu and Zhuang Rui both knew the temperaments of the father and daughter, and they became a little nervous. Ouyang Zhenwu even took a few steps closer to his father. Although the old man's health had inexplicably improved, there was no guarantee that his condition wouldn't relapse if he got emotional.

"Sigh, you just won't forgive your old man, will you? Get up."

Ouyang Gang sighed deeply. He had spent his life fighting on the battlefield, but in his old age, he was resented by his daughter. The old man felt bitter. At this moment, he blamed Zhuang Rui's father in his heart: "If you don't have the ability, don't show off. You worked yourself to death, but caused your daughter to not come to see you for decades."

"Mom, get up. Grandpa didn't blame you..." Zhuang Rui walked to his mother's side. The stone path was scorching hot from the sun. How could he bear kneeling on it? As Zhuang Rui helped his mother up, he secretly injected a trace of spiritual energy into her knees.

Upon hearing her father's words, Ouyang Wan's eyes lit up. She shook off Zhuang Rui's hand, helped her mother walk toward her father, and when she reached her father, she reached out her left hand and took his arm. The old man hummed and tried to shake her off but couldn't, so he let his daughter support him. However, a faint, heartfelt smile of satisfaction appeared on his face.

Seeing this, everyone breathed a sigh of relief. After saying goodbye to Zhuang Rui, Miao Feifei left on her own. The scene she had just witnessed made her want to spend more time with her elderly grandfather.

The tense people weren't just Ouyang Zhenwu and his group; there were also five or six doctors in the courtyard. When they saw the elderly couple getting excited, their hearts were in their throats. It wasn't until Ouyang Wan helped the two elderly people back into the courtyard that Dr. Dou and the others finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Ouyang Jun was kicked out of the house by his father to stay with his aunt and grandparents, while Ouyang Zhenwu greeted Dr. Dou and asked about the morning's examination.

"Minister Ouyang, the test results are good. The Chief and the old lady's physical functions seem to have become ten years younger overnight, and some of their age-related ailments have shown signs of relief. I wonder if it's due to their mood. In medical history, such a thing has never happened before. It's incredible."

Dr. Dou handed a thick stack of medical examination reports to Ouyang Zhenwu. The examination this morning left all the doctors present speechless. Not only had the high blood pressure that had plagued the old man for many years decreased, but he could even get out of bed and walk. He didn't seem like a ninety-year-old man at all.

As for the old lady's cataracts, the examination showed that the cloudiness in the lens had actually disappeared, and the damage to the lens capsule had also healed on its own. Apart from presbyopia, which is unique to the elderly, she had no other eye problems.

Dr. Dou and his colleagues considered various possibilities, then rejected them themselves. The final conclusion was that the two leaders' good mood stimulated the recovery of their bodily functions. Although they knew they would be criticized if they submitted this report, they had no other choice but to write it this way.

After listening to Dr. Dou's analysis, Ouyang Zhenwu asked, "Dr. Dou, do you think my father's health might relapse?"

"No, if we just make sure the old man drinks less, it's not impossible for him to celebrate his 100th birthday..."

Dr. Dou gave Ouyang Zhenwu a very accurate answer. Seeing that the old man was in such good health, the rise of the Ouyang family must be unstoppable. Dr. Dou and the others naturally wanted to make a good connection.

Hearing Dr. Dou's words, Ouyang Zhenwu finally felt relieved. He was a little guilty now. If he had known that his younger sister's arrival would make his parents so happy, he would have risked being scolded a few years ago to bring her over.

After giving a few more instructions on the elderly man's daily health care, Dr. Dou and Ouyang Zhenwu took their leave. They all needed to go back and think about how to write a more reasonable report. After all, Yuquan Mountain was home to more than a dozen retired leaders. If others felt that they were showing favoritism, their future would be difficult.

After seeing Dr. Dou off, Ouyang Zhenwu immediately picked up his phone to call his two older brothers to share the good news. This was a momentous occasion for the Ouyang family.

Over the phone, the brothers began to discuss how to properly celebrate their father's 90th birthday. In recent years, due to their father's poor health, the brothers had kept a low profile, but now it was time to show their strength.

Chapter 299 Panjiayuan

The family enjoyed a lively lunch together. Nannan, who was initially a little shy, became more lively after getting used to things. Her giggles filled the small building, making the quiet place feel full of life.

Ouyang Zhenwu was quite busy with work, so he left after finishing his meal. Before leaving, he gave Zhuang Rui a business card and told him to contact the person on the card when he had time. It was the business card of a professor in the Department of Architecture at Peking University. The layout and decoration of Zhuang Rui's courtyard house depended entirely on this person.

The old man and woman both had the habit of taking a nap after lunch. After finishing their meal, they went to rest. Zhuang Min also coaxed her daughter to sleep, leaving Zhuang Rui to keep his mother company. Although Ouyang Wan usually liked to take a nap, she obviously couldn't fall asleep at this time. The joy of seeing her parents made her very excited. This had nothing to do with age. No matter how old they were, they were still their parents' children.

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"Mom, why don't you take a break too? Or are you planning to draw a big cat on Grandpa's face later?"

Seeing his mother's expression, Zhuang Rui felt a little worried. In his memory, his mother was always calm and composed, and she had never been so excited as she was today.

However, at the dinner table, Zhuang Rui also heard a lot about his mother's childhood. Back then, Ouyang Wan's favorite thing to do was to secretly draw a cat's face on her father with a pen while he was sleeping.

"You silly child, joking with your mother like this. I haven't even asked you yet, where's that girl who came with us at noon? Why did she leave without even coming inside?"

Ouyang Wan laughed and scolded Zhuang Rui. Although she was very excited when she saw her parents at noon, she had not forgotten the girl who appeared next to Zhuang Rui. She just hadn't had a chance to ask Zhuang Rui about her until now.

"Oh, you mean Officer Miao? She's a friend I met in Zhonghai. She's been transferred to Beijing now. She also has some elders living here; they've gone to stay with her grandfather."

Zhuang Rui dared not hide anything from his mother, even though she and Miao Feifei were indeed just friends, and there was nothing he couldn't say.

"Surname Miao? Hmm, this girl is nice, and seems to have a good temper. By the way, Xiao Rui, not that I'm criticizing you, but you should really start dating someone properly..."

Ouyang Wan nodded. She had a good first impression of the girl; she was pretty and seemed to be a good-tempered girl.

Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated by his mother's words. Miao Feifei had a good personality and was very straightforward, but her temper was definitely not good. It seemed that his mother had been deceived by her appearance.

"Mom, I have a girlfriend now. You've met Xuanbing before. She's working in England right now, and I'll bring her to meet you when she comes back."

Zhuang Rui was afraid that his mother would try to force him into a relationship. He felt that being friends with Miao Feifei would be much more comfortable than being lovers, so he immediately shut his mother up.

"You've always been independent, my child. You can choose whoever you want to date, and I won't interfere in that. But you must get married within three years." Ouyang Wan thought of her own experience and didn't deliberately get involved in her son's love life, but she still set a deadline for Zhuang Rui to get married.

"Okay, Mom. By the way, I bought a courtyard house in the city. I might be busy these few days, so I won't be able to come to Grandpa and Grandma's place. Give me a call whenever you're planning to go back to Pengcheng."

Zhuang Rui needs to explain this to his mother. He's been thinking of bringing his grandparents to live with him once the courtyard house is renovated. It would be so much fun to have the whole family

together. Zhuang Rui, who has only lived with his family of three since he was a child, longs for the life of a large family.

"You bought a courtyard house? Yes, I know. I'll tell your maternal grandmother about it..."

Ouyang Wan rarely interfered in her son's affairs, but her eyes lit up when she heard about the courtyard house. She had spent her childhood either in a military compound or in a courtyard house, and she still remembered it vividly.

"By the way, Xiao Rui, your grandfather's 90th birthday is in a little over three months. Help me prepare a gift, and put some thought into it." Before leaving, Ouyang Zhenwu said a few words to Ouyang Wan about the old man's birthday celebration. Ouyang Wan could only ask her son for help with this.

"It's Grandpa's birthday, um, we need to find a good one, Mom, don't worry."

Zhuang Rui's mind raced for a moment, and he came up with a plan. However, he still needed to consult Old Master Gu about this matter. With that thought, Zhuang Rui stood up.

"Are you leaving now? Drive carefully..." Ouyang Wan quickly reminded her son as he got up, "There are so many cars in Beijing, unlike in Pengcheng."

"Okay, I'm off then. Mom, let me know when Grandpa and the others wake up."

Zhuang Rui agreed, walked out of the room, took out his phone, and called Miao Feifei.

Zhuang Rui planned to accompany Miao Feifei to Panjiayuan in the afternoon, then visit Old Master Gu in the evening, and tomorrow he would arrange to meet the professor to look at the courtyard house. He also needed to find a trustworthy person to oversee the construction. Thinking about all these things, Zhuang Rui had a headache.

After picking up Miao Feifei, Zhuang Rui, following her directions, drove straight to Panjiayuan.

Panjiayuan Antique Market, located in the southeast corner of Beijing's Third Ring Road, is the largest antique market in China. It is open four days a week, from Thursday to Sunday, and sells a variety of antiques, calligraphy and paintings, stationery, porcelain and wooden furniture. There are more than 3,000 stalls, and people from 24 provinces and cities across the country have set up stalls here.

Moreover, many ethnic minorities sell their traditional products here, so the goods sold are incredibly diverse, except for food. Some people say it's like a museum. It's the cheapest flea market in Beijing, attracting a large number of Chinese and foreign tourists.

The most famous antique markets in Beijing are undoubtedly Dashilan, Liulichang, and Panjiayuan. Dashilan has many long-established brands, such as Liubiju Sauce Shop, which has been open since the Ming Dynasty; Tongrentang, a famous traditional Chinese medicine shop that opened during the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty; Majuyuan Hat Shop and Neiliansheng Shoe Shop, which opened during the Jiaqing period; and Ruifuxiang Silk and Leather Shop, one of the Eight Great Shops that later had four storefronts. It is more like a microcosm of century-old shops than an antique market.

Liulichang was originally a book market. During the Qing Dynasty, officials and candidates for the imperial examinations often gathered here to browse the books. Gradually, it developed into an antique and cultural market, but it was still mainly focused on calligraphy, paintings and books. Century-old shops such as Huaiyin Shanfang, Guyizhai, Ruichengzhai, Cuiwenge, Yidege, Li Fushou Brush Shop, and Rongbaozhai were all located here.

Panjiayuan is different from the two places mentioned above. Its fame stems from the "ghost market" mentioned earlier, and the name "ghost market" originated from Panjiayuan.

There's a story behind this. In its earliest days, Panjiayuan was an abandoned kiln site in a somewhat remote location. During the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, when the country was in decline and many high-ranking officials and nobles fell on hard times, they stole their antiques and came to Panjiayuan to sell them.

After all, this was a matter of low status, so the transaction could only be conducted at three or four in the morning with lanterns, because most of the items sold in this ghost market were of unknown origin and had unspeakable secrets, so they could only be sold at a low price.

Thus, the rumor that "good goods come from ghost markets" spread. Of course, nowadays there is no need to hide or conceal anything, but the tradition of opening the market at four in the morning has been continued.

After 1992, Panjiayuan gradually developed into a secondhand market, and in just a few years it became the largest distribution center for antiques and secondhand goods in the country. Antique furniture, stationery, ancient books and paintings, agate and jade, Chinese and foreign coins, shadow puppets, religious items, ethnic costumes, Cultural Revolution relics and even daily necessities. Except for weapons, drugs and people, you can find any valuable item you can think of in Panjiayuan.

Panjiayuan is now far more famous than Liulichang and Dashilan in the public eye. Many foreign presidents and dignitaries have visited it, and a huge commercial district has formed around it.

Panjiayuan is only open four days a week, and the weekend is naturally the busiest time. When Zhuang Rui parked his car under Miao Feifei's guidance and walked into Panjiayuan, he couldn't help but be slightly shocked by the scene in front of him.

This isn't an antique market at all; it's more like a bustling fair. It's packed with people, and foreigners make up the majority of them. White and black people are everywhere, and all sorts of languages are being spoken. Zhuang Rui glanced over and saw a vendor with a pockmarked face, speaking fluent English, negotiating prices with a foreign woman.

"Zhuang Rui, what do you think? Didn't I tell you Panjiayuan is more bustling than the antique market in Zhonghai?"

Miao Feifei is an outgoing person who can't stay at home and doesn't like shopping for clothes. She used to come to Panjiayuan from time to time to stroll around. Although she didn't buy anything, she was in a good mood because she interacted with people from all over the world.

Standing at the entrance of Panjiayuan, all you can see, besides people, are rows and rows of stalls, each displaying dozens or even hundreds of items: porcelain, bronzes, pottery, ironware, woodenware, including the Four Treasures of the Study, jewelry, and everything in between.

"It's lively, it is lively..."

Looking at the bustling crowd in front of him, Zhuang Rui murmured to himself. He remembered something Uncle De had once said: "If you want to find antiques in Beijing, you have to go to Liulichang." Only now did Zhuang Rui understand the meaning of those words.

More than three thousand stalls, with millions of items on display.

But the most crucial point is that although our country has a lot of antiques left behind, they can't withstand being displayed and sold like this. There's no need to even look at them; Zhuang Rui already understands that in other places, there might be one genuine item out of a hundred, but here, it would be good if there were one genuine item out of ten thousand.

Zhuang Rui now understands why Miao Feifei frequently visits the antique market, yet knows absolutely nothing about antiques. Trying to find a genuine item here is probably no more likely than winning the lottery.

Chapter 300 The bustling antique market

In the bustling crowd, everyone wore a cheerful expression, waving their newly purchased items and loudly calling out to their friends. Two tall foreign girls stood out; one wore a Peking Opera mask, and the other carried a yangqin and erhu. Zhuang Rui watched, somewhat speechless. 69shux.com

However, Zhuang Rui also realized that people who come here are just hoping to find something on Taobao. What they really enjoy is the lively environment and the unique Chinese cultural atmosphere.

While Zhuang Rui was still standing at the entrance of Panjiayuan, calculating the ratio of real to fake items, Officer Miao had already rushed in with great interest. It was too chaotic here; one wrong move and you could get separated from the group. Helpless, Zhuang Rui could only follow.

"Alright, let's just treat this as a sightseeing trip..."

Zhuang Rui could only console himself with this thought: it's impossible for Panjiayuan to have no genuine items. It's just that if you can pick out a real one from millions of items, it's absolutely a stroke of luck. Even if Zhuang Rui had spiritual energy to use, it would still be the same.

You know, there are several, even a dozen, hands picking through things at each stall. Even if there's spiritual energy, it's useless, right? Is it really worth it for Zhuang Rui to cleanse those people's bodies for free?

"Once my own courtyard house is built, I can buy some high-quality replicas to put inside..."

Zhuang Rui followed Miao Feifei to several stalls, and to his surprise, he became quite interested. The high-quality replicas of porcelain and pottery here were exquisitely made. If you didn't hold them in your hand and use your spiritual energy to distinguish them, it would be difficult to tell the difference between the real and fake. Judging from the firing process, they should all be made according to ancient firing recipes and procedures.

In fact, some modern porcelain craftsmanship processes are no less advanced than ancient firing techniques, and often surpasses them in quality and artistic appeal. However, the appeal of antiques lies in their antiquity; unlike jade, where high quality equates to value, antiques lack historical and cultural significance. No matter how exquisite the piece, it's ultimately worthless without a rich history and provenance.

After wandering around for more than half an hour, Zhuang Rui realized that Miao Feifei was a total attention-seeker. She would squeeze into wherever there were crowds and then watch the excitement. Zhuang Rui was having a hard time following her. He wanted to pick out a few decent replicas, but he didn't have the time.

"Zhuang Rui, come here, come help me..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was squatting on the ground trying to look at a snuff bottle, Miss Miao waved to him from about five or six meters away. However, a tall white man was standing next to her, and there were more than a dozen people watching the commotion from a distance.

"What is it?" Zhuang Rui asked as he walked over.

"I don't know either. This foreigner is trying to talk to people everywhere. He seems to be in a hurry. Why don't you ask him what he wants?"

It turns out Officer Miao is a helpful person, but his English isn't very good. He gestured and talked to the foreigner for a long time, but still couldn't understand what the foreigner meant.

Zhuang Rui suppressed a laugh and said to the foreigner, "Friend, is there anything I can help you with?"

"Oh, you speak English? That's great! I wanted to ask where the restroom is. Actually, my body language is quite good, but unfortunately this is a beautiful lady..."

The foreigner was very humorous. Even though he was in pain from needing to pee, he still managed to crack a joke for Zhuang Rui. Zhuang Rui couldn't imagine what would happen if the foreigner made a urination gesture towards Miao Feifei. Would Officer Miao make sure he could never pee again?

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was just smiling and not saying anything, Miao Feifei quickly nudged him and asked, "What are you laughing at? What does this foreigner want?"

"He's looking for the restroom, but I don't know where it is," Zhuang Rui replied casually. It was his first time visiting Panjiayuan too.

Miao Feifei blushed slightly upon hearing this. She was familiar with Panjiayuan Market and pointed the foreigner in the right direction. The onlookers dispersed in a rush. After this incident, Officer Miao became much more obedient, following Zhuang Rui as they strolled through each stall.

Surrounded by the crowd, Zhuang Rui quickly finished browsing through one row of stalls. It was just one row; with over three thousand stalls in Panjiayuan, there must be countless rows. Since he could only spend a few minutes at each stall before being pushed forward by the crowd, Zhuang Rui didn't find anything of value. He even used his spiritual energy to identify several items, all of which turned out to be fakes.

As Zhuang Rui was about to turn the corner and enter the second row, he saw a crowd gathered in front of a shop. It was a dead corner where people didn't pass through, so Zhuang Rui was about to go over and take a look. Just as he turned around to call out to Miao Feifei, the young lady had already squeezed through. Zhuang Rui broke out in a cold sweat. Dressed so provocatively, wasn't she afraid of being taken advantage of?

Zhuang Rui squeezed in and was somewhat disappointed. It turned out that the shop had set up several stalls at the entrance, displaying ceramics. Zhuang Rui wasn't particularly interested in these items; the truly valuable ceramics were displayed inside the shop. If they were placed outside in a crowded and messy environment and broke, who would own them?

"Boss, can you give me a discount on this?"

A somewhat strange voice entered Zhuang Rui's ears. The words were spoken as if they were being uttered one word at a time, but the pronunciation was very accurate and had a bit of a Beijing accent. However, it just sounded awkward no matter how you listened to it.

Zhuang Rui looked in the direction of the sound and saw that it was a foreigner, a white man, whose nationality was unknown. Looking around, he realized that about half of the onlookers were foreign tourists.

"Fifty thousand US dollars, that's the lowest price I can go. This is something the emperor used! By the way, it's the same thing that Queen Elizabeth of your country used. Is fifty thousand too expensive?"

The stall was run by a young man about the same age as Zhuang Rui. He immediately quoted a price of 50,000 US dollars and even gave the foreigner an analogy. However, the analogy was a bit inappropriate. It's not like Britain doesn't have kings with penises. Why compare a queen without a penis to a Chinese emperor?

In the eyes of foreigners, China has always been known for its long history and mystery, and porcelain is often their first impression of China. There's no way around it, since "china" means porcelain. So when these foreigners visit Panjiayuan, they pay special attention to porcelain.

However, Zhuang Rui was taken aback by the stall owner's exorbitant demands. Looking at the porcelain displayed beside him, he saw a blue-and-white porcelain covered jar with a landscape and figure design. The jar and lid were a complete set, and it was quite large. The jar had a straight mouth, a short neck, and a ring foot. The lid had a flat top, a slightly folded rim, and a ring-shaped knob.

The jar is decorated all over with blue and white landscape and figure patterns. The blue and white is delicate and vibrant, fresh and bright, with the artistic effect of ink painting. The picture has distinct layers and a three-dimensional feel. The figures of scholars, recluses, and old men fishing alone are vivid. Based on the shape, Zhuang Rui judged that this should be a copy of a blue and white figure covered jar from the Kangxi period.

Some friends don't understand why I say it's a fake. Isn't that obvious? A genuine Qing Dynasty Kangxi blue and white landscape and figure covered jar is in the collection of the Palace Museum. Would it be

sold here? Besides, it's a national first-class cultural relic and is prohibited from being exported. Even if this foreigner buys it, he can't take it out of the country. Zhuang Rui doesn't even need to use his spiritual energy to see that this thing is fake. At most, it's a pretty good imitation. This stall owner is a complete swindler.

However, when it comes to antiques, it's all about buying and selling, and it's a matter of mutual consent. Besides, the stall owner was trying to fool foreigners, so Zhuang Rui simply watched the show from the sidelines. Most of the Chinese people gathered around probably shared the same thought as Zhuang Rui.

However, that foreigner must have been living in China for a long time, because he said without hesitation, "Two thousand dollars, buy it or leave it."

"Two thousand US dollars?!" the stall owner pressed, knowing full well whether it was true or not. If it could sell for two thousand US dollars, that would be more than thirty times the profit.

"The RMB, if it doesn't depreciate, is better than the US dollar..."

This foreigner was a shrewd fellow; his words drew roars of laughter from the surrounding crowd. Zhuang Rui and Miao Feifei were also doubled over with laughter. The two of them were hilarious; their discussion of prices sounded like a stand-up comedy routine.

"That won't do. Look at the firing process; it's absolutely top-notch. And look again..."

Although the stall owner made a huge profit selling it for 2,000 RMB, he was still a little unwilling to give up. Since it was a rare opportunity to fool a foreigner, he was determined to rip him off as much as possible. So he started talking to the foreigner in a conversation.

After listening for a while, Zhuang Rui got a little bored. He called out to Miao Feifei and prepared to continue shopping. He was planning to find a nice item to give to Grandpa Gu. He couldn't go to Grandpa Gu's place empty-handed that evening.

"Huh?"

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to turn around, his eyes fell on a ceramic jar placed in the corner of the stall, and he couldn't move his feet.

"Let's go, we're not watching anymore, that stall owner is a rip-off." Miao Feifei's sense of justice kicked in, and seeing Zhuang Rui stop, she thought he still wanted to watch the show, so she pulled him along.

"Wait, I saw something nice..." Zhuang Rui said softly, leaning forward again.

What Zhuang Rui had his eye on was a flat-bottomed earthenware jar that was entirely black and covered in dust and dirt. From the surface, it was just black, without any other glaze color, and the patina didn't seem very obvious. It looked a bit like an antique.

"Boss, let me see that dark thing over there." Zhuang Rui squeezed next to the pottery jar and said in a gruff voice in Pengcheng dialect.

"Come and get it yourself. These are all treasures here. If you break them, it's your responsibility." The stall owner was getting impatient. Didn't he see that he was negotiating a big deal? Why was he causing trouble?

Generally, antique stalls are categorized. Genuine items and well-made replicas are displayed around the stall owner, slightly lower-end items are placed on the periphery, and the worst items are clearance goods, usually piled together or placed in inconspicuous corners.

This pottery jar must have been a clearance item; not only was it placed in a corner, but it was also piled up with a lot of trinkets in front of it.