

Golden 49

Chapter 49 A Man's Favorite (Part 2)

Liu Chuan, clutching his car pass, excitedly ran outside the villa. He first drove his own car into the garage, then pulled out his Hummer. He waved to Song Jun and drove off with Zhuang Rui. When they reached the villa gate, several security guards snapped to attention and saluted. Liu Chuan was so busy he almost dropped the steering wheel to return the salute. Apparently, he'd never received such treatment before.

Zhuang Rui sat in the passenger seat, looking at Liu Chuan with envy. He knew very well that with the second-rate driving skills he had learned in driving school, if he drove into the downtown area, he might end up making headlines for a Hummer hitting someone. So, although he was itching to drive, he didn't ask to take the wheel. He knew that if he did, Liu Chuan, that reckless fool, would definitely hand the steering wheel to him.

It was painful to look at, so Zhuang Rui simply took out the Hummer manual that he had specifically asked Song Jun for and started reading it.

This Hummer H2 is a civilian version of the Hummer with an aluminum alloy body that has undergone heat treatment. During assembly, the panels are first glued together and then fixed with rivets (similar to the manufacturing process of a radio), making it extremely sturdy. It also uses a central tire inflation system. Deflating the tires on snow, sand, or mud increases their contact with the ground, thereby improving friction. Once back on normal roads, you can simply flip a switch on the control panel to inflate the tires. Inflation and deflation can both be done while driving and will not affect the vehicle's speed.

The sealed central pressure regulator maintains system pressure balance and protects major components from contamination. Ventilation hoses on each component converge into a central hose from the air filter. This system allows the Hummer to drive in nearly 1 meter of water all day without fear of water, sand, and mud.

The welded steel frame features five heavy-duty crossbeams that effectively absorb stress during fully loaded driving in harsh road conditions. This superior structure gives the Hummer unparalleled power and agility. A high-load, multi-stage cooling system provides high-quality cooling for coolant, engine oil, transmission/transfer fluid, and power steering fluid, ensuring these fluids remain at normal operating temperatures. This significantly extends the lifespan of engine components and allows the vehicle to operate safely even in the most demanding conditions.

After reading these instructions, Zhuang Rui finally understood why Liu Chuan had been so persistent in borrowing the vehicle from the Song army. This vehicle was designed for driving in high-altitude, cold, mountainous, and hilly areas. In the sub-zero temperatures of winter nights in Tibet, the engine oil in most vehicles would freeze, causing them to break down. This wouldn't happen with the Hummer, and its excellent four-wheel drive system could easily handle all kinds of harsh environments.

Although this H2 six-wheeled Hummer is enormous, its off-road performance is comparable to the military version of the H1 and the new H3. Its user-friendly controls and instruments, high-back bucket seats, standard features including a Delco sound system and power windows, and optional extras such as rearview mirrors with compasses and digital thermometers, a heated windshield, a premium Monsoon sound system, and a remote keyless entry system left Zhuang Rui dazzled and amazed.

Sitting inside the car, looking at the bar, refrigerator, and luxurious sofa, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but sigh from the bottom of his heart, "Money really is a damn good thing."

They had now entered the city. Liu Chuan's Hummer maintained its speed through the city traffic, just as agile as it had been on the sparsely populated outer ring road. Like the man himself, he drove aggressively, sometimes making Zhuang Rui wonder if Liu Chuan had reversed the brake and accelerator. However, this also demonstrated the Hummer's agility. Power steering, a 4-speed transmission, unique suspension, and an astonishingly small turning radius made the Hummer exceptionally nimble, handling more like a sports car than a truck.

Liu Chuan drove the car nimbly into the supermarket parking lot near Zhuang Rui's house. The huge car, like a heavy tank, attracted the attention of the security guards and other drivers. Although it wasn't his own car, Zhuang Rui felt a strange sense of superiority after getting out. At that moment, he could understand why it was so easy for people who drove Ferraris to pick up girls.

"Alright, stop showing off and go buy things."

Zhuang Rui kicked Liu Chuan, but the guy refused to leave after getting out of the car. He leaned against the car door and flirted with a few girls who were reasonably good-looking, which made Zhuang Rui almost want to vomit. He dragged Liu Chuan into the supermarket.

Liu Chuan had driven all over the country and had the flair of a seasoned traveler. He pulled out a pre-prepared list from his pocket and, along with Zhuang Rui, each pushed a supermarket shopping cart.

From toilet paper and chewing gum to canned beer, mineral water, and various vacuum-packed cooked foods, they ended up spending over two thousand yuan just on these miscellaneous daily necessities and food items. Looking at the shopping carts that had gone from two to four, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but feel secretly glad. If it were any other cart, it probably wouldn't even fit half of the items.

It took two supermarket staff members to help push the four shopping carts to the parking lot. There were quite a lot of items, but once they were sorted and placed in the carts, they weren't very noticeable. There was still a lot of space in the cart. The two oval sofas that took up half of the cart were enough to save the two of them the money they would have spent on hotels along the way.

After getting in the car, Liu Chuan took Zhuang Rui straight to his house, where he took out three flat, military-green iron buckets. Seeing Zhuang Rui's questioning look, he pointed to the buckets and said, "These are essential. Otherwise, when we get to Tibet, sometimes we can't even find a gas station. Are we supposed to push these big things around?"

"Hey, you're the real expert..."

Seeing Liu Chuan's preparations, Zhuang Rui realized that although he had participated in a club in college that frequently organized outdoor training and had learned a few days of wilderness survival skills, he was far inferior to Liu Chuan's unorthodox methods.

"Of course! Let me tell you, these oil drums were made using high temperature, high pressure, microwave bonding, and vacuum treatment. Look at this spiral inlet and outlet, it even has a detachable pull-out hose and a hand-held handle. It's super convenient to refuel. I pulled a lot of strings to get them from the military.

It was rare to hear Zhuang Rui's compliment, so Liu Chuan started boasting again. However, with these fuel tanks, the Hummer's range would indeed be greatly enhanced. The three fuel tanks could hold 90 liters of diesel. Even if the Hummer consumed more than 20 liters of fuel per 100 kilometers, these spare fuel tanks could still allow it to travel several hundred kilometers.

After finding a gas station and filling up the Hummer and the spare gas can, Liu Chuan drove Zhuang Rui home. However, as Zhuang Rui was getting out of the car, Liu Chuan called out to him mysteriously, "Wood, you definitely won't regret coming with me. There's a surprise for you in a few days."

"Get lost! Remember to pick me up early tomorrow, don't oversleep."

Zhuang Rui paid no attention to the surprise Liu Chuan mentioned. There are no surprises or unexpected events in this world. At this moment, he was filled with anticipation for tomorrow's itinerary.

Pengcheng is located in the northernmost part of Jiangsu Province, at the junction of Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan and Anhui provinces. Tibet, on the other hand, is located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, separated from Pengcheng by five provinces: Anhui, Henan, Shaanxi, Hubei and Sichuan. The total road distance is 3,630 kilometers, and only about 60% of it is highway. Therefore, this trip will definitely not be very pleasant for Zhuang Rui and Liu Chuan.

Actually, it is possible to bring animals on a plane, but it involves many complicated procedures, including immunization checks and vaccinations. Liu Chuan was afraid that the Tibetan mastiff he bought would die before it even got on the plane, so he gave up on the idea of flying.

Another point is that if they fly into Tibet, their travel plans will be restricted, and they may not be able to buy a purebred Tibetan Mastiff. You should know that in recent years, the price of Tibetan Mastiffs has skyrocketed, and they are almost priceless. In some of the larger cities in Tibet, it is already very difficult to find a purebred Tibetan Mastiff. You have to go to some remote areas where herders live to have a chance to find a good Tibetan Mastiff, and even then, you still need to be lucky.

The harsh natural environment of Tibet goes without saying. High altitude and lack of oxygen are difficult for most people to overcome. Soldiers guarding high-altitude outposts often develop altitude sickness after a few years. News reports have shown that many tourists collapsed as soon as they got off the plane at Lhasa Airport because they could not adapt to the high-altitude climate and had to take the next flight to leave.

Liu Chuan's preparations were quite good. After sending Zhuang Rui home, he asked a friend at the hospital to buy several oxygen bags just in case. Although he felt that he and Zhuang Rui were both in good health, he dared not be careless. In that kind of place, a breath of oxygen might save a life in a critical moment.

The harsh natural environment in Tibet is only one aspect; wolves in the uninhabited grasslands are also a major enemy of humans. In the Ngari region, there are frequent reports of herders being attacked and killed by wolves. Some Tibetan cadres even had their open-top jeeps break down on the way to the countryside, and when they were found, only their skeletons remained. Therefore, the idea of banning guns is not feasible in many parts of Tibet, where many herders are often skilled hunters.

Around 6 a.m., Liu Chuan picked up Zhuang Rui, ate some breakfast, and then drove away from Pengcheng.

Because of the highway, it was just past 10 o'clock and we had already driven more than 400 kilometers and entered Anhui Province. There were still a few dozen kilometers ahead to reach Hefei, the capital of Anhui Province. After driving on the highway for more than three hours, after exiting National Highway 206, there were significantly more vehicles on the road, so Zhuang Rui handed the steering wheel to Liu Chuan.

At that moment, Zhuang Rui was looking at the mezzanine compartment of the carriage, a space about one meter in size specifically for storing valuables, and asked Liu Chuan with some concern, "Rogue, won't we get into trouble carrying these things?"

Liu Chuan, a cigarette dangling from his lips, skillfully steered the car with one hand. He glanced back and said nonchalantly, "What a load of crap. That gun has a license, so even if we get caught, it's no big deal. Besides, with this car in hand, are we afraid of being checked? Don't worry about it."

As they were talking, the half-burnt cigarette ash fell into the car and was casually blown away by Liu Chuan. It's a shame that this guy said yesterday that he treated this car like his wife. If Song Jun saw this, he would definitely be so angry that he would pick up the Remington shotgun in the car and shoot Liu Chuan like a rabbit on the spot.

Zhuang Rui's concerns were not unfounded, because right in front of him was a Remington five-shot single-barrel shotgun that was about 70-80% new. The red stock and the dark barrel exuded a murderous aura. Next to the shotgun were two machetes about a meter long, their sharp blades gleaming coldly. They were clearly not the kind of weapons that gangsters used to scare people in movies.

These two knives are certainly not ordinary. According to Liu Chuan, they are made of high-strength spring steel taken from the chassis of some imported trucks that were scrapped in car accidents. He spent a lot of money to have them shaped on a lathe and then sharpened on a milling machine. You should know that spring steel is made through multiple processes of quenching and tempering. So,

although these two machetes may not be able to cut through iron like mud, they are probably no less powerful than the so-called divine weapons of ancient times, such as Gan Jiang and Mo Xie.

Gun and knife controls are quite strict in China. If someone really took it seriously, the two boys could be sentenced to several years for the crime of illegally possessing military equipment. However, with Liu Chuan's assurance, Zhuang Rui felt relieved and reached out to pick up the hunting rifle.

If we're talking about men's favorite things, guns would probably be number one. However, most people don't have access to guns, so they settle for cars instead. But in this world, the number of military enthusiasts and gun enthusiasts definitely exceeds the number of car enthusiasts.

The Remington single-barreled shotgun in Zhuang Rui's hand was likely imported. It had two tulip patterns on the barrel and the portrait of Elifalette Remington, the founder of Remington shotguns, in the center. It was exquisitely crafted. The gun seemed to have been modified, as the barrel was shorter than the original imported version. The entire gun was only about 90 centimeters long and not very heavy. Zhuang Rui weighed it in his hand and estimated it to be around five or six pounds. If he wore a coat and tucked the gun under his arm, it would be completely undetectable unless one looked closely.

Inside the compartment were five boxes of Remington shotgun pellets. The 120 thumb-sized bullets were neatly arranged in five rows. Zhuang Rui reached out and picked up a bullet, preparing to chamber it, but Liu Chuan saw it in the rearview mirror. Startled, Liu Chuan quickly swerved the car to the side of the road and slammed on the brakes.

Zhuang Rui didn't comment on Liu Chuan's actions. The inertia of braking caused him to slam his head against the back of the front seat. Just as he was about to get angry, he heard Liu Chuan shout first: "Hey bro, if you want to play with guns, let's do it when we get to the location. You can play with them however you want, but if it goes off in the car, I'm not wearing a bulletproof vest."

"It's okay, we went through military training in school, so this is familiar to us."

Knowing he was in the wrong, Zhuang Rui boasted that he had only fired three bullets with the old Type 56 semi-automatic rifle during school military training, and his knowledge of the Remington hunting rifle was mostly from reading about military magazines.

"Keep bragging, but don't play with your gun on the street. Put it away quickly, or you'll be in trouble if someone finds it."

Liu Chuan curled his lip and started the car, clearly unconvinced by Zhuang Rui's words. The gun belonged to one of his father's old comrades-in-arms, who had risen to the rank of division commander in the army. Even Liu Chuan himself had rarely handled it before. He had only managed to borrow it after pestering that elder for over half a month during the Spring Festival. It was only because people in the military were bold enough to lend it to Liu Chuan that he dared to do so. If it were a friend from the civilian world, even if they owned the gun, they would never dare to lend it to anyone else.

However, what Liu Chuan said was true. The car they were driving was incredibly flashy and attracted a lot of attention. If someone found out there was a gun in the car, they might call the police. Why invite trouble for no reason?

As Liu Chuan spoke, his eyes were fixed on the GPS global positioning system on the LCD screen on the lower right of the steering wheel. He turned the steering wheel and drove the car off the national highway. It was almost noon, and he planned to go to Hefei City to eat something and rest before continuing his journey. Although there was plenty of food in the car, it was all reserved for when they entered Tibet. Besides, eating those vacuum-packed fast food items was far less comfortable than finding a place to drink something hot.