

Golden 86

Chapter Eighty-Six: The Grassland Black Market (Part One)

Holding the little white lion in his arms, Zhuang Rui sat in the passenger seat of the Hummer and asked Liu Chuan, who was driving, "Hey rascal, is your friend reliable? What we're doing is illegal."

Liu Chuan was driving a Hummer through Lhasa. In front of them was a Santana, which was leading the way for the Hummer.

After visiting the Potala Palace yesterday afternoon, Qin Xuanbing, Lei Lei, and Bai Meng'an, the siblings, took a plane and left Tibet. Qin Xuanbing didn't speak to Zhuang Rui again until she left, leaving Zhuang Rui no chance to relive the moment of their intimacy. He had secretly cursed himself for being such a blockhead for the past two days.

After consulting with his boss, Zhou Rui decided to stay. Firstly, traveling in two cars at the same time would provide mutual support and make the journey much safer. Secondly, Zhou Rui was somewhat worried about the two men going to the black market for antiques in Lhasa. After all, they had been through thick and thin together and had developed a good relationship. Zhou Rui decided to go with them, thinking that if they encountered a situation where they were double-crossed, he could protect them with his skills.

"Brother Song's connections, do you think they're reliable? If he had the time, he would have flown over to participate in this black market auction. I heard there are a lot of good stuff in there. I'm telling you, Brother, this time it's all up to your luck. If you can snag another good item, we'll be set for life. Oh, and Brother Zhou too, you should get a share this time as well."

"Breaking the law? What do you mean by breaking the law? I didn't steal from a rich man, nor did I rob a bank. I just paid for things; who dares to say I broke the law? Besides, even someone like Brother Song dares to go to the black market; what do we common folk have to be afraid of?"

As Liu Chuan drove, he kept rambling on and on. He hadn't known about this news beforehand; after all, he was a pet owner and had no connection to the antique business, nor had he ever considered it. It was only two days ago, when Liu Chuan spoke with Song Jun on the phone and told him he'd acquired a good mastiff, that Song Jun casually mentioned it. Thinking about Zhuang Rui's incredible luck lately, Liu Chuan decided to try his luck.

Liu Chuan had been hanging around the flower and bird market for several years and had long heard about black market auctions. Now he wanted to see it for himself. Anyway, with Zhou Rui, a master of unpredictable skills, he wasn't afraid of being cheated by those who ran black markets. Besides, the three guns in the Hummer were no joke.

As for whether buying and selling things on the black market is illegal, Liu Chuan wasn't stupid. He specifically asked Song Jun, who said that even if the police caught them in the act, the responsibility would lie with the black market organizers. At most, the buyers would have to recover the items they purchased, but they wouldn't bear any criminal responsibility. Moreover, with a little effort, they could even get their money back.

With Song Jun's words, Liu Chuan finally made up his mind to go. He knew that the profits in the antique business were many times greater than those in the pet trade. In the past, it was Old Man Lü and his ilk who looked down on him and were unwilling to bring him into the business. Now that his own brother had this ability, Liu Chuan naturally wanted to make a good deal of it.

After contacting the organizers of the black market in Lhasa using the phone number given by Song Jun, they waited for news from them until this morning when they received a call saying that a car would pick them up. Liu Chuan and his group didn't want to ride in the man's Santana, so they followed in their Hummer.

"I just hope nothing bad happens. I've heard of the black market trade you mentioned before, but in Tibet, it mostly involves Tibetan antelope hides and some precious medicinal herbs. As for antiques, I've heard of them less often before."

Zhou Rui didn't drive the Desert Prince; instead, he sat in the back of the Hummer. Although he couldn't carry a gun, his ever-present knife was hidden in a place no one knew about. A trip to the black market was nothing to Zhou Rui.

"Damn it, who pays for the gas you guys are wasting by going around in circles like this?"

The Santana leading the way kept circling around Lhasa. They'd been out since around 8 a.m., and it was almost 10 a.m., and it was still going in circles. Liu Chuan was getting impatient and grabbed his phone to call.

"Mr. Liu, don't be angry. This is for safety and it's good for everyone. Okay, we'll be there soon."

The other party's voice came through the phone, and then they hung up, making Liu Chuan so angry he almost threw the phone away.

However, the Santana in front must have sensed that there were no other vehicles following it, so it stopped circling in the city, turned around, and drove straight out of the city. Liu Chuan cursed and followed it.

"This is the road to Gyantse."

Zhou Rui glanced at the direction the other party was driving and said to Liu Chuan that he was very familiar with this place, to the point that Zhuang Rui and Liu Chuan both wondered what he used to do. It seemed like there was no place in Tibet that he hadn't been to.

"Boss, could you please slow down?"

The road from Lhasa to Gyantse was very easy to drive on, all paved. Liu Chuan sped up and quickly overtook the Santana, pulling ahead of it. However, the other driver immediately called, telling Liu Chuan to slow down.

"You guys in this line of work don't deserve a nice car. It's easier to run away when the cops are chasing you."

Liu Chuan was on the phone, but he slowed down and let the other party pass. With someone as unreasonable as Liu Chuan, the other party probably didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

The car was traveling at a speed of about 100 kilometers per hour on the asphalt road to Gyantse. After about half an hour, the Santana in front suddenly turned into the grassland, and Liu Chuan quickly followed.

After bumping along the grassland for about half an hour, the people in the Hummer spotted a tent on the flat grassland ahead, though they couldn't see it clearly due to the distance.

Soon, the two vehicles drove up to the front of the tent. Outside the tent, there were already five or six cars parked. Three of them were SUVs, two were Santanas, and one was even a truck with military license plates. However, a vehicle of the Hummer's caliber was unique to Zhuang Rui and his group.

A dozen or so burly young men, each holding a walkie-talkie and a camouflage binocular, formed a circle around the tent. When the Hummer stopped outside the tent, they looked over with wary eyes, though their gazes also held a hint of envy.

The fact that a black market auction was being held in such a place was something Zhuang Rui and the others hadn't expected. However, they couldn't help but admire the organizers of this black market. On this flat grassland, no movement could escape their notice. Even if the police came, they couldn't possibly deploy so many officers to surround the entire grassland.

Besides, by the time the police cars arrive, these people will probably have already packed up their tents and run away, leaving no evidence for the other party.

After the Hummer came to a stop, a young man got out of the Santana in front and came to greet the Hummer.

Liu Chuan pushed open the car door and got out first. With his appearance, he could play a villain in a Hong Kong movie without needing makeup. Zhuang Rui followed closely behind and got out of the car as well.

Zhou Rui walked at the back, carrying a leather bag containing 300,000 yuan in cash. This money was temporarily withdrawn by Zhuang Rui from a bank in Lhasa. For this money, Zhuang Rui not only rushed to the bank to make an appointment yesterday morning, but the bank in Pengcheng also called Liu Chuan's mobile phone to inquire whether Zhuang Rui's account had any large expenditures recently.

"Mr. Liu, I'm sorry to have troubled you all. Please go inside the tent and rest for a while."

Judging from the young man's accent, he should be the one who spoke to Liu Chuan on the phone. However, he didn't seem to be in charge here. After chatting with Liu Chuan for a few minutes, he called over a person guarding the tent and asked him to lead the group to the tent. He then got into his Santana and left. Zhuang Rui guessed that he had gone to the crossroads to keep watch.

The young man who had been guarding the tent led Liu Chuan and the others into the tent.

"Please wait a moment, everyone."

When they reached the tent entrance, a middle-aged man of about forty years old stopped the three of them.

"We were introduced by Boss Song from Beijing. What, you don't trust us?"

Liu Chuan straightened his face and said with obvious displeasure. He was indeed unhappy. After all that trouble, they couldn't even let him into the tent when they arrived at the destination.

"Is this Mr. Liu Chuan?" the middle-aged man asked.

"It's me. These two are my brothers. Should we check them?"

Liu Chuan, who watches too many Hong Kong movies, said this half seriously and half jokingly.

"No need, no need. The people introduced by Boss Song are certainly trustworthy. Please come inside for tea..."

Upon hearing that Liu Chuan had been introduced by Song Jun, the middle-aged man immediately became enthusiastic, lifted the tent flap, and invited the group inside.

"No, let me show you the goods we brought first. If you have any good stuff, don't hold back. I like straightforward people."

Liu Chuan took the purse from Zhou Rui's hand, unzipped it slightly, and dozens of bundles of one-hundred-yuan bills appeared before the middle-aged man's eyes.

Liu Chuan learned this trick from Song Jun over the phone. Sure enough, after the middle-aged man saw the real gold and silver, his attitude became even more enthusiastic. He not only personally led the group into the tent, but also had someone bring them several bowls of hot butter tea.

However, Zhuang Rui and his group dared not drink the tea. Although Song Jun said that the organizers of this black market had a good reputation, they were on someone else's turf, so it was better to be safe.

The middle-aged man didn't insist; offering tea was just a matter of politeness. After inviting a few people to sit down, he returned to the tent entrance to greet the new guests.