

Golden 521

Chapter 521-523 CCTV Incident

Hello, who is this?

Yesterday, Gu Yun made him drink too much, and Zhuang Rui was still a little dizzy. He vaguely heard the phone ringing by the bedside, but without looking at the number, he pressed the answer button.

"Hey, Brother Zhuang, you promised me yesterday that you'd be here for the recording today, so why haven't I seen you yet?"

Jin Pangzi's voice came through the phone, his somewhat exasperated tone startling Zhuang Rui awake.

"Oh dear, Teacher Jin, look at this! I had a couple of drinks yesterday, how could I have forgotten about this? I'm so sorry, I'm really sorry. If you know of a suitable person, could you let someone else fill in for me first?"

Zhuang Rui had completely forgotten about it. In his opinion, these so-called special Spring Festival programs were just for entertaining the audience and making people happy during the Spring Festival. Zhuang Rui wasn't an actor and had no obligation to do so, so he didn't take it to heart.

"That won't do. The list was submitted to the production team yesterday. Besides, where am I supposed to find people in such a short time? Alright, that's enough. Brother Zhuang, please come quickly. I'm begging you..."

When Jin Pangzi heard what Zhuang Rui said, he felt extremely frustrated. There are at least a million people in the country engaged in the performing arts, and they all try their best to get into CCTV's Spring Festival program slot. He didn't expect this guy to not take it seriously at all and forget such an important thing.

"Okay... I'll head over right away..."

Zhuang Rui sounded somewhat reluctant on the phone. After hanging up, Fatty Jin breathed on his almost frozen hands, stomped his feet, and gave a wry smile.

It wasn't that Fatty Jin wanted to freeze outside, but he was afraid that Zhuang Rui would turn around and run away if he couldn't get in, because the access pass he had issued for Zhuang Rui was still in his pocket. During this period, the entire CCTV building was under martial law by the armed police, and the difficulty of getting in and out was comparable to that of Zhongnanhai.

After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui vaguely remembered that he seemed to have received a call from Fatty Jin yesterday when he was drinking at Uncle Gu's house, telling him to be at the CCTV film crew at seven o'clock.

Zhuang Rui drew back the curtains and discovered that the outside world had turned completely white. It turned out that it was snowing. As the saying goes, a timely snow promises a good harvest. If the snow could last until the New Year, it would be even more festive.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the alarm clock by his bedside; it was only 7:20. He slapped his forehead and quickly got up to wash up. After all, he had agreed to this yesterday in order to get rid of them.

"Xiao Rui, why are you up so early? Are you going out again?"

Zhuang Rui was brushing his teeth in the bathroom when his mother pushed open the door.

Zhuang Rui, with a toothbrush in his mouth, mumbled, "Mom, I'm going to do something really important. I'm going to be on CCTV. You'll see me on TV in a couple of days..."

"Mom didn't ask you about this. Another girl came to see you. I said you should settle down. I think this girl is quite nice. Don't mess around with her..."

"Girl? Is that Officer Miao? No, don't worry, she's my buddy..."

Zhuang Rui hastily wiped his face with a towel and came out of the bathroom. He had just realized that he didn't know which way the main gate of CCTV was. Now that Miao Feifei was coming, it would save Peng Fei the trouble of taking her there.

"This child, he's always talking nonsense..."

Zhuang's mother looked at her son helplessly. As the saying goes, a son is no longer under his mother's control when he grows up. She could no longer discipline him by pulling his ear like she did when he was a child.

"Peng Fei, you two got up pretty early..."

When Zhuang Rui arrived at the Intermediate Courtyard, he saw Peng Fei shoveling snow from the ground. It had snowed all night and the snow was almost knee-deep. Zhang Qian, along with Ya Ya and Nan Nan, were building a snowman behind Peng Fei.

"Brother Zhuang, where are you going? Let me give you a ride..."

Peng Fei was only wearing a fleece jacket issued by the army and was sweating profusely. When he saw Zhuang Rui dressed neatly and coming out, he knew that Zhuang Rui must be going out, so he quickly stuck the shovel in his hand into the snow on the side of the road.

"No need, you go ahead with your work. Wear more clothes so you don't catch a cold. It's the New Year, and you should visit Zhang Qian's family later..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand. Zhang Qian is a nice girl. She doesn't talk much, but she's very hardworking. When she has nothing to do, she snuggles up to Peng Fei. She and Peng Fei have long been at the point of discussing marriage, so she often stays here.

As they were talking, Officer Miao came out of the main room. Today, Miao Feifei was not wearing her police uniform, but a red fur coat. Combined with her pale face from the cold, she looked even more charming and radiant.

"Officer Miao, are you driving? I don't know the way..."

Zhuang Rui sighed inwardly. Miao Feifei had come to his door several times. Although Xuan Bing knew he had this friend, she might think of something else. This was truly a headache.

In 2005, the CCTV building was still located near the Military Museum in Haidian District, not far from Zhuang Rui's home. Sitting in Miao Feifei's Ferrari, they arrived at the location in about ten minutes, only to be stopped by the armed police outside when they entered.

"Brother Zhuang, oh, you've finally arrived! Hurry up and come inside, you still need to change your clothes..."

Jin Pangzi, who had been standing guard with the armed police in the snow for almost half an hour, saw Zhuang Rui get out of the car and his eyes lit up like Yang Bailao seeing Xi'er. He put the access pass around Zhuang Rui's neck, grabbed Zhuang Rui, and pulled him into the building.

Zhuang Rui stood there without moving and said, "No, Teacher Jin, I have a friend here. She just came along to hang out..."

"This... I can't do anything about this. These past few days, not only have people recording our program been here, but also the Spring Festival Gala rehearsals. Without an access pass, no one can get in..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Fatty Jin looked somewhat embarrassed. He himself was an invited guest; he didn't have the face to bring people inside for a tour.

Let alone Kim Jong-un, even the biggest stars have to listen obediently to the Spring Festival Gala production team when they come to the Gala.

"Zhuang Rui, give this to him..."

Miao Feifei opened the car window and handed out a black leather ID with the words "People's Police ID" on the cover. Inside, there was a police badge and the words "Public Security".

"Hey, Officer Miao, your promotion came a little too fast, didn't it?"

Zhuang Rui opened his police officer ID and glanced at it. He saw that the position section read "Deputy Director of XX Branch of XX City," and the police rank was "Third-Level Police Inspector." This director was far too young.

Zhuang Rui had grown up with Liu Chuan and naturally knew the hierarchy of police ranks. A third-level police inspector was already a deputy director at the bureau level or a director at the section level. Liu Chuan's father had spent his whole life working as a third-level police inspector and was only a branch director at the section level.

Miao Feifei is the same age as him, yet she is also a Level 3 Police Inspector. Moreover, Beijing is the capital of the country, and this level is one level higher than that of a prefecture-level city. In other words, the value of Miao Feifei's Level 3 Police Inspector is even higher than that of Liu Chuan's father.

The jurisdiction listed on Miao Feifei's police officer ID card was exactly this area. The armed police officer guarding the gate looked at Miao Feifei in the car with his ID card, saluted, and let her in. Zhuang Rui, on the other hand, had to register his ID card and it took him a while to get in.

Stepping into the CCTV building, Zhuang Rui felt as if he were in a world of extremes. Outside, snow was falling heavily, but inside it was sweltering hot. Zhuang Rui took off his leather jacket and held it in his hand. Even though he was only wearing a sweater underneath, he still felt hot.

"Hey bro, come on... come on, change your clothes and get your makeup done, the director's getting impatient..."

In the lobby of the CCTV building, which was divided into many private rooms by curtains, Fatty Jin led Zhuang Rui to a small room that was about seven or eight square meters while talking on the phone. He took out a piece of clothing from a box and asked Zhuang Rui to change into it.

"So, we don't need makeup, right?"

Zhuang Rui took the long robe with the diagonal opening and put it on.

"Brother, even I need to touch up my makeup. Don't complain, just follow my instructions..."

Fatty Jin sat down in front of the mirror. Behind him, a makeup artist whose appearance was indistinguishable from Zhuang Rui's, was using a powder box to work on Fatty Jin's face. Then, he used hairspray to style Fatty Jin's hair. After this styling, Fatty Jin really did look several years younger.

"this....."

After Fatty Jin finished his makeup, the androgynous makeup artist pushed Zhuang Rui down onto a chair. Fortunately, she only applied some foundation to his face, making him look a bit fairer. She didn't apply blush or lipstick as Zhuang Rui had hoped.

Seeing Miao Feifei laughing at him, Zhuang Rui put on a fierce look and said, "Laugh? What are you laughing at? Believe me or not, I'll have him do your makeup and turn you into a shrew?"

"Oh my, if this lady put on makeup, she would be absolutely as beautiful as a fairy. How about I do your makeup?"

The makeup artist was quite cooperative with Zhuang Rui. She looked Miao Feifei up and down, then extended a delicate pinky finger and tried to pull Miao Feifei to sit down.

Are you male or female?

Miao Feifei was much more direct than Zhuang Rui; she asked the question as soon as she opened her mouth.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the makeup artist's name tag and her flat chest, and said, "Zhang Dazhi, she should be a man, right?"

"My name is Mimi, so you can just call me Mimi, sister..."

The makeup artist rolled her eyes at Zhuang Rui, then reached out to pull Miao Feifei again, scaring the girl into darting out of the makeup booth like a rabbit.

Zhuang Rui burst into laughter. It turns out that this woman's breasts are comparable to those of a cook. But thinking about it, it makes sense. Eunuchs appeared in China much earlier than ladyboys in Thailand. Given China's huge population, there might be some people who think their little penis is in the wrong place.

Inside the CCTV building, several program recording teams were operating simultaneously. The busiest group was the Spring Festival Gala team. Groups of dancers moved back and forth in the lobby. Zhuang Rui followed Jin Pangzi all the way here, and he couldn't take it all in.

Of course, Zhuang Rui wasn't looking at those shirtless women with exposed thighs; instead, he saw many film and television stars, including several talented actors that Zhuang Rui really liked.

Officer Miao acted like a fangirl, taking photos with several male actors along the way, especially the bald, small-eyed actor, whom Miao Feifei dragged around to take several photos with.

Zhuang Rui's impression of the entire CCTV lobby could be summed up in one word: chaos. Everything was in disarray.

The sounds of some singers practicing their voices as if no one else was around, urging actors to go on stage, and even some people who looked like directors gesturing and giving instructions to the actors made the whole place noisy.

There was a group of children running around wildly, and Zhuang Rui thought it would be nice to bring Nannan and Yaya over to play.

Zhuang Rui and Fatty Jin walked almost through the entire hall and arrived at the entrance of a small hall at the very back, which was about thirty or forty square meters in size.

This shooting studio must have been temporarily converted. The so-called door was actually a rolling door with wheels underneath. Two large red lanterns were hanging at the entrance, and there were also

New Year's "double happiness" characters pasted on it. A middle-aged man wearing a jacket and a melon-shaped hat was standing at the entrance, looking around anxiously.

"Teacher Jin, is this the person you've been waiting for?"

Upon seeing Fatty Jin approaching, the man hurriedly went to greet him, his expression a mixture of anxiety and annoyance.

"Director Hu, this is Teacher Zhuang. Everyone's busy during the New Year, and Teacher Zhuang only managed to squeeze in this opportunity to come..."

Seeing that Director Hu's expression was somewhat unfriendly, Fatty Jin quickly tried to smooth things over. Of course, he wouldn't say that Zhuang Rui had overslept at home.

"What's the point of coming now? The exhibition hall where we were filming is occupied by someone else. We have to wait for two hours. Sigh, young people these days have no sense of time at all..."

Hu Ming is the chief director of this year's Spring Festival treasure appraisal program. He has been a program producer and assistant director for seven or eight years, and has worked at CCTV for over ten years. This time, after years of hard work, he finally landed the Spring Festival treasure appraisal segment, but unexpectedly, problems arose on the first day of filming.

This frustrated Hu Ming. He had finally managed to secure this filming studio from the station's leaders, but because of Zhuang Rui's lateness, the Spring Festival Gala production team had to give way. They said they would only need it for two hours, but who knew how long it would take?

Therefore, Director Hu didn't think much of Zhuang Rui, the culprit. In addition, Zhuang Rui was too young, and although he was wearing a cultural shirt, he didn't have the demeanor of an expert.

"Director Hu, I'm so sorry I'm late..."

Zhuang Rui also stepped forward to apologize, after all, it was his late arrival that caused the program to be unable to start filming, and he couldn't blame others for being anxious.

"What's the use of apologizing? Just wait over there..."

To be honest, Hu Ming looked down on these experts. Being able to appear on CCTV and face the whole country was an incredible stroke of luck. Even if they charged appraisal fees later, they would be a level above other experts. So when he spoke to Zhuang Rui, he used an impatient tone.

"Damn it, my buddy doesn't even want to come..."

Seeing the director's arrogant demeanor, Zhuang Rui raised an eyebrow, turned to Fatty Jin, and said, "Teacher Jin, just give me a call if you need anything. I'm going to take a stroll. Officer Miao, come on, see which handsome guy you like? I'll take a picture of him..."

Zhuang Rui couldn't stand these self-important people. He said goodbye and left with Miao Feifei. CCTV was a huge place, and since they rarely came here, they would just treat it as a visit.

In fact, Zhuang Rui didn't know that the director of a program has a status similar to an emperor in the crew. He doesn't allow others to express different opinions. If he is a big director, he will even have female celebrities to keep him company at night. This has spoiled these directors and made them arrogant.

"This...this, Teacher Jin, who is this person? They have absolutely no sense of discipline. Can't we find someone else?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui's attitude, Hu Ming angrily grabbed his hat. He had worked at CCTV for over 10 years and had never seen such a powerful person. Even top-tier celebrities didn't obediently follow the director's instructions when they were on set.

"Director Hu, this young man is quite remarkable. He's very well-known in the jade industry. Young people are bound to be proud and arrogant, so please don't take offense. Teacher Zhuang is a good person..."

Fatty Jin chuckled and tried to smooth things over. He didn't know much about Zhuang Rui's background either, but someone who could buy a courtyard house of several thousand square meters in the very heart of Beijing certainly couldn't be judged by the standards of an ordinary collector.

"Hey, Ms. Jin, has Ms. Zhuang arrived yet?"

Liu Jia came out of the rehearsal hall, along with another male host, the famous variety show king Li Jia, and several other experts. They had been resting inside and watching others rehearse, acting as temporary audience members. Zhuang Rui hadn't gone in at all, which is why Liu Jia asked Jin Pangzi this question.

"Uh, our show won't start for a while. Xiao Zhuang went to watch the Spring Festival Gala production team..."

"Oh, Ms. Jin, please call me when Mr. Zhuang comes back..."

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui had gone to watch the Spring Festival Gala rehearsal, a hint of disappointment appeared in Liu Jia's eyes.

Hu Ming, who was standing to the side, was very surprised. This leading lady from Beijing TV was quite a character. He had tried to invite her to dinner last night to discuss how to plan the program, but she had refused. He never expected that she would take a liking to that guy and call him "teacher" all the time.

Hu Ming still had some thoughts about Liu Jia. When he was an assistant director, he could only sleep with some minor, low-level actresses. Now that his status had improved, his horizons had naturally broadened as well. He had originally planned to discuss the male and female anatomy with Liu Jia after finishing the film, but now it seemed that the problem lay with that guy surnamed Zhuang.

"Hey, Officer Miao, if you want an autograph, you should bring your own notebook. What's the point of taking mine?"

Zhuang Rui followed behind Miao Feifei, feeling incredibly regretful. If he had known that Officer Miao preferred ugly men, he would have been better off just sitting there and resting, saving himself the pain of looking at her.

This woman's aesthetic sense is really problematic. She doesn't look for any female celebrities, but specifically seeks out male celebrities who have distinctive, well, or rather, unpleasant looks for autographs and photos.

And so, they went to that skinny crosstalk comedian who always says "I missed you all so much" as soon as he appears. However, Zhuang Rui still had a good impression of him, so he took some time to go over and take a photo with him. He then sat down next to Miao Feifei and watched them rehearse their skit.

"Zhuang Rui, have some sense! Go and take a towel to Teacher Feng. Honestly, what are you grinning about..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was laughing at the crosstalk performer who claimed to be a "friend of women nationwide," he was suddenly nudged by Miao Feifei, who handed him a towel and gestured for him to take it to Teacher Feng.

"Why should I? I'm here to participate in the show, not to be a waiter..."

Zhuang Rui muttered something under his breath, but he still couldn't afford to offend Officer Miao, so he obediently picked up two towels and handed them to Teacher Feng, who had just finished rehearsing, and another actress.

"Thanks....."

The woman's friend was quite kind; he assumed Zhuang Rui was a staff member of the conference. However, the actress glanced at Zhuang Rui a few more times upon seeing his attire.

"I told you to give Teacher Feng a towel, why are you being so attentive to that girl..."

Zhuang Rui had just sat back down when he heard Miao Feifei's nagging. He felt incredibly frustrated. He stood up and said, "I'm going to wander around somewhere else. You can stay here and watch Teacher Feng's performance..." I can't afford to mess with him, so I'll just avoid him.

"Where are you going? Wait for me, I still need to see you act like an expert later..."

Miao Feifei followed Zhuang Rui, and her shouts attracted the attention of many people around them.

Although many domestic celebrities are gathered in the CCTV hall today, Miao Feifei's delicate and flawless face is even more beautiful than those celebrities.

This made many famous directors in the hall secretly inquire about Miao Feifei's background. Their own film crews were exactly lacking someone like her, and of course, they also needed someone to warm their beds.

"Hey, you kid and you little girl, come here, they're calling you..."

A somewhat arrogant voice suddenly rang out in the hall. Zhuang Rui thought it sounded familiar, but when he turned around, the hall was full of people, and he couldn't figure out where the shout had come from.

"Hey kid, I'm calling you, what are you looking at?"

"Can't you speak properly, Xiao Rui? Come over here..."

This time, Zhuang Rui finally saw clearly that Ouyang Si Shao was sitting leisurely on a sofa in a corner of the hall with Xu Qing, the famous star. Xu Qing was waving at Zhuang Rui, and when she saw him looking over, Ouyang Jun even winked at him.

When the well-known directors saw that someone in the sofa area was calling Zhuang Rui, they immediately shut their mouths. They didn't know Ouyang Jun, but they knew Xu Qing. They all knew that Xu Qing had married someone with a very powerful background. Anyone who could get involved with such a person was someone they couldn't afford to offend, so their idea of finding Miao Feifei to warm their bed naturally disappeared.

"Fourth Brother, did you get sand in your eyes? Why are you squeezing them like that?"

Zhuang Rui walked over with a smile, and his first words made Ouyang Jun so angry that he spat out the mouthful of coffee he had just taken a sip onto the coffee table in front of him.

"You brat, what are you saying on New Year's Day? I'm just praising you..."

When Ouyang Jun saw that Miao Feifei had followed behind, he immediately shut up. He had already experienced Miao's formidable nature before; she had almost embarrassed him at the club that time.

Ouyang Jun really admired his younger brother. He looked listless, but now that they were about to get engaged, he still had the eldest daughter of the Miao family chasing after him.

"By the way, Fourth Brother, Sister-in-law, what are you doing here? It's so messy, it's not good for Sister-in-law's health..."

Xu Qing's pregnancy is quite obvious; although she's wearing loose-fitting clothes, it's still somewhat noticeable.

"Hey, do you think I want this? If I stayed at home, there would be no peace and quiet..."

Ouyang Jun explained to Zhuang Rui with a sense of frustration that, before holidays, all those who couldn't find a way to curry favor with the old man would try to get in touch with Ouyang Jun through connections, and even after moving to a new house, they hadn't had a moment of peace.

During the Spring Festival, it's not appropriate to give others a bad attitude when they come to pay their respects. As a result, Xu Qing couldn't get any rest either. Coincidentally, there were a few actors from Ouyang Jun's entertainment company who were going to perform on the Spring Festival Gala. The couple decided to come and watch the fun.

"What are you doing here, kid? Looking at pretty girls? You've got one with you, haven't you?"

Seeing his wife chatting so enthusiastically with Miao Feifei, Ouyang Jun quietly nudged Zhuang Rui and said, "I'll take you to the changing room later, wow, there are so many beautiful women there, they don't even try to hide themselves while changing..."

"You...you, who are you...?"

Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated by Ouyang Jun's words. This older brother was almost forty, yet he still had such a playful spirit. Perhaps it was because Xu Qing was pregnant that he had been holding back for so long.

"Xiao Rui, don't let him mess around. He won't teach you anything good..." Xu Qing knew her husband's nature. As soon as she saw his wicked smile, she knew that Ouyang Jun was up to no good.

"By the way, Xiao Rui, what are you and Fei Fei doing here?"

After chatting and laughing for a while, Xu Qing asked the two of them. She knew that Zhuang Rui had nothing to do with the entertainment industry. He usually stayed at Ouyang Jun's club and was rarely seen going out.

"Hi, I was dragged here as a guest, it's one of those live treasure appraisal events I attended in Jinan last time..."

Zhuang Rui explained to Xu Qing with some helplessness, leaving the two of them dumbfounded. It turned out that this little cousin was no ordinary person. If this CCTV program aired, he would definitely be known as an expert.

Ouyang Jun laughed and said, "You're quite the troublemaker, aren't you? Your sister-in-law and I will go support you. Which studio is it in? Come on, let's go check it out..."

"Xiao Zhuang, what are you doing here? Hurry up and go over there. The program hasn't started filming yet, you can chat with others first. Young people should be more humble..."

Before Ouyang Jun could finish speaking, he was interrupted by a voice that spoke in a lecturing tone, causing everyone present to frown.

"What's your surname? Hu, right? Just come and call me when it's time. Go do whatever you need to do. I don't need you to teach me how to be a decent person..."

Zhuang Rui glanced at Director Hu, didn't even stand up, and casually waved his hand as if shooing away a fly, leaving Hu Ming standing aside. Moreover, Hu Ming's voice had been a bit loud, attracting the attention of many people.

Those who respect others will always be respected. This Director Hu is taking himself too seriously. However, Zhuang Rui didn't take him seriously at all. If it weren't for Fatty Jin's sake, Zhuang Rui would have left long ago.

Hu Ming didn't come specifically to find Zhuang Rui. He was just passing by on his way to the restroom when he saw Zhuang Rui chatting and laughing with several men and women. A surge of lust rose within him.

Because this kid was late, not only was the filming studio taken over by someone else, but the woman he wanted to get close to also had feelings for him, which made Director Hu very jealous, which is why the scene of him reprimanding Zhuang Rui just happened.

"You...you just leave because you don't want to do the show, you have no discipline at all..."

Hu Ming was humiliated by Zhuang Rui's disdain. He knew there were many people in the industry watching, and he had no choice but to use his directorial authority.

However, Hu Ming didn't consider that Zhuang Rui wasn't a CCTV employee, and organizational discipline had no binding force on him whatsoever.

"Alright, I'm not doing that show anymore. You can leave now. Stop bothering me like a fly..."

Zhuang Rui was getting annoyed by this person. He wasn't a giant panda; he didn't have the habit of attracting attention.

"Xiao Rui, you're doing his show? This guy isn't very good, he doesn't take you seriously at all, and he calls himself an expert?"

Ouyang Jun looked at Zhuang Rui with schadenfreude and burst into laughter. It was a rare treat to see his little cousin suffer such a setback.

What do you do?

Hu Ming was at a loss with Zhuang Rui, and after being ridiculed by Ouyang Jun, he was so angry that the veins on his forehead were bulging. If it weren't for Zhuang Rui's tall and strong appearance, he would have been tempted to teach Zhuang Rui a lesson.

Ouyang Jun didn't have Zhuang Rui's good temper. Without even raising his eyelids, he replied directly, "Who do you think you are? You're not worthy to ask what I do..."

"Alright, you're not welcome here. You can leave now..."

Xu Qing, watching from the side, frowned. She knew Ouyang Jun's temper; if she angered him, he might really beat this person up in public. So, without waiting for Director Hu to speak, she directly told him to leave.

"You...you are Miss Xu?"

Hu Ming was so angry with Zhuang Rui that he lost his mind. Only then did he notice that one of the two women sitting next to him was Xu Qing, the top actress in the film industry. He swallowed back the words he was about to say.

In the entertainment industry, personal connections are crucial. Although Xu Qing is a very low-key person and has gradually faded out of the entertainment circle in recent years, her influence is far beyond what this up-and-coming director can match.

"Alright, then I apologize for disturbing you all..."

Hu Ming gritted his teeth, turned around and left. Although he had little interaction with Xu Qing and worked as a program director, which was not the same type of work as the film and television industry, he was unwilling to offend Xu Qing.

However, as Hu Ming turned around, his eyes revealed an undisguised rage, and his teeth were clenched so tightly they were practically grinding. He couldn't afford to offend Xu Qing, but he hated Zhuang Rui and the rude Ouyang Jun to the core.

"Alright, bro, stop pretending to be an expert. Just hang out with me for a bit, and we'll go upstairs for a few drinks at noon..."

Ouyang Jun didn't take Zhuang Rui's TV show to heart. Becoming famous wasn't difficult. Ouyang Jun might not have any other skills, but in the world of culture and entertainment, there were very few people who dared to disrespect him.

Of course, that short-sighted Director Hu was completely incompetent; otherwise, he wouldn't have taken over 10 years to become a program director.

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "Okay, since Second Brother and the others haven't returned to Beijing yet, we don't need to go anywhere. Let's go to Brother Lei's house together tonight..."

"By the way, if you want to become famous, Fourth Brother can arrange an interview for you. I doubt a popular TV show would work, you're too young, but other things are fine. I'll arrange it for you later..."

Ouyang Jun didn't know why Zhuang Rui had come, and fearing that Zhuang Rui might be unhappy if he didn't do the show, he naturally offered him some words of comfort.

"No, Fourth Brother, please have mercy! I was dragged onto this show by others, don't make me suffer any more..." Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui shook his head vigorously, as he had no interest in being a celebrity.

"Come on, let's get some exercise, then we'll go upstairs to the restaurant for dinner. The CCTV chef's skills are pretty good..." Ouyang Jun had been sitting for a while, so he stood up to watch other people rehearse their programs.

"You're going to see women, aren't you?" Xu Qing's voice held a hint of resentment.

Ouyang Jun wasn't buying it. He immediately said, "Oh my, you even noticed that? I have to say, I just saw a dancer whose legs were as thick as elephants. I really need to go check her out..."

"You're such a character... Let's go for a walk. Feifei, whose autograph do you want? I'll go get it for you..."

Xu Qing was amused by Ouyang Jun, and the group left the sofa area and wandered around to various film crews.

Reporters were strictly prohibited from taking photos during the Spring Festival Gala rehearsal, but since the camera was in Xu Qing's hand, no one stopped them. Miao Feifei and Zhuang Rui also benefited from this, taking photos with many movie stars they had only seen on TV or in movies before.

Of course, almost all the people in the group photos were male celebrities, and Ouyang Jun tried to walk towards the changing room several times, but Xu Qing pulled him back, making Ouyang Jun look depressed.

"Excuse me, sir, could you please wait a moment?"

Just as Ouyang Jun and the others finished watching the skit by the Northeast uncle and were about to change positions, Zhuang Rui, who was walking behind, was suddenly stopped by an armed policeman.

"What's going on?" Zhuang Rui asked, somewhat puzzled.

"I'm sorry, we have just received notification that your eligibility to participate in the Spring Festival special program has been revoked. According to regulations, you must leave the CCTV studio..."

The armed police officer saluted Zhuang Rui, but what he said made Zhuang Rui's face turn very ugly. He had been invited by the TV station, and now it was as if he was being kicked out. Zhuang Rui couldn't bear the humiliation.

Ouyang Jun, who was walking in front, heard the conversation between the two behind him. His face was so gloomy it looked like it could drip water. He turned around and asked, "Whose notification did you receive?"

"It was the folk treasure appraisal segment of the Spring Festival special program that notified us. We apologize, but please cooperate with our work..."

The armed police's duty is to cooperate with the TV station to maintain order and clear out loiterers; this matter falls under their jurisdiction.

The armed police officers on duty at the entrance ran into the hall, attracting the attention of many people. After understanding what had happened, they all looked at Zhuang Rui with sympathetic eyes.

Being cut from the show at the last minute is normal for the Spring Festival Gala; it just means the performer was unlucky.

Chapter 524-525 I'll Crush You (Part 1)

"This young man is really unlucky. He even changed his clothes, and he still got rejected..."

"Yes, but this young man is quite young. Judging from his clothes, he must be a crosstalk performer, right?"

"Hey, ask Teacher Jiang. There's no one in the crosstalk world he doesn't know. Teacher Jiang, is this young man from a crosstalk show?"

"No, we're not in this line of work. We're probably performing something else..."

The entertainment industry is a gossipy place, and the fact that an actor was eliminated can attract a lot of attention. Some people with excessive curiosity are even inquiring about Zhuang Rui's background.

Although Zhuang Rui is standing with Xu Qing and others, no one thinks they are friends. How could a big star be friends with an unknown nobody?

"Sir, I'm so sorry, please change out of your performance costume and leave here..."

Although the armed police officer was polite, what he said made Zhuang Rui extremely embarrassed. Without even asking, Zhuang Rui could tell that this was definitely something that Director Hu had done behind the scenes.

Hu Ming, who was hiding in the crowd, was feeling incredibly pleased. As the director, he had the right to decide the composition of his filming crew. Losing a jade expert was no big deal; it was just a matter of reducing the number of experts from five to four. The world would keep turning no matter who left.

Furthermore, Hu Ming's reason was perfectly legitimate: the report was an hour late, and he used that as a reason to get approval from the station as soon as he applied. For CCTV, which has always held a monopoly and is used to doing things its own way, eliminating a few actors and experts is no big deal at all.

It must be said that Hu Ming is very good at using others' strengths against him. He has not wasted his time in the past 10 years. With CCTV backing him up, even a big star like Xu can't do anything to him. Hu Ming makes a living from news, and he really doesn't take entertainment stars seriously.

"Okay, I won't make things difficult for you..."

Although he was angry, Zhuang Rui didn't want to argue here and make a fool of himself in front of others, so he turned around and headed towards the changing room.

"Brother, wait a minute. Everyone in CCTV is fired today, and you're not leaving either!"

Ouyang Jun, with a gloomy face, grabbed Zhuang Rui and said something incredibly arrogant that offended everyone in the hall.

As soon as he said that, all the murmurs immediately stopped, and everyone's attention turned to Ouyang Jun. They wanted to see who this arrogant person was.

Ouyang Jun was so angry he felt like his lungs were about to explode. Even when the old man on Yuquan Mountain was lying on his deathbed, no one dared to embarrass the Ouyang family like this.

This wasn't just making things difficult for Zhuang Rui; it was slapping the face of the Ouyang family. If Zhuang Rui really left in such a disgraceful manner, then if word got out, it would only be said that the Ouyang family lacked responsibility and was overly cautious in their actions, and perhaps even more people would try to take advantage of them.

Ouyang Jun wasn't stupid. He naturally knew that this was just something that the junior director had done, but others wouldn't think that way. Anyway, many people in the upper echelons knew that Zhuang Rui was Ouyang Gang's grandson, which was a slap in the face to the Ouyang family.

Moreover, in a sense, CCTV is still the traditional territory of the Ouyang family. Although CCTV is a vice-ministerial level unit, the Ministry of Culture can still guide it. Being humiliated on his own turf is even more unacceptable to Ouyang Jun.

"Who is this guy? Why is he talking so arrogantly?"

"Yeah, causing trouble at CCTV is just asking for trouble..."

"Don't talk nonsense, or you'll get into trouble..."

Shocked, onlookers whispered amongst themselves. Among those rejected from the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, some secretly wiped away tears, while others were indignant, but none uttered any boastful words, unless they never wanted to appear on CCTV again.

That bald actor who sold lamb skewers and was incredibly popular in the 1980s—wasn't he blacklisted for over a decade because of a lawsuit with CCTV? Now he's leased a barren mountain to farm, and his life is a complete mess.

So even though the person who spoke just now seemed to be a friend of the famous Xu, the onlookers didn't have a very good impression of Ouyang Jun and Zhuang Rui.

Director Hu, nestled in the crowd, felt as if he had drunk some kind of refreshing beverage, his heart and soul completely cool and invigorated. The person who had just spoken had been so arrogant as to tell him to leave, and now he was even daring to try and drive away everyone at CCTV. He wondered how this would end.

Hu Ming knew more about CCTV's power than most people; they were extremely protective of their own. He wasn't afraid of being held accountable by that guy surnamed Zhuang, since he was in the right anyway.

Even if the other person had some influence, he was probably just a rich guy. Which person who came to CCTV didn't have money? Hu Ming didn't take Ouyang Jun seriously.

Those who shared Hu Ming's thoughts were either newcomers to the entertainment industry or journalists unfamiliar with its higher-ups. A few well-known figures in the industry recognized Ouyang Jun at a glance and were quietly retreating from the crowd, afraid that Ouyang Jun would see them and take his anger out on them.

It would be very easy for Ouyang Jun to manipulate them. From the initial scriptwriting and filming to the final editing, the film has to be approved by the Ministry of Culture. If Ouyang Jun were to make a slight mistake or put them in a difficult position, he could make them lose everything and be left with nothing but tears.

Several people who sensed things were about to escalate had already taken out their phones and started calling the leaders they knew at CCTV. If things got out of hand and brought that old man into the spotlight, the CCTV officials might have to take action.

Those who know Ouyang Jun know that although he is just a businessman, he can definitely do what he just said. Suspending CCTV's rehearsals for a day is not a big deal; at most, it can be explained away with an internal rectification.

"Fourth Brother, let it go. It's not worth getting angry over such a small thing. We'll deal with him later..."

Zhuang Rui was still naive and didn't understand that such a small matter could actually involve certain levels of political struggle. In addition, Zhuang's mother had been very strict with him since childhood. Although she hated that man surnamed Hu, she still wanted to keep the peace.

"Brother, this is a slap in the face for us. We need to make a big scene, a real mess. Damn it, if we don't stir up some trouble, nobody will recognize us as brothers..."

Ouyang Jun turned his head, gritted his teeth, and whispered something in Zhuang Rui's ear. Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment, then realized what he meant, nodded silently, and remained silent.

"Go, take my sister-in-law to sit on the sofa..."

Zhuang Rui saw Xu Qing standing there with her big pregnant belly, which was quite eye-catching. He whispered something to Miao Feifei, and this time Officer Miao didn't throw a tantrum. She obediently helped Xu Qing to the outside of the crowd.

"Sir, please don't interfere with my work..."

The armed policeman also sensed something was wrong, but he was just carrying out a mission and it wasn't his place to worry about other things. He was only notified to come and drive people away, and if no one notified him to withdraw, then he had to complete his mission.

"Wait a minute, it's nothing to do with you, I won't make things difficult for you..."

Ouyang Jun waved his hand with a gloomy face, took out his phone from his pocket, and displayed the imposing manner of a veteran third-generation princeling, which made the young armed policeman pause for a moment. He did not insist any further, took a step back, but did not leave.

"Teacher Zhuang, what are you doing here? I've been looking for you for ages..."

Suddenly, a female voice broke the silence in the room. Liu Jia squeezed in from the outside of the crowd with a look of surprise. She had indeed looked around the hall for Zhuang Rui, but she did not see what had just happened.

"I just received a notification that your program team has canceled my guest status. This armed police officer was just about to ask me to change clothes and leave..."

Zhuang Rui looked at Liu Jia with a calm expression, but inwardly he was extremely annoyed. If this girl hadn't been so persistent in insisting he become an expert, none of this nonsense would have happened. However, Zhuang Rui also knew that Liu Jia was probably unaware that he was being asked to leave the CCTV studio.

"What? How come I didn't know? Young comrade, who notified you? Please find the person who notified you..." Liu Jia's reaction was unexpectedly strong, and she immediately questioned the armed police officer.

"Damn it, you slut, wait until you get transferred to the station, then I'll deal with you..."

Seeing Liu Jia's attitude, Hu Ming in the crowd couldn't help but curse inwardly. This guy has become a small-time director, and his confidence has really inflated. He thinks he's someone important.

"I received instructions from my superior via walkie-talkie, which is why I came here. However, it was that person who introduced me to this Mr. Zhuang..."

The young armed police officer was calm and composed when facing Zhuang Rui, but he hesitated a bit when he encountered a woman like Liu Jia, and immediately pointed into the crowd.

Everyone moved aside in the direction the young armed policeman pointed. They could see that Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun had extraordinary bearing, and Zhuang Rui seemed to be an expert invited by CCTV, not an actor as they had imagined. So they all stepped aside, not wanting to be misunderstood by Zhuang Rui.

When Hu Ming, who had been hiding behind the crowd, finally peeked out, the young armed policeman said confidently, "That's the gentleman..."

"Director Hu?!"

The person who appeared in front of her made Liu Jia pause for a moment, but she didn't ask any further questions because she didn't know what had happened. In a program or film crew, the director can make many decisions.

"Hehe, so it's Director Hu. You really know how to stir things up!" Zhuang Rui chuckled softly and walked towards Hu Ming.

"Brother, don't be impulsive. We're all civilized people. It would be too shameful to resort to violence..."

Ouyang Jun pulled Zhuang Rui back, afraid that Zhuang Rui would actually go up and beat that guy up in front of so many people, which wouldn't sound good if word got out. Of course, if he did beat him up, Ouyang Jun really didn't care, since in the eyes of those elders he was just a spoiled brat.

"Fourth Brother, I know, hitting him would be too easy on him..."

Zhuang Rui gently brushed Ouyang Jun's hand away and slowly walked to Hu Ming's side.

"What...what are you going to do?"

Hu Ming is only about 1.7 meters tall. Perhaps because he has been an assistant director for so long, he has exhausted himself by working on minor celebrities and intern hosts. When he saw Zhuang Rui coming over, he couldn't help but take two steps back.

"It's alright, Hu Dao, you haven't done anything wrong, why are you afraid of me?"

Zhuang Rui stepped forward, put his arm around Hu Ming's shoulder, and whispered in his ear, "Kid, you're in luck. I've never hated anyone this much in my life. Don't worry, I'll definitely ruin you!"

"You...you're threatening me?"

Hu Ming forcefully broke free from Zhuang Rui's arm and shouted at the armed police officer, "Officer, he just threatened me, saying he was going to cripple me..."

"Director Hu, please watch your words. I have a fiancée and am not interested in men..."

Zhuang Rui interrupted Hu Ming with a serious expression. The onlookers were stunned for a moment, and then burst into laughter.

However, they had already guessed what was going on. The young man might have really said that. It seemed that these two people involved were not simple. One wanted to kick the CCTV staff out, and the other wanted to cripple a director. Without some background, who would dare to make such boasts?

"What's going on? No rehearsals, huh? If you don't want to be on the Spring Festival Gala, just replace her. There are plenty of people waiting to be on it..."

Suddenly, a voice came from outside the crowd. As soon as the voice came out, the onlookers changed their expressions and quietly dispersed, because they recognized it as the voice of Director Zhang, the chief director of the Spring Festival Gala.

If you were to ask who wields the most power at CCTV, many people probably wouldn't say it's the high-ranking station director, because that vice-ministerial level leader wouldn't concern himself with such trivial matters.

But this bearded director Zhang was different. From CCTV's television production to the chief director of the Spring Festival Gala, Director Zhang's power was extraordinary. Which program to include and which actor to perform on the Spring Festival Gala was entirely up to him. Therefore, after hearing his words, no one dared to gather around to watch the excitement anymore.

"Director Zhang, you've come at the perfect time! He's the late guest who disobeyed the organization's decision and even threatened me just now..."

Upon seeing Director Zhang, Hu Ming immediately went up to him and began to badmouth Zhuang Rui.

Although Director Zhang is only in charge of the Spring Festival Gala, he still has the authority to guide other programs. He can handle some minor matters. Hu Ming just reported this situation to him. Director Zhang, who was extremely busy, readily agreed to the request to cancel that person's guest status as soon as he heard that someone was late.

"Director Hu, I'm in charge of the Spring Festival Gala, and you're in charge of the Spring Festival special programs. You can't tell me about this..." The bearded director looked at Hu Ming, casually tossed out a sentence, and then went to greet Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun.

"Director Zhang, didn't you agree to this?"

Hu Ming was confused after hearing Director Zhang's words. He didn't understand what had happened. This boss had just been calling him brother, so why was he suddenly acting all businesslike?

Director Zhang stopped in his tracks upon hearing this, and said coldly, "Director Hu, you can eat whatever you want, but you can't just say whatever you want. We're from different departments, so what right do I have to interfere in your department's affairs?"

"What...what's going on?" Hu Ming sensed something was wrong as he watched the bearded director approach Ouyang Jun.

"Mr. Ouyang, I'm so sorry. You see, I've been so busy these past few days that I haven't even had a few hours of sleep, and I haven't been able to spend time with you. I really feel bad about it..."

Director Zhang, who was speaking to Ouyang Jun at this moment, had a smile on his face. His humble demeanor surprised everyone who was secretly following the incident. When had they ever seen Director Zhang treat someone with such an expression?

"Director Zhang, I want to know, who made the decision to revoke Mr. Zhuang's qualification as a special expert? Is this how irresponsible CCTV is? Calling someone here early in the morning, telling him his qualification has been revoked, and then letting him leave without any explanation?"

Ouyang Jun did not shake the hand extended by the bearded director. This was because he did not have enough face for Director Zhang, since he did not have the ability to cripple Director Hu. Since his younger brother had spoken, he was determined to cripple him.

Director Zhang, having risen from a small-time actor to his current position, is undoubtedly a man of flexibility and adaptability. He wasn't embarrassed at all, and naturally withdrew his outstretched hand, saying sincerely, "Mr. Ouyang, I really didn't know about this. I'll report it to my superiors right away. Perhaps we could go upstairs for a while? It's just too noisy downstairs..."

"Brother, come upstairs and have a seat. The mandarin fish cooked by the CCTV chef is really delicious..."

Ouyang Jun nodded, knowing that once he went up there, someone of appropriate status would come out to greet him. There was no point in making a scene down there; it would only make him a laughingstock.

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Ouyang. This way, please. And this gentleman, please..."

Director Zhang wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. This man was someone he really couldn't afford to offend. Putting aside that old man, even his own father held his life in his hands.

It's important to know that Director Zhang doesn't rely on directing the Spring Festival Gala for a living; his most lucrative job is making TV dramas, and being a TV producer and director is his true profession.

The man in front of me had a terrifyingly powerful background. He not only had connections in the Ministry of Culture, but also in the Ministry of Radio and Television, which was his territory. If you wanted to make it in the Chinese entertainment industry, you couldn't avoid these two departments. Unless you decided to give up being a director, you would have to act like a grandson in front of this man.

After Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun disappeared into the elevator, Hu Ming, who was still standing there dumbfounded, suddenly snapped out of it and grabbed Liu Jia beside him, stammering, "Liu... Liu Jia, what... what does this person you recommended do?"

"I...I don't know either. When I first met him, he was a jade expert. Director Hu, why did you offend him?"

Liu Jia was also startled by Director Zhang's appearance. Seeing this famous director, known as "Master Zhang," being so humble in front of Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun, she felt uneasy. However, she knew that Zhuang Rui's background was much more powerful than she had imagined.

Led by Director Zhang, Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun entered an office on the eighth floor. The sign outside the office door clearly read "Director's Office".

"Brother Ouyang, it's such a trivial matter, is it really worth getting so angry? Come, come, sit down, calm down. I have some pre-Qingming Longjing tea here, have some first, and I'll have a good drink with you at noon..."

A middle-aged man in his forties or fifties came out from behind the large desk and waved for Director Zhang, who was leading the way, to leave.

"Brother Zhang, it's not that I'm disrespecting you, you know my cousin too. This is a slap in the face to our Ouyang family. Even if Zhuang Rui wasn't invited to the show, kicking him out in public, where do we put our face?"

Although Ouyang Jun's expression softened, he still looked unwilling to give up. Director Zhang frowned slightly upon hearing this. The other party was putting too much pressure on him, mentioning the Ouyang family right off the bat. Even if he wanted to protect that muddle-headed director, he probably couldn't.

"This was a mistake on our part, I'll handle it. Xiao Wang, have Hu Ming come to my office..."

Director Zhang is very decisive. He heard that Ouyang Jun's second brother, Ouyang Long, might be transferred to the Ministry of Radio and Television, and that he might become his direct superior. He already had a good relationship with the Ouyang family, so there was no need to offend them over such a small matter.

Moreover, Director Zhang had met Zhuang Rui when Old Master Ouyang celebrated his 90th birthday, and knew that he was the old master's only grandson. If anyone is to blame, it's Hu Ming for being blind.

"Director Hu, the station director wants to see you and asks you to go to his office immediately..."

Hu Ming walked back to the shooting studio in a daze when he suddenly heard someone calling his name. When he understood what it was, cold sweat immediately soaked his clothes.

Normally, if the station director contacted him, Hu Ming would be overjoyed, considering he'd barely exchanged a few words with the big boss. But at this critical juncture, even a fool could tell that this was definitely not a good thing.

At this moment, Hu Ming wished he could slap himself a few times. Zhuang Rui's words about ruining him were still echoing in his ears. Beads of sweat involuntarily dripped down Hu Ming's forehead.

"Director Hu, the rehearsal team has left, can we start now?"

Li Jia, a famous variety show host from CCTV, came over. He also had high hopes for this new program. While others were rehearsing, he was memorizing his lines in the back, so he was unaware of what was happening outside.

"You guys should rehearse first, maybe... we'll have to change directors..." Hu Ming waved his hand weakly, turned and walked towards the elevator in the lobby. This was something he couldn't avoid.

"Director, you wanted to see me?"

Upon arriving at the station director's office, Hu Ming cautiously inquired. When he saw Expert Zhuang and that arrogant middle-aged man sitting on the sofa drinking tea, his heart nearly leaped out of his chest with nervousness.

"Um, Hu Ming, I received a report from an intern at the station, saying that when you were working on the xxx program, you used your position to force others to agree to certain requests of yours. Is that true?"

Director Zhang naturally wouldn't bring up what had just happened. He had plenty of dirt on people, and none of the directors and producers at the station had clean hands when it came to relationships. Of course, Director Zhang himself wasn't much better off either.

Chapter 526 I'll Crush You (Part Two)

"Director, this...it was my fault. I haven't been strict enough with myself and made a mistake..."

Hu Ming was a smart man; he had originally intended to offer some explanation, but what came out of his mouth was an extremely sincere self-criticism, which nearly made Zhuang Rui, who was sitting on the sofa drinking tea, spit out his tea.

Hu Ming knew the principle of seeking good fortune and avoiding misfortune. Since his boss had said such things in front of those two people, he was determined to give them an explanation. If he was sensible, he might have a chance to make a comeback in a few years. But if he embarrassed his boss again, he would definitely never have a chance to rise again.

Zhuang Rui shook his head slightly. It seems that there are no simple people among those who work in the system.

"Well, it's good that you recognize your mistakes; there's still hope for redemption. Here's what we'll do: hand over your current work, put you on probation, and go home to await the organization's decision..."

Logically speaking, this kind of thing shouldn't be something that he, the head of CCTV, should inform Hu Ming about. However, in order to quell Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun's anger, he had no choice but to make a show of it in person. Otherwise, if these two guys kept causing trouble, they might implicate him.

"Yes, Director, I will definitely reflect deeply on my mistakes and accept the station's criticism and guidance..."

Hu Ming was now as docile as a lamb, completely losing the arrogance he had displayed as the director. He was terrified; someone who could be personally entertained by the head of CCTV would be as easy as crushing an ant to him.

However, Hu Ming did not think he had done anything wrong. It was normal for a director to be arrogant and domineering. He could only blame himself for being blind and offending someone he couldn't afford to offend. Oh right, and the year wasn't even over yet, and he had already changed his red underwear. It was his birth year!

It's all that slut's fault from a few days ago. She insisted on playing SM and ended up tearing my red underwear to shreds.

"Alright, you can leave now..."

Director Zhang waved his hand dismissively, like shooing away flies; he didn't want to ask any more questions about this ridiculous nonsense.

"Yes, yes..."

Hu Ming agreed and walked towards the door with his head down. However, as he opened the door, he glanced at Zhuang Rui with a look of resentment.

Although Hu Ming's glance was subtle, it was noticed by Zhuang Rui, who had been keeping a close eye on him. Zhuang Rui, who was already dissatisfied with Director Zhang's handling of the matter, suddenly became furious.

"Probationary period" is nothing. This kid might come back in three to five months. For this kind of person, we should just kill him and not give him any chance to recover.

Moreover, Zhuang Rui, who has always considered himself to be quite intelligent, has never been as embarrassed as he was today. He was almost kicked out in public, and he had never vented his anger on Liu Chuan since they were young.

"Director Hu, please wait..."

Zhuang Rui suddenly stood up from the sofa and walked quickly toward Hu Ming.

"Mr. Zhuang... I really..."

Hu Ming didn't know why Zhuang Rui called him. He was about to apologize when Zhuang Rui appeared in front of him. Hu Ming felt a sudden jolt in his head, as if firecrackers had exploded in his ears during the New Year. He saw a sky full of stars.

Hu Ming was in a daze and had no idea what was going on, but Director Zhang and Ouyang Jun, who were sitting directly opposite the gate, could see everything clearly.

Just as Zhuang Rui caught up with Hu Ming, he suddenly raised his right hand, pressed down on Hu Ming's head, and slammed it hard against the threshold. Although Zhang Taichang was more than 10 meters away from Zhuang Rui, he still clearly heard a "thud," like a rotten watermelon falling from a great height.

Looking at Hu Ming again, his face was a mess—red with blood, white with snot, and his once-hoofed nose was now sunken in; clearly, the impact had broken his nasal bone.

"Brother Ouyang, isn't this... this is going too far?"

Director Zhang was so shocked by Zhuang Rui's actions that he stood up. As the saying goes, a gentleman uses words, not fists. The political arena in mainland China is different from that in Taiwan, where a disagreement can easily escalate into a physical fight. Director Zhang had been working in the system for so many years, and this was the first time he had ever seen such a scene.

In China's officialdom, conspiracies and schemes abound, and backstabbing is commonplace. However, physical violence is against people, which is against the rules. China is a land of etiquette with five thousand years of civilization.

"Too much? My brother said he'd cripple him and put him on probation, humph..."

Ouyang Jun was also very dissatisfied with Director Zhang's handling of the matter. If it had been dismissal, that would have been more appropriate. Zhuang Rui's actions were exactly what he wanted. Ouyang Jun used to be a brave and ruthless character. He wasn't afraid of blood; in fact, he got excited about it.

"That's enough, Ouyang Jun. We've already given you face. Stop making a scene. If you escalate this, you won't look good either..."

Director Zhang was put in an awkward position by Ouyang Jun's words. After all, he was a vice-ministerial level cadre who was used to being bossy. When Ouyang Jun, an outsider, challenged him, he couldn't help but put on his directorial airs.

What angered Director Zhang even more was that although the threshold of the office was made of imitation mahogany, making the blood splatter less noticeable, the pool of blood on the floor stung his eyes. Zhuang Rui's actions clearly showed that he didn't take him seriously.

Aside from the old man from Yuquan Mountain, Ouyang Jun wasn't afraid of his own father. He naturally scoffed at Director Zhang's words, and said slowly with a gloomy face, "What's wrong with me? I'm just a businessman. My cousin doesn't even have a business; he's just a collector. Let them make a scene if they want."

"What? Is Zhang Tai planning to send us two brothers to a detention center?"

Ouyang Jun's words surprised Director Zhang. Yes, what could he do to them? Neither of these two were people within the system, and these official words had no effect on them.

Moreover, given the political upheaval at the end of last year, various ministries are now facing a reshuffling and reorganization. And the one from the Ouyang family is one of the Standing Committee members. If those two boys were to say a few bad things about him during the New Year, he might not be able to hold onto his position.

Although Director Zhang has people behind him, he can't help being targeted by petty people. A hundred good words from others are often not as effective as one bad word from some people. Thinking of this, cold sweat broke out on Director Zhang's forehead.

"Brother Ouyang, that's not what I meant..."

Director Zhang realized that official jargon and platitudes were useless when dealing with Ouyang Jun. He regretted it in his heart. He thought, "I've already hit him. It's not like he's the one being hit. Why did I have to say anything?"

"Ah! Someone's being hit! Someone's being attacked!"

Just as Director Zhang was about to say a few conciliatory words to salvage the situation, a heart-wrenching scream suddenly came from the doorway. It was Director Hu who had finally come to his senses. But as soon as he opened his mouth, he suddenly felt a leak in his mouth, and the scream of "kill" instantly turned into "suck".

"puff....."

Director Hu opened his mouth and spat out two front teeth into his palm. The soreness and numbness on his face had subsided, but he felt the pain was getting worse, and snot and tears involuntarily streamed down his cheeks.

"Kid, I said I'd cripple you, you can't go back on your word, right?"

Zhuang Rui affectionately put his arm around Hu Ming's shoulder, whispered something in his ear, and then shouted, "Director Hu, you're such a grown man, how can you be so careless? You can even bump into a door while walking. Tsk tsk, you've really wasted your life..."

Before Hu Ming could finish processing Zhuang Rui's words, he heard Director Zhang's voice again: "Little Hu, you can't even watch where you're walking! Hurry up and go get your wound bandaged. How can you do your job well if you're so reckless..."

Upon hearing Director Zhang's words, Hu Ming wished he could bang his head against the wall again. "Is there no justice in this world? They're all a bunch of snakes and rats!"

But Hu Ming never considered that when he used his power to seduce women into bed, and when he plotted against Zhuang Rui behind his back, he never thought of this outcome. What goes around comes around.

"It's just two teeth, forget it. I'll be affectionate with you next time we meet. Get lost. By the way, if you're thinking of calling the police, you should first consider whether they'll believe your station manager Zhang or you..."

Zhuang Rui patted Hu Ming's shoulder affectionately, then rubbed his face roughly with the collar of his jacket, but the force was a bit too strong, causing Hu Ming to shout loudly in pain.

Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Director Zhang's face twitched. This young man was nothing like an expert; he was a complete scoundrel, and a cultured one at that, knowing how to use himself as a shield.

The eighth floor is the station director's office, and the station staff are all busy with the Spring Festival Gala. One or two people peeked out, but immediately closed the door again. One of the key principles of officialdom is to mind your own business.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Hu Ming's face turned completely green. It seemed that the other party was still unwilling to give up. He realized that if he stayed in Beijing, he would definitely be crippled. Hu Ming stopped shouting, took off his jacket, covered his face, and rushed out of the station director's office.

After a grueling New Year in Beijing, Hu, a rising star at CCTV, made a wise decision: to resign and head south. Relying on his past connections, he took photos of women who wanted to become famous, and even made music videos. Several years later, he finally returned to the public eye with a set of wildly popular nude photos that swept the country. Of course, that's another story.

Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun, accompanied by Director Zhang, had a meal at the restaurant inside the CCTV building.

Although the meal was eaten in a private room, it was still seen by many observant people as they went in and out. Combined with the scene of Director Hu leaving the CCTV building in a sorry state, the outcome was self-evident.

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Director Hu was quite busy, so after having a few drinks with Zhuang Rui and Ouyang Jun, he left in a hurry, leaving only the four of them in the private room. They enjoyed their meal quite well, and it must be said, the chef's skills were truly excellent.

"What? You want me to continue participating in this program? Fourth Brother, you can go by yourself if you want, I'm not doing this expert role anymore..."

Zhuang Rui called out to Miao Feifei, and just as the two were about to leave, Ouyang Jun stopped them.

Ouyang Jun curled his lip and said, "Of course you have to continue participating in the show. That idiot director got replaced, otherwise people will think you two were fired, which would be embarrassing..."

"I said, can't we just live a simpler life? Why make things so complicated..."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui's head immediately started spinning. However, after thinking about it carefully, he realized that if he hadn't relied on Ouyang Jun's influence, this matter would have been difficult to handle. Ouyang Jun, in turn, relied on his family's influence. Since everything was interconnected, he naturally had to protect his family's reputation.

"If you don't go, I'll tell your aunt that you hit someone today..."

Ouyang Jun said with a wicked smile, he had figured out Zhuang Rui's weakness. He was a filial son and was afraid of upsetting his mother. Actually, it didn't matter whether Zhuang Rui participated in the show or not. It was just that Ouyang was bored and wanted to amuse Zhuang Rui.

"You can't talk like that! You're such a scoundrel. But Xiao Rui, going on TV won't do you any harm. I used to know someone in your circle who was begging around to get on TV but couldn't..."

Xu Qing gently patted Ouyang Jun, also encouraging Zhuang Rui to participate in the program. She herself was in the entertainment industry and knew the ins and outs of it very well.

"He'd love to be on TV so he can hook up with more girls. Didn't you see how the host practically threw herself at him?"

Miao Feifei's voice suddenly rang out beside them, but there was a hint of sourness in her words.

"Hey, Officer Miao, who did I flirt with? Last time... um, I can't say anything carelessly, I really can't participate in this show..." Zhuang Rui cried out in protest, almost revealing the incident of going to Bai Feng's house with Ouyang Jun last time.

"Brother Zhuang, I've been looking for you for ages! Let's go, the show is about to start recording..."

Just as Zhuang Rui and Miao Feifei were entangled in their argument, Fatty Jin appeared in front of Zhuang Rui, panting heavily, followed by Li Jia, the top anchor of CCTV-2.

"Teacher Jin, I..."

"Hello, Teacher Zhuang, I am Li Jia, the director and producer of this Spring Festival special program. The crew is just missing a jade expert, so you must step in to help us out."

By the way, this is your special guest certificate. On behalf of the Spring Festival special program team, I sincerely invite you to join us...

Before Zhuang Rui could refuse, Li Jia stepped forward, took out a large red silk certificate, and respectfully handed it to Zhuang Rui with both hands.

Li Jia was originally just the producer of the show, but after Director Hu's incident, he was temporarily notified to take on the role of director as well, which was a windfall for him.

Those who work in journalism are never short of a spirit of exploration. After Director Hu left the CCTV building, the whole story had already spread throughout the CCTV lobby. Li Jia naturally understood Zhuang Rui's importance, so she brought Jin Pangzi to invite him.

Moreover, the station just gave instructions to make this Spring Festival treasure appraisal program a success and a high-quality production, so Li Jia still feels a lot of pressure.

As the saying goes, one cannot hit a smiling face. Seeing this famous TV personality, who is often seen on television, respectfully handing him the invitation with both hands, Zhuang Rui really felt embarrassed not to accept it.

Back in the CCTV lobby, Zhuang Rui noticed something strange: everyone, whether they knew him or not, was greeting him with smiles. Even Teacher Feng, who claimed to be a friend of women nationwide, pulled Zhuang Rui aside for a few words, making him quite uncomfortable.

It wasn't good to refuse people during the Chinese New Year, so Zhuang Rui smiled and nodded in response to each one. However, by the time he reached the Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal Program team, his smile had become somewhat stiff.

Upon arriving at the program set that had just been occupied by someone else, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but smile when he saw several expert team members dressed like him. It turned out they were all familiar faces. Besides Fatty Jin, there was President Qian, Teacher Sun, and Teacher Tian, who was an expert in ceramics, plus the host Liu Jia. It was the same team that went to Jinan.

This made Zhuang Rui very happy. Although he had collected quite a few items, he was too busy and rarely had time to discuss them with experts in various categories of collecting.

Zhuang Rui knew that although his ability to identify antiques was more accurate than that of the experts, in terms of experience, he was still far inferior to these old guys who had been in the antique business for decades. Moreover, the anecdotes about antiques that he heard from them were quite fascinating.

Apart from Fatty Jin, who had more social connections, the rest of these people were all academics. They knew nothing about what had just happened and didn't care. So they chatted about things they hadn't seen recently that were of any interest, and who had picked up some treasure at Panjiayuan. The atmosphere was quite pleasant.

"Teachers, may I interrupt for a moment and explain the recording process of the program?"

While Zhuang Rui and the others were chatting enthusiastically, Li Jia and Liu Jia walked together into the separate hall where Zhuang Rui and the others were. There was only a long rectangular table in the hall, and behind the table were five chairs, which were the seats for the five experts.

“Well, Li Jia, you go ahead...” The group stopped and all looked at Li Jia.

"Here's the thing, this filming is divided into two parts. One part is hosted by me and Liu Jia, and the other part is the live appraisal of treasures by the experts."

Because time is tight, our two groups need to shoot simultaneously, so I'd like to ask for the opinions of the teachers. There are also a few points that need to be noted..."

After listening to Li Jia's words, the group realized that this CCTV treasure appraisal program was quite different from the one they had participated in last time.

The first difference is that some appraisers did not come in person, but entrusted the items to be appraised to the program team. In this case, the program team needed to find some staff members to act as appraisers.

Secondly, unlike the previous treasure appraisal in Jinan, this time there were so many antiques that the program couldn't possibly showcase them all within the one-hour broadcast time.

Therefore, Zhuang Rui and others had to select these items before filming began, choosing some representative ones to be broadcast on the show.

Of course, this so-called representativeness does not mean that everything must be genuine. Even if it is a fake, if it is unique and can popularize antique knowledge for the audience, it can also be included in the program.

In addition, during filming, the two hosts will first film their interactions with the appraisers outside, while Zhuang Rui and others only need to evaluate the items brought in by the people entering for appraisal. The rest of the work will be edited in post-production.

“Alright, let’s go see what we have first. We can only start the show once we’ve picked these things out...” After consulting with the others, Fatty Jin nodded in agreement.

Seeing that Fatty Jin had agreed to their plan, Liu Jia said, "Okay, then I'll take the teachers to see the things first..."

To Zhuang Rui's surprise, Liu Jia suddenly became dignified and poised, not even glancing at him directly.

In fact, Liu Jia's change of attitude was also due to what had just happened. She learned from Li Jia that Zhuang Rui's background was so powerful that even the head of CCTV had to bow down to him, which made Liu Jia want to back down.

Liu Jia was a smart woman. She knew that her past was questionable and that it was practically impossible for her to enter such a powerful family. Therefore, Liu Jia gave up the idea of seducing Zhuang Rui.

At this point, Liu Jia set her sights on Li Jia. Being able to establish a relationship with this top anchor of CCTV-2 would be extremely beneficial to her future development. It has to be said that this woman is extremely sensitive and pragmatic.

"This...this is a bit too much, isn't it?"

Upon arriving at a temporary warehouse belonging to CCTV, the group was immediately taken aback by the sight before them. Tables were filled with all sorts of antiques, some of which were quite large and were placed on the floor. There were approximately three hundred pieces in total.

Although the treasure appraisal program will be broadcast for seven consecutive days, that's only seven hours of screen time, making it impossible to record all the items in the program.

"This is just a part of it. There are also more than thirty other treasure holders here on the show. Regardless of whether the items they brought are real or fake, they will all be featured on the show. The judges will just need to select sixty items from these..."

Liu Jia explained to the group that the items placed there were brought in by appraisers who were unsure of their authenticity and were just trying their luck. Those who truly felt their items were valuable came in person, as they were afraid of their items getting damaged.

"Alright, teachers, each of you focus on your own tasks. Let's get busy and finish as soon as possible so we can call it a day..."

Fatty Jin clapped his hands, then took out a pair of white gloves from the pocket of his robe and walked over to the place where calligraphy and painting supplies were kept to examine them.

Zhuang Rui was the most relaxed, as among the more than three hundred antiques, there were less than twenty pieces of jade, all of which were displayed on one table.

"What are all these things...?"

Zhuang Rui frowned as he looked at the jade artifacts on the table.

Although these items all appeared to have patina and had an antique shape, Zhuang Rui's spiritual examination revealed that they were all modern imitations. They were indeed jade, but their value was not high.

Chapter 528 Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal (Part 1)

The appreciation of jade differs significantly from that of antiques. Antiques are judged primarily by their age, followed by their craftsmanship. For example, with porcelain, one must determine if it's from an official kiln of a particular dynasty and whether it reflects the social conditions of that time. Similarly, with calligraphy and paintings, one must ascertain whether it's by a renowned artist. Each category has its own specific criteria.

However, when appreciating jade, one must first look at the material of the jade. If the jade material is of poor quality, then even if it is from an earlier period, it will not have much value. Conversely, if the jade material is of the highest quality, even if it is carved using modern techniques, it will still be very valuable.

The twenty-odd jade artifacts placed in front of Zhuang Rui were not only of poor quality, but were also mostly carved using modern techniques. If they were sold on the market, they would only fetch thirty or fifty yuan at a street stall. They were hardly worthy of being called antiques, let alone handicrafts.

"Teacher Zhuang, what's wrong? Are all these jade artifacts fake?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui shake his head and leave the table, Liu Jia asked curiously, because in her opinion, all the objects on the table looked real.

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "The jade is all genuine, but none of it is antique; it's all modern imitations, so its research and market value are not high..."

"Teacher Zhuang, even if it's jade made with modern techniques, could you also choose a piece to comment on? This would allow the audience to learn some knowledge about identifying jade..." When it comes to antiques, jade is probably the closest to the lives of ordinary people.

In China, both young and old people have the habit of wearing jade ornaments. Therefore, among the experts, there must be a jade appraiser. Liu Jia's choice to invite Zhuang Rui was not entirely out of selfishness. After all, Zhuang Rui has the expertise and experience in television appraisal, making him very suitable for the program in all aspects.

"Alright, let's use the jade set that's in the box..."

Zhuang Rui pointed to a box on the table and said, "This wooden box contains a set of jade artifacts used in Han Dynasty sacrificial rites. The material is ordinary, carved from green jade. However, there are a few differences in the figures compared to those of Han Dynasty jade craftsmen, which I can explain on the spot."

"The teachers will probably have to wait a while before they can choose, so I'll go back over there and wait..."

Zhuang Rui looked around. Jin Pangzi and the others were still focused on appraising the items. This program was going to be shown to a national audience, and Zhuang Rui didn't want to overstep his bounds again. After all, a jack-of-all-trades would give the impression of being a jack of all trades. He just needed to mind his own business.

"Zhuang Rui, what's going on? I'm waiting to watch the show, why isn't it starting yet?"

Ouyang Jun was getting impatient waiting in the shooting studio, and started yelling at Zhuang Rui as soon as he saw him.

Zhuang Rui glanced at Ouyang Jun and said irritably, "Come on, you're more likely to be waiting to see me make a fool of myself. These items for the appraisal need to be selected, so it'll probably take a while..."

Li Jia was chatting with Miao Feifei and Xu Qing when she heard Ouyang Jun's words. She quickly said, "Teacher Zhuang, I'm so sorry. How about this, let's start filming the treasure owners who came to the scene first. As for the other antiques, we can film them tomorrow or the day after. What do you think?"

The truth is that Hu Ming didn't arrange this properly. Since the antiques sent by others needed to be selected, it should have been done in advance. However, Hu Ming didn't make any arrangements in the morning. These experts were all watching the Spring Festival Gala rehearsal, wasting the whole morning. They only remembered this matter now that it was time to record the program.

Although CCTV launched its treasure appraisal program in 2002, this is the first time it has been broadcast for seven consecutive days as a New Year's special. It is understandable that there is a lack of experience and the last-minute change of personnel has led to some chaos.

Zhuang Rui had a good impression of the host, who had a baby face and a friendly smile. He immediately smiled and said, "Okay, Director Li, you can arrange it as you see fit. We'll all follow your instructions..."

"Teacher Zhuang, just call me Li Jia. I was forced into this directing role, so please don't take it too seriously. You all continue chatting, I'll go call the other teachers..."

Li Jia waved his hands repeatedly; he couldn't possibly deserve the title of Zhuang Rui. But turning his head, he was puzzled. This Teacher Zhuang had a very good temper; he wondered what Director Hu had done to offend him.

So, a person's good or bad can be determined in a single thought. If Hu Ming hadn't had some feelings for Liu Jia and hadn't felt resentful seeing Liu Jia being affectionate with Zhuang Rui, he wouldn't have suffered this undeserved disaster. The monk said: "Women are tigers," and that's absolutely true.

"So, Teacher Jin, did you find anything interesting?"

Upon seeing Fatty Jin and the others return, Zhuang Rui went to greet them.

"There's nothing good here. I do have a few prints, but really, there are very few good things left in the public these days. I guess you haven't come across any good jade over there either?"

As Jin Pangzi spoke, he and Zhuang Rui and the others walked to the guest seats and sat down. The other experts also shook their heads repeatedly, looking somewhat disappointed. They came to participate in this program thinking that they should be able to see some good stuff in front of a national audience, but they didn't expect that most of them were fakes.

The experts' seats face a movable sensor door, which is decorated with traditional Chinese art and culture such as paper-cutting, and also features a couplet: "Spring is in whose home? Appraising treasures depends on discerning eyes; sentiments are soothed here, treasures are hidden with lofty sentiments."

On the glass floor in front of the main gate, there are also two large characters that read "Appraisal".

Li Jia stood beside the automatic door and said to the people inside, "Teachers, if you're ready, let's start filming..."

From the camera's perspective, this huge hall only had Zhuang Rui and his six other experts. But if you looked at it from a different angle, you would see that the hall was missing a wall, and Ouyang Jun and the others could see the filming situation inside the hall from where they were sitting.

"That's fine..." Fatty Jin nodded on behalf of the group.

"Please make way, everyone. I need to walk out of this hall, and then you teachers can sit down after that door is closed..."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui and the others stood up and walked to a place out of the camera's view. Then, Li Jia, dressed in a traditional Chinese robe, and Liu Jia, dressed in a bright red cheongsam, walked happily from the hall to the automatic door.

"Following Li Jia to appraise treasures, seven parts story, three parts treasure. Today is the first day of the Lunar New Year, and Liu Jia and I..."

"Please allow me and Li Jia, on behalf of the experts and all staff of the CCTV Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal Program, to extend our New Year's greetings to collectors and television viewers across the country..."

The two renowned hosts began their presentations, and after the automatic doors closed, staff members immediately led Zhuang Rui and the others to their seats in the expert section.

"Since CCTV launched its treasure appraisal program, it has been warmly welcomed by a wide range of television viewers. Last year, the production team traveled to more than 30 provinces and cities across the country. Today, we're taking a break in Beijing..."

Before Li Jia could finish speaking, Liu Jia continued, "However, since it's the Lunar New Year, we also want to offer some entertainment to collectors across the country. So, we've specially launched this Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal program. Over the past two weeks, we've sent out invitations nationwide, and in the end, we received tens of thousands of treasures..."

"There can't be that many, can there?"

Sitting in the expert panel, Zhuang Rui was dumbfounded. This was too exaggerated! In just one sentence, the value of the items in the warehouse had increased dozens of times.

"Some are just photos, not the actual items. We started selecting these two weeks ago..." Qian Jun, the general manager of Kyoto Auction House, who was sitting next to Zhuang Rui, explained to Zhuang Rui.

"Teachers, it's time to introduce you. Remember to wave to the audience..."

While Zhuang Rui and the others were chatting, a staff member stood in a blind spot of the camera and greeted them.

"Alright, let's first introduce the six experts we invited on the first day of the Lunar New Year..."

As soon as the staff member finished speaking, music started playing in the room, accompanied by Li Jia's voice from outside the door. Then, the automatic door opened grandly behind the two hosts, and the camera focused on the six people sitting in the expert seats.

"This kid... his smile is way too fake, isn't it?"

Having learned from his experience with the last TV treasure appraisal in Jinan, Zhuang Rui remained calm and composed. He followed the example of the people around him, waving his hand at the camera with a big smile, which made Ouyang Jun and others watching the fun laugh.

The camera only filmed Zhuang Rui and the others briefly before turning off, but in the director's seat, a pre-edited clip was immediately inserted, featuring photos and biographies of the six experts.

"Sun Sheng, expert in miscellaneous artifacts appraisal, researcher at the Capital Museum..."

"Jin Xiyi, expert in calligraphy and painting appraisal, associate researcher at the Palace Museum in Beijing..."

"Tian Fan, ceramics appraisal expert, researcher at the Palace Museum in Beijing..."

"Qian Jun, market assessment expert, general manager of Beijing Jingdu International Auction Company..."

"Liu An'an, expert in bronze Buddhist statue appraisal, researcher at the National Academy of Arts..."

To be honest, Zhuang Rui only knew the surnames of these teachers; he was hearing their given names for the first time. However, the edited footage on the screen below turned out to be him.

"Zhuang Rui, jade and gemstone appraisal expert, director of the National Jade and Gemstone Association..."

"Where...where was this filmed?"

The photo on the screen shows Zhuang Rui holding a jade pendant. He is examining the object with a magnifying glass. Although he looks young, he has the air of an expert.

Zhuang Rui thought for a while before remembering that this should be a scene from Jinan, and he didn't know where CCTV found the composite photo.

"Alright, now that we've introduced the experts, we welcome our first treasure holder today. Let's see what treasure he's brought!"

Chapter 529 Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal (Part Two)

As the expert profiles appeared on the screen, hosts Li Jia and Liu Jia were also busy; the treasure appraisal program had officially begun.

"Welcome our first collector, Mr. Wang Meng. Happy Chinese New Year, Mr. Wang..."

"Happy Chinese New Year! Happy Chinese New Year to the host..."

The conversation coming from outside the door made Zhuang Rui feel a little awkward. There were still several days until the New Year, but the way those people were talking made it sound like it was already the first day of the Lunar New Year.

"Mr. Wang's treasure is truly extraordinary..."

Liu Jia's voice almost made Zhuang Rui spit out the tea he was drinking. Why did those words sound even more awkward? Okay, Zhuang Rui admitted that he wasn't pure anymore, but looking at the

strange expression on Fatty Jin's face next to him, it seemed that he wasn't the only one with such a vivid imagination.

"This is a gold ingot, it's really auspicious. To see such a treasure on the first day of the Lunar New Year, this one is from the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty..."

Li Jia's voice came from outside the door, letting the experts inside know what kind of object they were going to appraise.

After the two hosts and the owner of the treasure chatted for a few more minutes, the automatic door opened, and a young man who looked to be only in his early twenties walked in. Upon entering, he bowed to the experts and said, "Happy New Year, everyone..."

These are all pre-arranged lines. Although the program is pre-recorded, it will be broadcast on the first day of the Lunar New Year. All the words used in the program must be interpreted as if they were spoken on the first day of the Lunar New Year.

"Happy Chinese New Year, Happy Chinese New Year..."

Although Fatty Jin wasn't an expert in appraising this object, he was quite knowledgeable about it. He continued, "Giving a gold ingot on the first day of the Lunar New Year is incredibly auspicious. Actually, when we eat dumplings during the New Year, we're essentially eating gold ingots. Wishing you prosperity..."

Zhuang Rui sat to one side, feeling a surge of admiration for Fatty Jin. He could rattle off such tales so easily; Zhuang Rui was far inferior to him.

"Young man, what's the origin of this gold ingot?"

After the palm-sized gold ingot was passed around in the hands of several people, it was handed to Teacher Sun, who was an expert in miscellaneous items, and this item belonged to the miscellaneous category.

"A friend of mine bought this at an auction..."

"When was this film taken? And how much did it cost?"

"It was taken the year before last, and it cost 1.6 million RMB to buy..."

Zhuang Rui was surprised when he heard the conversation between Teacher Sun and the person who owned the treasure. This gold ingot looked to weigh no more than two or three kilograms, yet it could be sold for such a high price.

Zhuang Rui reached out and took the gold ingot in his hand, examining it for a moment. He noticed that the edges of the ingot were engraved with exquisite patterns. Zhuang Rui secretly glanced inside and saw that the inside of the gold ingot was filled with a rich, purplish-gold spiritual energy.

While the gold that Zhuang Rui obtained from Myanmar did possess some spiritual energy, it was so faint as to be almost imperceptible. It seems that, like other antiques, the spiritual energy in this gold was formed over a long period of time.

After Zhuang Rui returned the gold ingot, Teacher Sun took it in his hand and began to analyze it:
"Precious metals like gold and silver are melted down and recast in every dynasty. This gold ingot has been preserved from the Ming Dynasty to the present day, and the inscription is very clear. It can be said to be one in ten thousand."

The inscription on this piece is undoubtedly the work of a master craftsman from the Imperial Household Department at the time. The knife work is clear and the carving style is typical of the Ming Dynasty. It is quite rare for something like this.

Moreover, the Ming Dynasty had very strict control over gold; these gold ingots had to be stored in the treasury and would never appear in private hands...

Fatty Jin chimed in, "This thing should be used by the government to control the treasury, like the treasury gold mentioned in TV dramas. Let's have Boss Qian appraise it..."

The item is genuine, and both Fatty Jin and Teacher Sun gave it high praise. However, the final estimate will have to be given by Qian Jun, who works in auctions and is naturally very knowledgeable about the market value of these items.

"This gold ingot is extremely precious. Its value doesn't lie in the gold itself; the ingot is only worth a few hundred thousand. But its historical value far exceeds the ingot's intrinsic worth. If we really had to give it a price..."

Qian Jun paused here. Not only did the owner of the treasure widen his eyes, but Zhuang Rui and several other experts, as well as the staff standing in the distance, also pricked up their ears. The item was bought for 1.6 million. Who knows how much its price will rise in two years?

"3.6 million, in today's auction market, this thing should fetch that price..."

Amidst everyone's anticipation, Mr. Qian presented his offer, causing the staff on site to gasp in surprise as they stared at the gold ingot.

In just two years, this gold ingot appreciated by 2 million yuan, which is much more profitable than investing in stocks or trading, and it's a sure thing. The impact felt on-site was far greater than watching it on TV, making many staff members daydream and perhaps even planning a trip to Panjiayuan in the next few days.

"Thank you, thank you all for your appraisal..." Upon hearing the price, the owner of the treasure was overjoyed, stood up, bowed, and walked out.

"Click..."

A deputy director next to him called for a stop, then took a large red certificate and went to the expert panel's seat, asking Teacher Sun to write an appraisal report: "Fifty taels of pure gold ingot made by the Ministry of Revenue in the 30th year of the Jiajing reign of the Ming Dynasty. After appraisal by the expert panel, this gold ingot is the only known Ming Dynasty gold ingot circulating among the people. At that time, it was mainly used for royal and national expenditures, as well as rewards and storage, which makes it even more precious."

After Teacher Sun finished writing the evaluation, everyone, including Zhuang Rui, signed their names on it.

"Thank you, thank you teachers..."

The assistant director pulled the person holding the treasure aside and gave them a few instructions before letting the camera continue. After the person holding the treasure went out, they interacted with the two hosts for a while before the second person holding the treasure came on stage.

"This young man is lucky..."

"Yeah, I didn't expect the first item to be an old thing. It seems we'll all have a good look today..."

"Who knows what the next object will be..."

The first item they appraised was a rare and precious artifact, which pleased the experts. Since the door was closed and it wasn't their turn to be photographed yet, they started chatting amongst themselves.

"Teacher Sun, gold ingots are relatively easy to melt and cast. Are there many modern imitations of them?"

Zhuang Rui felt a little itchy when he thought about the two tons of gold he was about to get his hands on. He thought, "I'll get a few pieces too. I won't sell them. They'll look nice just sitting in the basement."

"Hehe, there are fakes too, but they are relatively few, because after metal antiques are faked, they are oxidized to give them some of the characteristics of antiques, but there will be some loss in the oxidation process."

Gold is a precious metal, and this piece alone, regardless of its historical value, is worth hundreds of thousands. Basically, no one would spend that much money to fake it..."

After Teacher Sun explained it this way, Zhuang Rui understood. That made sense. Something that was worth hundreds of thousands of yuan was worthless. If it was faked, and it turned out to be a complete fake, then they would have wasted their money.

"I'll find someone to make a mold later, and when the gold arrives, I'll melt down a few pieces and make some to play with..."

Zhuang Rui thought to himself that he wasn't afraid of the losses, and the gold ingots were really beautiful, much prettier than those small gold bricks.

At this moment, a second person also entered the hall, carrying a white-glazed, colorless phoenix-shaped teapot. This was to be appraised by Tian Fan. After taking one look, Tian Fan laughed and said, "How did you come to have this item?"

The man in his thirties who possessed the treasure seemed a little nervous. He said, "It belongs to my relative. He went to the Palace Museum and saw a piece of porcelain with blue and white decoration, which is the same style as this one. It should be an antique, right?"

Tian Fan laughed upon hearing this and followed up with, "This isn't yours, is it?"

After receiving the man's reply, Tian Fan continued, "The theme of our treasure appraisal segment this time is 'Dreams Come True,' but your relative's dream won't come true for now, because this item is still quite far from being real, probably several hundred years away..."

Tian Fan's words made everyone present laugh. Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man naturally realized that the item was fake, and he left the hall with the pot.

Several other collectors brought their items for appraisal, including paper-cut window decorations, bronze artifacts, and one even brought a piece of calligraphy attributed to Emperor Huizong of Song. Of course, the claim of "personal calligraphy" was merely his own interpretation.

However, without exception, all of these items are fakes and imitations made by later generations. The bronze ware is a replica of a handwashing utensil from the Warring States period, but the green embroidery and other decorations are all artificial.

As for the calligraphy personally written by Emperor Huizong of Song, it was even more outrageously fake, because the dozen or so bells from different periods on it were all almost the same color, which was simply impossible. The old gentleman who owned the treasure was not very satisfied with the expert's opinion, left a message saying that he would reserve his opinion, and turned to leave.

Zhuang Rui and his group encountered many similar situations back in Jinan; no one would suspect their treasure was fake.

They weren't very valuable. In just over half an hour, they had already looked at about ten items, but the other experts were busy with that, so Zhuang Rui didn't have a chance to do anything, because there wasn't a single jade item among them.

"Teacher Zhuang, your business has arrived..."

After seeing what a collector was holding, the experts all laughed. Calligraphy, paintings, bronzes and miscellaneous items had all appeared, but Zhuang Rui's jade category was the only one they hadn't seen. What the collector was holding was a jade ornament.

This is a white jade ornament inlaid on a sandalwood base. It is about the size of a fist and is carved with two lions, one large and one small. The small lion is riding on the back of the large lion. The carving is quite good.

Chapter 530 Spring Festival Treasure Appraisal (Part 3)

Zhuang Rui picked up the white jade ornament from the table, played with it in his hand for a moment, and couldn't help but feel a little amused and exasperated. He looked at the young man holding the treasure and asked, "Did you collect this yourself?"

"No, my father bought it last year. I just wanted to see if it was valuable."

The person holding the treasure is not old, probably in their early twenties at most.

"Then how much do you think it's worth?" Zhuang Rui asked.

"My father bought it for over 30,000 yuan. I think it's worth over 100,000 yuan. Some people say it's an antique jade..."

"Hehe, at first glance, this piece of jade looks very white, and it's a whole piece of jade, and it's not small either. In our trade, this lion should be called a 'Tai Shi Shao Shi' ornament. It looks very imposing and can be placed in a prominent place at home. Look at the gap between the two lions; it can also be used as a pen holder in the study. It's quite nice..."

Zhuang Rui's words brought a smile to the young man's face, but the other experts were also laughing. They were laughing at Zhuang Rui for being so slick and experienced at such a young age, and they were sure that what he was about to say would be unpleasant.

Sure enough, after praising the ornament, Zhuang Rui continued, "But if you look closely at the jade, you'll find that although it's from Xinjiang, it's not Hetian jade and doesn't meet the quality of Hetian jade."

The carving looks good, but it wasn't hand-carved; it was machine-made, sculpted by a modern high-speed cutting machine. These machines didn't exist before, so this ornament is a new kind of thing..."

"Worthless?" The young man's face was filled with disappointment; his father had promised to give it to him.

"It's not that it's worthless; this jade carving is a decent work of art, but it's not worth 30,000 yuan. However, there's more to your piece than meets the eye, Mr. Sun. Please take a look..."

Zhuang Rui smiled and handed the item to Sun Sheng, who was playing with miscellaneous items. This action puzzled not only the young man but also Sun Sheng, who was also confused about Zhuang Rui's intentions.

"Huh? It really is! Young man, you're in luck..."

Sun Sheng examined the ornament for a moment, then his eyes suddenly fell on the base. He said, "The jade and carving are just average, but the base is quite nice. It's a flat-bottomed lotus pedestal made of

old sandalwood. Xiao Zhuang, you have a really sharp eye. Even when it comes to miscellaneous items, you're no worse than me..."

"I've dealt with a few sandalwood items before, so I'm somewhat familiar with them, but I can't compare to Teacher Sun..."

Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this and waved his hands repeatedly. He had noticed as soon as he received the ornament that the jade contained no spiritual energy whatsoever, but the sandalwood base was an old object with extremely dense white spiritual energy inside. It should be from the Qing Dynasty and worth tens of thousands of yuan.

"Others buy the box and return the pearl, but this is selling the box and giving away the pearl..."

Everyone laughed at what Fatty Jin said. It was true; even the seller probably didn't expect that the base he found for convenience would be so valuable.

"Zhuang Rui, not bad, you really have style..."

Ouyang Jun, who was sitting next to him, didn't care that the program was being filmed and started shouting loudly. The program was going to be re-edited before it would be broadcast, but no one stopped Ouyang Jun.

Zhuang Rui's calm and composed explanation just now really gave him the air of an expert. Not only Ouyang Jun, but even some of the staff who initially looked down on Zhuang Rui because of his age changed their minds.

In people's minds, experts and professors must be in their forties or fifties, but Zhuang Rui's performance at this moment shows what it means to be young and promising.

"How about we take a break, teachers?"

After the young man left, the two hosts, Liu Jia and Li Jia, came in. Li Jia, being the director, went to the filming location to watch the recording footage.

"No need, let's continue. The sooner we finish recording, the more likely we are to go home for the New Year..."

Jin Pangzi waved his hand with a smile, and the others echoed his sentiment. Zhuang Rui, however, felt like he'd been tricked. If they had to film seven days' worth of programs in three days, filming only half a day each day would definitely be impossible.

"Okay, let's continue..."

Li Jia and Liu Jia drank some water and had their makeup touched up by the makeup artist. They were much more tired than Zhuang Rui and the others. The experts sat in the expert panel, drinking tea and chatting, which was much more comfortable for them.

"Hey, Brother Zhuang, is this still your dish? If it's not served, it's fine, but once it's served, it's all your business..."

The item to be appraised this time was quite large, so two staff members carried it to the front of the experts' table for several people to examine it. Meanwhile, the two hosts, Li Jia and another host, chatted with the owner of the item outside, giving the experts inside time to appraise it.

"Teacher Sun, shouldn't this also be classified as miscellaneous items?"

What was presented to Zhuang Rui and the others was a piece of chicken-blood stone. It was quite large, and with its base, it was about half a person's height. It was also colorful, and all of it was chicken-blood red, making it very beautiful.

On the fiery red top of the chicken-blood stone, five fierce-looking, brightly colored tigers are carved, which are very imposing.

The base is made of a fine variety of green jadeite, which looks delicate and fresh. It also features pine trees, wildflowers, and wild grass, which further accentuates the regal style of the five tigers on top.

"Hmm, it's a miscellaneous item, but it's really quite large. Xiao Zhuang, why don't you give your critique..."

Sun Sheng and Uncle De of Zhonghai have a deep connection and a good relationship. His intention in asking Zhuang Rui for comments was to give Zhuang Rui a boost and let him get more exposure.

"Okay, let me take a look first..."

The carving of this chicken-blood stone piece is very intricate. When Zhuang Rui was in Zhonghai, which is very close to Zhejiang, he also identified many chicken-blood stone pieces with Uncle De.

After arriving in Beijing, Zhuang Rui learned a great deal about the subdivisions and identification of carving techniques from Master Gu, and he was not intimidated at all.

After looking at the artwork for four or five minutes, Zhuang Rui noticed something interesting and felt more confident. He returned to the expert's seat, while the two hosts outside let in the owner of the treasure, a middle-aged woman.

"What's the origin of this stone?" This is the opening line of an appraisal, and Zhuang Rui's first question was this.

"This has been passed down in my family for generations. I'm from Qingtian, Zhejiang. Originally, it was just a piece of raw material, but because my son turned eight last year, my family commissioned someone to carve it as a birthday present for him..."

The woman was quite talkative, answering every question in detail, which made Zhuang Rui and the others laugh. It seemed she came from a wealthy family, and this birthday gift must have been quite valuable.

Moreover, Zhuang Rui noticed that the jadeite around the woman's neck and the bracelet on her wrist were of very good quality. In particular, he could tell at a glance that the jadeite Buddha pendant was made of high-quality icy green material, worth at least 500,000 yuan.

"This piece of chicken-blood stone you have is from Changhua, Zhejiang. First of all, it's certain that its material is extremely rare, even rarer than the jadeite you're wearing around your neck..."

Zhuang Rui took a sip of water and began to speak eloquently. At this moment, he felt somewhat like an expert, and he felt a great sense of satisfaction in being able to share what he knew.

"Because Emperor Qianlong bestowed the title of 'Emperor of Seals' upon Tianhuang stone, chicken-blood stone became known as 'Empress of Seals.' Its color is so bright red that it looks as if freshly slaughtered chicken blood has been dripped onto the stone."

The most striking feature of your stone is its vibrant, lively, thick, and dense blood-red color. In terms of the blood-red color alone, it can be considered a top-grade bloodstone.

The blood in chicken-blood stone is good, but it also needs a good base to complement it. The base under the blood in chicken-blood stone is called ox-horn ground. Because it is the material for making seals, it is a soft base that is easy to carve.

Another point is that your piece of material is an old mine chicken blood stone, which is basically impossible to find now. Although the carving is new, the design of the subject matter is very good. The interplay between the mountain rocks, pine trees, wild grass, and the tiger in motion shows an extremely high level of artistry.

Furthermore, I recognize the craftsmanship of this piece. It was carved by Luo Jiang, a disciple of the renowned Southern School jade carving master, Master Wu. With such a fine material and a master craftsman, this piece of chicken-blood stone can be considered an outstanding work of contemporary arts and crafts. Congratulations, this is a very precious piece..."

Luo Jiang is now considered one of our own, and Zhuang Rui doesn't mind giving him a bad review. When he first looked at the piece, he noticed Luo Jiang's mark on it, which was a bit of a surprise at the beginning.

"Teacher Jin, why are you all looking at me like that?"

After the treasure owner left, full of gratitude, Zhuang Rui noticed that the other experts were looking at him with strange eyes.

"Xiao Zhuang, it seems you're more suited to be this miscellaneous guest than I am..."

Seeing that the camera wasn't pointed at them, Sun Sheng gave Zhuang Rui a thumbs up. This wasn't just flattery; it was a genuine expression of admiration.

Sun Sheng had originally intended to mentor Zhuang Rui by showing him the bloodstone, thinking that if Zhuang Rui couldn't explain or answer some questions, he could step in to help.

However, none of them expected that Zhuang Rui would not only describe all the details of its features, but also explain the origin of the carving technique.

It's fair to say that Zhuang Rui's performance just now was at the level of a master of cultural relic appraisal. I believe that after this episode airs, Zhuang Rui's reputation in the domestic collecting world will definitely be no less than theirs.

"You guys are making fun of me, but please don't praise me too much, that's called flattery to death. I'm still young..." Zhuang Rui's words made everyone laugh. There were always breaks in these treasure appraisal shows, and the group chatted quite happily.

At this moment, Zhuang Rui felt that participating in this program was quite good. He liked the purely academic atmosphere and could learn a lot in the process.