

Golden 611

Chapter 612 Cutting Iron Like Mud (Part Two)

Zhao Hanxuan and Huangfu Yun's eyes widened upon hearing this. They didn't know what Zhuang Rui was going to do. Did he really think that by tapping it for a while, all the rust would fall off?

"Uh, something's still missing..."

Zhuang Rui, holding the bronze sword, looked around the room. Suddenly, his eyes lit up, and he walked to the corner and picked up the broom.

"You two, watch closely..."

Zhuang Rui held the bronze sword in his left hand and a broom upside down in his right, with the sword hanging down. Then he used the broom to scrape the bronze sword hard.

What happened next stunned Zhao Hanxuan and Huangfu Yun was that the rust on the bronze sword actually came off with the broom. Before long, the ground was covered with rust residue, and the bronze sword blade faintly emitted a yellow glow.

"What...what kind of sword is this?"

Even though Huangfu Yun frequently visited major auction houses abroad, he had never seen such a miraculous scene. Could it be that the legendary incorruptible bronze sword would really appear before his eyes?

"Old Zhao, get me some rags and some warm water..."

Zhuang Rui vigorously cleaned the rust off the bronze sword with the broom handle. The broom handle was made of sorghum stalks, so it wouldn't damage the bronze sword. Besides, the rust wasn't formed on the bronze sword itself, but was just attached to it. Zhuang Rui had struck the bronze sword earlier to shake off the rust.

When Zhuang Rui heard Huangfu Yun say that the sword was covered in rust, he felt something was wrong. The bronze sword was so shiny that it was almost reflective through the rust, which meant that the rust was likely etched onto the bronze sword when it was buried with other weapons.

However, because the bronze sword itself was made of excellent material, it was not corroded; the corrosion simply adhered to the surface, making it look like a fire poker.

With this realization, and considering that Zhuang Rui initially noticed the rust on the sword was loosening when he tapped it, he decided to perform a magic trick for the two of them. The principle behind it was incredibly simple.

"Here, a rag..."

There was no warm water in the shop, so Zhao Hanxuan got water from the water dispenser, brought it into the back room, and then handed Zhuang Rui a rag.

Zhuang Rui dampened and wrung out the rag, then carefully wiped the bronze sword. As the rust powder was gradually peeled away, the slightly yellowed bronze blade was revealed to the three of them.

The bronze sword, now free of rust, was about an inch shorter than before. Its blade was covered with even and beautiful lines, and the two edges gleamed coldly under the light. No one doubted the sword's sharpness.

"Clang, clang clang..."

After wiping away the water stains with a dry cloth, Zhuang Rui held the sword in his left hand, bent his right middle finger, and flicked it against the blade. Instantly, the sound of metal clashing together rang out, crisp and melodious, quite pleasant to hear.

"Brother Zhuang, look! Quickly check if there are any inscriptions on it. This sword must be a famous sword that has been passed down through the ages. Take a look!"

Huangfu Yun, who was standing to the side, was now bloodshot and out of control. If Zhuang Rui did not listen to him, Huangfu Yun would probably rush forward and snatch it.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui also carefully searched the sword. However, after looking for a while, he did not find any writing. There were two patterns that looked like characters, but Zhuang Rui did not recognize them.

"Brother Huangfu, come and take a look. Are these two characters? They look a bit like bronze script to me..."

Zhuang Rui grabbed the bronze sword with a rag and turned it upside down so that the hilt was facing Huangfu Yun.

Huangfu Yun had long wanted to snatch it and play with it, so he seized the opportunity and drew the sword away.

"Damn, watch out, bro..."

Just as Huangfu Yun drew his sword, Zhuang Rui felt a chill in his palm and quickly let go. Looking at the rag that had fallen to the ground, he saw that it was already broken into two pieces.

"Really? It can be that sharp?"

Zhuang Rui's eyes widened in disbelief. This legendary decisiveness must be something else entirely. Zhuang Rui made up his mind to try it out later and see if he could make a clean cut.

Zhuang Rui used to see in martial arts novels that those divine weapons were indestructible and extremely sharp, but at the time he thought they were all nonsense. Although some of the ancient people's techniques cannot be replicated even now, Zhuang Rui just couldn't believe that the ancients could forge such weapons without modern iron-making technology.

But facts speak louder than words. Looking at the two towels lying on the ground, Zhuang Rui felt a chill run down his spine. If he had been any slower in letting go, his palm might have been cut as well

"The blade is flawless, the satin weave is like a thousand flowing waves, the edge is strong yet restrained, sharp yet concealed. A treasure, truly a treasure! How could the ancients have forged such a precious sword?!"

Zhuang Rui wasn't the only one with this thought. After carefully examining the bronze sword, Huangfu Yun also let out a loud howl, as if only in this way could he vent his excitement and astonishment.

"Brother Zhuang, what's going on?"

Hearing the commotion inside, the monkeys outside rushed in. Seeing Huangfu Yun with a flushed face holding a sword, they immediately moved a chair and stood in front of Zhuang Rui.

"Monkey, it's alright, it's alright. You can go out now. Brother Huangfu is just a little agitated..."

Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated by the monkey's actions and quickly tried to explain. Judging from the monkey's expression, it was as if it was about to smash the chair at Huangfu Yun.

"Oh, Brother Zhuang, just call me if you need anything..."

Although monkeys are timid, they are surprisingly reliable when it matters. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, he hesitated for a moment, glanced at Huangfu Yun, put down his chair, and went out. However, he was still worried and stayed at the door.

"Brother Zhuang, I'm so sorry, I'm really sorry, I lost my composure, I really lost my composure..."

The monkey's entry had startled Huangfu Yun out of his shock. He carefully placed the sword on the table, but his eyes remained fixed on the bronze sword.

"Brother Huangfu, did you see those two characters? What do you read them?"

Although Zhuang Rui guessed that the characters were bronze inscriptions from the Yin-Shang period, he had only studied seal script and knew nothing about scripts from before the Qin Dynasty.

There are very few people in this world who can understand that writing system; you could probably count them on one hand.

"Huh? Bro, what did you say? How do you pronounce those two characters?"

Huangfu Yun was still a little distracted and paused for a moment after hearing Zhuang Rui's words.

"Yes, you're an expert in swords and knives. How exactly do you pronounce those two characters?"

Not only Zhuang Rui, but Zhao Hanxuan was also full of curiosity. Everyone has had a hero complex at some point. Not to mention Zhuang Rui, even Comrade Zhao had read Jin Yong's martial arts novels back then and longed for the legendary divine weapons.

Upon hearing this, Huangfu Yun smiled wryly and said, "Brother, you think too highly of me. I'm not even a half-baked expert in swords and knives, let alone an expert in ancient writing. How could I possibly recognize these two characters..."

You don't know him either?

Zhuang Rui was taken aback upon hearing this. After exchanging glances with Zhao Hanxuan for a moment, he said, "Then please ask Master Ge to take a look. He's a seal engraver, so he should have a deep understanding of characters..."

"Xiao Zhuang, these two characters should be bronze inscriptions from the Yin-Shang period, also called bronze script. Although I know that, I haven't studied it in depth. As for how to pronounce these two characters, this old man doesn't know either..."

After Master Ge came in, he carefully examined the two patterns that resembled characters with a magnifying glass, but he didn't recognize them either, which made Zhuang Rui and the others feel slightly disappointed.

"Never mind, I'll trace those two characters down later and then have someone take a look at them..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head helplessly, but immediately became excited again. He rushed out into the shop, plucked a hair from the monkey's head, and before the monkey could react, Zhuang Rui had already darted back into the inner room.

"You really want to try?"

When Zhao Hanxuan saw Zhuang Rui's childlike behavior, he realized that the boss in front of him was just a young man in his twenties. Huangfu Yun, on the other hand, went over with great interest and helped Zhuang Rui pick up the bronze sword, placing it with the blade facing upwards in front of Zhuang Rui.

The monkey's hair wasn't short, about five or six centimeters long. Zhuang Rui placed it on the blade of the sword. The hair didn't break, but when Zhuang Rui blew a strong breath onto the blade, the hair instantly split into two and floated to the ground from the blade.

"Even a blown hair can break it!"

For a moment, the room fell silent, and the three of them breathed heavily. This unknown bronze sword was definitely no less than the legendary swords like Gan Jiang and Mo Xie, and might even be more powerful.

"Brother, how much did you pay for this sword?"

Huangfu Yun suddenly remembered this question and asked it with a dry throat.

"I bought it together with that ring-pommel sword; the two together cost 1200 yuan..."

Zhuang Rui's words made Huangfu Yun and Zhao Hanxuan roll their eyes. This was practically a free gift. Putting everything else aside, just based on the sharpness and age of this sword, it would fetch at least 30 million at an auction house.

"By the way, how is this sword at cutting iron? Shall we try it out and see if it can cut through metal?"

Zhuang Rui was also greatly stimulated at this moment, like someone who didn't know martial arts but got a secret manual of divine skills, he was so excited that he couldn't control himself.

"Modern forged ironware certainly won't work, but we could try with some copper coins. The sword unearthed in Longquan could slice through seven copper coins without a scratch..."

Huangfu Yun shook his head, not really approving of Zhuang Rui's approach. If the blade of the bronze sword were damaged, it would be irreparable.

"Alright, let's try with copper coins then..."

Zhuang Rui knew that modern ironware was made of alloys and contained steel, so copper coins suited his taste perfectly. He quickly called the monkey and asked him to go and buy some copper coins.

Chapter 613 Resolute and Decisive

You might not find many other things in Panjiayuan, but when it comes to copper coins, you can find them by the ton. Every stall will have some copper coins for sale.

This is mainly because copper coins were the most widely circulated currency in ancient China. The number of copper coins in existence is too large, and apart from some rare copper coins, ordinary copper coins are not very valuable. There are not many counterfeit ones either. The monkey went out for only five or six minutes and then ran back to the shop with a handful of copper coins in his hands.

Hearing that the boss had acquired a sword that could cut through iron like mud, the monkey went into the room and refused to leave. Even the only employee in the shop kept sticking his head into the room, wanting to see it for himself.

"Alright, come in and take a look. Just stand at the door and keep an eye out for anything..."

Zhuang Rui felt incredibly relieved today, and immediately called the shop assistant over. The antiques and jewelry in the shop were all locked up, so there was no fear of them being stolen.

"Brother Huangfu, how many should we set out for the first time?"

The copper coins found by the monkey are the most common Qianlong Tongbao coins. Emperor Qianlong reigned for more than 60 years and then served as the retired emperor for several years, so the copper coins discovered during the Qianlong era are the most numerous and widely circulated.

The monkey found fifty or sixty of them; it's unclear whether he bought them or asked someone for them.

"How about we try it with paper first? We don't want to damage this precious sword..."

Huangfu Yun was a sword enthusiast, and his starting point for conducting the experiment was to ensure that the sword would not be damaged. Therefore, he suggested that the experiment be conducted using paper first.

"OK!"

Zhuang Rui nodded. The monkey, with its keen eye, ran to the outer room and found a colorful book introducing the Four Treasures of the Study, about seventy or eighty pages long. Zhuang Rui glanced at it and noticed that the paper was quite stiff, so it wouldn't be bad to try it out first.

Zhuang Rui placed the book on the table, took a deep breath, raised his right hand high, and slashed down fiercely at the pages. A flash of cold light appeared, and the blade had already cut into the pages.

"Quickly, check if this sword is damaged..."

The most nervous person in the room was Huangfu Yun. His first concern was not how many layers of paper had been cut, but whether there were any broken parts on the blade.

"It's nothing, nothing at all..."

Zhuang Rui pulled the sword out of the book and examined it under the light. The part where the blade touched the book was intact and no different from the rest of the book.

"Brother Zhuang, you cut fifty-eight sheets of paper! Wow, that's really impressive. If you used that to chop someone up, one blow would break their bones..."

The monkey picked up the book on the table and opened it. Zhuang Rui's sword strike had sliced through fifty-eight sheets of paper, and even the bottom seven or eight sheets had deep sword marks. If Zhuang Rui had used a little more force, he probably could have cut them in half.

"Come on, let's cut a copper coin..."

Seeing the sword's power, Zhuang Rui's confidence soared. He immediately took out five copper coins and placed them on the table. However, after placing them, Zhuang Rui thought for a moment and then took out three more copper coins and placed them on top of the table.

Zhuang Rui had previously heard Huangfu Yun mention that the Longquan sword that had been unearthed once cut through seven copper coins with a single strike, and he was somewhat unconvinced and wanted to break that record.

"Let's put out five first..." Huangfu Yun was a little worried.

"It's alright, it's only eight!"

Zhuang Rui shook his head. He had a feeling that it shouldn't be difficult to break through these eight copper coins with one sword, but the difficulty lay in the wrist strength and eyesight. He had to cut the exact spot without missing a beat.

After arranging the copper coins, Zhuang Rui stood in front of the table, took a deep breath, and stared intently at the top of the stack of copper coins. He raised his right hand high and gripped it with his left hand. Although the sword hilt wasn't long enough, this way he could exert more force.

After gesturing with the raised sword against the copper coins several times, Zhuang Rui raised both hands high, slowly inhaling until his chest could hold its breath, then, with a burst of strength, chopped down hard on the stack of coins.

Not only Zhuang Rui, but everyone in the room dared not breathe loudly, for fear of disturbing Zhuang Rui, and their eyes were all fixed on the raised bronze sword.

Zhuang Rui used almost all his strength in his hands to chop down with all his might. This time, no one could even see that cold glint. They only saw a blur before their eyes, followed by a crisp sound. When they looked at the table again, there were scattered copper coins everywhere, some of which had fallen to the ground.

The bronze sword in Zhuang Rui's hand was deeply embedded in the square table, almost half of the blade cutting in. When Zhuang Rui first raised his hand, he couldn't pull it out.

Although the bronze sword was sharp, Zhuang Rui was still very careful, moving it back and forth and up and down for a while before finally taking it out.

Zhuang Rui held the blade up to his eyes and saw that, apart from some scratches that made it appear brighter where it had come into contact with the copper coins and the table, the blade was not warped or damaged at all. This made Zhuang Rui breathe a sigh of relief and relax.

The monkey picked up a copper coin that had been split in two from the ground and excitedly shouted to Zhuang Rui, "It's broken! Brother Zhuang, it's broken! You're really amazing! Hey, if this happened in ancient times, you'd be a great hero..."

"Hero? More like a shrimp. Alright, monkey, stop talking nonsense and hurry up and find all the copper coins. See if there are any that haven't been cut open..."

Not only were the monkeys searching, but Zhao Hanxuan and the others were also using powerful flashlights to search in places where the light couldn't reach. The room wasn't very big to begin with, and a few minutes later, 16 copper coins that had been split in half were placed on the table.

"Is this... real?"

Everyone stared at the copper coins, almost unable to believe their eyes. The legendary divine weapon was right before their eyes.

It should be noted that even modern weapons made of alloys, let alone weapons forged thousands of years ago, might not be able to slice through eight copper coins with a single sword strike. The bronze sword in Zhuang Rui's hand at this moment seemed to carry a touch of mystery to everyone.

Zhuang Rui meticulously polished the bronze sword, then, noticing the eager gazes of the crowd, said, "Alright, everyone get back to your work. Old Zhao, find me a box; I'm going to put this sword away..."

In addition to selling the Four Treasures of the Study, Xuanrui Zhai also sells scrolls. These are in two-meter-long boxes, which are readily available. Zhao Hanxuan quickly took one over, and Zhuang Rui carefully placed the bronze sword inside. However, he did not notice that Huangfu Yun's eyes were practically glued to the box as well.

"Brother, Brother Zhuang, this sword, this..."

Seeing that the sword was out of sight, Huangfu Yun became anxious and grabbed Zhuang Rui. However, he was too excited and his words were a bit incoherent, leaving Zhuang Rui confused. He asked, "What's wrong, Brother Huangfu? Do you happen to be interested in the sword?"

"Nonsense, of course I'm interested, is that even a question?"

Huangfu Yun glared at Zhuang Rui with annoyance. People are all about fate. Although the two had only known each other for a short time, they got along like old friends.

"Sigh, it's interesting, but I can't afford it, brother. If your bronze sword were to go up for auction, it would definitely cause a huge uproar. If its age could be determined and its lineage found, I estimate its price would be over 200 million!"

"What? It can cost that much?"

Zhuang Rui was startled upon hearing this. He had thought the sword was worth at most 30 to 50 million, but he hadn't expected that his valuation was still too low.

"What's 200 million? If it's a famous sword recorded in history, it could easily cost 300 to 500 million..."

At an auction in the United States last year, a dragon-shaped sword once used by Emperor Qianlong was sold for the equivalent of 70 million RMB. However, in Huangfu Yun's opinion, that imperial sword is far inferior to the one in Zhuang Rui's hands, both in terms of archaeological and practical value.

"Damn, this thing's too hot to handle, I need to get home right away..."

Zhuang Rui really had this thought in mind. This thing was so valuable that he wanted to put it in his treasure room as soon as possible so that he could feel at ease.

"Brother, I have a favor to ask, what do you think..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui about to leave, Huangfu Yun became anxious and grabbed Zhuang Rui, saying, "I have two or three days left before I go to England. Before I leave, I want to know the exact origin of this sword. Brother Zhuang, could you let me trace those two characters first?"

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui pondered for a moment and said, "How about this, I'll call my advisor, and if he has time, we'll go over now..."

Zhuang Rui also wanted to find out whether this sword was a legendary weapon that had left many legends in history. After hearing Huangfu Yun's request, he immediately thought of Professor Meng.

Zhuang Rui knew that Professor Meng was not only a leading figure in the field of archaeology, but also unparalleled in the study of ancient Chinese characters. He had presided over the excavation and collation of oracle bone inscriptions on many occasions. The two characters on this sword should not be difficult for Professor Meng.

"Okay, okay, let's go there now..."

Huangfu Yun was overjoyed. He really had no intention of keeping the sword for himself, because he didn't have that much money, but he did want to know the origin of the sword.

"Wait a minute, let me make a phone call first..."

It wasn't the weekend, and Zhuang Rui was worried that Professor Meng might have a class, so he called him first. Sure enough, Professor Meng had a class to teach soon, but he was quite surprised when Zhuang Rui mentioned the bronze artifact with inscriptions. He asked Zhuang Rui to wait an hour and then they would have lunch together at school.

After hanging up with Professor Meng, Zhuang Rui called Peng Fei again, asking him to come to Panjiayuan immediately. To be honest, Zhuang Rui was really unsure about himself, even with an item worth hundreds of millions of yuan in his hands.

Panjiayuan was not far from Zhuang Rui's courtyard house. Peng Fei arrived in about ten minutes. Zhuang Rui specifically instructed Monkey and the others not to spread the word before getting into the car with Huangfu Yun.

Chapter 614 The Sword of Fixed Light (Part 1)

This time, Zhuang Rui didn't let Peng Fei be the driver; he drove himself because he had entrusted the precious sword to Peng Fei.

Although Peng Fei didn't know what Zhuang Rui had given him, he rarely saw Zhuang Rui treat things with such solemnity. He carefully held the long box in his arms, not daring to be careless in the slightest.

"Brother Zhuang, the person you're waiting for is Professor Meng, right?"

Upon arriving at Peking University, Professor Meng was still teaching a class, so Zhuang Rui parked the car and waited with Huangfu Yun and Peng Fei at the entrance of the restaurant.

"Yes, how did you know?"

Zhuang Rui asked the question, then remembered that Huangfu Yun was from this school. He smiled and said, "I almost forgot, this is Brother Huangfu's alma mater..."

Looking at the younger students coming and going from the school cafeteria, Huangfu Yun said with some emotion, "Yes, it's been five or six years since I came back here after I went abroad..."

When people are still young, they always think about growing up and making a name for themselves in society. But often, after being battered and bruised by reality, they will look back on their school days and those innocent times.

After graduating from Peking University, Huangfu Yun went abroad. Although he has done well over the years, he has also encountered many setbacks and difficulties. Now that he has returned to his alma mater, he is filled with emotion.

"Hehe, I'm going to study here this year..."

Because of his postgraduate entrance exam, Zhuang Rui has developed a sense of belonging to Peking University, even though he is not a student there yet. For at least the next two years, he will become a postgraduate student at Peking University.

After chatting for a while, it was almost noon, and more and more students came to eat.

"Xiao Zhuang, you've been here for a while, haven't you?" Professor Meng appeared at the cafeteria entrance.

"This cafeteria is too noisy; it's not a place to talk business at all," Zhuang Rui frowned slightly and said, "It's okay, I just arrived too. Teacher Meng, how about we go out and find somewhere to eat?"

Professor Meng waved his hand and said, "No need, I have some things to do this afternoon. Come, let me take you to a private room to eat..."

It turns out this cafeteria has several floors. The first and second floors are for students, and the upper floors are for teachers, with many private rooms.

"Xiao Zhuang, order whatever you like to eat. Don't try to save the teacher money..."

After everyone sat down, Professor Meng handed the menu to Zhuang Rui. He was very satisfied with his prospective disciple and wished he could recruit him right away.

"Thank you, Teacher Meng. I need your help today, and I'd also like you to treat me to dinner..."

Zhuang Rui introduced Huangfu Yun and Peng Fei to Professor Meng, and then casually ordered a few dishes. Although he was eager to know the origin of the sword, Professor Meng didn't mention it, so Zhuang Rui could only calm down and eat.

"Alright, you're pretty composed. Come on, let's go to the office..."

The group ate quickly, finishing in 20 minutes. Professor Meng smiled at Zhuang Rui. He had just wanted to test Zhuang Rui's composure, but he hadn't expected Zhuang Rui to actually hold back from mentioning the textual analysis, showing a maturity beyond his years, which pleased Professor Meng greatly.

Professor Meng is nearing the end of his career, and it is estimated that Zhuang Rui is the last batch of graduate students he will recruit. He is very optimistic about Zhuang Rui's future. Having such an outstanding disciple makes Professor Meng, who has dedicated his life to teaching and educating people, feel very gratified.

Professor Meng has a separate office, which is not very big, but the bookshelves behind his desk are filled with all kinds of books, most of which are related to archaeology, as well as some chemistry journals. This knowledge is also closely related to archaeology.

"Xiao Peng, please make yourselves at home. Zhuang Rui, let me see what's on your things..."

Upon entering the office, Professor Meng casually greeted Huangfu Yun and Peng Fei, then reached out and took the long, rectangular brocade box that Zhuang Rui handed him.

"This...this is a bronze sword..."

Upon opening the box, Professor Meng, who had been sitting at his desk, suddenly stood up, staring at the bronze sword in disbelief. Although he had long guessed that the bronze artifact Zhuang Rui was referring to was a weapon, he never expected that the bronze sword would be so well preserved.

Professor Meng has presided over countless archaeological excavations over the decades, from tombs of the Yin and Shang dynasties to imperial mausoleums of the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. He has seen countless unearthed cultural relics, including a considerable number of weapons.

However, those unearthed ancient weapons have been oxidized by air and corroded by soil for thousands of years, and they have basically decayed. Professor Meng has also done a lot of weapon restoration work. By observing weapons from certain eras, we can make a determination on the form of warfare in those eras.

Although several famous ancient swords have been unearthed in China, none of them were from archaeological excavations in which Professor Meng participated. This was the first time he had ever seen a bronze sword in such good condition, radiating a faint, cold light.

"Teacher, before coming here, I tested this sword. It can cut through eight Qianlong Tongbao coins at once, and with the speed of a breath. I suspect it's a famous sword like Gan Jiang or Mo Xie from ancient times. However, I don't know much about bronze inscriptions. Could you please help me identify the two characters on this sword?"

Zhuang Rui told Professor Meng the test results from the store exactly as they were presented.

Professor Meng's expression became somewhat agitated after hearing Zhuang Rui's words. If he had known earlier that the item Zhuang Rui brought for appraisal was this, Zhuang Rui and the others probably wouldn't have been able to have lunch.

It is important to know that the discovery of every famous sword with historical records in ancient times causes a great stir and leads to endless academic research and debate, which Professor Meng cannot ignore.

Don't underestimate this seemingly inanimate object. In the eyes of archaeologists, it becomes incredibly rich. For example, the forging process of the sword can reveal the metallurgical level and social structure of the time. There is so much to explore and discover here.

Based on his years of experience in archaeological excavation, Professor Meng could tell as soon as he opened the brocade box that the sword was definitely an unearthed bronze artifact. Its ancient and weathered feel was something that modern technology could not replicate.

"A peerless sword, a peerless sword..."

Professor Meng did not rush to examine the inscription on the bronze vessel. Instead, he slowly looked down from the tip of the sword, admiring the beautiful satin-like pattern. He couldn't help but mutter to himself.

"Professor Meng, what are the pronunciations of those two bronze inscriptions?"

Huangfu Yun, who had been silent until now, finally couldn't hold back any longer. The mystery was about to be revealed, but if Professor Meng continued to watch at this slow pace, he might not even know the name of the sword by the time the sun set.

"In terms of craftsmanship alone, this bronze sword is absolutely no less than famous swords like Zhanlu and Juque, it's just that its length..."

Professor Meng did not directly answer Huangfu Yun's question. In fact, he had not looked at the two bronze inscriptions at all. The reason was that Professor Meng wanted to use his archaeological knowledge to see if he could determine the origin of the sword.

When the topic of length came up, Professor Meng frowned slightly. In his memory, there weren't many famous swords in history that were only about two feet long. Whether it was the Yin Shang or Qin and Han dynasties, most swords were more than three feet long.

When Jing Ke attempted to assassinate the Qin emperor, the sword Qin Shi Huang carried was about seven feet long. Although one foot in the Qin Dynasty was only equivalent to 1 centimeter today, a seven-foot long sword would still be 62 meters long. In the end, Qin Shi Huang was only able to draw the

sword and turn the tide after hearing the imperial physician Xia Wuqie shout "The king is carrying a sword."

This shows that swords before the Qin Dynasty were mostly long and primarily used for thrusting. The bronze sword in front of us is only about two feet long, or fifty or sixty centimeters, which was not very common in ancient times.

"Could it be that one?"

Suddenly, Professor Meng thought of a name and his whole body trembled. If it really was that sword, then its length could be explained.

Thinking of this, Professor Meng was no longer willing to speculate. He picked up a magnifying glass and carefully examined the two inscriptions on the sword hilt.

Bronze inscriptions refer to the inscriptions cast on bronze vessels from the Yin and Zhou dynasties. They are also called bell and tripod inscriptions. Compared with oracle bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions have thicker strokes, more curved strokes, and more lumps. They were extremely popular during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, but they declined in the Qin dynasty and were gradually replaced by small seal script.

"Yes, it must be, it really is this sword?!"

After Professor Meng clearly saw the two inscriptions, his face flushed with excitement. However, Zhuang Rui and Huangfu Yun were annoyed. Why didn't the old man share his recognition with everyone?

"Teacher, what kind of sword is it?"

Zhuang Rui finally couldn't hold back any longer. "Don't just say half of what you mean, why don't you just give me the name and be done with it?"

"Wait, I'm not sure yet, let me check..."

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Professor Meng calmed down considerably. He stood up, pulled out a thick book from the large bookshelf behind him, and began to read it.

Zhuang Rui saw that Professor Meng was holding Rong Geng's "Jinwen Bian" (Compilation of Bronze Inscriptions), which is the first comprehensive dictionary of bronze inscriptions after Wu Dacheng's "Shuowen Guzhou Bu" (Supplement to the Ancient Script of Shuowen Jiezi). It is one of the essential reference books for ancient script researchers. It can provide a complete overview of both known and unknown inscriptions on bronze vessels from the Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties. It is a very comprehensive dictionary of bronze inscriptions.

Uncle De had shown Zhuang Rui the book "Jinwen Bian" before, but Zhuang Rui felt it was useless at the time and didn't pay attention to these seemingly incomprehensible words. Now Zhuang Rui understands the meaning of the saying "You only realize how little you know when you need it".

"Dingzi...guang...dingguang?!"

When Zhuang Rui saw Professor Meng use a pencil to find the two characters "Ding Guang" in the "Jinwen Bian" and circle them, Zhuang Rui compared the two characters in the book with the inscription on the sword hilt and found that they were indeed the two characters.

Although Zhuang Rui's voice wasn't loud, Huangfu Yun still heard it and asked incredulously, "What? Brother Zhuang, you said this sword... is called... Dingguang?!"

Chapter 615 The Sword of Fixed Light (Part Two)

Seeing Huangfu Yun's excited expression, Zhuang Rui casually replied, "It's called the Dingguang Sword, huh? What's wrong?"

As the saying goes, everyone has their own area of expertise. Although Zhuang Rui studied miscellaneous appraisal under Uncle De, he wasn't very knowledgeable about antiques like swords and bronzes, and he had absolutely no recollection of the term "Dingguang."

"What's wrong?! You don't know?"

Upon hearing this, Huangfu Yun looked at Zhuang Rui as if he were a monster, and said, "This sword is a historically famous sword that is on par with the Xuanyuan Sword and the Taikang Sword. It is no less than those legendary swords..."

Huangfu Yun mentioned the Xuanyuan Sword, which Zhuang Rui had heard of before. It was said that the Yellow Emperor used that sword to defeat Chi You, but these were all mythological stories, and Zhuang Rui didn't really believe them.

"Xiao Zhuang, Huangfu is right. Your bronze sword is very famous in history. I don't know how you got so lucky to actually come across something like this..."

Professor Meng gently stroked the blade with his fingers, his focused expression like that of someone caressing a woman's skin. This gave Zhuang Rui goosebumps. Could this be the legendary act of finding solace in the sword?

"I was lucky, hehe, I was just lucky. I thought it was just an ordinary iron sword, and it was just a little sharp. Teacher, does it have any other use?"

Although he was secretly pleased, Zhuang Rui still put on an air of having won by sheer luck, which made Huangfu Yun, who was listening nearby, grit his teeth. "I'm always wandering around Panjiayuan, how come I don't have your luck?"

"Legend has it that the Dingguang Sword can gather the light of the sun and moon to its tip, but that's just a legend. Let's try it out today..."

Upon seeing this famous sword, which is among the most renowned in Chinese history, Professor Meng lost his composure and even wanted to see if the legends were true.

Professor Meng's office runs east-west. There's a window on the west side. Professor Meng went over and opened it. It was already past 1 PM, and the sun was slightly setting. Coincidentally, the sun was shining brightly that day, and without the window blocking the sunlight, the office became even brighter.

Professor Meng held the "Dingguang" sword in his hand towards the sunlight, and everyone in the room immediately fixed their eyes on the "Dingguang" sword.

"Holy crap...this...this can't be real, right?"

The Dingguang sword itself is bronze in color and somewhat dark. It is not the kind of sword that shines so brightly that it reflects one's image. However, when sunlight shines on the sword, the entire Dingguang sword seems to come alive. The satin pattern on it is like waves, seemingly surging in layers.

What Zhuang Rui found most unbelievable was that the layers of wavy satin-like patterns seemed to be guided by some invisible force, surging towards the tip of the Dingguang Sword. Upon closer inspection, the tip of the sword looked like a gemstone, shining brightly in the sunlight.

Not only Zhuang Rui, but also Peng Fei and Huangfu Yun were dumbfounded. This was too amazing. Now there was no doubt that the legend that the Dingguang Sword could gather the light of the sun and moon to its tip must be true.

After Professor Meng removed the sword, the light dissipated. Peng Fei rubbed his eyes and said, "Brother Zhuang, was I seeing things?"

Zhuang Rui replied, seemingly ignoring the question, "I don't know if you're seeing things, but I definitely think I am..."

"Hehe, that can be explained. It's due to the special satin pattern on the Dingguang Sword that causes the light to be uniformly refracted to the tip of the sword. Xiao Zhuang, this sword is truly priceless. Just these satin patterns alone are worth studying..."

Professor Meng couldn't help but laugh when he saw the astonished looks on Zhuang Rui and the others' faces. He had seen the satin patterns on swords and blades refract light before, but the ability of the Dingguang Sword to refract light to a single point was truly unique.

"Brother Zhuang, what kind of sword is this? It's so amazing!"

Peng Fei was still completely confused, but he had asked the wrong person. Zhuang Rui only knew that the sword was called Dingguang, but he was also clueless about its origin.

"Young man, this sword has a very impressive history. It was forged during the reign of King Taijia of the Shang Dynasty, with the combined resources of the entire nation, over a period of four years. It was one of the Shang royal family's national treasures..."

Professor Meng knew that Zhuang Rui was not very familiar with this period of history, so he explained it to Peng Fei. The Dingguang Sword had a great reputation in history, ranking only after the Xuanyuan Sword, Yu Sword, Tengkong Sword, Qi Sword, Taikang Sword, and Jia Sword, making it the seventh sword in the list.

Moreover, in Professor Meng's opinion, regardless of the whereabouts of the other swords, in terms of sharpness alone, they are probably inferior even to the Longquan swords that were unearthed earlier.

Furthermore, none of those legendary divine weapons have been seen yet, so none of them are as real as the one in his hand. Professor Meng can already conclude that this is the Dingguang Sword forged by the King of Yin Shang.

Huangfu Yun suddenly asked, "Professor Meng, this sword is so magical that Lu You's lament, 'The national enemy remains unavenged, the brave warrior grows old, the sword in its scabbard makes a sound at night,' was probably not unfounded, was it?"

Professor Meng paused for a moment upon hearing this, then smiled wryly and said, "That's all written in martial arts novels. When the master is in danger, the sword in the scabbard will ring out in the dead of night. Young man, you can't believe these things..."

"That's not necessarily true, Brother Zhuang. You must hang it on your bedroom wall tonight; perhaps this sword will work its magic..."

Huangfu Yun shook his head and said something that made everyone laugh and cry. Zhuang Rui secretly thought to himself, "If I were having sex and this sword made that sound, wouldn't that be a disturbance? If I were a coward, it would probably turn into Viagra."

After handing the Dingguang Sword back to Zhuang Rui, Professor Meng suddenly wanted to see its sharpness, so he asked Zhuang Rui, "Little Zhuang, did you bring any copper coins?"

"I brought more than a dozen, Teacher Meng. Do you want to test the sword?"

Zhuang Rui had considered this possibility when he arrived, and he had more than 10 copper coins in his pocket.

Professor Meng waved his hand and said, "I can't do it, my eyesight is failing, you should do it..."

"Brother Zhuang, I'll do it..."

Before Zhuang Rui could answer, Peng Fei was already eager to try it out. He had enjoyed playing with cold weapons when he was in the army, and now that he saw such a famous sword from ancient times, he wanted to try it out himself.

"Okay, be careful not to damage the sword..."

Zhuang Rui nodded, took out some copper coins, but this time he didn't put in too many; he just stacked five copper coins at the foot of the table, and then handed the sword to Peng Fei.

Peng Fei gestured at the table a few times, then slashed down with his sword. His technique and wrist strength were far superior to Zhuang Rui's, and the force was immense. Everyone only heard a crisp "clang" as the sword blade pierced into the imitation mahogany table.

"It can cut through iron like mud and sever a hair in an instant. What a fine sword!"

Professor Meng picked up the copper coin that had been cut in half on the table and looked at it. Although he had seen many such behaviors that could not be explained by science before, he still looked incredulous.

Despite the advancements in technology today, many ancient inventions remain unexplained. For example, there's no consensus on how the meridians and qi in traditional Chinese medicine are generated.

Peng Fei, who was holding the sword, was also taken aback. He picked up the "Dingguang Sword" and looked at it. There wasn't even the slightest crease on the blade. Peng Fei couldn't help but marvel. This sword was even sharper than his own dagger.

After calming down, Professor Meng looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Zhuang, I have a request, I don't know..."

Professor Meng stopped mid-sentence, a troubled expression on his face.

"Teacher, you said..."

Seeing Professor Meng's expression, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but secretly groan in his heart. "Please don't tell me to donate it to the country," he thought. "I absolutely cannot hand this over. Even if I offend Professor Meng and have to give up my graduate studies, Zhuang Rui is still unwilling to give up this sword."

"Xiao Zhuang, although in recent years, archaeological excavations have unearthed a great many bronze weapons, including bronze swords, they are numerous and diverse. The discovery of the swords of King Fuchai of Wu and King Goujian of Yue has shocked the world..."

Professor Meng paused here, then continued, "Those two swords are too famous. I've seen them before, but I wanted to borrow them for research and analysis. However, no one would give this old man the face to do so. Xiao Zhuang, I wanted to borrow this sword from you to analyze its material composition..."

Professor Meng once conducted a research project to study why ancient bronze swords, buried underground for thousands of years, could still remain spotless and sharp without any rust. However, without physical examples to study, he put the project aside.

However, when quantitative chemical analysis was later applied to the authentication of bronze artifacts, Professor Meng learned that the rust-free and corrosion-free phenomenon was caused by the ratio of copper, tin, gold, and iron during forging. However, Professor Meng never had the time or physical evidence to study this ratio.

Now that Professor Meng has seen Zhuang Rui's sword, his old ideas have been rekindled. If this can help him unravel this mystery of ancient forging techniques, it would be a significant achievement in archaeological research.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui felt much more relaxed. As long as it wasn't something he was asked to hand over to the state, but rather borrowed for analysis and research, Zhuang Rui could accept it.

"Xiao Zhuang, I'm not asking you to leave the sword with me. You might trust me, but I don't trust you at all."

"Here's the thing, once you officially become my graduate student, your main responsibility will be researching the proportions of materials used in bronze swords. When you need this sword, just bring it with you..."

When Professor Meng saw that Zhuang Rui didn't speak, he thought that Zhuang Rui disagreed, so he quickly extended an olive branch. You know, newly enrolled graduate students are not qualified to develop research topics on their own.

Chapter 616 Lion-shaped Seal (Part 1)

Nowadays, graduate students in universities are practically working for their professors. The professors take on outside work and dump it on their graduate students.

When results are achieved, a more conscientious supervisor will take the lion's share and will also share some with the student. However, a less conscientious supervisor might take all the profits and leave the student with nothing.

By saying this, Professor Meng was essentially promising Zhuang Rui that he would be in charge of the project.

Of course, the research funding that was granted was all controlled by Zhuang Rui. Professor Meng knew that Zhuang Rui was wealthy and might not care about this amount of money, but he still made his stance clear.

"Thank you, Teacher Meng..."

Upon hearing Professor Meng's words, Zhuang Rui quickly agreed. He had originally thought that the old man would be overcome with patriotism and make him hand it over to the state, but now that it was just for research and he could control it, what could Zhuang Rui possibly complain about?

Moreover, Zhuang Rui knew that his status as a graduate student at Peking University was already a done deal, and with Professor Meng's help, the interview would just be a formality.

"No need to thank me. If you can find anything out, your teacher will thank you in return. By the way, I need to take some photos. This sword is of great historical value, and you'll probably need to bring it to a seminar in a while..."

Professor Meng waved his hand, took out a digital camera from his desk, and started taking pictures of the fixed-light sword from various angles.

"Okay, just let me know when the time comes, teacher..."

Zhuang Rui readily nodded. He knew that the "Dingguang Sword" was a legendary sword and must have great historical significance. However, Zhuang Rui believed that as long as he didn't want it, no one could take the Dingguang Sword away, unless the old man in his family was being unreasonable.

"Alright, take your things back now. Keep them safe and don't apply any rust remover or other chemical agents. It's best to wipe them down frequently..."

Professor Meng had some knowledge of bronze artifact preservation. After photographing the Dingguang Sword from various angles, he gave Zhuang Rui a few more instructions, worried that Zhuang Rui might neglect its care and damage this peerless sword.

"I really don't know if this kid is just lucky or if he has some kind of secret?"

After seeing Zhuang Rui and the others off, Professor Meng returned to his office and shook his head. However, he was already very satisfied to have seen a famous sword that could rewrite the history of bronze ware.

"Brother Zhuang, it's rare for me to come back. I'm going to visit my teacher later, so let's say goodbye here..."

After leaving Professor Meng's office building, Huangfu Yun spoke to Zhuang Rui, but his eyes remained fixed on the "Dingguang Sword" in Peng Fei's hand.

As a professional collector of swords and antiques, Huangfu Yun was in a real dilemma. Unfortunately, he lacked the financial resources to buy them, even if Zhuang Rui agreed to sell.

"Alright, Brother Huangfu, let's keep in touch. If you come across any valuable artifacts left by our ancestors while you're abroad, give me a call..."

Zhuang Rui had long wanted to go abroad to shop, but he was not familiar with the major auction houses overseas. Now that he had met Huangfu Yun, he would have another guide when he went abroad in the future.

Huangfu Yun was unaware that Zhuang Rui had such thoughts. Hearing this, he paused for a moment before saying, "Brother, if you're interested, there's a special auction of Chinese antiques in London next month. If you're interested, you can go and take a look. I'll definitely be there..."

"next month?"

Zhuang Rui wasn't sure if anything would happen next month, and there were still more than 20 days left, so he said, "Brother Huangfu, if I'm free next month, I'll go check on things. I'll trouble you then..."

"Okay, then let's keep in touch by phone..."

Huangfu Yun glanced longingly at the brocade box in Peng Fei's hand, then waved goodbye to Zhuang Rui.

"Brother Zhuang, how much is this sword worth?"

Peng Fei had just seen Huangfu Yun's eyes and felt an urge to snatch her away. After getting into the car, he asked Zhuang Rui about it.

In Peng Fei's view, this sword is just a bit too sharp. In the era of cold weapons, it was undoubtedly a priceless treasure. However, in modern society where guns and cannons are rampant, cold weapons are no longer very useful. There is an old saying: No matter how high your martial arts skills are, you can still be taken down with one shot.

"Guess..."

Zhuang Rui drove away from the Peking University campus. Seeing that he still had time, he decided to first put the "Dingguang Sword" back at home, and then go to his grandfather's place to get the seal. After all, carrying an item worth hundreds of millions around would definitely make him nervous.

"It's worth at least a few million, right?"

Peng Fei had been with Zhuang Rui for a while and knew that the prices of antiques were unpredictable. The rarer the item, the higher you could guess. So Peng Fei gave what he thought was an astronomical price.

"Heh, a few million? That's not even enough to buy the tip of a sword..."

Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this. He turned around and prepared to find Mr. Qian from the Kyoto Auction House to get some recent antique auction data so he could brush up on his knowledge. If Huangfu Yun hadn't told him the price of the sword, Zhuang Rui's estimate would have been only slightly higher than what Peng Fei had just said.

"That man named Huangfu Yun was valued at around 200 million, but now that we know about his lineage, the price will probably be even higher..."

Zhuang Rui didn't expect his luck to be so good today. It seems he should go to Panjiayuan for a stroll when he has nothing else to do.

"Two...two hundred million? It can be that expensive?"

Peng Fei's hand, holding the sword, trembled violently, and he almost dropped it.

"Nonsense, don't you think about it? Of all those legendary swords, only this one has been unearthed. Two hundred million is probably an understatement..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Peng Fei simply placed the "Sword of Fixed Light" on Zhuang Rui's lap and said, "Brother Zhuang, this thing is too precious. Why does it feel so heavy when I hold it?"

"Alright, kid, stop messing around. You're carrying hundreds of millions of dollars worth of gold, and you haven't complained about how heavy it is..."

Zhuang Rui jokingly scolded Peng Fei, and the two returned to the courtyard house while talking.

Qin Xuanbing's jewelry design studio was located in the side room leading to the basement in Zhuang Rui's backyard. Upon seeing Zhuang Rui enter, Qin Xuanbing asked curiously, "Honey, didn't you go to Uncle Gu's place? Why are you back now?"

"Hehe, honey, I found a priceless treasure at Panjiayuan today. I'll take it home first, then head over to Grandpa's right away..."

Zhuang Rui leaned in, hugged Qin Xuanbing, and kissed her. If it weren't for the fact that it was broad daylight and he had things to do later, Zhuang Rui would have loved to use... you know... actions to release his excitement.

"You idiot, hurry up and go, don't bother me..."

Qin Xuanbing saw Zhuang Rui dash out of the house like a child, and a smile appeared on her face. She enjoyed this kind of life. She had a loving husband, an easy-going mother-in-law, and lived in this big mansion. Life was very comfortable and quiet, which suited Qin Xuanbing's personality perfectly.

"Brother Yun, why aren't you busy today?"

Upon entering Grandpa Gu's courtyard, Zhuang Rui saw Gu Yun playing Go with the old man and quickly went over to greet him.

"This brat only played chess with this old man because he knew you were coming, otherwise would he have kept this old man company?"

Before Gu Yun could speak, the old man snorted coldly, swept the chessboard aside, and said, "Zhuang Rui, come inside when you've finished your business..."

"Hey Dad, are you cheating? We're about to lose, and you're trying to run away?"

Gu Yun's words made Zhuang Rui realize why the old man was in a bad mood; it turned out he was going to lose the chess game to his son.

Zhuang Rui glanced around and then said, "Brother Gu, what do you need me for? Let's make this clear first, that thing is really gone, so please don't bring it up..."

These days, he's been with his wife every day, and since they're both young and energetic, they've been doing *that* almost every day. Even with Zhuang Rui's ability to recover his spiritual energy, he's finding it a bit overwhelming. Now he's just eagerly hoping that he can start making his own medicinal wine next spring.

Of course, this doesn't mean Zhuang Rui is incapable; it's a psychological effect. It's like giving a regular vitamin to someone with a cold and telling them it's a miracle cure. The person who takes the vitamin

will experience a significant improvement in their cold. That's the effect of psychology, proven by clinical trials.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Gu Yun wore a wry smile and said, "You little rascal, who told you about that? I'm strong enough, go ask your sister-in-law if you don't believe me?"

"strong?"

Zhuang Rui curled his lip in disdain, wondering who was following him around asking for tiger penis. They might not be strong, but their skin was certainly thick.

"Alright, stop talking nonsense, I need your help with something..."

Fearing that the old man would find out about him asking Zhuang Rui for tiger penis, Gu Yun quickly changed the subject and asked, "Is your fourth brother developing land in the East City area?"

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "Yes, Brother Gu, just say what's on your mind. Let's not beat around the bush between brothers..."

"Alright, then I'll get straight to the point, brother. You know, I get more work in the winter, and less in the spring and summer. See if you can get some projects from Ouyang Jun. By the way, I'm qualified, not some roadside freelancer..."

Ancient building restoration is indeed seasonal. There is usually more work in autumn and winter. If Gu Yun can't get other work in spring and summer, he will have to spend money to support a large group of people.

"Hey, it's just a small matter. You can talk to Fourth Brother yourself. It's not like you don't know him..." Zhuang Rui thought it was something big, but it turns out it's about a project.

Gu Yun laughed and said, "Isn't it because we're close brothers? Your opinion is definitely more effective than mine..."

"Okay, I'll call Fourth Brother later. You can go find him yourself, Brother Gu..."

Zhuang Rui nodded in agreement. Gu Yun's work quality was absolutely top-notch, and he was currently living there himself.

Chapter 617 Lion-shaped Seal (Part Two)

Zhuang Rui entered Old Master Gu's room. The old man was happily brewing tea. Seeing Zhuang Rui enter, he nodded, pointed to the chair opposite him, and said, "Sit down. What does that brat want from you? If you can't help, then don't..."

Gu Tianfeng knew Zhuang Rui's background. In China, while it's impossible to say there's nothing the Ouyang family couldn't do, there probably weren't many things they couldn't accomplish. Gu Tianfeng was worried his son might make some unreasonable demands, putting Zhuang Rui in a difficult position.

Of course, a son is always one's own flesh and blood. The old man's words were loaded with meaning: don't help with things you can't help with, but as for things you can help with, there's no need to say more.

This book is being published for the first time, providing you with a reading experience free of errors and disordered chapters.

"Uncle Gu, it's nothing serious. Brother Yun's business is slow right now, so he asked me to recommend some jobs. Luckily, Fourth Brother has some projects going on, so I'll have him take some of them. It's legitimate business..."

Seeing that the old man was quite serious, Zhuang Rui quickly explained that it was no big deal at all. It didn't matter who did Ouyang Jun's work, so it was better to let one of their own people do it.

"Yes, follow the rules, don't break them..."

Upon hearing this, Gu Tianfeng didn't say anything more. He opened the drawer of the table where he was sitting, took out a palm-sized sandalwood box, and pushed it in front of Zhuang Rui.

"Look, this was carved from that piece of big red chicken-blood stone. The old man's skills haven't been forgotten..."

The old gentleman seemed quite satisfied with the work, and there was a hint of pride in his words.

"Hehe, of course, my senior master is the renowned Nanwu Beigu..."

After giving a small compliment, Zhuang Rui picked up the box that looked like it was made of rosewood from the table.

"Huh? Senior Uncle, this thing must be quite old, right?"

When Zhuang Rui picked up the box, it felt quite heavy. Using his spiritual energy, he confirmed it was indeed made of sandalwood, with clear and delicate grain—high-quality small-leaf sandalwood, quite valuable.

Don't be fooled by the small size of this box; it dates back to at least the period before the Republic of China era. From an antique perspective, it's an old item, and Zhuang Rui estimates it to be worth around 70,000 to 80,000 yuan.

In ancient times, the process of sealing a work of calligraphy or painting was a very serious and important step. Therefore, the requirements and preservation of the seals were taken very seriously. This sandalwood box, with its woven buttons, was clearly specially made to hold the seals.

"Yes, I found it a long time ago, and it's been with me for decades. I don't need it anymore, so I'll give it to you..."

When the old man spoke, there was a clear hint of reluctance and melancholy in his voice. Zhuang Rui could tell that this sandalwood box was definitely the old man's most cherished possession.

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui shook his head and said, "Uncle-Master, I can't accept this item. You should keep it for yourself..."

"Nonsense, why would I keep it? I already said I'm retiring, so this old man won't issue any more certificates of authenticity. What's the point of having this thing?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the old man's voice suddenly rose, but he then sighed and said, "You have a natural talent for jade, and you're lucky, but you're too old and started learning too late. Otherwise, I would have passed on all my skills in the Northern School of jade carving to you..."

To learn carving, one must have a solid foundation in calligraphy and painting, and then train the dexterity of one's hands from a young age. Zhuang Rui's bones had already grown out, so at most he could only carve seals for fun. It would be almost impossible for him to learn carving.

Although Gu Tianfeng had many disciples throughout his life, the decline of the Northern School of carving was a foregone conclusion, and none of his disciples were capable of taking on the main responsibility, which is why the old man had this lament.

"Hehe, Uncle-Master, with your physique, you'll live at least another thirty to fifty years. What's the rush? After I have my son, I'll have him learn Northern-style carving from you. Then, I'll pass this sandalwood box on your behalf to him..."

Seeing that the old man seemed a bit down, Zhuang Rui quickly changed the subject. In fact, Zhuang Rui genuinely had this idea; teaching seal carving to children would not only cultivate their practical skills but also refine their character, making them more composed. If Zhuang Rui had a son, he would definitely send him to the old man for instruction.

"Hehe, you little rascal, don't tease me, open it and take a look..."

Gu Tianfeng was amused by Zhuang Rui's words. Just then, Gu Yun also walked in with his son. As the saying goes, grandparents love their grandchildren more than their grandchildren, and the old man's face immediately lit up with a smile when he saw his grandson.

Zhuang Rui smiled, opened the box in his hand, and his attention was immediately drawn to the rectangular chicken-blood stone seal.

The seal is no longer in its original shape; it has become square. At its top, a lion playing with a ball is carved in the round, serving as the seal's knob. The center is hollowed out, allowing a ribbon to be threaded through it and tied around the waist. This is typical of the Northern School of carving, with extremely fine knife work.

After picking up the seal from the silk mat in the box, it felt cool to the touch, yet slightly warm. The edges of the seal were smooth and comfortable to the touch, without feeling abrupt, which made Zhuang Rui feel very comfortable.

Upon closer inspection of the seal in his hand, Zhuang Rui was struck by its pure, smooth texture and the splashed chicken blood, resembling ink splattered with distinct layers. The bright red blood seemed to leap out of the seal.

"Xiao Zhuang, this piece of Da Hong Pao material is of excellent quality. Too much carving would only make it lose its true nature, so I only made a lion knob for you, so that its true nature can be shown..."

The old man, who was playing with his grandson, explained to Zhuang Rui, and then said, "This seal can also be called a 'chicken blood lion knob seal.' I also referenced the design of a seal formerly owned by Mr. He Jingguo in the 'Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Seal Stones.' Do you like it or not?"

As the saying goes, a heavy sword has no edge, and great skill is without artifice. When it comes to the craftsmanship of an old master, the simpler the work, the more you can see his superb craftsmanship. This seal looks simple, but every stroke reveals a magnificent and meticulous style.

"Hehe, satisfied, satisfied..."

Zhuang Rui was telling the truth, just as the old man said. Adding too much artificial carving to the natural chicken blood on this seal would only ruin the overall feel of the seal. It's just right now.

"Xiaoyun, go get a book and a sheet of white paper..."

Gu Tianfeng instructed his son to fetch something, but he wanted Zhuang Rui to see the seal engraving, as this was the most important part of a seal.

"Master Uncle, your inkpad is quite something..."

After Gu Yun brought the paper, Zhuang Rui opened the inkpad box placed next to the seal. A faint fragrance immediately wafted into his nose. Upon closer inspection, the inkpad was red but not garish, calm and elegant, delicate and thick, definitely a top-quality product.

The importance of ink paste to seals is self-evident. It can directly affect the effect expressed by seal art. Good ink paste, when applied to calligraphy and painting, produces beautiful and deep colors with a three-dimensional effect. The longer the ink paste is used, the more vibrant the colors become.

Poor quality ink paste will result in a dull or pale color after being applied to the ink, and some ink may seep out, making the printed text blurry.

A skilled inkpad user chooses inkpads just as a skilled calligrapher chooses brushes and ink; the quality of the inkpad directly affects the value and artistic effect of the calligraphy and painting.

Some people think of inkpads as the kind sold in stationery stores, but that's a misconception.

The ink pads sold in stationery stores are coarse, oily, and have a superficial color, which cannot express the true appearance of the seal. Therefore, they cannot be called ink pads at all, but only ink coloring.

Anyone with even a little common sense would not use it as a model for seal making or for stamping calligraphy and paintings.

"Hehe, this is ink paste made by Lihuazhai in Zhangzhou, Fujian a few years ago. Their ink paste formula is very famous in China. It was given to me by an old friend. A good seal must be matched with good ink paste. You're lucky to have gotten this for yourself..."

Although Gu Tianfeng spoke casually, Zhuang Rui knew that such a small box of inkpad was definitely valuable, especially the kind that was specially given as a gift, which would probably cost around a thousand yuan for 50 grams.

Having accepted even the old man's sandalwood box worth seventy or eighty thousand, Zhuang Rui no longer hesitated. He immediately took two fingers from each hand to hold the seal, dipped them evenly in the ink, smoothed the white paper on the book, and pressed down firmly. After feeling that the force was even, he lifted his hands.

"Zhuang Ruiqing's Appreciation"

Four bright, elegant, and serene seal characters leap off the paper. The ancient and vigorous lines of the characters give Zhuang Rui a subtle feeling of being cast in gold and carved in jade. The saying "within a square inch, there is a myriad of phenomena" is exactly what this means.

Zhuang Rui could tell that the old man had put a lot of effort into carving the inscription. He used two carving techniques: the straight cut and the slicing cut. The straight cut was swift and smooth, and the carving was completed in one go, showing a vigorous and unrestrained momentum.

In the details, the old master combined the cutting technique with short, continuous cuts, step by step, to express the vigorous, concise, solid, and steady style. The combination of these two cutting techniques demonstrates the highest level of seal carving craftsmanship.

Based on this alone, Zhuang Rui could conclude that Master Ge, whom he had hired for "Xuanrui Zhai," was probably not as skilled as the old master in seal carving.

The yin and yang characters on seals are also very particular. Different characters represent different functions. For example, there are name and style seals, letter seals, and signature seals, also known as "flower seals". These are carved with flowers and written with the name on them to make them difficult to imitate. In ancient times, they served as a mark of trust.

In addition, there are studio seals. In ancient times, people often named their residences and studies and used them to make seals. The "Xuanrui Studio Seal" that Master Ge first engraved belonged to the studio seal category.

The four characters clearly indicate that this seal is a collector's and connoisseur's seal.

This type of seal is mostly used to stamp calligraphy, paintings and cultural relics. For example, the painting by Lang Shining that Zhuang Rui appraised for the master also used this type of seal. The seal on it reads: "xx appraises", which is very similar in meaning to "Zhuang Rui appreciates".

Chapter 618 Good News

"Senior Uncle, you truly are like a sword sheathed but a man whose age has not diminished..."

Looking at the seal, Zhuang Rui sincerely flattered the old man. This wasn't just flattery; the old man's skill was unmatched nationwide.

"When did you learn this trick? Look, let's see again..."

Grandpa Gu glared at Zhuang Rui with annoyance, then handed him a magnifying glass, urging Zhuang Rui to take a closer look at the four characters "Zhuang Rui Qing Shang".

"Hmm? Grandpa, what's this?"

After Zhuang Rui took the magnifying glass, he looked at the four characters printed on the paper. Upon closer inspection, he could indeed see some differences.

It turned out that there was a faint red mist between these four characters, which was hard to notice if you weren't paying attention. Zhuang Rui originally thought that it was the color of the seal left on the surface because he had used too much force. But now it seems that the old man did it on purpose.

Under the magnifying glass, the faint red color revealed three patterns: swimming fish. Three lifelike goldfish appeared vividly in Zhuang Rui's eyes.

"Hehe, that's for anti-counterfeiting purposes. I carved it on using micro-engraving techniques. It's something that ordinary people or machines shouldn't be able to replicate..."

The old man didn't actually expend much effort carving Zhuang Rui's seal, but the micro-carving of the pattern exhausted him quite a bit; otherwise, Zhuang Rui wouldn't have had to wait three days for the seal.

"Senior Uncle, thank you so much..."

Zhuang Rui was at a loss for words to express his gratitude to the old man. He could only secretly vow in his heart that he would make this seal a coveted authentication stamp for many calligraphy and painting collectors.

"Keep up the good work, you have a long road ahead. Whether it's antiques or jade, your foundation is too weak. You still need to study systematically..."

Gu Tianfeng saw through Zhuang Rui's thoughts and gave him a gentle but firm rebuke. Basic knowledge was indeed Zhuang Rui's weakest point, which was one of the reasons he chose to pursue a master's degree under Professor Meng.

"Alright, let's have dinner here tonight before going back..."

The old man waved his hand, silencing Zhuang Rui's words of thanks, and took his grandson for a stroll in the yard. In this bright spring weather, what could be more delightful than relaxing in a deck chair and playing with his grandson?

It was fine for Zhuang Rui to stay for dinner; it wasn't the first time. However, he needed to take care of Gu Yun's matter first. Zhuang Rui took out his phone and called Ouyang Jun, explaining the situation to him.

Gu Yun also renovated Ouyang Jun's small courtyard house. He lives there very comfortably now and has a good impression of Gu Yun. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, he asked Gu Yun to come to the company tomorrow to discuss it. From what Ouyang Jun said, he seems to want to hand over the environmental protection and greening work to Gu Yun.

After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui told Gu Yun about it and said apologetically, "Brother Gu, how about I go with you to Fourth Brother's company tomorrow? I'll try to get you a good job..."

When Gu Yun heard Zhuang Rui mention the landscaping area, he was all smiles. However, upon hearing Zhuang Rui's next words, he was startled and quickly waved his hands, saying, "No, please don't, brother, Boss Ouyang is really looking out for me..."

Is there any point in greening efforts?

Zhuang Rui really didn't understand. In his opinion, greening was just about building a few pavilions and planting some trees in the community. Although people nowadays pay more attention to the environment, Zhuang Rui didn't have that kind of concept in his mind.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Gu Yun rolled his eyes and said, "Of course there's profit to be made. Let me tell you, if you buy saplings from Daxing for 20 yuan each, you can sell them for 200 yuan. Do you think there's profit to be made?"

"Building a circulating water system for an artificial rockery is just a matter of pouring cement; it costs at most ten thousand or twenty thousand, but you can make hundreds of thousands in revenue. Do you think that's worthwhile?"

Gu Yun and Zhuang Rui were quite close, so he didn't hide anything from Zhuang Rui about the profits in this industry. He explained everything to Zhuang Rui, including the cost price and selling price of houses, as well as the profits of real estate developers.

Mr. Zhuang was speechless upon hearing Gu Yun's words. No wonder everyone, from the truly inhuman to the most ruthless, wanted to get into real estate; this was what they called exorbitant profits.

Currently, the price of apartments in elevator-equipped residential complexes within the Third Ring Road of Beijing, in the Dongcheng District, is around 14,000 to 15,000 yuan per square meter.

Zhuang Rui knew that Ouyang Jun hadn't paid a high price for the land. After cost accounting, as long as the buildings could be sold, the net profit per square meter would be astonishing. Moreover, the housing market was still rising, and it might break the 20,000 mark next year. The exorbitant profits involved were self-evident.

As for the tricks Gu Yun mentioned, they may seem to offer high profits, but compared to real estate developers, they are nothing at all.

Zhuang Rui was unaware that by the time Ouyang Jun's properties opened for sale next year, the price of apartments on the East Third Ring Road would have already exceeded 20,000 yuan per square meter, with some reaching over 30,000 yuan. Zhuang Rui's pockets would suddenly be much fuller. Of course, that's a story for another time.

"By the way, Brother Gu, are those prices you just mentioned the industry standard?"

Zhuang Rui suddenly realized that he was also a major shareholder in this project. Given his relationship with Gu Yun, it was fine for him to make money, but if it was too shady, it would be taking money out of his own pocket. In that case, it would be better for him to give him the money directly, so that Gu Yun wouldn't have to curse the developer as an idiot after making money.

"Don't worry, brother, these projects will definitely be put out to tender. My price will be lower than the industry average. I'm not greedy, and I guarantee I'll do a great job..."

Gu Yun smiled and patted Zhuang Rui on the shoulder. He understood that Ouyang Jun's project was so large that even if it was just landscaping, his company alone couldn't handle it. He was content to get a share of it.

Moreover, although Gu Yun's company has the qualifications for horticultural engineering, it will still need to go back to the school to ask some experts and teachers to provide drawings. When the profits are distributed, they will not be as much as he said.

However, Gu Yun had a long-term vision. Since Ouyang Jun had entered the real estate industry, he certainly wouldn't just do this one project. As long as he could build a good relationship with Ouyang Jun, his company would probably never have time to relax in the future.

"Hey bro, wait here, I'm going out to buy some braised dishes. We'll have a good drink tonight, you two brothers..."

Having received Zhuang Rui's confirmation, Gu Yun was in high spirits. After greeting Zhuang Rui, she hurriedly left. Zhuang Rui couldn't stop her and smiled wryly behind her. Well, if she's drunk, she might as well stay. It'll be good to help the old man recuperate.

Now, Zhuang Rui goes to Yuquan Mountain every few days to stay for a day, just to help his grandparents with their health. But it's not so convenient at Grandpa Gu's place. Zhuang Rui has been thinking about whether he should learn some acupuncture or something to make a good impression.

"Huh? Why is Tom calling?"

As Zhuang Rui walked into the courtyard, preparing to play a game of Go with the old man, his phone suddenly rang. It was Tom, the representative from Raytheon Company.

A few days ago, Zhuang Rui had already discussed his requirements and configuration for the Hawker model with Tom, and was just waiting to formally sign the contract and pay the deposit. However, this was scheduled for the day after tomorrow.

"Tom, what's up? I don't have time to take you sightseeing in Beijing today..."

Zhuang Rui answered the phone, joking with the other party. Tom's Chinese was excellent, so there was no need to speak English with him.

"Oh, dear Rui..."

"Stop, stop, Tom, call me Zhuang Rui, or dear Zhuang, I'm not... you know..."

Zhuang Rui simply couldn't accept Tom's friendly language; Qin Xuanbing had never addressed him that way before, and Zhuang Rui almost got goosebumps.

"Oh, well, dear Zhuang, I have some news for you, perhaps you'll be interested..."

Tom knew that Chinese people usually expressed their feelings in a rather subtle way, so he shrugged and then got to the point.

"News? What news? Tom, you're not going to tell me your company's plane tickets are going to increase in price, are you?"

While talking on the phone, Zhuang Rui sat down in front of the Go board, grabbed the black pieces, and said that his Go skills were really not good. Although Grandpa Gu was also a terrible player, if Zhuang Rui played the white pieces, he would definitely lose more often than he would win.

"No, no, our company is trustworthy. If we were to raise prices, we would hold a press conference in advance..."

Tom explained to Zhuang Rui very seriously, and then said, "It's like this, we have a client on Wall Street who ordered a Hawker private jet from our company last year, but unfortunately, he recently went bankrupt, so he doesn't have the money to pay the remaining balance for the aircraft..."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui's expression turned serious. He put down the chess box, stood up, and wondered if Tom would have told him this for no reason.

"This aircraft is currently parked on our company's test tarmac. It has passed safety inspections and fully meets safety standards..."

"Wait, Tom, are you trying to tell me that this plane is mine if I want it?"

Zhuang Rui interrupted Tom, saying, "This kind of beating around the bush is a Chinese specialty! Where did this foreign guy learn that? He should just ask if you want to buy it."

"Oh, dear Zhuang, you are so clever. If I were a lady, I would definitely consider marrying you..."

Tom's flattery left Zhuang Rui speechless. With Tom's speaking skills and eager tone, anyone with a normal brain could understand what he meant: someone had paid a deposit to pre-order the plane, but now they didn't have the money to buy it, so Raytheon needed to sell it.

"Dear Zhuang, you can take a look at the configuration of this aircraft first. If you have any other needs, we can modify it for you free of charge..."

When Tom heard that Zhuang Rui on the other end of the phone didn't speak, he quickly relayed the message the company had asked him to convey.

Chapter 620-621 Reception (Part 1 & 2)

"Good morning, Mom, Aunt Zhang, Aunt Li!"

Zhuang Rui got up early in the morning and played with the white lion in the yard for a while. He then walked to the middle courtyard and saw his mother, Zhang Ma, and Li Sao doing health exercises.

A few elderly women learned this in a nearby park, but there were too many single elderly men there. Whenever they saw three "young and vibrant" elderly women, they would always try to strike up a conversation with them, so in the end, the women had to go home to practice.

"Good morning, Xiao Zhuang. Where's Xiao Qin?"

At Ouyang Wan's request, Zhang Ma and Li Sao finally stopped calling him "boss," but when they saw Zhuang Rui coming over, they still stopped and greeted him.

"You guys continue, you guys continue, she's washing up, she'll be right there..."

When Zhuang Rui saw that he had come and disturbed the group's morning exercises, and that his mother was giving him a disapproving look, he quickly waved his hand to let them continue.

"Are you going to be gone for a few days this time?"

Ouyang Wan didn't stop moving, but her eyes were on her son.

Zhuang Rui said with a grin, "Mom, my flight is this afternoon. I'll stay in Hong Kong for a day and then fly back tonight. Hehe, I'll take you around the world then..."

"Take your wife with you, Mom's not going. Alright, you go ahead and get busy..."

Ouyang Wan was also amused by Zhuang Rui. She didn't expect that Zhuang Rui would actually buy an airplane in less than half a month.

"Sister Ouyang, your son is such a filial son..."

"Yes, Xiao Zhuang is really a great guy. Such a big boss, yet he spends almost all his time at home..."

Hearing Zhang Ma and Li Sao praising him again, Zhuang Rui hurriedly led the white lion to the front yard. Whenever something happened, those two would always praise him endlessly, and his mother especially loved to hear it, which made Zhuang Rui feel very uncomfortable.

Half a month had passed since Tom last discussed the Hawker jet. Although they hadn't reached any conclusions that day, things took a turn for the better after Tom reported Zhuang Rui's request to headquarters the following day.

Because it is indeed difficult to sell aircraft ordered by others, and Zhuang Rui is the first to express interest in purchasing one, Raytheon, after consideration, will offer Zhuang Rui a discount of \$2 million if he does not modify any part of the aircraft.

In this way, Zhuang Rui only needed to spend \$10 million, which is less than 90 million RMB, to acquire this ready-made Hawker jet. After discussing it with Qin Xuanbing, Zhuang Rui signed a purchase contract with Tom.

Normally, the safety inspection of this aircraft would require not only inspection by the relevant U.S. authorities, but also the client's approval and signature in person. However, since Raytheon has a branch in Hong Kong, Zhuang Rui completely entrusted this matter to his father-in-law.

After all, Qin Haoran's family owns a private plane and a private pilot, so he is quite familiar with the operation. Moreover, Zhuang Rui knows nothing about aircraft performance, so it would be better to entrust the inspection to a professional. The signature can be done by his father-in-law.

During his time in Beijing, Zhuang Rui didn't do nothing. He found Ouyang Lei and, through persistent persuasion, managed to get a soon-to-retire pilot from him.

Of course, this was mainly due to the generous treatment offered by Zhuang Rui. After contacting the pilot who was about to retire, both parties were willing, and Ouyang Lei only played the role of introducing and helping him with the retirement procedures.

However, this act of undermining the country somehow reached the ears of Old Master Ouyang. Without saying a word, the old man stormed into Zhuang Rui's courtyard and nearly chased Zhuang Rui through two courtyards with his cane.

This exhausted Zhuang Rui quite a bit, not from dodging, but from having to hold the white lion tightly. Otherwise, the lion would get angry, and it wouldn't recognize Ouyang Gang. Afterwards, Zhuang Rui shook his head, realizing he had probably given the old man too much tonic, making him too hot-tempered.

Not only Zhuang Rui, but Ouyang Lei also got into trouble. Zhuang Rui originally wanted to poach the two of them and find another driver, but Ouyang Lei refused to help even if it meant death. He almost hit himself with his cane. Find another one? The old man will be storming into the Military Commission compound tomorrow.

Even though Zhuang Rui was prepared to pay with a tiger penis, Comrade Ouyang Lei remained steadfastly uncorrupted and righteously refused Zhuang Rui's offer. However, after leaving, Ouyang Lei used the excuse that he had already introduced Zhuang Rui to a pilot to take the tiger penis with him.

It's no wonder the old man was angry. You have to understand, it's not an easy thing for the military to train a pilot. It costs the military nearly 5 million yuan to train a novice into a mature fighter pilot.

Therefore, the air force has always been the most sought-after among all branches of the armed forces. The ranks of the pilots are generally much higher than those of the army and navy. In a flight squadron, you can't find a single private; they are all officers.

The country has spent so much effort cultivating this talent, and Zhuang Rui just poached him like that. Do you think the old man wouldn't be angry?

However, the pilot Zhuang Rui found was already over forty years old and was indeed planning to leave the military. He had been flying transport planes for the past few years, so he and Zhuang Rui hit it off and he left the military.

In the end, Zhuang Rui approached Ouyang Jun and poached a co-pilot from an airline with a salary twice that of civil aviation.

Zhuang Ruiqian has already spent a lot of money before even seeing the plane, but everything has been taken care of, including the conversion of the military pilot's certificate, since a civil aviation certificate is required to fly civil aviation.

A regular airline pilot's monthly salary plus allowances, depending on their monthly flight distance, is generally between 30,000 and 50,000 RMB, while a co-pilot's salary is between 7,000 and 20,000 RMB.

To recruit these two people, Zhuang Rui offered them monthly salaries of 80,000 and 50,000 yuan respectively. In addition, through that civil aviation pilot, he also recruited two experienced flight attendants, offering them monthly salaries of 20,000 yuan each.

Just maintaining this plane, not counting parking fees, fuel costs, and personal insurance, costs Zhuang Rui has to spend 160,000 RMB per month, which is 1.72 million RMB per year. Zhuang Rui now understands why so many people can afford to buy a private jet but can't afford to maintain it.

That's not all. What really hurt Zhuang Rui was that he rented the Capital Airport apron for three years at once, paying a full 15 million RMB. This was after Ouyang Jun got a discount from people in the civil aviation industry. Almost all of the 2 million USD saved from buying the plane was spent on this.

In addition, each time the plane is put into operation, there are also some miscellaneous fees that Zhuang Rui is unaware of. In short, if the plane wants to take off, the first thing to do is to pay for the runway. Moreover, Zhuang Rui and Peng Fei are the ones who handle all these troublesome matters from beginning to end.

After signing the contract with the pilot and flight attendant and paying all the required fees, Zhuang Rui wondered if he had lost his mind and if he had been having an intermittent neurotic episode when he decided to buy a private jet. Of course, it was pointless to think about that now.

In fact, Zhuang Rui felt that the expense and trouble were due to the fact that he did not have a team. For large corporations that buy private jets, these trivial matters are not something the boss needs to worry about. The people below will naturally handle everything perfectly, and the boss only needs to take the plane and leave.

Zhuang Rui also deeply realized this problem. When he convened a meeting with the two pilots and two flight attendants, a total of four people, he clarified their work and responsibilities.

Besides doing his job, the co-pilot was also assigned all sorts of miscellaneous tasks, such as contacting the airport to arrange flights. He came from a civil aviation background, so he was expected to do more work. Otherwise, why would Zhuang Rui have paid him more than twice his usual salary?

Besides handling these tedious tasks, Zhuang Rui also took some time during this period to practice skydiving. The reason? This guy's terrified of dying.

Although the military pilot could fly a civilian aircraft like a fighter jet, Zhuang Rui was still a little worried, so he trained with a flight squadron for a week.

With Peng Fei's assurance that there would be absolutely no problems, Zhuang Rui completed his first jump during a training session. However, somewhat tragically, Zhuang Rui was kicked off the jump. As for who left the footprints on his buttocks, Zhuang Rui still doesn't know. Of course, the prime suspect is that kid Peng Fei.

After having lunch at the courtyard house, Zhuang Rui, along with Qin Xuanbing and Peng Fei, went to the Capital Airport to meet up with the pilots and flight attendants. Together, they boarded a flight to Hong Kong to receive the luxury private jet that Zhuang Rui both loved and hated, a symbol of his status.

"Hello, Mr. Zhuang, hello, Mrs. Zhuang..."

Upon arriving at the airport, the group was already waiting in the departure lounge. Two flight attendants, being quite perceptive, came up to greet Zhuang Rui and Qin Xuanbing and took the small suitcase from Qin Xuanbing's hand.

The two pilots stood up and nodded to Zhuang Rui. Apart from the one who had retired from the military and knew a little about his background, Zhuang Rui was incredibly mysterious to the others. They only knew that he was the assistant general manager of a large company.

Of course, the group didn't really believe this identity. These days, when you go out to do business and hand out business cards, they're usually either general manager or chairman of the board. But both domestically and internationally, you haven't seen many chairmen or general managers who own private jets.

Some time ago, Zhuang Rui asked Ouyang Si Shao to make a business card for the position of assistant general manager of a real estate company for the sake of convenience. Ouyang Jun was very pleased at the time, thinking that his younger brother finally knew how to do something for his family. Although the general manager was a professional manager with a team under his command, Zhuang Rui's attitude was commendable.

Who knew that just one day later, Ouyang Jun was so angry that he almost pointed at Zhuang Rui and cursed him like a shrew, because this kid was not only using the company's name to do things, but also dragging him, the chairman who was several levels above him, along to run around doing things related to his broken-down plane.

This was like treating a steamed bun as if it were nothing, which made Ouyang Jun very unhappy. He took the opportunity to extort two tiger whips from Zhuang Rui, which made him feel a little better.

"Sigh, I really don't know if it's worth it..."

Even after the plane took off, Zhuang Rui was still agonizing over this issue. He had spent nearly 100 million RMB in total, but he hadn't even seen a glimpse of a private jet.

As Zhuang Rui closed his eyes and pondered in his mind, he was unaware that his behavior added a touch of mystery to the eyes of the flight attendants and the two pilots. The boss was indeed the boss; he was thinking about problems even while on the plane.

Only Qin Xuanbing could more or less guess what her husband was thinking. However, she used to only care about taking the plane from home and never thought about so many things. Now that it was her turn to buy it, she was shocked by the expenses.

Now Qin Xuanbing understands why her family's private jet is rarely used. It turns out it was bought just to show off. Apart from a few top tycoons in Hong Kong, many people probably share the same idea as the Qin family.

Upon arriving in Hong Kong, the Qin family sent two cars to pick them up. One car took the airport staff and Peng Fei to the hotel, while the other car took Zhuang Rui and Qin Xuanbing to the Qin family villa. Now that Zhuang Rui and Qin Xuanbing were engaged, he was already the Qin family's prospective son-in-law, so it was appropriate for him to stay at their home.

"Zhuang Rui, the annual International Jewelry Fair is in a few days. The organizers have sent us an invitation, and I'd like you and Bing'er to represent Qin's Jewelry at the fair..."

After dinner, Zhuang Rui and the others sat in the living room chatting. Qin Haoran's words struck Zhuang Rui as abrupt; how could he possibly represent the Qin family?

"Uncle Qin... Dad, this matter... is it really appropriate for Xuanbing and me to go?"

Although Zhuang Rui is quite thick-skinned now, he still calls Qin Haoran far less affectionately than he calls his mother-in-law. This is mainly because his father passed away early, so calling him "Dad" sounds a bit awkward.

"Why is it inappropriate? It's inappropriate for us to go..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui's puzzled expression, Qin Haoran smiled and continued, "Last year, your purple-eyed jade necklace won the gold medal at the International Jewelry Fair. However, according to tradition, the award ceremony for jewelry that won the gold medal last year will be held the following year. Don't you think you, as the owner, should go?"

The reason for this regulation is that the organizers want to expand the influence of the expo, because the jewelry that wins the gold medal at each expo is often resold very quickly, and having the new owner of the jewelry receive the award will undoubtedly attract more attention.

"That necklace isn't mine anymore, it belongs to Xuanbing..."

Zhuang Rui muttered something under his breath, but he was still worried about letting Qin Xuanbing go alone, so he said, "Okay, let's go. What time exactly?"

Fang Yi said with a smile, "It's going to be held in London in a week. Your private jet will come in handy this time..."

The mother-in-law was quite pleased with what Zhuang Rui had just whispered. This son-in-law was very sensible; he knew that the jewelry worth over 100 million yuan belonged to his daughter. In case their relationship encountered any problems in the future, at least his daughter wouldn't suffer a great loss.

Fang Yi was unaware that in Zhuang Rui's heart, Qin Xuanbing already belonged to him. So what difference was there between Qin Xuanbing's things and his own?

"Yes, Xuanbing and I will go then. Mom, aren't you coming this time?"

Thinking that he could take his own private plane to England in a few days, Zhuang Rui felt a surge of excitement. He had never dared to dream of such a thing before.

"We won't be going, but someone from the company will be attending. They can arrange your schedules then..."

Qin's Jewelry also has several pieces of jewelry participating in the expo. The raw material used is the red jadeite that was gambled on in Myanmar. However, although red jadeite is rare, its quality is not top-notch. Therefore, Fang Yi and Qin Haoran are not very optimistic about Qin's Jewelry's performance at this expo.

After chatting with Qin Haoran and his wife and Old Master Qin for a while, it was already 11 p.m. Zhuang Rui was taken to his room to rest by the Qin family's servants. Of course, he shared a room with Qin Xuanbing. The older generation wasn't so unconventional, otherwise Zhuang Rui would definitely have chosen to stay in a hotel.

"Zhuang Rui, who are you calling so late?"

After Qin Xuanbing finished showering, she saw Zhuang Rui making a phone call. They had already called Zhuang's mother when they got off the plane, so this call was probably not to his family.

"Shh..."

Zhuang Rui made a gesture, indicating that the call had been connected.

"Brother Huangfu, it's me, Zhuang Rui. Hope I haven't bothered you?"

Zhuang Rui just remembered that Huangfu Yun had mentioned the London Chinese Antiques Auction, which seemed to be taking place in the next few days. Since he was going, he naturally wanted to check it out, so Zhuang Rui called Huangfu Yun to confirm the time.

"Hey, Brother Zhuang, I just got up. Didn't disturb you. What brings you to call me? Are you trying to sell me that Dingguang Sword cheap?"

Huangfu Yun was not in London, but in Paris. Paris and Hong Kong are about seven or eight hours apart, so it was around six or seven in the morning. Huangfu Yun saw the blonde beauty sleeping next to him get up naked, reached out and pinched her breast, and couldn't help but secretly blame Zhuang Rui for not being able to exercise in the morning.

Huangfu Yun was quite an anomaly among Chinese students studying abroad. He was tall and handsome, very attractive to girls, and a womanizer by nature. He had a history of romantic affairs in many cities. In his words, he wanted to "promote my country's prestige" and "make sure to take care of the descendants of the Eight-Nation Alliance."

This girl was someone Huangfuyun met yesterday at a bar in Paris. After a night of fun, they were planning to do some activities this morning, but Zhuang Rui's phone call ruined it.

Zhuang Rui, on the other end of the phone, was unaware that Huangfu Yun was secretly criticizing him. He laughed and said, "Brother Huangfu, you really want that sword? Well, let's have someone appraise its price. I'll sell it to you at 60% off. How about that? Isn't that a bargain?"

After Professor Meng recognized Zhuang Rui's sword as the "Dingguang Sword," it caused a great stir in the domestic archaeological academic community. During this period, Zhuang Rui took the sword to several academic seminars, and the "Dingguang Sword" was also identified as the "first sword of the Yin-Shang Dynasty" that has not been unearthed to date.

As for the price of this sword, opinions vary, but one thing is certain: this "Dingguang Sword" will not be less than 200 million RMB.

Zhuang Rui didn't care whether the final value was 300 million or 500 million. He wasn't planning to sell it anyway, and besides, the state didn't allow the private sale of such bronze artifacts.

"60% off?! Bro, that's not fair of you, calling to tease your older brother first thing in the morning. Forget 60% off, even 10% off wouldn't be enough for me right now..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Huangfu Yun was so annoyed that he didn't even want to talk to the woman who was getting dressed beside him. Over the years, he had only saved up five or six million RMB. Even if the "Dingguang Sword" was discounted to one-tenth of its value, it would still cost 20 million RMB. He could only look at it with envy.

"Hehe, Brother Huangfu, don't even think about that sword anymore. It will be my family heirloom from now on..."

During this period, many people urged Zhuang Rui to donate the sword to the country, but Zhuang Rui refused. Why should he? It's my own thing, why should I give it to the country? I'm just an ordinary citizen, I don't have that kind of high awareness. I'll let my son play with it when I'm done playing with it. Whether my son donates it or not is none of Zhuang Rui's business.

Huangfu Yun waved to the blonde woman who was just leaving through the door and said into the phone, "Alright, stop showing off. What's up calling so early?"

"I just wanted to ask, what's the exact date of the London Chinese antique auction you mentioned last time?" Zhuang Rui vaguely heard a woman's voice and couldn't help but laugh. He realized he had really interrupted someone's good time.

"Five more days, but the auction location has changed. It's no longer in England, but in Paris. What, my friend, are you thinking of coming over?"

Huangfu Yun became interested after hearing Zhuang Rui's words. Although he was not an angry young man, he also hoped that these Chinese cultural relics lost abroad could return to their motherland. However, he was not financially able to afford them. If Zhuang Rui came, with his economic strength, he should be able to bid on more items.

Compared to London, Paris has a richer art scene, so two weeks ago, the internationally renowned auction house held this special auction of Chinese cultural relics in Paris, France, and will subsequently hold a series of auctions of precious cultural relics from various countries.

"In Paris?"

Zhuang Rui frowned upon hearing this. He was going to attend the London International Jewelry Fair in a week. He wondered if he would have enough time.

"Brother Huangfu, please wait a moment..."

Zhuang Rui turned to Qin Xuanbing and asked, "Xuanbing, how far is Paris from London? If we go to Paris first and then rush to London, will we make it in time?"

Zhuang Rui thought to himself, "How can the capitals of two countries be so close together?"

To be honest, Zhuang Rui's knowledge of world geography is really not that great. As soon as he said this, Huangfu Yun on the other end of the phone and Qin Xuanbing beside him both laughed.

Qin Xuanbing laughed as she said, "Zhuang Rui, Paris is only three or four hundred kilometers away from London. Even if we take a private plane, it will only take three or four hours by train. What are you worried about?"

Wow, a private jet? Dude, you even have one of those?

Upon hearing Qin Xuanbing's words, Huangfu Yun on the other end of the phone exclaimed in surprise, then continued, "Brother Zhuang, there are quite a few good items in this auction, some of which can't even be found in China. If you have enough funds, you'd better bring more..."