

Golden 59

Chapter Fifty-Nine: Choice

After making the call to Liu Chuan, Zhuang Rui stood at the entrance of the City God Temple Antique Market. He waited for about half an hour, until it was getting dark. Just as Zhuang Rui was starting to get impatient, Liu Chuan finally arrived in his Hummer.

Looking at the Hummer from the outside is completely different from sitting inside. When the Hummer drove over from a distance, it looked like a bulldozer, incredibly domineering. When the car stopped in front of Zhuang Rui, everyone's envious eyes fell on him.

"Why are you so slow? Didn't you say we were leaving Hefei at four or five o'clock? Did you really do *that* at the hotel?"

Zhuang Rui opened the car door, sat in the passenger seat, and gently placed the bamboo rattan box behind the seat. Although he knew that these root carvings were not afraid of being dropped, there was a valuable item inside, so Zhuang Rui's movements were inevitably a bit gentler. It's like how people know that diamonds are one of the hardest substances in the world, but anyone who handles that thing will handle it with care.

"Get out of here, try driving at night yourself. If you don't get enough rest, do you think I can hold on? Let's find a place to eat first, then we'll head straight to the highway. By the way, Wood, what's that treasure in your box? You're being so careful. Take it out and let me see. Show me what you've got."

As Liu Chuan started the car, he bantered with Zhuang Rui. After Zhuang Rui's several lucky finds, he now had a blind faith in him, as if this guy could find treasures with a single move. Wang Shizhen's manuscript was an example, as was Liu Sanhe's cricket gourd. Liu Chuan couldn't help but believe it.

"I bought a few root carvings, one of which should be a rosewood ornament. Let me tell you, I ran into a traitor today..."

Zhuang Rui vividly described the events that occurred at the antique market to Liu Chuan. When he first mentioned the fake foreigner smashing someone's stall, Liu Chuan was so angry he almost slammed on the brakes, intending to turn around and cause trouble for the traitorous translator. However, after

hearing Zhuang Rui say that the traitor had been punched and had to pay four thousand yuan in compensation, Liu Chuan grumbled as he drove to the place where the two had lunch.

"So, the sandalwood root carving in that box is worth hundreds of thousands? Damn, with that thing, even if we made a wasted trip, it'll still be worth it. When did you become so discerning?"

The two sat down in the private room. Liu Chuan stared wide-eyed, his face filled with disbelief.

"I don't know the exact price, but it should be more expensive than that gourd from Liu in Sanhe. Sandalwood is incredibly valuable, and this one is about the size of a palm and in excellent condition, so the price shouldn't be low."

Upon hearing the words "eagle eyes," Zhuang Rui's heart skipped a beat. Although he knew the scoundrel meant no harm, he couldn't help but feel flustered. He quickly adopted a lecturing tone and said, "You rascal, I'm not trying to be mean, but you've been hanging around the antique market for years. Why don't you learn something from Manager Lü and the others? You know, from the Yellow Emperor to the present day, thousands of years have passed down. Even finding an ancient toilet would be enough for you to live on for years."

"Pah! You're the one who eats with toilets! I'm not cut out for that. I used to think about going into this line of work, but these eyes of mine see everything as real. Old Lu said I have lightbulb eyes, I'm just there to make things look good for others, what they call suckers. Damn it, that old man is really despicable..."

Liu Chuan spoke indignantly, making Zhuang Rui laugh so hard he almost fell off his chair. This old man Lu was truly amusing, and his description of Liu Chuan was indeed apt. This guy was easy to fool when he got carried away; if he really wanted to collect antiques, he probably wouldn't be as good as Yang Wei's father.

"But Wood, I think you're good at this business. Putting everything else aside, with your luck, I doubt anyone can compare. There are at least tens of thousands of people coming and going in the antique market every day. How come all the good stuff ends up in your hands? How about quitting that lousy job in Zhonghai and opening an antique shop in Pengcheng? We'll be able to look out for each other if we're brothers together."

Liu Chuan then changed the subject, bringing up Zhuang Rui. In his opinion, with Zhuang Rui's current net worth of several million, there was no need for him to work for someone else anymore. He could take out a few hundred thousand and open an antique shop. With Song Jun and the others looking after him, it would be much better than working a regular job.

"Open an antique shop?"

Zhuang Rui's heart skipped a beat. Although he was indeed rich now, he had been living a very stressful life these past few days and hadn't had time to experience what it felt like to be a millionaire. Now, after hearing Liu Chuan's words, he was genuinely tempted. With his current capital, even if he was about to be promoted to manager of the pawnshop, that job with a monthly salary of several thousand yuan didn't seem so important anymore.

However, after weighing the pros and cons in his mind, Zhuang Rui shook his head. Work was indeed not very important to him now, but the work at the pawnshop was extremely special. To put it bluntly, he could come into contact with a large number of antiques every day, and most of them were genuine. This was very important for upgrading the spiritual energy in his eyes. Zhuang Rui had a feeling that when the spiritual energy in his eyes reached saturation again, some other changes might occur.

A few days ago, Zhuang Rui took some time to visit Pengcheng Museum, but he was very disappointed. Pengcheng Museum has a lot of cultural relics, but most of them are Han Dynasty jade terracotta warriors or bronzes. The few calligraphy and painting works are all protected by a thick glass cover, and the spiritual energy in his eyes could not penetrate them.

There were also some wooden screens and similar items, which were all cordoned off with a warning line several meters apart, preventing tourists from getting close. It was like having a piece of fat meat right in front of your mouth but not being able to eat it, which made Zhuang Rui extremely frustrated at the time.

Another reason is that Zhuang Rui felt that his knowledge of the antique business was still too limited. He wanted to return to the pawnshop to accumulate some experience and knowledge about antiques, so that he could at least tell a few things about an object after seeing it, instead of relying entirely on his intuition to distinguish the authenticity of antiques.

During these several bargain hunts, even though the manuscript by Wang Shizhen brought him 3.8 million, he felt more shocked than joyful. He didn't feel anything special about the first two bargain hunts because he attributed them to the spiritual energy he saw.

However, acquiring this sandalwood Maitreya Buddha carving today gave him an indescribable sense of satisfaction. The reason was simple: he recognized the sandalwood root carving by sight, not by spiritual insight. This feeling was like the difference between getting 100 points by cheating on an exam and getting 100 points entirely through one's own ability; the feelings were completely different.

Thinking about all this, Zhuang Rui still decided to go back to work at the pawnshop. However, his initial motivation for working was completely different from before. Before, it was for money, but now it was for learning. He would go out and work on his own when he felt that he had enough knowledge.

After making this decision, Zhuang Rui felt much more at ease. In the past few days, he had sometimes felt inexplicably irritable, and it seemed that the symptoms were his own inner knot.

“Da Chuan, I’m just lucky right now, managing to snag a few good items. But I can’t be this lucky forever. What if I crash and burn someday? Then I won’t even have a chance to recover. I don’t know much about the antique business, so I can’t give up my job at the pawnshop. I can learn a lot there. Once I’ve accumulated enough experience, I can come out and we can work together again, bro...”

Zhuang Rui's words disappointed Liu Chuan somewhat, but he also admitted that Zhuang Rui was right. No one can have good luck forever. However, the guy didn't rule out the possibility of Zhuang Rui going solo. Based on Liu Chuan's understanding of Zhuang Rui, he wouldn't stay out of business for very long.