

Golden 731

Chapter 732 The Storm

"Brother Gyatso, the weather is so nice..."

The afternoon sun shone brightly on the vast grassland, radiating boundless vitality. The distant hills and snow-capped mountains, their snow still clinging to the ground, were bathed in a golden glow, showing no sign of an impending storm.

"There's no mistake, Xiao Zhuang. Let's drive the car to the foot of that hill ahead and park them close together..."

Gyatso took a deep drag on the cigarette, which was now just a cigarette butt, threw it on the ground, stubbed it out with his foot, and then turned and got into the car.

Suo Nan, who got out of the first car, patted Zhuang Rui on the shoulder and said with a smile, "Brother, you're right to listen to Jiacuo. When he was five years old, he traveled back and forth on the Sichuan-Tibet Highway with the car. He knows much more about the climate on the grasslands than we do..."

Zhuang Rui's identity in this search team was simply that of a living Buddhist layperson with a connection to Buddhism. Apart from Peng Fei, no one knew about Zhuang Rui's background, so everyone spoke to Zhuang Rui very casually.

"Waaaaah..."

The white lion, seemingly out of nowhere, leaped out from the doorway in front of Zhuang Rui, nuzzled him with its large head, and then roared in the direction Jiacuo pointed, its deep voice carrying far and wide.

"White Lion, get in the car..."

Seeing Bai Shi's actions, Zhuang Rui sensed something was wrong. He quickly opened the back door, let Bai Shi get in, started the car, and sped off towards the seemingly nearby hills, following Jiacao's SUV.

As the saying goes, "looking at a mountain makes a horse run itself to death." The hills ahead didn't seem far away, but it took Zhuang Rui a full twenty minutes to drive there. At that moment, the weather suddenly changed.

Centered on the cloud that Zhuang Rui had just seen, dark clouds continued to accumulate, growing thicker and more numerous until they completely covered the sky. The once bright sky turned gloomy, as if a celestial dog were eating the moon.

The strong wind made a large tree thirty or forty meters away from the car sway back and forth. Zhuang Rui felt that his car, which had just come to a stop, suddenly became lighter and was swaying from side to side. The wind, carrying sand from who-knows-where, rushed in through the slightly ajar car window.

The thundercloud storm was proving its power to Zhuang Rui and the others, and lightning flashed in the sky, seemingly showing off the only light in the sky.

The thunder roared so loudly that the earth paled in fear, plunging the world into darkness. Only streaks of lightning tore through the sky above everyone's heads, revealing a sliver of light.

"Xiao Zhuang, don't get out of the car! Close the doors and windows tightly, whatever you do, don't get out of the car..."

Gyatso opened the car window and shouted at Zhuang Rui, who was standing right next to him. However, Zhuang Rui could only make out what Gyatso was saying from his mouth, because the deafening thunder and strong winds drowned out all other sounds in the world.

"Damn it, Peng Fei, what are you doing? Go back, go back now..."

Suddenly, Zhuang Rui saw Peng Fei open the car door. The metal door was instantly blown open by the strong wind, and Peng Fei's body was like a piece of paper in the wind, half of his body was blown sideways.

In the instant the wind blew him up, Peng Fei gripped the metal sheet on the car door tightly with both hands, but his body still slammed heavily against the metal door. If the car hadn't been reinforced, the impact would have broken the door.

"Damn it, weren't they saying that tornadoes only happen along the coast?"

Left with no other choice, Zhuang Rui rolled down the electric window. Instantly, the mouth that was cursing was forced shut by the strong wind. The howling wind rushed into the car, and the entire SUV was shaking.

"You little brat, you don't want to live anymore..."

Zhuang Rui reached out a hand, grabbed Peng Fei's collar, and forcefully pulled him into the car, while the two people in the other car also worked together to close the car door.

"Cough cough, Brother Zhuang... Brother Zhuang, if anything happens, we'll die together..."

Peng Fei weakly raised his head and coughed several times. Zhuang Rui saw blood seeping from his mouth, clearly indicating that the impact had injured Peng Fei's internal organs.

"Alright, I'm not that easy to die. I'm a man with a connection to Buddhism; even lightning wouldn't dare strike me..."

Zhuang Rui could sense Peng Fei's loyalty and felt a pang of heartache seeing him like that. He took out a bottle of water, opened the cap, and fed Peng Fei the water. As Peng Fei drank, a wisp of spiritual energy emanated from Zhuang Rui's eyes and seeped into Peng Fei's chest.

"This...this wind is fucking strong..."

After taking a sip of water, and with the help of Zhuang Rui's spiritual energy—which could be considered either Buddha's Eye of Truth or not—Peng Fei felt much better. He supported himself with his hands and sat up in the passenger seat. By this time, the little lama had already climbed to the back seat to keep the white lion company.

"Stop talking, get some rest..."

While Peng Fei was conscious, Zhuang Rui dared not use too much spiritual energy on him. The wind outside continued to howl, but it had subsided a lot because the rain had stopped. All he could hear was the howling wind and the sound of raindrops hitting the car.

"Peng Fei, you can't be so reckless next time. What if something happens? How am I supposed to explain this to your wife..."

Zhuang Rui still feels a bit scared when he thinks about it now. The situation just now was something that human power could not resist. No matter if you are a rich man or an ordinary citizen, under the might of nature, you can only bow down and submit to your fate. You can't even have a temper.

"Brother Zhuang, I'm sorry to have troubled you. I was just worried that if something happened, you wouldn't be able to handle it without me by your side. Who knew the wind would be so strong..."

Peng Fei realized he had just made a mistake. His action of opening the car door not only put himself in danger, but also put Jiacao and Suonan in danger. With the wind at that time, the SUV was almost overturned.

Zhuang Rui saw that Peng Fei had finally caught his breath. After not hearing Basang speak for a while, he turned around and asked loudly, "Basang, what are you doing?"

Basang's voice wasn't loud, but it was firm as he said, "This is a test from heaven for us. I'm chanting scriptures to bless us all with peace..."

Zhuang Rui shook his head speechlessly. Once something is related to faith, it becomes much easier to understand. Indeed, even the spiritual energy he sees can be connected to the Five Eyes.

Outside the car window, the rain was still pouring down, falling on the grass and stirring up a misty fog, like the thunderous roar of a thousand horses galloping, echoing the thunder and lightning in the sky.

The storm on the grassland came and went quickly. After about an hour, the rain gradually stopped, and a golden ray of light appeared in the dim sky, like a sharp sword cutting through the layers of fog. The sunlight shone through the thick clouds and onto the grassland again.

After a while, the rain stopped and the thunder ceased. The wind was gentle and the clouds were light. The sky had turned a clear blue. If it weren't for the large tree dozens of meters away that had fallen to the ground, one would hardly be able to tell from the rain-drenched grass that the place had just suffered.

It must be said that the grass on the vast grassland has the most tenacious vitality. Such a huge storm has no effect on them at all. When the wind blows, the green grass is like jade, and the raindrops on it slide off the leaves, crystal clear.

"Holy crap, it's turned into a swamp..."

Zhuang Rui pushed open the car door, and as soon as his feet touched the ground, he felt the water up to his ankles. The icy water seeped into his brand-name sneakers. Zhuang Rui bent down and tested it; under the dense grass, the water was more than half a foot deep.

"That's normal. There are many depressions on the grassland, which are lakes formed after heavy rains. In some places with soft soil, swamps will form..."

Gyatso also got out of the car, but he was much more experienced than Zhuang Rui. He got out of the car barefoot and rolled up his trousers to his knees.

"Brother Gyatso, can we still leave today?"

Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment upon hearing this. He had grown up listening to stories of the Red Army climbing snow-capped mountains and crossing grasslands, and he knew that the swamps in the grasslands were as terrifying as floods and ferocious beasts.

"Hehe, Xiao Zhuang, don't worry, Gyatso could walk this road with his eyes closed..."

Suo Nan also got out of the car, but he was holding a telephoto camera and kept pressing the shutter button on the rainbow that had not yet faded in the sky.

The clouds that had not yet completely dispersed, under the refraction of sunlight and rainbows, presented all sorts of strange shapes, like divine horses flying in the sky, or dragons leaping and tigers soaring, which really tested people's imagination.

Zhuang Rui now truly understands the saying "after the storm comes the rainbow." Indeed, the rainbow that appears after a fierce storm is the most beautiful.

"Xiao Peng, are you alright?"

Seeing Peng Fei get out of Zhuang Rui's car, Suo Nan put down his camera, but then said, "Little Peng, I have to criticize you. Your behavior was too much. You can't do it again next time..."

"Brother Suo Nan, I'm sorry, it was my fault..."

Peng Fei readily accepted the criticism. Apart from the young lama, he was the youngest among them. After hearing Suo Nan's criticism, he immediately lowered his head and admitted his mistake.

"Brother Suonan, he knows he was wrong. He just spat out some blood..."

Fearing that Suo Nan might say something unpleasant that Zhuang Rui couldn't bear, Zhuang Rui quickly tried to smooth things over.

Brother Suonan was a very kind person. After saying a few words to Peng Fei in a mild way, he heard from Zhuang Rui that Peng Fei had vomited blood, so he quickly took out a packet of powdered Tibetan medicine from the carriage and made Peng Fei swallow it with mineral water.

"I haven't seen such a big storm in the summer for several years, but we often have blizzards in the winter..."

Gyatso pointed to the fallen tree not far away and said, "Today was really dangerous. That tree was struck by lightning first, and then blown down by the wind. If the lightning had been a little off course, I'm afraid..."

Gyatso's words sent a chill down Zhuang Rui's spine. If the lightning had actually struck the car, everyone inside would probably have been roasted alive.

Chapter 733 Arrival in Zogong

Upon hearing Gyatso's words, everyone except the young lama Basang looked rather grim. They'd encountered a storm on their very first day; who knew how difficult the rest of the journey would be?

Basang suddenly said from the side, "A strange phenomenon has occurred. This is a sign that a Living Buddha is about to be reincarnated. We will definitely find the reincarnated child on this trip..."

"We're not on a journey to the West like in Journey to the West, where we have to go through eighty-one tribulations..."

Peng Fei seemed to be out of danger, and after hearing Basang's words, he made a sarcastic remark.

"This strange phenomenon almost killed us guys..."

Zhuang Rui also pursed his lips, ignoring the little lama's words, and instead looked at Suonan, saying, "Brother Suonan, this place is all flooded, we need to find a place to camp..."

Even though it's July or August now, the temperature at night can drop to three or four degrees Celsius, making it impossible to sleep in the car. Moreover, in the summer, herders live in more scattered areas, so it's rare to encounter them grazing their livestock.

"Gyatso, what do you think?"

Although Sonam was nominally the team leader for this trip, when it came to familiarity with the Tibetan region, he still had to listen to Gyatso's advice.

"It's impossible to cross the grassland tonight. Let's find a high place where there's no standing water to camp..."

After this storm, it was already past 5 p.m., and if we delayed any longer, it would soon be dark.

Both off-road vehicles had specially made tires, so even on the muddy grass, they only slowed down a little. Led by Gyatso, they drove for more than two hours on the vast grassland. After it got completely dark, the vehicles stopped on a small hill that was seven or eight meters above the ground.

At Anzhai campsite, Zhuang Rui and Basang couldn't offer much help. Peng Fei, injured, watched from the sidelines. However, the seemingly frail Suo Nan surprised them; his practiced movements in setting up the tent were like those of a seasoned traveler, demonstrating remarkable expertise.

Three tents were set up in total. Two were backed by the off-road vehicle, and the other was a three-person tent where Basang, Suonan, and Jiacao stayed together in a triangle shape, with a campfire lit in the middle.

The temperature had started to drop in the evening, to around ten degrees Celsius. Sitting by the campfire, grilling the mutton he had taken from the car, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but think of that night on the grassland last year.

At the time, the Bai siblings were far away in Hong Kong, and Zhou Rui was also extremely busy in Pengcheng. As for Lei Lei and Qin Xuanbing, they were the ones who benefited themselves and Liu Chuan.

Zhuang Rui once asked Qin Xuanbing when she had developed feelings for him. Qin Xuanbing replied that it was on that night on the grassland. People's encounters are truly amazing. One night brought together two people who seemed mismatched at the time.

"Come on, Xiao Zhuang, have a drink to warm up, it'll get a bit chilly at night..."

A whole lamb was roasted until golden brown, emitting an enticing aroma. Jiacao skillfully sliced off pieces of meat with a small Tibetan knife, wrapped them in oil paper, and placed them in front of everyone. Suonan took out a bottle of barley wine and handed it to Zhuang Rui.

"Brother Suonan, how about we skip the drinks? There's a good chance of wolves attacking tonight..."

Thinking back to the attack by wolves last year, Zhuang Rui still felt a chill. If Zhou Rui hadn't been well-prepared and had plenty of ammunition, his group might have been eaten by wolves.

"Hehe, it's alright. There's plenty of food on the grasslands in summer, so there won't be any wolf packs. As for one or two lone wolves, with you, the Tibetan Mastiff, there's absolutely nothing to fear..."

Gyatso laughed when he heard this. On the grasslands, the most terrifying thing is not wolves, but the harsh weather. However, summer is relatively better, but in winter, sometimes heavy snow blocks the roads, and it is normal to be trapped in one place for ten days or half a month.

"Alright, let's have a drink then. Wait, I'll go get a bottle of wine..."

Upon hearing Jiacao's words, Zhuang Rui stood up, went to the car, and retrieved two bottles of Moutai from the villa's liquor cabinet.

"Good wine! Come on, let's switch to Moutai, Moutai is more potent..."

When Suo Nan saw the liquor Zhuang Rui was holding, his eyes lit up. Although he was also a government employee, he worked in a low-paying department and rarely had the opportunity to drink Moutai.

Peng Fei was injured, and the young lama didn't drink alcohol, so Zhuang Rui and the other two quickly finished the two bottles of Moutai. They also ate a whole sheep clean. After adding some firewood to the fire, everyone returned to their own tents to rest.

There was also a sleeping bag in the tent. After lying down, we zipped it up, leaving only our eyes and nose exposed. It was very warm. After driving all day and being hit by a storm, everyone was exhausted. Soon, the sound of snoring could be heard from all the tents.

The white lion was crawling outside Zhuang Rui's tent. Although its eyes were closed, its twitching ears showed that the white lion was carrying out its guarding mission.

The night on the grassland was very quiet, with only the rustling sound of the wind blowing through the grass. There was no wolf attack as Zhuang Rui had imagined. He slept until the next morning when he was awakened by the low growl of the white lion. He looked at his watch and it was just six o'clock in the morning.

"Alright, I don't need to prepare breakfast for you..."

Zhuang Rui came out of the tent and found the white lion tearing apart a fat wild rabbit. Perhaps because of the cold weather, the rabbit weighed five or six pounds, much larger than wild rabbits in the inland areas. It was covered in fine gray fur, and its throat had been bitten off by the white lion.

"Xiao Zhuang, this Tibetan Mastiff is the best I've ever seen in my entire life..."

While brushing his teeth, Gyatso saw Zhuang Rui come out and gave him a thumbs up with envy. He had traveled almost all over the Tibetan region, but he had never seen a Tibetan mastiff as majestic as a white lion.

"Brother Gyatso, my white lion is the guardian of the snow mountain..."

Zhuang Rui laughed proudly upon hearing this. The white lion seemed to have overheard their conversation, turned its head and growled a few times before focusing on dealing with the rabbit again.

"Come on, have something to eat. We need to get to Zogang County today..."

After washing up, Suonan brought some dried meat and tsampa. Tsampa is actually roasted barley flour with a little sugar added. It can be eaten by soaking it in boiling water, or mixed with barley wine or butter tea and shaped into small balls.

"Brother Suo Nan, I'm afraid you won't make it today, will you?"

Zhuang Rui had traveled this route before, and it seemed to have taken him three or four days. Although the straight-line distance of this route was not far, the mountain road was difficult to travel. If you were to take a long-distance bus, it would take five or six days.

Gyatso glanced at the sky and said confidently, "More or less, it shouldn't rain today. If we hurry, we can reach Zogang and stay there..."

After breakfast, the group quickly packed up their tents and sleeping bags, and then extinguished yesterday's campfire with water.

Peng Fei refused to get into the other car, so Basang got into Jiacao's SUV, while Bai Shi and Peng Fei were in Zhuang Rui's car.

The route led by Gyatso was extremely difficult, sometimes even requiring crossing through a canyon between two mountains. However, the scenery along the way was superb, and occasionally one could see gazelles on the mountainside. The man in the car ahead kept taking pictures with his camera.

Aside from taking half an hour for lunch, the group finally arrived in Zogang County from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Zogang County is located in the southeastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the southeastern part of Changdu Prefecture. It borders Chaya to the north, Mangkang to the east, Deqin County of Yunnan Province to the south, and Zayu and Basu counties to the west. It is the junction of Sichuan, Tibet and Yunnan.

The main mountain ranges within Zogang County include Dongda Mountain, Duola Mountain, Chawazhu Mountain, Chawaduoqijizhiga Mountain, and Meili Snow Mountain, which borders Yunnan Province. The

highest peak, Qela Mountain, has an altitude of 5,434 meters, and the average altitude of the county is 3,750 meters.

Meili Snow Mountain is a major pilgrimage and tourist attraction in the county. It is a natural scenic area and is regarded as a "sacred mountain" by the local people. Every year, pilgrims come here in an endless stream.

According to the young lama Basang, the white lion is the guardian deity of Meili Snow Mountain.

The altitude of Zogang is slightly lower than that of Mangkang. At least Zhuang Rui didn't feel the same way he did in Mangkang. Even if he smoked a cigarette or did some light exercise, he didn't feel any obvious discomfort.

It seems that accommodations had been arranged in advance. After arriving in Zogang, Gyatso drove directly into a government guesthouse. Zhuang Rui discovered that during registration, Suo Nan used a letter of introduction, but the official reason given was to accompany personnel from a Hong Kong charity organization on a visit and inspection tour.

Because Peng Fei was injured, Zhuang Rui drove the entire fourteen or fifteen-hour journey alone. After arriving at the guesthouse, Zhuang Rui didn't go to eat dinner and went straight to his room to sleep.

Zhuang Rui's body didn't feel anything physically, but he was mentally stressed. After a night's rest, he was full of energy again the next day, which surprised Suonan and Jiacao. This young man's physical condition was unbelievably good.

"Brother Suo Nan, how should we search for him?"

After eating something at the guesthouse, the group went to Suo Nan's room together.

Zhuang Rui, Peng Fei, and the young lama had no experience in finding reincarnated children. Only Suo Nan had participated in the search for the 11th Panchen Lama more than ten years ago.

"Here's the thing, Xiao Zhuang, your current role is as a representative of a Hong Kong charity that specializes in helping infants with congenital heart disease. You'll be conducting a research trip to the remote mountainous areas of Zogang and Mangkang to investigate the prevention and treatment of infant diseases..."

This is a registration form. We need to register all the infants born in the past few months and then visit them one by one..."

Zhuang Rui was dumbfounded by Suo Nan's words. It turned out that Suo Nan had arranged an identity for him without his consent and even prepared a registration form. It seemed that he was destined to be a fake charity worker.

"Okay, whatever you say, I'll do..."

Zhuang Rui nodded helplessly. He hadn't expected that he would actually donate a lot of money and goods later on.

Chapter 734 Karma Village (Part 1)

Fortunately, the so-called foundation representatives didn't need to be medical experts, otherwise Zhuang Rui would have been completely lost.

"Brother Gyatso, where are we going?"

After a brief meeting inside the house, Gyatso invited everyone to get into the car. After driving around half of the county town, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but pick up the walkie-talkie in the car and ask a question.

"We've arrived..."

As soon as the sound came from that direction, the car stopped. Zhuang Rui looked ahead and saw that it was a hospital. There were more than 10 people standing at the hospital entrance, and a red banner was hanging there. Zhuang Rui couldn't make out what was written on it.

After parking his car behind Jiacao's SUV, Zhuang Rui, along with Peng Fei and Bai Shi, got out of the car.

"This time, we're really going down there to address the issue of congenital heart disease in infants. If we find any cases of this, we need to report it to our superiors, and then real staff will come down..."

After Suo Nan got out of the car, he saw that Zhuang Rui looked confused, so he explained to him that Zhuang Rui's identity was not entirely fabricated.

The reason this search activity was made so complicated is that the reincarnation of a Living Buddha is an extremely solemn matter for the Communist Party of China. It is necessary not only to take into account the feelings of the Chinese people, but also to prevent international interference.

During the search for the 11th Panchen Lama, that treacherous lama unilaterally announced that he had found the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Although many Buddhists at home and abroad did not recognize this, it still caused a very bad influence.

Jampa Lodro Rinpoche is the ordained Living Buddha of the 11th Panchen Lama. He holds a high position in Tibetan Buddhism, and the search for his reincarnation has attracted much attention from believers both at home and abroad. Therefore, both the central government and Buddhist leaders attach great importance to it.

When the Living Buddha passed away, he sat facing the border between Zogang County and Meili Snow Mountain in Yunnan. Later, several high-ranking monks who went to the sacred lake also sensed this direction.

Therefore, Suo Nan's search team needs a very strict confidentiality system, while the other teams mainly serve to confuse outsiders.

As for why the name of this foundation was used, the main reason is that *** is located in a high-altitude area, where the incidence of congenital heart disease in infants and young children is much higher than in inland areas. Such a charitable organization would not attract much attention.

...

"Mr. Zhuang, I am Lunzhu, representing the county party committee and the county government. Welcome to our place to help alleviate the suffering of infants and young children. You arrived too late yesterday, so I couldn't come over..."

As soon as Zhuang Rui and the others got out of the car, a group of people standing at the hospital entrance surrounded them. Perhaps Jiacuo had already spoken a few words with this Lunzhu, because the man immediately shook Zhuang Rui's hand, acting very friendly.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the other person with some surprise. The man was probably in his early forties. His face was flushed from the high altitude, indicating that he was definitely a native of Yunnan. His eyes were very clear.

"This is County Magistrate Lunzhu..." Suo Nan whispered in Zhuang Rui's ear.

"County Chief Lunzhu, this is what we should do..."

Although he had never had such an experience, Zhuang Rui still knew how to exchange pleasantries. He had a good impression of the weathered county head in front of him. If this were in the mainland, let alone the county head personally greeting him, at most the health bureau would have to step in.

Furthermore, of the officials Zhuang Rui had met, nine out of ten were basically fat-headed and pot-bellied, which led Zhuang Rui to believe that no fat official was a good official.

"This is Dean Laba Tsering. He will be leading the work team and accompanying you on your trip to the mountains..."

County Magistrate Lunzhu was indeed very pragmatic; after they got to know each other, he immediately introduced Zhuang Rui to the people around him. 0000000.0000

After introducing everyone, County Magistrate Lunzhu said to Zhuang Rui, "Mr. Zhuang, let's have a welcome dinner at noon, and then head to the mountains this afternoon..."

"Thank you for your kindness, County Head Lunzhu, but we're here for the children who don't have the means to see a doctor. Once we're done with our work, we'll definitely have a good drink with County Head Lunzhu..."

Zhuang Rui sighed inwardly. This kind of feasting and drinking is unavoidable no matter where you go. However, firstly, Zhuang Rui didn't like dealing with officials, and secondly, he was an imposter. So, he righteously declined the lunch invitation and asked to leave immediately.

To be honest, Zhuang Rui's Hong Kong-accented Mandarin, which he learned from Zheng Hua, was quite convincing. At least the county magistrate of Lunzhu and the hospital staff were convinced of Zhuang Rui's identity, and after hearing his words, they all began to make preparations.

Since Zhuang Rui insisted on leaving, County Magistrate Lunzhu stayed for a while longer before taking his leave.

"Not bad, brother..."

Suo Nan leaned closer to Zhuang Rui and quietly gave him a thumbs-up. As the leader of this search operation, he didn't want to have too much contact with local officials; he had signed a confidentiality agreement before coming.

Zhuang Rui smiled and turned his gaze to the hospital. Seeing that there were two ambulances and another car, he asked curiously, "Brother Suo Nan, why are there so many cars at the hospital?"

"We need to bring a lot of testing equipment. Don't be fooled by the large number of vehicles going; towards the end, we'll probably have to carry everything up the mountain by hand. Even our off-road vehicles can't get into some places..."

Sonam had participated in the 11th Panchen Lama's search activities and was very familiar with some mountainous Tibetan areas. Although those places were beautiful, they were very poor because roads could not be built and they had no way to communicate with the outside world.

After hearing Suo Nan's explanation, Zhuang Rui suddenly felt a little heavy-hearted for some reason, because he thought that while he was traveling on a private jet and driving a luxury car, there were still many people who needed help.

The hospital had clearly made preparations; the medical vehicles and personnel arrived quickly, and the original two vehicles became a convoy, driving out of the small county town in a grand procession.

According to Suo Nan's idea, the first step is to investigate the most remote mountainous areas and collect the birth statistics for the past six months, and then gradually collect statistics on infants and young children near the county seat.

Because reincarnated lamas are usually only able to develop their intelligence and recognize certain people from their previous lives or objects they used in their previous lives at the earliest age of two or three, if a little kid who has just opened his eyes can speak and distinguish objects, then he is probably not a living Buddha, but a demon.

Based on the time of the Living Buddha's passing, even if he has been reincarnated, he is probably still an immature child, making it impossible to conduct the reincarnation identification process.

"Dean Laba Tsering, how many babies were born in our county in the first half of the year?"

Zhuang Rui specially invited Laba Ciren to his off-road vehicle. He had just heard Suonan's words and was feeling a bit moved. He wanted to see if there was anything he could do to help those children who were really suffering from illnesses.

"The number of births in the first half of the year was relatively high, with a total of 618, but it may be less in the second half..."

Aside from those who live in the mountains and have difficulty coming to the hospital, almost all the other pregnant women were born at Laba Tsering's hospital, so he answered Zhuang Rui's question without hesitation.

"How...how many? Only...only 600-plus people?"

Zhuang Rui's hand on the steering wheel trembled slightly. How could a county only have a little over 600 births a year?

Zhuang Rui found it hard to believe. Weren't ethnic minorities allowed to have two children?

"Hehe, Mr. Zhuang, our county only has 40,000 people in total. After deducting the elderly and teenagers, there aren't many young men of marriageable age..."

Laba Tsering smiled and explained to Zhuang Rui that the average altitude of Zogang County is 3,750 meters, and most people will experience altitude sickness such as headache, shortness of breath, chest tightness, loss of appetite, and slight fever when they reach an altitude of 2,700 meters.

Therefore, apart from the Tibetans who have lived here for many years, there are very few outsiders who can settle in this small town for a long time. As a result, the birth rate cannot be compared with that of the inland areas. You should know that even the smallest county in the inland areas has hundreds of thousands of people.

Another point is that, compared to the situation in the mainland where the average housing area is only a few square meters, it is completely unimaginable here. As long as you have money, you can use a lot of land at will, and you can even build a castle in Western Europe without any problem.

Zhuang Rui was speechless. It is said that God is fair. He gave *** beautiful and mysterious natural scenery, but also gave people here altitude sickness that is difficult for ordinary people to adapt to, so that these hardworking Tibetans can never get rid of poverty and disease.

After leaving the county town, the convoy basically disappeared from the roads, and the vehicles sped across the vast grasslands. The blue sky, white clouds, and endless green grasslands created an exceptionally beautiful landscape.

Zhuang Rui and his team's first stop was a small village located in the Chawaduojizhiga Mountain. According to Laba Ciren, the village only had a few dozen households, but six children were born in the first half of the year, making it the focus of their investigation.

More than two hours after the car started moving, the once flat grassland began to undulate, with small hills causing the car to slow down.

Meanwhile, the snow-capped mountains in the distance, which were covered in snow all year round, gradually became clearer. Zhuang Rui could see that the mountainsides were shrouded in mist and the peaks were majestic and spectacular. However, the closer they got, the more difficult the road became.

After driving for another half hour, the car finally could not go any further because the road ahead was a mountain road and impassable. Everyone got out of the car, and the hospital staff began to carry the equipment downhill.

Laba Tsering pointed to the mountains ahead and said to Zhuang Rui, "After crossing this mountain and then a canyon, we'll reach Karma Village..."

Chapter 735 Karma Village (Part Two)

"Xiao Zhuang, hold this. If you feel uncomfortable, just put a piece in your mouth..."

While directing everyone to move the equipment, Dean Laba Tsering handed Zhuang Rui a strip of pills.

They are now at an altitude of about 4,200 meters. For people who live here year-round, this is nothing, but for those who are new to the area, it is a height that can be life-threatening.

"American ginseng tablets?"

Zhuang Rui glanced at it, then couldn't help but smile wryly, saying, "Dean Laba Ciren, I usually pay close attention to exercise, so this height doesn't affect me much..."

Perhaps it was because he had been using spiritual energy to cleanse his body for over a year, but Zhuang Rui did not experience any altitude sickness during his trip to ***. Even after activities and smoking, he felt about the same as in the mainland. In terms of physical condition, Zhuang Rui believed that no one present could be better than him.

"Take it, just in case..."

Before Laba Tsering arrived, he was instructed by County Chief Lunzhu to take good care of Zhuang Rui and his group, so they brought more than a dozen oxygen inhalers and a small oxygen tank.

In addition to American ginseng tablets, Laba Tsering also gave Zhuang Rui and others several other medications, including *Rhodiola rosea*, Panadol, and Nodikang capsules. As he said, these things are good to have on hand in the high plateau.

In high-altitude areas, symptoms such as fever caused by altitude sickness are most likely to lead to many complications such as acute pneumonia and cerebral edema. These symptoms can cause a person to lose their life in a very short time, and even if they receive treatment, it will be to no avail.

As for the soldiers stationed at high-altitude outposts, almost every one of them suffers from chronic altitude sickness after their discharge, which can even affect the rest of their lives for some.

...

Including Laba Tsering, there were four doctors and two nurses, plus Zhuang Rui and five others, making a group of 11. They began their journey into the mountains along the rugged path. 0800.00

The mountain they were about to cross wasn't very high, unlike the previous mountain, where the snow on the mountainside could be seen from a distance.

Perhaps due to the high altitude, even in summer, there are few tall trees on the mountain, and very few trees taller than a meter. Most of the trees are shrubs, and the whole mountain is lush and green. The surroundings are quiet, with only the sounds of Zhuang Rui and the others walking on the mountain path.

"White Lion, slow down..."

Upon arriving here, the white lion seemed to be on steroids, running ahead and occasionally startling a wild rabbit or roe deer from the grass, which the white lion would chase and play with. It wasn't that it wanted to hunt, but rather that it felt incredibly novel.

Although the mountain wasn't very high, it still took the group more than four hours to climb. However, to the surprise of Laba Tsering and the Tibetans who accompanied him, Zhuang Rui was the first to reach the summit, and he had a rosy complexion and showed no signs of altitude sickness.

Keep in mind that this is at an altitude of 4,800 meters, which is close to the forbidden zone of life. Even people who live in the mountains year-round slowed down their pace and were panting when they reached the top. The two female nurses even had to use oxygen several times along the way.

"Xiao Zhuang, do you often participate in mountain climbing activities?"

Laba Tsering told everyone to rest on the mountaintop, and then sat down next to Zhuang Rui. He watched as Zhuang Rui actually took out a cigarette and prepared to light it, thinking to himself that Zhuang Rui was a monster.

Now Laba Tsering can confirm that his act of giving Zhuang Rui the medicine was indeed unnecessary.

"No, but I take the white lion for a walk every day..."

Zhuang Rui's words made everyone roll their eyes, and they wondered if they should take more walks after meals from now on.

"Alright, everyone, eat something to replenish your energy. It's still several hours of mountain road to get to Karma Village..."

Dean Laba Tsering made the arrangements. Walking on the plateau demands a lot of physical strength, and everyone took out the food they had brought and began to eat. Only Zhuang Rui, with his white lion, wandered around the mountaintop.

"So beautiful..."

Upon reaching the summit, the snow-capped mountains stretched out before him in their entirety. Gazing at the towering peak that seemed to pierce the clouds, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but sigh in awe.

The long and wide glacier landforms formed by the snow accumulation on the high mountains are magnificent and spectacular. In the distance, the strangely shaped and angular mountain ridges formed by ice, snow and stone on the mountainside are as if they were carved by a giant axe. The rocky valleys are rugged and the bird paths are winding.

However, only Zhuang Rui would appreciate such scenery; the others rested silently to recover their strength, as there was still a long way to go.

"Waaaaah..."

"White Lion, what are you doing?"

The white lion, which had been strolling on the mountaintop, suddenly darted out, its movements so fast that all the people could see was a white shadow darting through the bushes. Its enormous size made it appear exceptionally agile.

"Xiao Zhuang, don't chase, don't run too fast..."

Zhuang Rui was also taken aback and quickly chased after him. He heard shouts from Laba Ciren and the others behind him, but he couldn't care less at the moment. Nothing was more important than the white lion.

At an altitude of over 4,000 meters, no one dared to run like Zhuang Rui, not even Peng Fei, who had undergone special training. So, after only a minute or two, Zhuang Rui and Bai Shi disappeared from the mountaintop.

"Quick, stop resting, get ready to go down the mountain..."

Laba Tsering was frantic. He was counting on Zhuang Rui to donate some medical equipment to the hospital. If something went wrong, he would lose all hope.

Suonan and Jiacao exchanged bewildered glances. They hadn't expected Zhuang Rui to be in such good physical condition, still having the energy to run even now.

Peng Fei had already rushed to the place where Zhuang Rui had disappeared. He felt extremely awkward. If it weren't for the fact that his chest injury hadn't healed, this altitude sickness wouldn't have been a problem for him.

When everyone reached the other side of the hillside, they were stunned by what they saw.

There were about fifty or sixty large ibex running frantically down the mountain. The white lion, which had looked somewhat lazy, was now chasing after one of the ibex like a lion. The nimble ibex changed direction several times, but it couldn't shake off the white lion.

"Go, White Lion!"

Zhuang Rui stood not far from the group, shouting loudly to encourage the white lion. This was the first time he had seen a white lion hunting in the wild. The fierce and powerful figure of the white lion chasing the argali sheep excited Zhuang Rui, and his blood seemed to boil.

Zhuang Rui has always loved watching Animal World, especially the scenes of wild beasts hunting. However, what he sees on TV is completely different from what he sees in real life. That kind of running that surpasses human limits is an unparalleled visual enjoyment in itself.

Running in the mountains, the white lion was still far inferior to the ibex that lived there. Just as the distance between them was about to widen, a low growl suddenly came from the white lion's throat. The deep sound made the ibex it was chasing pause abruptly. In that instant, the white lion had already caught up behind and slammed its front paw into the ibex's hindquarters.

To everyone's surprise, the ibex was knocked off balance by the slap, and the white lion seized the opportunity to pounce, its large mouths accurately biting the ibex's throat.

Unlike leopards and other felines that suffocate their prey by biting them, white lions have a very strong bite. As their jaws snap shut, the ibex's neck makes a cracking sound, clearly indicating that it has been bitten off.

"Woo...wooooo..."

The white lion released its grip, its front paws pressing down on the ibex carcass. Its blood-red mouth opened wide, and it raised its head and roared. The deep roar carried far and wide, like the arrival of a king. The ibex herd that had fled far away fell silent, and the world was utterly still.

"Well done, White Lion..."

Zhuang Rui rushed over and grabbed the white lion by the neck, completely unconcerned that the blood from the white lion's mouth had smeared onto him. The white lion, now back to its wild self, felt even more real to Zhuang Rui.

It is said that domesticated Tibetan mastiffs have lost their ferocity, but the white lion's performance is quite the opposite. Zhuang Rui believes that, let alone a blue sheep, the white lion is in no way inferior to a lion or tiger, given its size.

"This is too unbelievable! A Tibetan Mastiff can catch a Himalayan blue sheep?"

While Zhuang Rui was playing with the white lion, everyone gathered around, but they all looked dazed, clearly still reeling from the scene of the white lion pouncing on its prey.

Apart from Zhuang Rui and Peng Fei, the rest of the people had lived on the plateau their whole lives and were naturally very familiar with the blue sheep.

Because their fur is so similar in color to the rocks, argali sheep are very difficult to spot. They can climb cliffs with just a foothold. They can jump 2 or 3 meters in a single leap, and can leap more than 10 meters from a height without falling and getting injured.

The only natural enemies of this animal are golden eagles, vultures, snow leopards, and jackals. However, when jackals hunt argali sheep, they rely entirely on group cooperation to trap and kill the sheep. But today, everyone has learned something new: Tibetan mastiffs can also hunt argali sheep.

"Waaaaah... Waaaah!"

As the group approached, the white lion broke free from Zhuang Rui and growled menacingly at them. This was the first large animal it had ever hunted, and its possessive nature was immediately apparent. It would not allow anyone other than Zhuang Rui to touch its prey.

The white lion's appearance made everyone nervous, and they all retreated. Even Peng Fei did not dare to provoke the white lion at this time. Having just hunted the argali, the white lion was like a tiger unleashed from its cage, with an undisguised aura of savagery.

"Fine, I won't fight you for it. Damn it, I've been feeding you for nothing all this time..."

Peng Fei held a home DV camera in his hand, muttering indignantly.

Chapter 736 Karma Village (Part 3)

Peng Fei reacted quickly; upon seeing the white lion chasing the ibex, he turned on the DV camera. Although the scene of the white lion chasing the ibex herd wasn't very clear, the moment the white lion pounced on the ibex was captured very clearly.

"Hey, don't get excited, don't get excited, no one's going to take your food..."

Zhuang Rui chuckled and turned the white lion by the neck. This guy has been possessive of his food since he was a cub. He is the only one who can move his food. Even if it were Ouyang Wan or Nannan, the white lion would bare its teeth. Of course, after Zhuang Rui scolded him several times, he didn't dare to bite.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the white lion let out a low growl and turned to tear at the ibex.

"Xiao Zhuang, wait, don't let it eat it yet..."

Gyatso, who had stepped aside, saw the white lion preparing to eat and suddenly shouted.

"What's wrong, Brother Gyatso?"

Zhuang Rui turned around in confusion. This was originally the white lion's prey, and everyone had brought food. They wouldn't be thinking of competing with the white lion for food, would they?

"Could you let me skin this argali sheep first, and then feed it to this Tibetan mastiff?"

Gyatso was a little embarrassed, but it would be a real pity if such a complete sheepskin were torn apart by the white lion.

Wild argali hides are sturdy and durable, and can be used to sew clothing and women's handbags. Although they are not as valuable as Tibetan antelope hides, they are still rare and good materials, with each hide costing around a thousand yuan.

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment, then bent down and put his arm around Bai Shi's neck, saying, "Let Peng Fei peel it. He's more familiar with Bai Shi. If it were you, Bai Shi definitely wouldn't agree..."

"Okay, whatever, whatever. Actually, one leg of lamb for your white lion is enough for him to eat..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's agreement, Jiacuo beamed with joy. The taste of this argali was far superior to the cattle and sheep he raised at home. However, argali were naturally agile and difficult to catch, and Jiacuo hadn't expected to encounter them here.

Peng Fei handed the DV camera to Zhuang Rui, then took the small knife that was hidden somewhere and began to skin the sheep, while his eyes kept glancing at the white lion, afraid that the guy might swat him if he was displeased.

"It's a male Himalayan blue sheep, hehe, we're all in for a treat..."

Except for the young lama Basang, everyone else had a smile on their face.

After hearing Jiacuo's words, Zhuang Rui also turned his head to look at it. This argali was much larger than ordinary domestic sheep, with a body length of more than 1.6 meters. Its head was relatively small, with a pair of big eyes that were half-open and half-closed. It had two long horns on its head, which were V-shaped and curved backward and outward.

The argali's fur on its back is slate gray with slight blue markings, closely resembling the color of the mountain rocks. Its belly and the inside of its limbs are white, while the front of its limbs is black. Zhuang Rui estimated that this argali weighed at least 80 kilograms, enough for his dozen or so people to have a hearty meal.

"Damn, White Lion, you're something else! That swipe of your paw was almost as heavy as a tiger's..."

Peng Fei seemed to have done this job before, and he was very skilled at dissecting the argali. In no time, he had peeled the skin down to the rump. He touched the spot where the white lion had struck him and felt that the bone there was completely broken. Even if the white lion hadn't finished the job with that last bite, the argali wouldn't have been able to escape.

It's important to know that leopards and lions primarily rely on their sharp claws and teeth to tear apart their prey, but tigers generally strike first with their claws. Like bears, a tiger's paw strike can deliver up to 800 kilograms of force, and if the strike lands solidly, the prey will usually lose its ability to resist.

If some zoologists were to see the white lion, they would surely ask Zhuang Rui to study it. It can be said that the white lion has now surpassed the capabilities of the Tibetan Mastiff, and in some aspects of its evolution and abilities, it is no less than that of fierce beasts such as lions and tigers.

"Alright, stop nagging and hurry up and finish the work. We'll eat meat then..."

Zhuang Rui had absolutely no taste for the dried meat he carried with him, and his appetite had been poor to begin with. However, upon seeing the ibex, he immediately changed his mind. Having roasted meat for lunch before continuing his journey seemed like a good option.

Peng Fei quickened his pace, and after skinning a whole argali sheep, he removed a whole hind leg weighing about 20 pounds and tossed it to White Lion.

Seeing the white lion enjoying its prey, Gyatso, Suonan, and the others, at Zhuang Rui's urging, each took out their Tibetan knives and began to butcher the mutton.

There was a clear stream in the mountains. The two nurses took the butchered mutton to the stream to wash it, and then strung it together with thick shrub branches.

The other male doctors also enthusiastically began gathering firewood to start a fire, and quite naturally dug a shallow pit in the rockless ground, using a few stones to build a frame.

For the nomadic people of ***, outdoor barbecue is almost an innate skill. In just over ten minutes, a bonfire was lit on a flat hillside near the stream, and strings of sliced mutton were hung on it.

Gyatso was a person who traveled all year round. Even when he went to the deep mountains, he would carry barbecue materials with him. He had a mineral water bottle filled with cooking oil and a small brush that he kept dipping into the oil and brushing it onto the mutton.

The mutton quickly changed color from the grilling, and the dripping oil sizzled in the fire, releasing a rich aroma. Suo Nan then took cumin and chili powder and sprinkled them on the golden-brown mutton.

"Alright, everyone, eat it while it's hot. Himalayan mutton is a delicacy you don't usually get to eat..."

Each person had a sheet of oil paper or a plastic bag laid out in front of them. Jiacao skillfully used a knife to place pieces of mutton in front of each person. The aroma made even the white lion, who had already eaten and drunk his fill, twitch his nose.

Some meat rolled off the oil paper and onto the grass, but the doctors didn't mind. They stuck it in with small knives and ate it directly. Compared to the elegant eating with knives and forks in a fancy restaurant, this scene was undoubtedly more unrestrained and whetted one's appetite.

"Delicious!"

Zhuang Rui took a bite of the golden-brown mutton and almost swallowed his tongue. The delicious taste was something he had never experienced before.

I don't know how Gyatso did it, but the roasted mutton had no muttony smell at all. The meat was tender and juicy, slightly spicy, and even had a faint fragrance.

Unfortunately, the Moutai liquor from yesterday was all gone, and all that was left was the barley liquor that Laba Ciren brought. Although he wasn't used to the taste of this liquor, Zhuang Rui still drank almost half a jin (250ml) with the mutton.

More than an hour later, these 11 people actually ate all the 40 to 50 kilograms of mutton, leaving only a lamb skeleton.

In the end, Gyatso even drank the sheep's brain. He originally intended to give it to Zhuang Rui, but Zhuang Rui couldn't accept such treatment, so Gyatso ended up getting it instead.

With food in their bellies, they felt less tired from work. On the way down the mountain, everyone quickened their pace. After crossing a canyon and climbing over a not-so-high hill, it was already past three o'clock in the afternoon, and Karma Village came into view.

"This...this is Karma Village?"

Standing atop the hill, gazing at the distant village, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but conjure up a landscape painting in his mind.

The clear stream meanders and flows into a small lake, which reflects the bright sunlight like a mirror, mirroring the blue sky, white clouds, snow-capped peaks, and cliffs.

The terraced fields nestled in the mountains are planted with nearly ripe grains. A gentle breeze stirs the water, creating ripples that sound like the gentle rustling of bamboo, evoking a resonance in Zhuang Rui's heart.

There are about thirty or forty wooden houses, built haphazardly along the shore of the small lake. From afar, you can hear children playing and Tibetan mastiffs growling.

The children who were playing in front of the door saw Zhuang Rui and his group and immediately started shouting. Several adults came out of the various wooden houses and came to greet them.

The person leading the group from the village was an elderly man with gray hair and a face full of deep wrinkles, showing the vicissitudes of time.

After exchanging a few words with Laba Tsering, the old man laughed heartily, waved his hand behind him, and shouted a few words. The young men behind him immediately turned around and ran back to the wooden house, leaving Zhuang Rui somewhat puzzled.

However, Zhuang Rui immediately understood. After the young men ran back to the village, even more people came out of the village, some holding hadas (ceremonial scarves) and others carrying butter tea. They had come to welcome their distinguished guests.

At this moment, words were superfluous. Zhuang Rui was surrounded by several people, and the enthusiastic villagers presented him with several snow-white hadas around his neck. The white lion received the same treatment, with even more hadas around its neck than Zhuang Rui.

The beautiful mountain village and the warm-hearted Tibetan people made Zhuang Rui feel incredibly peaceful, despite the arduous journey. There was no hustle and bustle of big cities, and the trip was not as boring as he had imagined.

The Tibetans here don't understand Chinese at all. Zhuang Rui stood in front of the village and listened to their conversation for a long time before he was welcomed into the village.

The Tibetan mastiffs that had been growling in the village immediately pounced on the white lion upon seeing it, but they obediently followed behind it, clearly regarding it as their leader, which startled Zhuang Rui.

Upon entering the village, Zhuang Rui saw two men dressed in hiking gear emerge from a wooden house. Judging from their appearance, they were not locals.

"Who are they?" Zhuang Rui turned to Jiacuo and asked, gesturing for him to ask the villagers.

"Hi, hello everyone..."

Just as Gyatso was talking with the villagers, another person came out of the house. He was a foreigner with a high nose bridge. When he saw Zhuang Rui and Peng Fei, he greeted them warmly in Chinese.

"Hello...hello everyone..."

Zhuang Rui was a little stunned. He didn't expect to see outsiders, especially foreigners, in such a remote mountainous area of Tibet.

Chapter 737-738 Auspicious Appearance

"Hey bro, where are you from? What are you doing here?"

This time, it wasn't the foreigner speaking, but a young man behind him, who looked to be about twenty-one or twenty-two years old, and judging from his accent, he seemed to be from northern China.

"Uh, I'm from... Hong Kong. I'm a staff member of the Foundation for the Prevention of Congenital Heart Disease in Infants and Children. I'm here to investigate and collect statistics on the incidence of diseases in infants born at high altitudes..."

Zhuang Rui almost blurted out that he was from ***, but luckily he reacted quickly enough, managing to speak in a Cantonese accent. Whether those people could understand him was not Zhuang Rui's concern.

Even if Zhuang Rui said he came from Taiwan, it wouldn't matter much; there are plenty of Taiwanese working in Hong Kong these days.

"What...do you do?"

Upon seeing someone greet Zhuang Rui, Suo Nan immediately walked over and asked with a serious expression. His mission was confidential, and the presence of outsiders, especially foreigners, in the village immediately aroused a strong sense of enmity.

For reasons that everyone knows, the search for the reincarnation of Living Buddhas is most vulnerable to interference from foreign forces with ulterior motives.

Seeing so many people in such a remote mountain village, not only Suo Nan, but also Zhuang Rui, didn't understand where they came from, and didn't know if this was a coincidence or a chance encounter.

"Hey guys, why are you all so nervous?"

The young man who spoke first seemed puzzled by Suo Nan's hostility and said, "We are the mountaineering team from Tsinghua University, and we've come here to conquer Chawaduoji Zhiga Mountain!"

The man remained unmoved, extended his hand, and said, "Mountaineering team? Show me your credentials..."

Suo Nan is a government employee who has hosted many well-known mountaineering teams from home and abroad. He knows that mountaineering and expedition teams organized by schools usually have certificates from the school.

Furthermore, for safety reasons, all teams coming to *** for climbing and exploration must register with the local government and be accompanied by a local guide; otherwise, they are not allowed to conduct exploration activities.

The local government welcomes organized and experienced professional mountaineering teams, but student mountaineering teams are a bit of a headache. These students often lack professional skills but are full of enthusiasm, which can easily lead to problems during the climb.

At least in the news reports about rescuing expedition teams, the incidents are mostly about school students getting trapped in the mountains or unable to get down after climbing up.

"Who are you? Why do you need to see our credentials?"

The young man greeted him with great enthusiasm, but was met with a cold shoulder. He couldn't help but get a little angry and asked the man in a blunt and unfriendly tone.

They are indeed the mountaineering team from Tsinghua University, but they are not the main members. The team members who climbed Mount Everest have long since graduated, as that is the limit of human climbing.

Although those who came after were eager to surpass it, they could no longer find a height higher than Mount Everest. In addition, knowing that their experience and skills were not very good, they came to challenge the relatively low-altitude Chawaduojizhiga Mountain.

"Uh, I'm a staff member of the *** Autonomous Region government, accompanying Mr. Zhuang on this on-site inspection. I'm qualified to request you to provide supporting documentation..."

Suo Nan took out a green ID card, flashed it quickly in front of the group before Zhuang Rui could even see it clearly, and then put it away.

"What's wrong with the government? We've reported it..." The young man was still a bit annoyed, muttering indignantly.

"Hey Zhao Jun, shut up..."

At this moment, two more people came out of the house, a man and a woman. The man was holding a document, which he handed to Suo, saying, "This is a certificate from our school, and also documents filed with the local government..."

Just as Suonan was checking the certificate, a short Tibetan man squeezed through the crowd and spoke to Suonan in Tibetan. Suonan's complexion gradually improved, he nodded, and returned the certificate to the man.

"Xiao Zhuang, these people are fine. That guy named Dunzhu Ciren is their guide. But you'd better not say too much. Your Cantonese isn't very good. Don't let them find out..."

After the misunderstanding was cleared up, Suo Nan pulled Zhuang Rui aside and whispered a few words to him. It turned out that Zhuang Rui's proud Hong Kong-style Mandarin was full of flaws in Suo Nan's eyes.

"It's okay. Working for a foundation in Hong Kong doesn't necessarily mean you have to be from Hong Kong..."

Zhuang Rui smiled, replied to Suo Nan, and then went to greet the mountaineering team. In the past few days, apart from communicating with Peng Fei in Mandarin, he had mostly heard Tibetan. Now that he saw a few people from the mainland, Zhuang Rui felt very warm and fuzzy.

"Hi everyone, I'm actually from mainland China, but I work in Hong Kong. It's great to meet you all..."

Zhuang Rui, after all, had been out of school for four or five years and had been traveling around for the past two years, so he was quite knowledgeable. In just a few words, he started chatting with this group of young people and even managed to find out where they came from.

The mountaineering team consisted of six third-year students from Tsinghua University in Beijing—four men and two women. They came to *** for a climbing activity during their summer vacation before graduation.

The team leader, who was also the last student to emerge, was named Zhu Wei. The young man who spoke rather bluntly was named Zhao Jun. Another one was his classmate, Wei Zheng. As for the foreigner, he was a junior from England, named David.

The two girls, named Wen Qiuqian and Wen Qiuyu, are actually twin sisters. However, the older sister, Wen Qiuqian, has been suffering from altitude sickness since arriving here and has stayed in the wooden house without coming out.

Wen Qiuyu is very beautiful. She has short hair, which makes her look very dashing. She hasn't said a word and is leaning against Zhu Wei. The two seem to be in a romantic relationship.

The reason these people chose Chawaduoqizhiga Mountain is that although it is not as famous as Meili Snow Mountain, its highest peak reaches an altitude of about 5,600 meters, and it is more precipitous and challenging than Meili Snow Mountain.

After Zhuang Rui understood the situation, he couldn't help but shake his head inwardly. These young people really didn't know their own limitations. A 5,600-meter peak is something that even professional mountaineering teams would take very seriously and develop climbing plans for, let alone amateur mountaineering teams.

These young people, with their fearless attitude, only saw the magnificent and beautiful scenery of nature, but were completely unaware of its dangers. Zhuang Rui hoped that when they reached a certain height and ran out of strength, they would understand the principle of knowing when to retreat.

"Brother Zhuang, do you have a doctor here? Could you please examine Xiaoqian?"

Young people get to know each other easily, and Zhuang Rui was older and more experienced than them. In no time, the young students were calling him "Big Brother" one after another.

Zhu Wei and his group arrived at this small mountain village yesterday and originally planned to start climbing the mountain this morning. However, Wen Qiuqian fell ill, and they were not well prepared, as they did not bring any appropriate medication. They are currently discussing whether to continue climbing or to send the patient out of the mountain first.

Seeing that Zhuang Rui and his group included a doctor was like sending charcoal in snowy weather, giving them hope that they could continue climbing the mountain.

"Dean Laba Tsering, there's a patient here, could you please take a look at her first..." Zhuang Rui agreed to Zhu Wei's request and walked over to the hospital staff.

"Okay, wait a minute, let me get the blood pressure monitor..."

Since everyone had been walking all day, they were resting in the village. The physical examinations for the village children had not yet begun. When Laba Tsering heard Zhuang Rui's words, he immediately stood up and agreed.

After Zhuang Rui followed Laba Ciren into the wooden house, they saw a girl lying on the bamboo bed inside. She looked almost exactly like Wen Qiuyu, but her face was extremely pale and her lips were purple. Upon seeing them enter, she didn't even have the strength to sit up. 69HUX.COM

"Xiao Zhuang, these are symptoms of acute altitude sickness, caused by suddenly moving from the plains to the high altitude. She needs to rest for two to three days. The medicines I gave you are all for the symptoms; you can give them to her first..."

After measuring Wen Qiuyu's blood pressure and heart rate, Laba Tsering gave a diagnosis: this cause is very common among tourists who have just entered the country. Patients are generally those who are relatively weak or do not exercise much.

"Doctor, is my life in danger?"

Wen Qiuyu asked anxiously. This time, she had dragged her sister here. She had been crying anxiously in the house just now, and they were discussing having someone carry her out of the mountain.

"There shouldn't be any major problems. Observe her overnight after she takes the medicine, and we'll check again tomorrow..."

Laba Tsering's words relieved the young people. If something had really happened to Wen Qiuqian, they would have been in deep trouble when they returned to school.

To avoid disturbing everyone's rest, the group left the cabin. After chatting with them for a few minutes, Zhuang Rui returned to Jiacao's side. He had a dual mission: to impersonate a foundation staff member and to search for any reincarnated children in the area.

"Xiao Zhuang, there are six babies born in this village within the last year. Three of them are older than the Living Buddha's passing. Only three meet the criteria. When the consultation begins later, you and Lama Basang should pay close attention to them..."

When Suo Nan saw Zhuang Rui arrive, he pulled him and Basang aside and whispered instructions to them.

Zhuang Rui nodded and said, "I understand. How old are those three babies?"

"One is two months old, and the other two are around four or five months old..."

Suo Nan didn't see the children either, but he heard from the villagers that none of the children were taken to the hospital when they were born. Although they were only recently born, the confused parents couldn't remember the exact date. Suo Nan had to ask them for a long time before he finally understood.

"Two months old..."

Zhuang Rui was speechless. It seemed that all he could do on this trip was to do statistical work. He simply couldn't imagine how a two-month-old baby could recognize things.

"White Lion, come here..."

Zhuang Rui was sitting in front of a villager's house, drinking barley tea, when he saw a group of seven or eight children surrounding the white lion and making a fuss. He quickly called out to them, knowing that even if the white lion were to charge at them, it would be too much for those children to handle.

"Waaah..."

The white lion growled at the Tibetan mastiffs following behind it, and several of the mastiffs didn't dare to follow anymore. But the children weren't afraid; they had been playing with Zhuang Rui all day long since birth.

For Tibetan mastiffs, they are the best friends and most loyal companions. Even a nursing infant will not be afraid of a Tibetan mastiff.

Don't you go to school?

Surrounded by a group of children, Zhuang Rui was curious. He saw that the children were as young as seven or eight years old and as old as twelve or thirteen. They were all wearing dirty Tibetan robes and their hair was messy, like little wild men.

These children probably didn't speak Mandarin. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, they just tilted their heads and looked at him. The one in the lead started babbling in Mandarin, but Zhuang Rui couldn't understand a word.

"They don't have money to go to school..."

After Laba Tsering finished arranging for the doctors to assemble the testing equipment, he walked over to Zhuang Rui, pointed to the surrounding terraced fields, and said, "This village only has this much land. The annual harvest is barely enough for them to make a living and exchange for some oil, salt, soy sauce, and vinegar. Where would they find the money to send their children to school..."

Laba Tsering was not visiting this small mountain village for the first time and was very familiar with it. This mountain village at the foot of the snow-capped mountains did not even have electric lights, and children as young as seven or eight had to go out to herd livestock.

"Doesn't the country have nine years of compulsory education?" Zhuang Rui asked, puzzled. He remembered hearing before that many fees were waived when studying in ***.

"These children have to help adults with chores and herd cattle and sheep when they are six or seven years old. Besides, even if school is free, eating out still costs money..."

Laba Tsering shook his head and sighed. There was more than one small mountain village like this. Many children living at the foot of the mountain could not go to school. The villagers could not afford the hundred or so yuan for room and board each semester.

"Dean Laba Tsering, could you ask them if they want to go to school?"

Looking at these Tibetan children with rosy cheeks, Zhuang Rui felt a pang of emotion.

Zhuang Rui lost his father at a young age, which he initially thought was a very tragic thing. However, he felt that at least he had received a good education, unlike these children who had to do things that adults do as soon as they were old enough to understand.

Seven or eight years old? At that time, Zhuang Rui probably only knew how to be naughty and block other people's chimneys. How could he know the hardships of life?

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Laba Tsering asked the children a question in Tibetan. Zhuang Rui saw that the children's eyes lit up immediately, and they surrounded Laba Tsering, their faces full of excitement.

One child was talking while drawing and writing on the ground with a stick. Then he proudly raised his head, pointed to the Tibetan script on the ground, and said something loudly to Laba Tsering.

"He said it was his name..."

Laba Tsering felt a pang of emotion and looked at Zhuang Rui, saying, "The children all want to go to school, but they know their families are very poor. This child's maternal grandmother's family lives outside the mountains, so he can write his own name..."

In this village, almost everyone is illiterate. They respect educated people and want their children to be educated as well, but they simply cannot afford the school fees...

"Brother Suo Nan, could you come here for a moment..."

Upon hearing Laba Tsering's words, Zhuang Rui looked up and greeted Suo Nan. He wanted to help these children go to school, but it was a bit inappropriate for Laba Tsering, as a doctor, to say such a thing.

"Brother Suonan, could you please help me count how many children in the village are old enough to go to school? I want to sponsor all their expenses from primary school to university..."

"Elementary school to university? Xiao Zhuang, that's quite an expense..."

Suo Nan was stunned when he heard this. He didn't expect that Zhuang Rui, the person from the fake foundation, would actually do charity.

Although the village has various policies and the cost of schooling is very low, it still costs at least 20,000 to 30,000 yuan to go from primary school to university. There are at least a dozen children out of school in this village, which adds up to several hundred thousand yuan.

Suo Nan was unaware of Zhuang Rui's net worth; for him, several hundred thousand was already an astronomical sum.

Zhuang Rui waved his hand and said, "Don't mention money yet, Brother Suo Nan. You go and compile the list first, then give it to me. After we leave the mountain, we'll contact the local education department to make arrangements..."

Sponsoring these children's education is not a financial burden for Zhuang Rui at all, but he is worried that some departments and parents might just do a superficial job and use the money for other purposes. Therefore, he wants to talk to County Chief Lunzhu about this matter directly after he leaves the county.

"Okay, I'll take care of it now. Oh, by the way, those kids who need to be checked will be coming out soon, you and Basang keep an eye on them..."

Suo Nan gave Zhuang Rui a deep look, then turned to find the village chief. In such a remote mountain village, the village chief was an absolute man of his word. As long as he agreed to let the children go to school, there would be no problem.

"Master Zhuang, how can we tell that this child is the reincarnation of the teacher?"

After Suonan left, Basang scratched his head and asked Zhuang Rui. Although he was the most important member of the search for the reincarnation of the Living Buddha, Basang was still a big kid and didn't understand such things.

"this....."

Zhuang Rui scratched his head for a moment, then said, "How about this, when they're being tested later, we'll take out some things the Living Buddha used to use and tease them, see how these children react..."

Zhuang Rui was also helpless about this. He couldn't expect those breastfeeding babies to rush over to them as soon as they saw them, could he?

Basang nodded and followed Zhuang Rui toward the hospital work team that had been prepared. The herders with children all bowed respectfully to Basang upon seeing him.

In ***, the chairman of the autonomous region is with a lama, and it is guaranteed that the Tibetans will bow to the lama first.

Although Basang looks very young, he still commands the respect of the Tibetan people. If he weren't holding a child in his arms, they would probably kneel in respect.

The first to be tested were those two- or three-year-old children. Although high-altitude congenital heart disease is more common among people who have migrated to high-altitude areas, the indigenous people also have a high chance of developing this disease.

According to Dean Laba Tsering, their current equipment is not very advanced and is not very good at detecting heart rate; they can only perform some relatively basic examinations.

Even so, for the Tibetans who live in the mountains year-round, this is a rare and precious opportunity. Almost every household brought their children out, and laughter filled the village's threshing ground.

"Brother Zhuang, is this big white dog yours?"

Except for the two girls, the rest of the mountaineering team from Tsinghua University gathered around to watch the excitement. The student named Zhao Jun, who was the first to greet Zhuang Rui, was now looking at Bai Shi with envy.

"That's a Tibetan Mastiff, don't you know? Go away, Brother Zhuang, can we take a picture with it?"

The mountaineering team leader couldn't hold back any longer. After using his authority to send Zhao Jun aside, he stared longingly at Zhuang Rui.

"I have no objection, but you should ask White Lion if he's willing."

Zhuang Rui chuckled, and the white lion beside him raised its head in a cooperative manner, letting out a low growl. The students were so frightened that they quickly retreated. The white lion was no ordinary creature; imagine how many people wouldn't be afraid if a lion stood in front of them.

"Xiao Zhuang..."

Seeing that it was almost time to test several children under one year old, Suo Nan, who was talking to the village chief, quickly called out to Zhuang Rui.

"Alright, here's a video recording for you, just don't disturb my work..."

Zhuang Rui handed the DV camera used to capture the white lion's prey to a few students, and then joined the middle of the testing group.

"This child is so cute, come here, let uncle give him a hug..."

Zhuang Rui held the dzi bead on his wrist and teased a seven or eight-month-old boy. Perhaps because the language was different from what he usually heard, the child suddenly burst into tears and frantically tried to hit the dzi bead in front of him with his little hands.

"Holy crap, this actually works?"

Just as Zhuang Rui withdrew his hand, he suddenly felt something warm on his chest. Looking down, he saw that the little child had turned his grief and anger into strength and was raising his fist at Zhuang Rui in another way.

"Don't wipe it, a boy's urine is a very auspicious thing..."

Just as Zhuang Rui took out a tissue to wipe his clothes, Jiacao stopped him. The people around him laughed, making Zhuang Rui feel a little embarrassed.

After the child was examined, Basang stepped forward to give him a blessing, and then the next child was brought over, this time the youngest baby.

Although he didn't want to be a weird uncle anymore, Zhuang Rui still took the dzi bead necklace and went over. In the eyes of the villagers and doctors, his behavior was a kind act, so naturally no one stopped him.

"Hmm? Something's strange..."

Although the child was very young, with wrinkles just beginning to smooth out on his face, his small eyes were exceptionally bright. What surprised Zhuang Rui the most was the child's ears, especially his earlobes, which were very large. The earlobes alone were almost the same size as the entire small ear.

According to the ancients, having hands that reach past the knees and large earlobes that reach the shoulders is considered a sign of good fortune.

Chapter 739 Candidates

"There's no scientific basis for it..."

Zhuang Rui drew a conclusion about the child's appearance. He couldn't conclude that big ears meant good fortune just because Liu Da'er and those Buddhist monks had big ears. Zhuang Rui's ears weren't small when he was born either, but he still lived a poor life for more than 20 years.

"No *** allowed..."

Zhuang Rui held up the dzi bead bracelet and teased the child, his words causing everyone nearby who understood Mandarin to burst into laughter.

"Huh?"

The little guy, who had been quietly watching Zhuang Rui, suddenly started to struggle after Zhuang Rui took out the bracelet. His two small hands, which couldn't be closed, were grasping at the air as if he wanted to grab the bracelet in front of him. However, his left hand was open, while his right hand remained tightly clenched into a small fist.

"Yes, kids always like to grab things..."

Zhuang Rui didn't believe that the reincarnation of the Living Buddha could be found so easily. After waving the bracelet in front of the little guy, he put it away.

Seemingly sensing that his toy had disappeared, the two-month-old little guy looked around and suddenly saw the white lion behind Zhuang Rui. He pointed at the white lion with his little finger and kept giggling.

What Zhuang Rui found somewhat amiss was that the white lion actually stepped forward, stuck out its blood-red tongue, and gently licked the little guy's clenched fist.

"Giggle...giggle..."

The little guy seemed very happy, his little face beaming with joy. His right hand, which had been clenched into a fist, suddenly opened, and a Buddhist prayer bead fell to the ground.

The little boy's mother picked up the prayer beads and smiled as she spoke to the people beside her in Tibetan.

"What did she say?" Zhuang Rui asked the doctor next to him.

She said her son loved playing with the family's Buddhist prayer beads, but he never put them in his mouth...

The Tibetan doctor explained to Zhuang Rui that children naturally like to grab things, but they also naturally like to put things in their mouths.

However, this child is a bit strange. He usually only likes to play with Buddhist prayer beads. Once he grabs the prayer beads, he doesn't want to let go. Sometimes he will hold them for a whole day without crying or making a fuss. The adults in the family all say that this child has a connection with Buddhism and are planning to send him to a lama temple to become a novice monk when he is a little older.

The doctor's words not only touched Zhuang Rui's heart, but also made Basang and Suonan start to pay serious attention to the child. Suonan, in particular, who had experienced searching for a reincarnated child, stared intently at the baby still in swaddling clothes.

However, the child was clearly more interested in Zhuang Rui and the white lion, and even stretched out his little hands, wanting Zhuang Rui to hold him.

Zhuang Rui didn't pick up the child, but looked at Basang and said, "Basang, why don't you hold him? See if he'll stay with you."

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Basang stood in front of Zhuang Rui and reached out her hand to the little guy. The little guy leaned forward without hesitation and was taken by Basang.

"Brother Hot Guy..."

Zhuang Rui turned around, nudged Suo Nan, and walked out of the crowd.

"What's wrong?" Suo Nan followed Zhuang Rui without making a sound and asked in a low voice.

“My white lion never takes the initiative to get close to people. In all its life, apart from the Living Buddha and the Panchen Lama whom I met a few days ago, it has never taken the initiative to get close to anyone else...”

In Zhuang Rui's memory, Bai Shi was indifferent to Nannan and his mother. He would only show a little affection occasionally because of his threat. Being affectionate towards a child like just now was almost unheard of.

Zhuang Rui's words made Suo Nan's eyes light up. Although he felt that this child was somewhat extraordinary, he still couldn't believe that this search would be so easy. After glancing at the crowd, he said, "White Lion's actions alone don't prove anything, do they?"

"But the fact that holding the prayer beads and they reacted to my dzi bead bracelet should say something, right?"

To be honest, before coming here and even after setting off, Zhuang Rui didn't really believe in reincarnation. He thought that when a person dies, it's like a lamp going out; there's only this life, so how could there be a past life? However, the little guy's actions just now made Zhuang Rui's belief waver.

Children like to grab things, which is understandable, but why specifically Buddhist prayer beads? And why does it smile when it sees me and the white lion? What does that signify? Could it be that reincarnation truly exists in the unseen world?

Zhuang Rui was somewhat bewildered at this moment. Although his eyes were strange, he couldn't quite accept the idea of gods and Buddhas. If there really were gods protecting him, why didn't these powerful beings blow away that little devil with a single breath more than half a century ago?

"Perhaps it is people's beliefs that alter the magnetic field through brainwaves, causing many incomprehensible things?"

After thinking for a long time, Zhuang Rui, with a more scientific approach, came up with a seemingly plausible answer for himself.

Scientists have confirmed that when a person concentrates on thinking about something, their brainwaves become unusually active. If the person is mentally strong, it can even affect the magnetic field within a certain range around them.

"Xiao Zhuang, Zhuang Rui, did you hear me?"

Zhuang Rui, who was deep in thought, was suddenly interrupted by Suo Nan. He looked up, slightly bewildered, and said somewhat embarrassedly, "Brother Suo Nan, I was just thinking about something and got distracted. What are you talking about?"

Suo Nan looked at Zhuang Rui with a mix of amusement and exasperation. The two were less than a meter apart, yet Zhuang Rui could still be distracted while talking so close.

"I said the child is too young to determine whether he is a reincarnated lama, but based on the examination just now, he is definitely one of the candidates for reincarnation..."

Suo Nan paused here, thought for a moment, and then continued, "How about this, you tell them you want to see the snow-capped mountains, and we'll stay in this village for a few more days..."

Even candidates are very important to Sonam. When they were searching for the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, six or seven teams searched for six years before finding three candidates for the reincarnation.

"One of the candidates? There are candidates for this one too?" Zhuang Rui asked, somewhat puzzled, as no one had ever told him about this.

Suo Nan looked at Zhuang Rui strangely. He didn't know how someone like Zhuang Rui, who knew nothing about the reincarnation process, had managed to get into the search team.

However, Suo Nan still explained to Zhuang Rui: "Of course there must be candidates. When we were searching for the 11th Panchen Lama, there were three candidates, all of whom had the potential to become the reincarnation. After multiple assessments and communication with high-ranking monks, the current Panchen Lama was finally selected..."

However, the other two were also people with a connection to Buddhism, and they were sent to a temple afterward and are now studying at a Buddhist academy..."

"Alright, Brother Suonan, since you're the team leader and you say it's a candidate, then it's a candidate. I'm going back to *** in a few days. Finding a candidate for a reincarnated child means this trip wasn't in vain..."

Zhuang Rui smiled. He felt that the child was very strange. However, the little guy was too young to express his emotions. Perhaps, as Suo Nan said, he should list him as a candidate first and observe him slowly when he grows up.

Moreover, as Suonan just mentioned, when the reincarnated Panchen Lama first met the search team, he pointed to someone and said he knew him, and pointed to a Buddhist artifact in the artifact's hand, saying that the artifact was originally placed in Tashilhunpo Monastery. His behavior was even more astonishing than that of the child.

"Tell the villagers I'm staying for a few days..."

Zhuang Rui returned to the crowd while talking to Suo Nan. There were still two children who hadn't been seen yet.

Back in the crowd, Zhuang Rui saw a group of people pointing at his white lion and seemingly talking about something. He couldn't help but ask curiously, "What are you talking about?"

When Jiacao saw Zhuang Rui return, he quickly said, "Little Zhuang, they say that when this child was born, someone saw a Tibetan Mastiff come down from the snow-capped mountains. It was also pure white, but much smaller than yours. Some people believe it, and some don't, and they're arguing about it now..."

"What?! I saw a snow mastiff that looks just like a white lion?!"

Zhuang Rui was stunned when he heard Jiacuo's words. This was even more shocking than when he discovered that the child seemed to be a reincarnated lama. You see, the idea of finding a wife for the white lion had been troubling Zhuang Rui for a long time.

"Who was it? Who saw it?"

Zhuang Rui, no longer caring about the remaining two children, asked loudly.

Gyatso said to a Tibetan man in his forties, "Dawa, you were the one who said you saw it, right?"

The man nodded, walked up to Zhuang Rui, and said in broken Chinese, gesturing as he spoke, "Tibetan Mastiff, white, this big, female..."

"Brother Jiacuo, can you ask him how he knew that Tibetan mastiff was female?" Zhuang Rui's eyes lit up when he heard the word "female", and he quickly asked Jiacuo to act as the translator.

Upon hearing Gyatso's words, the man named Dawa showed a hint of displeasure, but still began to communicate with Gyatso.

"Xiao Zhuang, Dawa said that we Tibetans have lived with Tibetan mastiffs since we were young, and we can tell the sex of a Tibetan mastiff at a glance just by its size..."

Seemingly somewhat dissatisfied with Zhuang Rui's question, Jiacuo concluded by saying, "Don't even mention them, I can tell the difference between male and female Tibetan Mastiffs..."

"Ha ha....."

Zhuang Rui laughed loudly upon hearing this, bent down and hugged the white lion's neck, saying, "Old buddy, we're going up the snow mountain tomorrow, then you won't have to be a bachelor anymore..."

The white lion seemed to understand Zhuang Rui's words, its eyes showing a gentle look. It rubbed its big head against Zhuang Rui's cheek and growled happily.

The white lion's roar caused all the Tibetan mastiffs in the village to howl in unison, and the quiet village suddenly became bustling with excitement.

Chapter 740-741 Snow Mountain (Part 1)

The Tibetan mastiff and the man's oblivious behavior left the local Tibetans speechless. They had always believed that only herders living in Tibet could forge the truest friendships with Tibetan mastiffs.

The tacit understanding between Zhuang Rui and the white lion has clearly overturned their understanding. However, Tibetans are the people who like to get along with Tibetan mastiffs the most. The village chief, who was so old that he could hardly walk, walked shakily to Zhuang Rui and bowed deeply.

"Oh, old man, I can't accept that..."

Zhuang Rui quickly moved aside, feeling truly unworthy of such an elderly person bowing to him.

"Xiao Zhuang, please accept this bow from the old man. He said your white lion is a messenger of God, and the deep bond between you and the white lion makes you friends with all Tibetans..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui step aside, the old man quickly spoke a few words to Jiacao, who then translated the words into Chinese for Zhuang Rui.

Zhuang Rui firmly declined, saying with a smile, "No, no, how can you give a gift to a friend? Just let him have a few more drinks tonight..."

"Yam (meaning good in Tibetan), Yam..."

After hearing Gyatso's translation, the old man gave Zhuang Rui a thumbs up, then turned around and started speaking loudly to the villagers, though Zhuang Rui still couldn't understand a word.

However, the crowd that had been gathered together immediately dispersed after hearing the village chief's words, shouting excitedly.

"Brother Gyatso, what are they saying?" Zhuang Rui looked at Gyatso beside him with some confusion.

Gyatso said with a smile, "The village chief said that the most distinguished guests have arrived in the village. They are going to slaughter a sheep and welcome us with the most solemn ceremony. Uh, to be precise, they are going to welcome you..."

Zhuang Rui paused for a moment upon hearing this, then turned to look at the sparse flock of sheep on the hillside. He whispered to Jiacuo, "Brother Jiacuo, keep an eye on them. Keep a count of how many sheep they slaughtered. I'll leave them some money when we leave..."

Zhuang Rui knew that for the herders, every sheep was their most precious possession, and they would not kill them easily. They would only kill one or two sheep during festivals or when worshipping their ancestors.

This small mountain village, surrounded by mountains, cannot graze on a large scale due to geographical limitations, making these sheep even more precious. The villagers rely on these sheep to exchange for their annual oil, salt, soy sauce, and vinegar.

"Xiao Zhuang, we Tibetans don't charge our guests. If you do that, the host will be angry..." Jiacuo shook his head. He was Tibetan himself, and how could a host possibly charge guests?

Zhuang Rui smiled wryly upon hearing this: "Brother Jiacuo, why don't you just leave some behind when you leave? We'll have eaten and drunk our fill, but the village will lose a lot of income..."

"By the way, Brother Gyatso, I just mentioned wanting to sponsor the children's schooling. Did the village chief agree?"

Zhuang Rui was still a little confused. When Suo Nan told the village chief that he wanted to sponsor the children's schooling, the village chief didn't react this strongly. He just showed affection to Bai Shi and won the respect of the villagers. This was really hard to understand.

"He agreed, and he asked Brother Suonan to thank you..."

Gyatso seemed to sense Zhuang Rui's question and continued, "Gifts between friends represent our friendship, but it's not something that money can buy their respect..."

Zhuang Rui nodded as if he understood, though not quite. These simple Tibetan people clearly had their own standards for judging things.

As night fell, the entire small mountain village came alive with activity. The villagers, who had previously been dressed in dirty clothes, changed into beautiful Tibetan robes of various colors, tied white hadas around their necks, and carried scriptures and various delicacies on their backs. They then began their procession through the village.

Leading the procession were two village girls dressed as "Lhamo" (i.e., fairies), while the young lama Basang and Zhuang Rui were invited to mount horses—a privilege reserved only for the most distinguished guests.

Other ordinary villagers walk, and although the village is built along the mountain with rugged terrain, their steps are still vigorous and light.

Behind them, some carried incense burners, while others carried bundles of "Tibetan mulberry" on their backs. People shook colorful arrows in their hands (used to attract good fortune and pray for blessings), and everyone was as happy as if it were New Year's Day.

In the very center of the procession, several Tibetans respectfully carried a large Buddha statue. Someone had specially covered it with a cloth to prevent direct sunlight from shining on it. The statue was surrounded by Tibetans, with flags fluttering and smoke rising from burning sang offerings, creating a scene that was both solemn and lively.

Although the procession only numbered a little over a hundred, including the children playing and the members of the mountaineering team, the atmosphere was still very lively. In the end, the group carried torches made of Tibetan mulberry leaves, circled the mountain god temple in the village, and then returned to the threshing ground.

Meanwhile, all the preparations for the bonfire party were complete. More than a dozen cleaned whole sheep were strung on iron bars and hung on the rack above the bonfire, while several Tibetan women were busy working nearby.

The old village chief held the large bowls of barley wine in his hands and toasted each of them, starting with Zhuang Rui. The Tibetan girls, who were good at singing and dancing, dressed in beautiful costumes, sang and danced in the field.

The firelight illuminated everyone's faces, all beaming with joy. Jars of barley wine were brought out one after another. In this atmosphere, there was no need for words; raising large bowls and drinking heartily was the best form of communication.

When Zhuang Rui woke up from his drunken stupor the next day, all he could recall about the night before seemed to be "barley wine and roasted mutton." He didn't even know how he got back to the cabin and fell asleep.

"Waaah...waaah"

Zhuang Rui had just sat up and hadn't even had a chance to look around the room where he had slept the night before when he heard Bai Shi whimpering under the bed. If he hadn't been completely naked except for a pair of shorts, Bai Shi probably would have already pulled him off the bed by his shorts.

"What's wrong, White Lion?"

Although he had a habit of running with Bai Shi every morning at home, Zhuang Rui was too lazy to move on the plateau. Although he was not worried about altitude sickness, running at an altitude of four or five thousand meters was still a bit shocking.

The white lion couldn't open its mouth to tell Zhuang Rui anything, so it could only nudge Zhuang Rui with its big head, urging him to get up quickly.

"Are you thinking of finding a wife?"

Zhuang Rui suddenly remembered this incident. He had never regarded the white lion as an animal. Zhuang Rui believed that the white lion had definitely understood what he had said yesterday.

Sure enough, after Zhuang Rui said those words, the white lion nodded dramatically, its bright eyes staring blankly at Zhuang Rui.

"You little rascal, can't you be a little more subtle..."

Zhuang Rui laughed and scolded, picked up the clothes from the bedside and put them on. When he got up, he found that Peng Fei was also sleeping in the room, but he couldn't hold his liquor as well as Zhuang Rui. He was drooling and snoring.

"Ah, that feels so good!"

Leading the white lion out of the wooden house, Zhuang Rui stretched. Living in this beautiful place, which resembled a landscape painting, although it lacked any modern appliances, it had a unique rural charm.

"Good morning, Brother Suo Nan!"

Zhuang Rui saw Suo Nan come out of another wooden house and quickly greeted him.

"Hehe, it's getting late, it's already noon..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Suo Nan couldn't help but laugh. Yesterday, Zhuang Rui was the most popular person in the village and drank the most alcohol, while they, who were originally Tibetan guests, didn't drink much. It was Suo Nan who had to carry Zhuang Rui back yesterday.

"Oh no, I was planning to go up the mountain..."

Zhuang Rui glanced at his watch and realized it was already past 1 p.m. No wonder Bai Shi was in such a hurry.

"You can just wander around at the foot of the mountain. I told you to use this as an excuse to climb the mountain, not that I actually want you to climb it. You don't even have this much equipment. How are you going to get up the mountain?"

Suo Nan had just made up an excuse; he hadn't expected Zhuang Rui to actually want to climb the snow mountain.

"Hey, Brother Suonan, I can't refuse. Can you ask Bai Shi if he'll agree?" Zhuang Rui smiled wryly upon hearing this.

"Oh, I see, so your Tibetan Mastiff is in heat..."

Suo Nan laughed, but without professional mountaineering equipment, climbing this 5800-meter-high snow-capped mountain was almost a death sentence. After frowning and thinking for a moment, Suo Nan said, "Let's go check out that mountaineering team, or you can go up the mountain with them..."

When climbing mountains in high-altitude areas, physical fitness and endurance are paramount. Everyone has witnessed Zhuang Rui's extraordinary physique. As long as one is careful when climbing, there shouldn't be any major problems.

When they arrived at the mountaineering team's accommodation, they discovered that apart from the sick Wen Qiuqian and her twin sister Wen Qiuyu who were taking care of her, the rest of the team had already gone hiking that morning.

The mountaineering team members were just supporting characters yesterday and didn't drink too much. In addition, Wen Qiuqian's illness had already delayed them for two days, so they started climbing Chawaduojizhiga Mountain early in the morning under the guidance of a local guide.

"Xiaowen, how about I borrow your mountaineering gear?"

When Zhuang Rui saw the trekking poles, gloves, and climbing ropes in the room, his eyes lit up. He already had a pair of hiking boots with crimps, and with these items, Zhuang Rui felt that climbing this snow mountain wouldn't be a big problem.

"You can borrow anything, but Brother Zhuang, it's dangerous to climb mountains alone..."

Wen Qiuyu nodded and offered Zhuang Rui a word of advice.

Although Zhuang Rui and his group are currently at an altitude of only a little over a thousand meters from the summit, it will likely take at least a day to reach that height. Wild animals and natural phenomena such as avalanches on the snow-capped mountains could endanger the lives of the climbers.

"Xiao Zhuang, wait a moment, I'll go call Jiacao and have him accompany you up the mountain..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was determined, Suonan realized he couldn't dissuade him, so he turned back to find Jiacao, because he knew that Jiacao had worked as a mountain guide for a period of time.

As expected, Gyatso was very experienced. After hearing that Zhuang Rui wanted to go up the mountain and trying to dissuade him a few times without success, he immediately started making preparations.

More than half an hour later, Zhuang Rui stared blankly at the two hiking backpacks on the ground, which were almost waist-high. Was this a mountain climbing trip or a camping trip?

Gyatso not only brought enough dried meat and other food for five people for three days, but also two tents and two sleeping bags, as well as chocolate, a machete for clearing the way, a small shovel for setting up the tents, a pot for cooking, a small oxygen cylinder, UV-protective sunglasses, and binoculars, among other items.

What Zhuang Rui found most unacceptable was that Jiacao had actually put two women's hiking hats into his bag as well.

Apart from the two sets of thermal underwear, everything else in the room where Wen Qiuqian and her sister lived had probably been taken away by Jiacao.

"Brother Gyatso, do we really need to carry so much stuff?"

Zhuang Rui tried lifting the hiking backpack on the ground. Fortunately, the hiking equipment nowadays is made of special lightweight alloy materials. Although it looks quite intimidating, it is not very heavy. Zhuang Rui did not feel much burden carrying this little bit of stuff.

"I've never climbed this mountain before, but I've heard it's not easy. Let's take more things; it's always better to be prepared..."

Gyatso's expression was somewhat solemn. For things like mountaineering, thorough preparation is essential. He once witnessed a mountaineer fall to his death on the spot while climbing Mount Everest.

Moreover, nature is unpredictable, and unexpected scenes often occur on the mountain. Even though it is only July or August, stories of snow falling in June are common on Daxue Mountain.

Mountaineering is considered an extreme sport because while it challenges the limits of the human body and unleashes human potential, it often comes with the risk of death and disability.

"Brother Zhuang, I'll go with you too..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was carrying a huge hiking backpack and preparing to go up the mountain with Jiacao, Peng Fei suddenly appeared. He had been looking for Zhuang Rui for a long time after waking up.

"No, you should rest. This mountain isn't very high. I can stay up here for one night and come down tomorrow. Besides, there are only two sets of mountaineering equipment, so you don't need to go..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand. Peng Fei was injured, and although he had treated him with his spiritual energy, his body was still relatively weak. Zhuang Rui didn't want him to take any risks.

Seeing that Peng Fei still wanted to speak, Zhuang Rui waved his hand and said, "Don't say anything. I can go in and out of the Savage Mountain, so why would I be afraid of this snow mountain?"

"Alright, Brother Zhuang, then you'd better be careful..."

Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Peng Fei was a little amused, but he knew that there were relatively few wild beasts on the snow mountain, and they generally wouldn't attack humans unless provoked, unlike the tropical rainforest which was full of dangers. With Zhuang Rui's physique, climbing this mountain should be relatively easy.

"Xiao Zhuang, wait a minute, don't go up the mountain so fast, you need to manage your energy wisely..."

Following behind Zhuang Rui, Jiacao felt that he really had aged. He was only three or four years older than Zhuang Rui, but judging from his performance just now, he looked like a man in his fifties or sixties.

After more than three hours, the two had arrived at an altitude of 4,900 meters from the foot of the snow-capped mountain. During these three hours, Zhuang Rui did not rest once. He looked as relaxed as the white lion running ahead of him, showing no signs of fatigue.

However, Gyatso couldn't take it anymore. The ground was covered with snow and thin ice that never melted. Walking was extremely difficult, and his strength was being depleted very quickly. Keeping up with Zhuang Rui's pace was already exhausting for Gyatso.

The temperature here has dropped sharply. Even though he was wearing a military overcoat, Gyatso's lips were still trembling from the cold. He couldn't understand why Zhuang Rui wasn't afraid of the cold at all. He didn't have the thick fur of a white lion.

"Alright, let's rest for a bit, Brother Gyatso. We'll walk for another two hours, then we'll find a place to camp..."

Zhuang Rui looked at Jiacao, who was panting heavily and had a flushed face, and stopped in his tracks. To be honest, if Jiacao hadn't been with him, Zhuang Rui would have already climbed halfway up the mountain.

Looking up at the clear blue sky, the snow-capped mountain peaks, shrouded in pristine white snow, resembled a circle of magnificent white fox fur. Turning back to the foot of the mountain, the vast Tibetan settlement appeared much smaller.

Between the snow-capped mountains and grasslands, low-lying locust trees and wild willows grow in abundance, and further afield, there are alpine grasslands covered with wildflowers, as beautiful as a Tibetan carpet.

Beneath the barren, desolate landscape, lies a vibrant life force irrigated by glacial meltwater. Everything appears so pure and primal, a magical and grand fusion of desolation and the breath of life.

If it weren't for the household waste left behind by our predecessors and buried under the snow, this place would seem as if no one had ever set foot here since time immemorial.

Standing in this forbidden zone of life, Zhuang Rui felt that whether it was humans or other creatures, they all seemed so insignificant. Looking back, the ground was covered with a blinding white expanse of snow, as if the whole world consisted of only this one monotonous and cold color.

Even in the height of summer, this place, at an altitude of nearly 5,000 meters, is not hot at all, but damp and bitterly cold. However, the air, free from industrial exhaust and chimney pollution, feels very comfortable when inhaled.

Zhuang Rui, who initially thought wearing sunglasses was unnecessary, had long since put glasses on the bridge of his nose, because without glasses, even with the protection of spiritual energy, his eyes would still feel sore and painful from the strong ultraviolet rays.

"Xiao Zhuang, I think we should just camp here. It's getting dark..."

Upon hearing that Zhuang Rui wanted to walk for another two hours, Jiacao's face, which looked like that of someone in their thirties but in their fifties, suddenly turned ashen. Jiacao could guarantee that even Zhuang Rui, the best guide on Mount Everest, was a complete novice when it came to physical strength.

"here?"

Zhuang Rui frowned and said, "Brother Jiacao, let's walk a little further. At our speed, we should be able to catch up with those students in two hours..."

The mountaineering team from Tsinghua University set off at seven o'clock in the morning, a full seven hours earlier than Zhuang Rui and his group. However, Zhuang Rui was confident that with his speed, he could definitely catch up with them.

"Okay, I'll eat something first..."

Gyatso looked around and saw that the place where he and Zhuang Rui were located was in a windy spot, not suitable for setting up camp. After sitting down, he took out some chocolate and started eating. At this time, it was very necessary to replenish the body's energy.

Zhuang Rui also took out some dried meat and chewed a few bites. Then, he enthusiastically took out a DV camera with the white lion and started filming the mountain scenery. Jiacao shook his head as he watched. If Zhuang Rui were to climb Mount Everest, he would definitely break the record for the fastest ascent of Mount Everest.

"Huh? What's that sound?"

Suddenly, Zhuang Rui heard a clear chirping sound. Looking up, he saw a large eagle soaring in the sky above, its claws seemingly gripping something.

"Holy crap, that's a golden eagle..."

Zhuang Rui took out his binoculars and chased after the figure in the sky. On the golden eagle's talons, which had a wingspan of several meters, was actually a jackal.

Zhuang Rui could clearly see that the jackal's head had several bloody, deep holes, presumably made by the golden eagle's claws.

"I haven't seen a golden eagle for years, I never expected to see one here..."

Sitting next to him, Gyatso also looked up longingly at the giant eagle. In Tibet, there are some skilled eagle trainers who can train golden eagles to be the best partners of hunters, and their role is even greater than that of Tibetan mastiffs.

Gyatso once raised a golden eagle while herding livestock on the grasslands. One winter, the golden eagle caught more than 30 grassland wolves, which made Gyatso very envious.

“Let’s go. A golden eagle has appeared here. Maybe its nest is up in the mountains. Hey, Brother Zhuang, if we could get our hands on a baby eagle, that would be wonderful...”

Upon seeing the suddenly appearing golden eagle, Gyatso became excited, which made Zhuang Rui both amused and exasperated. Even if there was a golden eagle's nest, there might not be any baby eagles. Furthermore, even if there were baby eagles, who would dare to steal them from under the golden eagle's nose?

However, Zhuang Rui was also very interested in the golden eagle. If he were to raise another golden eagle, wouldn't he be like the ancients, leading a yellow dog on the left and holding a falcon on the right, gazing northwest and shooting at the heavenly wolf? How heroic that would be!

Surprisingly, with this newfound motivation, Gyatso's speed increased considerably. As the sun painted the snow-capped mountains golden and the last rays of sunlight were about to disappear, Zhuang Rui and Gyatso heard a voice from ahead.

"Is this Zhu Wei? This is Zhuang Rui..."

When they were still twenty or thirty meters away from the figures ahead, Zhuang Rui shouted loudly and turned on his powerful flashlight, because the sun had already completely set behind one end of the snow-capped mountain.

"What happened? What's wrong with Zhao Jun?"

Upon approaching, Zhuang Rui discovered that the hot-blooded young man named Zhao Jun was lying on a thick tent, his pants stained with blood, while Zhu Wei and the others looked dazed and somewhat at a loss.

"Speak up? Are you stupid?!"

Zhuang Rui shouted loudly, startling the group of guys who had been staring blankly into consciousness.

"Brother Zhuang, Brother Zhuang, please save us, please save Zhao Jun..."

To Zhuang Rui's dismay, these guys were so fragile they were almost in tears. Even the most composed Zhu Wei had red eyes, looking at Zhuang Rui as if he were a family member.

"Have a drink first, Brother Jiacao, and then take a look at Zhao Jun's injuries..."

Seeing that the group was quite agitated, Zhuang Rui took out a bag of barley wine, handed it to Zhu Wei, and said, "Don't rush, tell me slowly, what exactly happened to you?"