

Golden 79

Chapter Seventy-Nine: Conflict (Part One)

After observing Qin Xuanbing's behavior in the Hummer, Bai Meng'an realized that Qin Xuanbing had indeed developed feelings for Zhuang Rui. Perhaps it wasn't quite to the point of being determined to marry him, but for Qin Xuanbing, who had always kept men at arm's length, this was already quite remarkable.

Although Bai Meng'an was somewhat jealous of Zhuang Rui, he hadn't reached the point of hatred. He himself was a person who often had scandals with various celebrities in Hong Kong, and he had always harbored a desire to conquer the aloof Qin Xuanbing. However, it seemed that he had no hope now.

Zhuang Rui, however, was rather oblivious to matters of the heart. Everyone in the car could see Qin Xuanbing's undisguised affection for him, but the guy kept his attention focused on his puppy. He even took Qin Xuanbing's occasional glances at him as expressions of love for the puppy.

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was ignoring her, Qin Xuanbing reached out and teased the little guy, saying, "Zhuang Rui, give your puppy a name."

"Name it? That makes sense. We can't just call it 'little thing' or 'little guy.'"

Zhuang Rui frowned upon hearing this. The little guy was so cute; he needed a nice name.

"Little White? Snow White?"

"No, that sounds awful."

Zhuang Rui came up with two names, but both were rejected by everyone. In addition, Liu Chuan took away his right to name the little guy, which made him so angry that he almost named the little guy Liu Chuan.

Qin Xuanbing said, "Zhuang Rui, its fur is white, and it looks like a little lion, so let's just call it White Lion."

"White Lion is great! The lion in The Lion King is also white." Liu Chuan exclaimed loudly upon hearing the name.

"White Lion, hmm, not bad either, it sounds good, let's call it White Lion then."

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment, nodded, picked up the white lion, put it in Qin Xuanbing's arms, and said, "Go and thank your sister Xuanxuan."

"Pah, if I'm its older sister, then you're its older brother."

Qin Xuanbing spat at Zhuang Rui, but immediately realized that her words were grammatically incorrect. She blushed with embarrassment and turned her head to the side.

Zhuang Rui didn't think too much about it. He just felt that he had been getting along very well with Qin Xuanbing during this time. He wasn't angry when he heard Qin Xuanbing's words. He just kept smiling foolishly. Bai Meng'an, who was standing next to him, was burning with envy. She wished she could transform into Zhuang Rui and take the opportunity to fawn over him in order to win his heart.

After traversing the vast grasslands, the group finally arrived in Nagqu. However, they didn't stay long, resting for one night before driving to Lhasa early the next morning. This was the last stop on their trip to Tibet. After spending two days sightseeing in Lhasa, they prepared to return home, which was about in line with Liu Chuan's expectations.

Lhasa is the holy land in the hearts of all Tibetans. On the highway from Nagqu to Lhasa, there are many Tibetans walking to Lhasa for pilgrimage, and even more ascetics. To express their piety, they prostrate themselves with every step they take. Zhuang Rui and the others saw that the clothes on their knees were worn and tattered, but on their faces, they saw only peace, without a trace of worldly restlessness.

Lhasa was formerly known as "Rasa". Legend has it that when Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty married into Tibet in the 7th century, this place was still a barren beach. Later, in order to build the Jokhang Temple and Ramoche Temple, the pond was filled with soil carried by goats. After the temple

was built, the number of missionary monks and pilgrims increased. Around the Jokhang Temple, many hotels and residential houses were built one after another, forming the prototype of the old city centered on the Jokhang Temple.

Meanwhile, Songtsen Gampo expanded the palace at Red Hill (the present-day Potala Palace). As a result, palaces were successively built on the Lhasa River valley plain, and the renowned plateau city, famous both domestically and internationally, was formed. "Rasa" gradually became a "holy land" in people's hearts, becoming the center of Tibetan religion, politics, economy, and culture at that time.

In the general public's impression, Lhasa consists of the Potala Palace, Barkhor Street, Jokhang Temple, Sera Monastery, Drepung Monastery, and the Lhasa River. However, Tibetans believe that only by reaching Jokhang Temple and Barkhor Street can one truly experience Lhasa.

"Zhuang Rui, come and look, this thing is so beautiful!"

In the bustling Barkhor Street, Zhuang Rui carried more than a dozen bags of various sizes, with a colorful hada knot around his neck. Inside his jacket, a furry little head peeked out—it was the little white lion.

Zhuang Rui squeezed his way toward Qin Xuanbing and the other girls with difficulty, but not many people paid attention to him here. They were all tourists from all over the country, and they were used to this kind of scene. However, the beauty of Qin Xuanbing and the other girls attracted the attention of many tourists.

"Hey ladies, we've bought quite a lot of things today. You don't want to bring this whole street home, do you?"

Zhuang Rui squeezed his way to the stall where a few girls were standing and said with a wry smile, "The three girls decided to go shopping this morning. Liu Chuan had to take care of his two beloved Tibetan mastiffs, Zhou Rui had no interest in shopping at all, and Bai Meng'an actually suffered from altitude sickness after arriving in Lhasa and was lying in her hotel room breathing oxygen. Without asking, Zhuang Rui was naturally conscripted."

Zhuang Rui originally intended to leave the white lion at the hotel, but when the little guy saw Zhuang Rui about to leave, he clung tightly to Zhuang Rui's trouser leg and wouldn't let go. Helpless, Zhuang Rui

put on Liu Chuan's jacket and took the white lion with him. His own jacket had been torn to shreds during the fight with the wolves.

Barkhor Street is a well-preserved old city in Lhasa, the most famous pilgrimage route in Tibet, and the tourist and commercial center of Lhasa. The street, paved with hand-polished stones, is not very wide, but it is the place with the highest daily traffic in Lhasa. There are more than a thousand shops and mobile stalls. Almost all the houses along the street are shops, selling prayer wheels of various sizes, Tibetan robes, Tibetan knives, vivid and simple religious objects, and other daily necessities.

Since Zhuang Rui's hotel was right next to this place, Qin Xuanbing and the others dragged him out early in the morning. They had been shopping for four hours straight, and the girls were still full of enthusiasm, excitedly sweeping through every stall they passed. Zhuang Rui had become a walking shopping cart, being pulled around like a puppet all morning.

However, Zhuang Rui also made some gains. He bought a lot of Tibetan medicinal materials, such as Ganoderma lucidum, saffron, cordyceps, Tibetan antelope horn, snow lotus, etc. There were also some kinds of magical compound Tibetan medicines that were said to be prepared and processed by lamas and Tibetan medicine secret recipes. Although he didn't know how effective they were, it was always good to take them back to show filial piety to his elders. This was something that Liu Chuan had repeatedly told him before he left the hotel.

Qin Xuanbing draped the few Tibetan-style women's clothes she had just bought over Zhuang Rui's shoulders, and then, along with Bai Mengyao and Lei Lei, slipped into the crowd to continue their treasure hunting business. Zhuang Rui couldn't believe that Qin Xuanbing, who was as cold as ice just half a month ago, had become like this. Seeing her haggling with the vendors in Mandarin with a Cantonese accent, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but wonder if she was a completely different person.

However, Zhuang Rui felt a sense of familiarity with Qin Xuanbing, as if she were a friend. After spending these days together, Zhuang Rui discovered that Qin Xuanbing was kind-hearted. In the past few days, Zhuang Rui often joked with her. If it were before, Zhuang Rui would definitely have kept his distance from her.

Although he complained, Zhuang Rui was still willing to do the hard work for these ladies. After all, the people coming and going here were a mixed bag, and he wouldn't feel at ease if he didn't have a man with him. Moreover, the items here were obviously modern handicrafts, with no old things. Zhuang Rui was too lazy to use his spiritual energy to distinguish them, and he enjoyed the pleasure of shopping.

"Are you being reasonable? We were the ones who wanted this first. Why should we sell it to them? Don't we have the money to pay?"

Zhuang Rui heard it clearly; the indignant voice came from Lei Lei. She had probably gotten into an argument with someone while selling things, and she didn't care about the Tibetan knife she was playing with anymore. After throwing it on the stall, she squeezed towards the direction from which the voice came from.

"What happened? Lei Lei, don't be angry, tell me slowly."

Zhuang Rui finally managed to squeeze to the front of the stall that had been surrounded by several people, and saw Lei Lei pointing her finger at the stall owner and loudly questioning him.

"Zhuang Rui, you've come at the right time. Tell me, aren't they being unreasonable?"

Lei Lei grabbed Zhuang Rui and asked him to judge the matter.

"Miss, please tell me what happened first. I don't know anything about it." Zhuang Rui looked at Lei Lei and said helplessly. She and Liu Chuan were really a pair, both of them were a bit confused in their actions and words.

"Here's the thing, we took a liking to that Thangka. The stall owner initially said he wanted to sell it for 500 yuan, and we agreed. But then he changed his mind and wanted to sell it for 800 yuan, and we agreed to that too. What's infuriating is that we had already agreed on a price, and then this person came over and offered 1,000 yuan. The stall owner was going to sell it to that person. Isn't this a very dishonest way to do business?"

Qin Xuanbing recounted the events to Zhuang Rui, her usually calm demeanor now replaced by a look of anger.

"Miss, that's not how it works. When I sell something, if someone offers a higher price, of course I'll sell it to them. If you want it, and you offer a higher price, I'll sell it to you too. Why would I not make money? Don't you all agree?"

Before Zhuang Rui could speak, the stall owner began to defend himself, and some people in the crowd loudly agreed. Lei Lei turned pale with anger upon hearing this, and just as she was about to speak, a middle-aged man standing opposite her said with disdain, "If you can't afford it, don't buy it. It's embarrassing enough."

This remark infuriated Lei Lei. Although she was not as wealthy as Qin Xuanbing, she still had a few hundred thousand yuan at her disposal during her trip to the mainland to investigate the market. She immediately said, "I'll offer 1,200 yuan. Let's see who can't afford it."