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Chapter Sixty-Eight Preparations

While paying the bill, Zhou Rui spoke at length in Tibetan with the breakfast stall owner, who just kept pointing towards the street with his right hand and shaking his head. The group, having finished eating, followed the owner's finger and saw many large dogs running around on the street, including several Tibetan mastiffs.

"The shopkeeper said that there are Tibetan mastiffs for sale here, but their quality is similar to those on the street; they are all mixed breeds. If you want to buy a better mastiff, you have to go to Changdu or Lhasa. However, those places are mostly mountainous and agricultural areas, so there are fewer Tibetan mastiffs and the breed is not pure. Good mastiffs are also rare and very expensive. He said that twenty years ago, you could see pure Tibetan mastiffs everywhere here, but now those mastiff kings have all returned to the embrace of the snow mountain gods."

The Snow Mountain God that Zhou Rui mentioned is actually Mila Snow Mountain in Tibet. Tibetans worship the color white and therefore believe that there are gods in the snow mountain. Returning to the embrace of the Snow Mountain God means that those purebred Tibetan mastiffs have died or disappeared.

Zhou Rui hesitated slightly for a moment before saying, "I know of a place in Tibet where purebred mastiffs might still exist. I encountered one there two years ago, but it's hard to say now."

Zhou Rui's expression suggested he didn't want to talk about that place, presumably because it had given him an unpleasant experience.

Liu Chuan did not show any disappointment after hearing Zhou Rui's words. He had not expected to find good Tibetan Mastiff puppies in these places. Even if there were, the sellers would probably ask for an exorbitant price. He had traveled to many places and knew that the prices of local specialties were often much higher than in other places. It was like exporting something and then selling it domestically.

Zhuang Rui, however, was more concerned about Song Jun's affairs. Seeing that Zhou Rui still seemed to have more to say, he asked, "Brother Zhou, our purpose in going to Tibet this time is to find a good Tibetan Mastiff puppy. I wonder where that place you mentioned is? Can we go there to look for one?"

Zhou Rui glanced at Bai Meng'an and the others, hesitated slightly, and replied, "I have lived in Tibet for eleven years and am quite familiar with the area. Tibetan mastiffs are mainly distributed in the pastoral areas of the northern Tibetan grasslands, especially the purely nomadic grasslands. The Tibetan mastiffs raised by the herders there are not only tall and powerful, but also of very pure breed, such as those in Nagqu, Shigatse and their surrounding counties."

"Then let's just go there," Zhuang Rui interjected.

"Most of Nagqu Prefecture is grassland pastoral area, and many herders live deep in the grasslands. If you want to find purebred mastiffs, you have to go to those herders. However, it's currently the end of winter, which is also the time when the grassland wolves are at their hungriest and most ferocious. I'm afraid we might encounter a wolf attack when we go to the grasslands."

Zhou Rui finally spoke his mind. His most important purpose for this trip was to protect the safety of this group of people. Driving was actually secondary. Now that he heard Zhuang Rui say that he wanted to go to the Tibetan grasslands in northern Tibet to find Tibetan mastiffs, he couldn't help but feel uneasy, given his understanding of the vast grasslands.

"We want to go to the grasslands, where the blue sky is filled with white clouds, and the wind blows the grass low to reveal cattle and sheep. How beautiful that would be, Sister Xuanxuan, don't you think?"

Upon hearing Zhou Rui's words, Bai Mengyao, who had finally quieted down for a while, jumped up again, seemingly forgetting all the travel plans she had just designed. Compared to the boundless grassland scenery, the plan to visit Litang Temple had become less important.

"How about this, Bai Meng'an, you and the ladies go to Mangkang County for a few days. The scenery there is very nice. I'll accompany Brother Zhuang and Liu Chuan to northern Tibet to look for Tibetan mastiffs. We'll all meet in Mangkang in a week, and then we'll contact each other by phone. What do you think?"

Zhou Rui was clearly a very responsible person. In a sense, the Bai siblings were now his employers, so his first thought was to ensure their safety.

"That's fine too..."

Bai Meng'an nodded in agreement. Bai Mengyao had secretly told him what happened in the car yesterday, and Bai Meng'an realized that Zhuang Rui was very likely to become his rival in love. Zhou Rui's idea could separate Qin Xuanbing and Zhuang Rui, and also give him a chance to get closer to Qin Xuanbing. Of course, he wholeheartedly agreed.

Bai Mengyao knew exactly what her brother was thinking, so she stopped clamoring to go see the grassland and remained silent.

"I'm going to the Tibetan grasslands with Da Chuan. There should be a chance to ride horses there, right?"

Lei Lei was unwilling to be separated from Liu Chuan. After this trip to Tibet, everyone would be busy with their own things, and they probably wouldn't be able to be together for a long time. Besides, being able to drive across the grasslands with someone you love is a very romantic thing.

"I'll go too..."

Qin Xuanbing also spoke up to express her stance. Actually, her original thought was that it didn't matter whether she went or not, as there were many places to visit in Mangkang. However, Lei Lei's mention of horseback riding attracted her. Qin Xuanbing liked horses and even more the feeling of galloping on horseback. However, in the racetracks in Hong Kong, those so-called fine horses were okay at gait, but when they ran, they lacked a certain feeling.

"Yes, actually, seeing the grassland scenery is quite nice; it can broaden one's horizons."

Bai Meng'an smiled and said, as if he had agreed to go to the Tibetan grasslands from the beginning. There was no sign of reluctance on his face. Zhuang Rui and the others understood his thoughts and couldn't help but chuckle to themselves.

"Since everyone has decided to go, you can wait for me in the Hummer for a while. I'll be right back."

Seeing that everyone had reached a consensus so quickly, and that it was the result he least wanted to see, Zhou Rui didn't say much. He just lowered his head and thought for a while, then asked everyone to wait for him, and then drove the Desert Prince out of Litang County by himself.

Zhou Rui's "a while" was quite a long time. The group waited in the Hummer for more than two hours before they saw the Desert Prince speeding towards them from afar, covered in dust. After stopping the car, Zhou Rui jumped out, carrying a long, narrow canvas bag slung across his back. He knocked on the Hummer window, and after Zhuang Rui opened the door, Zhou Rui quickly climbed in.

With a hiss and a rip, Zhou Rui pulled open the canvas bag, revealing something that surprised everyone: two shiny black Type 56 fully automatic submachine guns, along with eight magazines. The golden sheen peeking out from the tops of the black magazines indicated that they were all fully loaded with bullets.