

Golden 36

Chapter Thirty-Six: Appraising Treasures (Part One)

"Well, I was just saying, please don't laugh.

Zhuang Rui felt a little uneasy under the gazes of the crowd. You might not feel anything if one person was staring at you, but when several or a group of people are staring at you, it really tests your mental fortitude.

Just like some company interviews, several interviewers are arranged to sit opposite you, which naturally puts psychological pressure on the interviewee. Those who can withstand the pressure and talk fluently are often the final winners. Although Zhuang Rui doesn't care much about other people's opinions of him, he still feels a little nervous being watched by these eyes.

"Well said. I've been drinking tea all my life, and I might not be able to say what you're saying. Xiao Zhuang's words are full of Buddhist wisdom, every sentence a Zen principle. These young people today are remarkable, truly formidable..."

It was Old Master Lü who broke the silence in the room. Although he was praising Zhuang Rui, he kept shaking his head, as if lamenting that he was getting old and no longer had the courage he once had.

Song Jun was also quite engrossed in listening. He stood up, walked over to Zhuang Rui, and patted him hard on the shoulder, saying, "Brewing a pot of fragrant tea nurtured by the timeless beauty of the Three Mountains and Five Peaks, and lighting a stick of sandalwood incense imbued with Zen wisdom and Buddhist tranquility—that's well said, very spirited. Brother Zhuang, from now on, your meals will be free when you come here. I'll give you a card later. You can use this private room anytime. But let me make it clear first, don't take away these precious chairs of mine!"

Song Jun's words made everyone laugh, but Zhuang Rui didn't want to take advantage of the situation and quickly said, "Brother Song, I appreciate your kindness, but let's forget about the free offer. You open the door to welcome customers, so it's only right that I pay for my meals. However, today's bill is on you.

Zhuang Rui was thinking that he wouldn't be staying in Pengcheng for very long in the future, and he probably wouldn't have many opportunities to come here again. Even if he did have the chance to come

again, he could afford the expenses for one or two visits. If he agreed to come, he would inevitably owe the other party a favor, which would not be good.

Song Jun, however, objected, saying, "What do you mean by 'opening the door to customers and charging for their purchases'? That sounds so awkward to me. This is a teahouse, not a brothel. Brother Zhuang, I'm not giving you a free meal for nothing. I'll have someone write down your words and carve them on both sides of the door as a reward from me. A card is nothing. Even if you come every day, you won't eat me out of house and home."

"Brother Song, I didn't say that. Don't worry, anyone can use that, and no one will hold you accountable," Zhuang Rui replied, both amused and exasperated.

"I've never heard anyone else talk about tea culture or tea ceremony all the time, but I've never heard anything like what you're saying today. Stop dawdling, just take it. A grown man doesn't take back what he's given away. I also have some businesses in the city, and this card is valid for all of them."

Song Jun glared, took a golden card from the waiter who had just entered and handed it to Zhuang Rui, and shoved it into Zhuang Rui's hand, as if to say, "If you don't accept it, I'll make you regret it," while also making a few sarcastic remarks about Boss Wang sitting to the side.

"Hey... Wood, Song-ge is giving this to you, just take it. I've never seen a card like this before. I bet even Grandpa Lu doesn't get this kind of treatment."

Liu Chuan suddenly appeared, snatched the card that Song Jun had shoved into Zhuang Rui's hand, and examined it closely.

"Da Chuan, you're more like a bandit than I am. I know you two brothers are close, but let me tell you this first: don't bring any shady characters. Sometimes I have some rather special guests here..." Boss Song seemed a little worried about the card ending up in Liu Chuan's hands, and gave him a special warning.

Seeing that Liu Chuan had taken the card, Zhuang Rui didn't say much. He admired Song Jun's straightforward temperament and thought it was worth making friends with him.

“Da Chuan, you can keep this card. Come here with Brother Song to enjoy some tea and learn about self-cultivation when you have time...” Zhuang Rui never even considered taking the card back from Liu Chuan; it didn’t matter which of the two brothers had it.

"Okay, I'll eat here for all three meals from now on, and I promise I won't save Brother Song any money. By the way, Wood, what kind of weird poem were you reciting just now? I think Miss Qin was completely stunned by you." Liu Chuan always spoke without restraint, and he had been joking with Qin Xuanbing quite often these past few days.

"Alright, go watch your TV. If you say another word, give me the card."

Zhuang Rui said irritably, "I finally managed to get rid of the previous topic, but this guy brought it up again. I don't want to provoke Miss Qin again, even though I once had a fleeting thought of using the spiritual energy in my eyes to see certain scenery."

When Zhuang Rui glanced at Qin Xuanbing, he saw that she didn't seem to be paying attention to Liu Chuan's words. He breathed a sigh of relief, but also felt a little disappointed.

"Alright, never mind, you can continue enjoying your tea, continue..."

Liu Chuan smiled broadly and happily put the card away. Zhuang Rui could tell that this card was definitely not simple; otherwise, given Liu Chuan's habit of not easily owing favors, he wouldn't have asked him to accept it.

Seeing that Zhuang Rui and Boss Song had finished declining, Old Master Lü said, "Young Zhuang, you've given us quite a few surprises these past two days. I just wonder how your manuscript is. Can you give us another surprise? You know, if your manuscript is Wang Shizhen's handwriting, then buying it for 20,000 yuan would be an incredible bargain."

Alright, the tea tasting and treasure appraisal are over. Everyone, please bring out and show off the items you brought.

After hearing what Manager Lü said, Liu Chuan also pulled Lei Lei over. His purpose in coming today was to see what the tattered book Zhuang Rui insisted on buying that day was worth. Logically speaking, he

had found money on the street far more often than Zhuang Rui since he was a child. Could it be that this kid's luck has improved over him as he grew up?

Seeing that everyone else was taking out their belongings from the square table and preparing to open them, Zhuang Rui also reached out and took out the Incense Ancestor's Notebook wrapped in satin from his pocket. Just as he was about to open it, he was stopped by Old Master Lü.

"Xiao Zhuang, you should open that last. Don't make the suspense disappear from the start. Also, I want to clarify that since this is an appraisal, there will naturally be genuine and fake items among these objects. Apart from these two girls and Liu Chuan, each of us will appraise one item today. The one who makes the most outrageous mistake will treat everyone to lunch at the Mingdu Hotel. What do you all think?"

It was almost 11 a.m., and everyone nodded in agreement. Liu Chuan, who could eat for free, naturally agreed wholeheartedly. Only Boss Song frowned and said, "Old man, aren't you blatantly ripping me off by treating me to a meal in Tiandu? I'll treat you to lunch this time!"

Manager Song was taken aback for a moment, then laughed and said, "I forgot that you also have shares in Tiandu. You don't need to pay today. Whoever loses pays. It's settled then."

Zhuang Rui was somewhat surprised when he heard their conversation. Although he had not lived in Pengcheng for many years, he knew that the Tiandu Hotel, which had just opened, was the first five-star hotel in Pengcheng and was rumored to have a very powerful background. However, he did not expect that Song Jun was one of the owners of Tiandu.

Liu Chuan was also stunned for a moment, clearly unaware of this. He took out the golden card, gasped, and asked with a drooling look, "Brother Song, can this card be used in Tiandu?"

Before Liu Chuan could finish speaking, he jumped up. Lei Lei's small hand subtly pinched the soft flesh of Liu Chuan's waist hard, and she whispered in Liu Chuan's ear, "Look at you, so pathetic."