

Golden 871

Chapter 871 Fund

"Mr. Zhuang, aren't you going a bit too far with this?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Dali couldn't help but smile wryly. A small black market for antiques could fetch a single item auction price as high as 150 million RMB—a rarity even in international auctions.

In the past decade of Chinese art auction records, it seems that only last year's hyped Yuan blue-and-white porcelain jar has exceeded this transaction amount. If it hadn't been auctioned on the black market, it would have been a historic achievement.

Zhuang Rui poured Li Dali a cup of tea and said with a smile, "Mr. Li, this auction is enough to make you famous all over the world..."

"Come on, it's more like infamous. I doubt this black market will be able to continue operating..."

Li Dali was full of complaints. He planned to give the money to Zhuang Rui and then immediately go abroad to avoid trouble. He now realized that playing games with these powerful sons of officials was a very dangerous thing.

"Mr. Zhuang, this is a check for 190 million. Please accept it..."

The reason Li Dali arrived a little later than Zhuang Rui was because he went to deal with the check; he didn't dare to owe Zhuang Rui money.

Zhuang Rui looked at Li Dali strangely and said, "Mr. Li, why are you in such a hurry?"

"I...I'm going to stay in the Maldives for two months, and this whole thing has blown up. The police are probably looking for me everywhere right now..."

Li Dali spoke his mind. The older you get in the underworld, the more timid you become. Boss Li knew that if the government wanted to deal with him, it wouldn't be difficult at all. He had done many illegal things in the past ten years, enough to put him in jail for a few years.

"Just because of that?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback for a moment upon hearing this, then laughed and said, "Mr. Li, don't worry, no one will come looking for you. This matter is over. No matter who asks, just say that you sold two modern art pieces. You can stay home without worry..."

"Mr. Zhuang, are you serious?"

Although the Maldives has beautiful scenery, Mr. Li wasn't really interested in traveling. Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, his eyes lit up.

"Of course it's true. This whole thing started because of me, so we can't let you, Mr. Li, take the blame, can we?"

Zhuang Rui smiled, took out a pen and paper, wrote an account number on the check, then pushed the check back and said, "Mr. Li, according to the auction house's rules, you take a 15% commission on this money, and then transfer the rest into this account..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Li Dali was stunned. After a long pause, he stammered, "Mr. Zhuang...you're too kind. I just helped with a small matter..."

Fifteen percent of 190 million is nearly 30 million RMB, almost a third of Li Dali's wealth. Most importantly, Boss Li never intended to take a commission from this money.

"Alright, Mr. Li, this is Mr. Qian's phone number from the Kyoto Auction House. You can go see him when you have time. We'll have opportunities to cooperate in the future..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand, stopping Li Dali from continuing. "The key is for everyone to make money together. People who try to take all the profits for themselves won't get anywhere in this society."

Furthermore, Li Dali has indeed put a lot of effort into this matter. He has prepared the ancient kiln site in a very proper manner. Without that groundwork, the auction might not have attracted the Japanese. Based on this alone, it is not unreasonable for Li Dali to take 30 million.

"Alright, Mr. Zhuang, you're so kind, and I, Old Li, will be just as generous. If there's anything else you need in the future, just let me know. If I, Old Li, even flinch, I'm a son of a bitch!"

Although Li Dali's words were somewhat rough, they were sincere. He had been in the underworld for so many years and had seen many people who took money but did nothing and even stabbed him in the back. He had never seen anyone as honest as Zhuang Rui before.

"Alright, Lao Li, go and reassure your men. I have some things to take care of. That's all for today. I'll treat you to dinner another day..."

Zhuang Rui patted Li Dali on the shoulder, his tone becoming warmer. Although his business was now quite large, he didn't have many capable subordinates. While Li Dali's background wasn't exactly clean, he was a decent person.

After leaving the private room, Li Dali insisted on paying the bill. Zhuang Rui smiled but didn't say anything. They got into their cars and drove away from the teahouse.

"Brother, where are we going? Home?" Peng Fei asked Zhuang Rui, turning the steering wheel.

Zhuang Rui rubbed his temples. Today's auction was exciting, but the excitement had also left him feeling a bit tired. After thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui said, "Let's go to the museum. I want to set up a foundation. It would be better if Huangfu Yun handled this..."

The discovery of the Cizhou official kiln has caused a great stir in the domestic collecting community, and even the government has taken notice. Miao Feifei has also learned the ins and outs of the matter. If Zhuang Rui really spends this money with a clear conscience, it will probably give people something to criticize him for in the future.

Therefore, Zhuang Rui plans to take out all of this 100 million yuan and add another sum of money of his own to set up a foundation in the name of Dingguang Museum to help out-of-school children. The money is not cleanly obtained, but it is spent in a respectable way. He believes that even if people find out in the future that he set up the scheme, they will not say much.

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"Hello, is this Grandpa?"

Just as the car was about to reach the museum, Zhuang Rui received a phone call. He looked at the number and saw it was from Yuquanshan.

"Xiao Zhuang, this is your Aunt Wu. The commander wants you to come here immediately..."

The voice coming from the phone was that of the old man's special caregiver. She had been taking care of Ouyang Gang and his wife for more than ten years, so Zhuang Rui usually called her "Auntie" when he saw her.

"Aunt Wu, what's wrong? Is something wrong with Grandpa's health?" Zhuang Rui asked in surprise.

"It's nothing, the commander is in good health, he just asked me to notify you to come over..."

Aunt Wu's words put Zhuang Rui at ease. Although there was spiritual energy to help him recover, birth, aging, sickness and death are inevitable. After all, the old man had reached that age, and some unexpected things could happen.

"Okay, I'll be right there..."

After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui said to Peng Fei, "Let's go to Yuquan Mountain..."

Among the three generations of the Ouyang family, including Ouyang Lei, no one was more favored by the old man than Zhuang Rui. You should know that even Ouyang Long and others who were working in other places might not be able to see their grandfather when they came to Beijing.

As the car entered Yuquan Mountain and turned onto the road leading to the small building, Zhuang Rui immediately saw that the old man was sitting at the entrance of the courtyard, with Aunt Wu standing beside him, seemingly trying to persuade him about something.

Zhuang Rui had Peng Fei stop the car from a distance, then quickly walked over and said with a smile, "Grandpa, what's wrong? Did you and Grandma have a fight?"

In his later years, the old man had become a bit like a child, and he usually had to be coaxed. However, today the old man's expression was different from usual, and Zhuang Rui felt that he was targeting him.

The old man's face tightened. He tapped Zhuang Rui's shoulder with his cane and said, "Who told you to sit down? Stand up. Xiao Wu, stay away..."

"Commander, this..."

Aunt Wu knew that the old man had suddenly become angry after receiving a phone call. She guessed that Zhuang Rui might have gotten into trouble outside, and gave Zhuang Rui a wink before leaving.

"Grandpa, what's wrong?"

Zhuang Rui was truly baffled; the old man's display of power made him a little uneasy.

The old man, leaning on his cane, said angrily, "I heard you sold national treasures? Those things may be a bit of a nuisance, but they belong to our country. How could you give them to an island nation!"

"Grandpa, who told you that? That's not how it is..."

When Zhuang Rui heard about this, he was both amused and exasperated. Who was so talkative as to let the old man know about this? But since the old man didn't know it was a setup, it certainly wasn't Miao Feifei who told him.

"Never mind who told me, I just want to know if it's true or not? Let me tell you, your Grandpa Song will come over with his cane and beat you in a minute..."

The old man's words reminded Zhuang Rui that the old man of the Song family was also an antique enthusiast. Perhaps someone had whispered it in his ear, and then it reached his maternal grandfather.

Zhuang Rui now realized that what he thought was a very secretive thing couldn't escape the eyes and ears of the relevant departments at all. The auction had only ended a few hours ago, and the news had already reached the old man.

In fact, Zhuang Rui did not know that after the incident he had last time, Ouyang Gang and the old man of the Song family had paid more attention to him. Such a big matter would naturally be reported to the old man.

"Grandpa, that's not how it is. I did sell something to the island nation, but it was fake. It wasn't even worth 100,000 yuan, let alone over 100 million. It's not a national treasure at all..."

Zhuang Rui quickly explained to the old man that these old guys were all retired from the battlefield, and each of them had a fiery temper. Maybe that old man Song was looking for a pistol at home. This matter had to be made clear.

"Are you telling the truth?" the old man asked, still somewhat doubtful.

Zhuang Rui patted his chest and said, "Grandpa, how could I dare to lie to you? I'm telling the absolute truth, it's just that the things are made to look real..."

Zhuang Rui explained the matter of establishing a foundation to the old man again, and the old man's originally serious expression gradually softened.

"Well, that's good. Xiao Rui, Grandpa is getting old. I don't know when he'll be going to meet Marx and Chairman Mao. While he's here, he can protect you, but after he's gone, some things might not be so easy to say..."

Therefore, you must do things uprightly. As long as you do things uprightly, you have nothing to fear from what others say...

The old man spoke slowly, and finally, leaning unsteadily on his cane, he stood up and said, "You go ahead and do your work. I'll talk to Old Man Song about this..."

"Grandpa..."

Watching the elderly man being helped into the courtyard by the nurse, Zhuang Rui suddenly felt a lump in his throat. Only now did he realize that the old man had been silently caring for him all along.

Chapter 872 Turmoil (Part 1)

After leaving Yuquan Mountain, Zhuang Rui went to the museum to explain the foundation's establishment to Huangfu Yun and inquired about exchanging artifacts with the Palace Museum. He didn't return home until evening.

In the days that followed, Zhuang Rui had more and more free time. Apart from attending classes at Peking University, he spent his days at home with his children. Watching his children grow up day by day, Zhuang Rui was filled with the happiness of being a father.

On weekends, Zhuang Rui would visit museums or "Xuanrui Zhai". Two months later, the Dingguang Foundation was established and initially funded children in the impoverished mountainous area of Sanbaimi, building twelve Hope Primary Schools, which received unanimous praise from society.

Huangfu Yun handled all of these matters, while Zhuang Rui remained behind the scenes. Apart from a few people in the industry, very few people knew that Zhuang Rui had initiated the foundation.

"Dad... Daddy, hug me..."

Little Fangfang swaggered toward Zhuang Rui, clapping his little hands incessantly. His little sister followed closely behind. The two little ones had just celebrated their first birthday and could already say many words such as "Dad, Mom, Grandma, Uncle."

Perhaps because Zhuang Rui often used his spiritual energy to cleanse their bodies, the little ones were much taller than other children their age, and their skin was especially good, making them look like two porcelain dolls.

Behind the two little ones were two snow-white Tibetan mastiffs. Ouyang Wan was also watching her grandchildren with a nervous expression, afraid that they would fall.

"Here, son, have a taste..."

Zhuang Rui picked up Fangfang and brought his face close to hers. He then picked up his daughter with his other hand and looked at Ouyang Wan, who was anxiously watching her grandchildren behind him, and said, "Mom, you're getting old. Don't run around with them. Isn't Jin Gang watching over them?"

Ouyang Wan glanced at her son and said irritably, "Weren't you the same when you were little? Didn't your mother run around a lot? Hmm, but Jin Gang is sensible; he's helping Peng Fei put up the couplets right now..."

This year's New Year is a bit late, in mid-February. After Zhuang Rui finished decorating the courtyard house, he brought his whole family to the manor. He plans to spend the New Year there this year.

"Aww! Ho ho!"

Just as they were talking about King Kong, the big guy ran over. Looking at its clothes, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but burst out laughing.

I don't know who tailored King Kong's clothes, but they actually made him a set of bright red Tang suit cotton-padded jacket and trousers, and he even wore a landlord's hat on his head. If you looked at him from behind, you would really think he was a burly man.

"I want... Jinjin, I want Jinjin..."

As soon as King Kong arrived, the two little ones immediately became restless in Zhuang Rui's arms, twisting their bodies and stretching out their little hands to let King Kong hold them.

"I'm telling you, who exactly is your father here...?"

Zhuang Rui handed Fangfang and Yuanyuan to Jin Gang with a wry smile. The two little ones were having a great time tugging at the fur around Jin Gang's neck, which made Zhuang Rui extremely jealous.

Two Tibetan mastiffs circled around King Kong, grabbing his clothes with their paws and trying to climb up. However, it turned out that dogs really don't have the talent for climbing trees, and they all fell down halfway up, which made Zhuang Rui laugh.

"Gah... Gah gah!"

The golden feathers that had been circling in the sky also flew down and rubbed their sharp beaks against the faces of the two little ones. If outsiders saw this, they would definitely be terrified, but Zhuang Rui's family had already gotten used to it.

Ouyang Wan stared at her two grandchildren and asked Zhuang Rui, "Xiao Rui, shouldn't Xuanbing be back by now?"

"I'll be back tomorrow, Mom. You've asked me that more than ten times already..."

Qin Xuanbing started working last month, responsible for Qin Ruilin's jewelry design. She usually works from home, but she went to Hong Kong a few days ago. This year, the Qin family is planning to come all over to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

"Alright, I'll watch over things here. Go help Aunt Li and the others, see if the rooms are ready..."

With her in-laws coming, Ouyang Wan naturally had to give them ample attention, preparing all the habitable rooms in the manor and keeping busy with these matters for the past few days.

Zhuang Rui smiled and said, "I know, Mom. Don't worry, the rooms here are even better than those in a five-star hotel..."

"By the way, where's Peng Fei? He's been gone for almost half a month, hasn't he? Why hasn't he come back yet? Xiaoqian has asked him several times..." Just as Zhuang Rui was about to turn around and leave, Ouyang Wan called out from behind.

"Mom, Peng Fei will be here in the next few days..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was speaking, his cell phone rang in his pocket. He took it out and looked at it, then said with a smile, "Here, it's your godson calling. He calls every day, what are you worried about?"

"You brat, I'm just worried that you'll get into some danger again and make your mother worry..." Ouyang Wan glared at her son.

"Okay, I'll take this call first..." Zhuang Rui walked to the side and pressed the answer button.

"Brother Zhuang, everything's taken care of. I'm flying back to *** the day after tomorrow..."

Peng Fei's voice came through the microphone. There seemed to be quite a few people around him, making it a bit noisy, and none of them were speaking Chinese.

"Nobody's paying attention to you, right? Be careful, Zhang Qian's been talking about you a lot lately, go give her a call..."

Zhang Qian is also more than two months pregnant. If Peng Fei hadn't been able to speak Japanese and was quick-witted, Zhuang Rui really wouldn't have let him go out this time.

The story of Peng Fei going to *** dates back to more than a month ago.

At the beginning of 2007, news suddenly spread in the archaeological community that they had discovered an ancient kiln site with a history of thousands of years and unearthed two complete porcelain pieces from it.

After research and verification by numerous ceramic experts and historians, these two porcelain pieces have indeed been confirmed to be from a thousand years ago. This has led to the declaration to the world that China had surpassed China in ceramic firing technology a thousand years ago.

At the same time, they put forward another theory, namely that Cizhou ware porcelain, which has been circulating in China for a long time, was originally introduced to China from the ***.

This distorted news caused an uproar in China, prompting several domestic ceramic experts to travel to the United States to verify the authenticity of these two pieces of porcelain that were supposedly "surpassing" China in technology.

What's somewhat frustrating is that even the experts couldn't determine the authenticity of these two porcelain pieces.

The carbon-14 dating of the porcelain pieces, made from porcelain powder scraped from the porcelain base, confirms that these two porcelain pieces are indeed artifacts from over a thousand years ago, and all the evidence is unfavorable to the Chinese side.

Just then, people suddenly remembered last year's auction, but it wasn't a formal auction and there was no video evidence, so even if some people spoke up, it wouldn't make any difference.

Li Dali has been extremely anxious lately, receiving a constant stream of abusive phone calls from all over the country. If it weren't for the fact that he used to be involved in organized crime, someone would probably have already come knocking on his door.

Zhuang Rui was also reprimanded by the old man, who asked him to come up with a solution to the matter. That's why Zhuang Rui sent Peng Fei to the Japanese secretly. He had long anticipated that the Japanese would do something sneaky and had already prepared a backup plan.

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"Dad, you take a rest, give Fangfang to me, this child is too naughty..."

At noon, Zhuang Rui and Hao Long drove two cars to pick up Grandpa Qin's family. Of course, this only included Zhuang Rui's parents-in-law and Grandpa Qin; his two uncles stayed in Hong Kong.

Qin Haoran adores his two grandsons and has been holding them tightly ever since they arrived home. Right now, Fangfang is reaching out to pull at his grandfather's glasses.

"Not tired, not tired at all. Didn't you see? Even the old man isn't tired, how could I be?"

Qin Haoran was referring to his father, who was sitting on the sofa with a little figure wrapped around him, laughing heartily.

"Dear viewers, we are now broadcasting live from a press conference held in Tokyo by Chinese ceramic experts. As you all know, the recent announcement by the authorities of the discovery of ancient porcelain dating back a thousand years has attracted widespread attention."

The Chinese side claims they have sufficient evidence to prove that the porcelain in the hands of the *** people is fake. We can see that the president of ***Yamaki Co., Ltd. entered the press conference carrying two pieces of porcelain..."

Phoenix TV, which was playing, suddenly interrupted with a program that caught the attention of the men in the living room.

"These bastards have no history at all, yet they insist on stirring up trouble. It's also because some people in our country are useless and sold our national treasures to them, which gave the bastards their opportunity. They are truly despicable descendants!"

Watching the scene on TV, Old Master Qin was heartbroken, while Zhuang Rui, sitting opposite him, was red-faced. He was the one who sold the goods, so this was like cursing a monk in front of a monk.

"Dad, that thing might not be real. Didn't our country's ceramic experts say they have evidence?"

Qin Haoran had a rather objective view of the issue. After saying this, he looked at Zhuang Rui and said, "Xiao Rui, you're an antique collector, what's your opinion on these two porcelain pieces?"

"I?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback, not expecting his father-in-law to ask him a question. Just as he was about to answer, he suddenly saw a familiar figure on the TV and quickly said, "Dad, you'll know when you watch TV. The results will be out soon..."

The person appearing on television was Tian Fan, a researcher at the Palace Museum. He was there as a ceramics expert and was the one who requested this press conference.

"Friends from the media, it's a pleasure to have you all attend this press conference..."

Researcher Tian, who Zhuang Rui had always perceived as somewhat dull, surprisingly displayed a sophisticated air. After a brief speech, he continued, "Regarding the so-called ancient kiln site porcelain unearthed by the *** authorities, I would like to clarify that they are two fakes, modern handicrafts!"

Tian Fan's words were like a bomb dropped into the crowd. Whether it was the viewers in front of the television or the reporters at the press conference, everyone stood up.

Chapter 873 Turmoil (Part Two)

"We have sufficient evidence to prove that these two pieces of porcelain are the work of a master ceramic maker in my country. He successfully replicated the porcelain that was presented as tribute to the royal family at that time, based on the broken porcelain unearthed from the ancient Cizhou kiln in China more than a thousand years ago..."

In other words, the two porcelain pieces owned by the ceramics community in *** are merely works by this master; the claim that Chinese porcelain was inherited from *** is a colossal joke!

Professor Tian ignored the commotion from the audience and calmly delivered his prepared speech. After the on-site interpreter translated his words into English and Japanese, the room became even more chaotic.

All the reporters at the scene raised their arms, hoping to get a chance to ask questions. In today's information age, this was simply explosive news, and could even be described as a scandal in the ceramics industry.

Using modern artifacts from other countries to pass off as antiques unearthed in one's own country is not only a scandal, but also a joke. If this were true, the academic community would likely face contempt from scholars worldwide.

"Yehe-kun, are you sure these two porcelain pieces are from a thousand years ago?"

Sitting in the last row of the press conference, Yamaki was also feeling very uneasy.

If this thing is fake, it will be a disaster for Yamaki. He will be ridiculed by the whole world, and Yamaki Corporation will probably fall apart.

"Mr. Yamaki, you have to trust science. We've verified it with carbon-14 dating. These two porcelain pieces are definitely from a thousand years ago. Those Chinese people were just saying that to save face..."

Nogai glanced at Yamaki with dissatisfaction, not believing his own eyesight. Could even the instruments be fake? So far, Nogai's carbon-14 dating of ceramic ware had not revealed any flaws.

Yamaki paused abruptly, then said to Nogai, "I'm sorry, Nogai-kun, it was my fault. I shouldn't have doubted you..."

It's worth noting that the announcement of the discovery of a 1,000-year-old kiln site was made by Yamaki Co., Ltd. Since then, the Yamaki family's company has experienced unprecedented growth, and many consumers in the US choose Yamaki Co., Ltd.'s products first when purchasing porcelain.

With Yehe's encouragement in some public occasions, in just over a month, the Yamaki family's previously somewhat shrunken ceramic market has now surged, not only recovering lost ground but also occupying half of the entire *** ceramic market.

Therefore, Yamaki dared not offend Yehe. Even if he believed the two porcelain pieces were genuine, he was now in a difficult situation and had no choice but to continue down this path.

"Mr. Tian, as a renowned scholar, isn't it extremely irresponsible of you to say such a thing?"

Seeing the crowd's agitated state, Yamaki could no longer hold back. If he aroused public suspicion, it would have a very negative impact on his company.

"Are you Mr. Yamaki, the one who announced the discovery of the ancient kiln site?"

Although Professor Tian was over fifty years old, he had excellent eyesight. Even through seven or eight rows of chairs, he recognized the man as the owner of the "antique porcelain".

"That's right, these two pieces of porcelain are a testament to the cultural heritage of our great nation, and you cannot allow them to be slandered like this!"

Yamaki's words drew loud cheers from the reporters present. This was their home turf, and for a moment, the atmosphere was imposing and the reporters were awe-inspiring.

"Mr. Yamaki, are you really sure these two pieces of porcelain were unearthed from the ground?!"

Professor Tian stood up and looked at Shanmu, questioning him loudly. He was not weak in any way in terms of his aura, and his slightly thin figure seemed so tall at this moment.

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"Old Tian, well done!"

Upon hearing Tian Fan's question while he was at his own manor, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but slap his thigh.

Since the treasure appraisal event in Jinan, Zhuang Rui and Professor Tian had met several times and were quite familiar with each other. He hadn't expected that Professor Tian, who was usually not very talkative, would have such a strong and unyielding character.

"Xiao Rui, do you know this Teacher Tian?"

Qin Haoran, who was sitting next to Zhuang Rui, was also watching with great excitement. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, he suddenly turned his head.

"Uh... I know him. We're both in the antique circle, and we've had a lot of contact. I didn't expect it was him who went to *** this time..."

Zhuang Rui chuckled. It was more than just knowing each other. Professor Tian had instructed him to hold this press conference, and what Old Master Qin had just said about disdaining his descendants seemed to be related to him as well.

"This Professor Tian is quite good; he possesses the integrity of a Chinese scholar. Xiao Rui, please introduce me to him sometime..."

Qin Haoran was a scholar with a deep understanding of Chinese culture, but he was too busy with his family business to do research.

"Okay, okay, Dad, let's watch TV first..."

Zhuang Rui nodded in agreement, and at the press conference, the tension between the two sides intensified.

Under Professor Da's questioning, Yamaki became slightly impatient. Noga gently tugged at him and whispered a few words in his ear.

"If Professor Tian cannot provide evidence, I will sue you for defaming our academic research. This would be a great insult to my personal integrity..."

After receiving instructions from Yehe, Yamaki's words became sharp, and the scene turned into a war of words between the Chinese and Japanese sides, leaving the reporters caught in the middle somewhat at a loss.

However, the standoff between the two sides was a great news story in itself, and Yamaki's question was exactly what these reporters wanted to ask.

Therefore, no reporter would be so tactless as to interrupt them; instead, they all dutifully transcribed the information into text and sent it back to the relevant news organizations using their personal communication tools.

As for the cameramen, they pointed their cameras at the two of them, capturing every detail of their facial expressions and not missing a single small movement.

Many viewers from China, Japan, and even more countries who had just turned on their televisions were captivated by this "press conference" from Tokyo, while Phoenix TV's ratings soared.

Neither Zhuang Rui, who was in ***, nor Professor Tian, who was on stage, expected that the shockwaves caused by this incident would far exceed the influence of the academic community itself.

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"Mr. Yamaki, is that the box you're carrying the 'ancient porcelain' you're talking about that you unearthed?"

When Yamaki asked about the evidence, Professor Tian suddenly changed the subject and brought up the porcelain itself.

"That's right, Professor Tian, you said this porcelain piece is fake, but what is your evidence? Archaeology is a very rigorous process, not just empty talk..."

Yamaki strode to the table at the press conference, and under the protection of several bodyguards, took the porcelain from a specially made leather case and placed it on the table.

Yamaki's move was also at Yehe's behest; he wanted to slap the Chinese academic community hard in front of television viewers all over the world.

Because Yehe believed that the two porcelain pieces were genuine, that no one could find any flaws, and that Yamaki also had a carbon-14 dating report.

"I also have two pieces of porcelain here. I would like to ask Mr. Shanmu to appraise them to see if they were also unearthed from your *** ancient kiln site?" Professor Tian smiled, took out a cardboard box from under the table, and pulled out two pieces of porcelain.

"Wow, the same one?!"

"Yes, exactly the same..."

"My God, how is this possible? These four pieces of porcelain are so similar?"

The entire room erupted in excitement upon seeing the porcelain that Professor Tian had brought out, because the porcelain that Professor Tian had brought out was exactly the same as the two pieces that Shanmu had. At least, these reporters could not tell the difference.

"this....."

Yamaki was also shocked by Professor Tian's action. He was closest to the porcelain, and the other two pieces of porcelain had the greatest impact on him. Yamaki felt his head buzzing.

"hehe....."

Zhuang Rui, watching this scene on television, couldn't help but laugh. After scheming to extort money from Shan Mu, he immediately informed Xu Guoqing, asking him to try his best to produce more pieces identical to the previous two porcelain pieces.

Zhuang Rui did this to prevent the little bastard from doing anything shameless, and now it seems that it has indeed come in handy.

"Professor Tian, the fact that you can produce these two porcelain pieces doesn't prove anything. These two porcelain pieces were unearthed in our country more than a month ago. You have plenty of time to replicate them. I seem to have heard that your country is very good at counterfeiting..."

When the chairman of the Wild Union Association, who was sitting in the last row, saw that things were getting out of his control, he immediately stood up and said the words above. And you know what? To the reporters from various countries, these words sounded quite reasonable.

"Shameless!"

At that moment, countless viewers in front of their televisions uttered this sentence, and even the usually gentle and refined Qin Haoran was no exception.

"Damn it, they won't shed a tear until they see the coffin..." Zhuang Rui cursed inwardly, thankfully he had prepared a backup plan.

Professor Tian was not stumped by the question about illicit relations. He smiled and said, "Since I have produced these two pieces of porcelain, I naturally have evidence to prove that your two pieces of porcelain and mine are the work of the same person. However, are you... willing to destroy these exquisite pieces of porcelain?"

"This is our national treasure, of course it cannot be damaged..." Yehe immediately refused Professor Tian's offer.

"National treasure? Those have a price, right? You can name any price you want. If it's proven to be genuine after damage, I will compensate you according to the price you quoted..."

If it's a fake, haha, then it means this was a deliberate forgery, and it deserves to be broken..."

Professor Tian's words caused another sensation in the room. What was originally an ordinary press conference had taken many twists and turns, and now everything was on the line.

Chapter 874 Turmoil (Part 3)

In fact, the cross-section of new porcelain is quite different from that of old porcelain. However, this difference can be made up for through certain techniques. Even if you break the porcelain to examine the cross-section, it is still difficult to distinguish between them.

However, the method of processing the internal body of porcelain is very costly. Ordinary imitation porcelain does not have that old look, so if you break the porcelain, there is a high probability that you can tell the difference between the real and fake pieces from the broken surface.

However, it is important to note that every piece of art that has been passed down for thousands of years is a precious, irreplaceable, and unique object. If it is smashed and proven to be genuine, it would be an irreparable loss.

Authentication itself is a matter that requires a great deal of professional knowledge. If every antique had to be broken down for authentication, there probably wouldn't be many antiques left in the world.

So when Professor Tian made this request, the entire room erupted in uproar, and some journalists who understood art were already questioning Professor Tian's professional competence.

"If it's true, then it's not just about paying money..."

"Yes, although broken porcelain can be repaired, its historical and cultural value is far less than that of a complete piece..."

"What if they're fake? Didn't you see that Professor Tian also brought out two identical pieces of porcelain?"

For a moment, the room was divided into two factions: one faction agreed to smash the porcelain for identification, while the other faction believed that this was inappropriate and an insult to the inheritance of ancient civilization.

At this moment, Yamaki was also very conflicted. If he didn't agree to Tian Fan's conditions, it would give people the impression that he was guilty.

However, Yamaki was really unsure if he agreed, since these two pieces of porcelain were not unearthed from any so-called "ancient kiln site," but were purchased from China.

To put it bluntly, Yamaki was really guilty. If there was any secret inside the porcelain, he probably wouldn't be able to wash away this huge disgrace to the academic community even if he committed seppuku.

...

"Mr. Yamaki, what do you think? You can name a price for your porcelain. With so many reporters in front of me, I can't possibly renege on the deal. If it's genuine antique porcelain, I can compensate you according to your price..."

Professor Tian is now in a precarious situation; if he can't unravel the mysteries within the porcelain, this matter will remain a mystery, with some always believing and others always doubting.

Unlike Yamaki, who was currently filled with anxiety and uncertainty, Tian Fan had complete faith in Zhuang Rui. In his pocket, he even had a check for 80 million US dollars that Zhuang Rui had given him, which was a sum of money that Zhuang Rui had gathered from all his available funds.

Recalling receiving Zhuang Rui's call and meeting the young man, Professor Tian still felt a bit like he was in a dream. Originally, they couldn't verify that the two pieces of porcelain were fake, and even some members of the expert group were about to give up when Zhuang Rui suddenly gave him a surprise.

Tian Fan never dreamed that the Cizhou official kiln auction that had caused such a stir eight months ago was actually orchestrated by Zhuang Rui, who even had a backup plan, seemingly having foreseen today's situation back then.

After much deliberation, Yamaki still couldn't make up his mind. After a moment's thought, he said, "Professor Tian, smashing antiques for appraisal is unprecedented in the art market. I need to consider this carefully..."

"Please do as you please. If you're afraid, then stop promoting these so-called unearthed ancient porcelains..."

Tian Fan's words made Shan Mu's face darken, but he didn't say anything. Instead, he told several bodyguards to guard his porcelain and quickly walked back to Ye He's side.

"Yehe-kun, what do you think we should do?"

Throughout this incident, Nogai has always served as Yamaki's strategist. Now that Yamaki is somewhat at a loss, he naturally seeks advice from Chairman Nogai.

"I want to examine their porcelain first..."

Nogai harbored suspicions about the sudden appearance of two identical porcelain pieces. After all, the incident had already escalated, and if it was ultimately proven that the porcelain was counterfeit, not only Yamaki, but he too would have to wash away the shame with his blood.

After obtaining Tian Fan's permission, Ye He took a magnifying glass and carefully examined the two pieces of porcelain that Tian Fan had brought on the table.

About five minutes later, Yehe smiled slightly, put the magnifying glass back in his pocket, gave Yamaki a wink, and the two walked to the side.

"How is it, Yehe-kun?" Yamaki asked anxiously.

"Haha, the Chinese aren't satisfied with just being humiliated, they've come to us for a beating again. Mr. Yamaki, agree to their terms, whatever price they ask for. I think victory will definitely be ours. As for those two pieces of porcelain they brought..."

As soon as I touched it, I could feel that although the porcelain brought by the Chinese was extremely exquisite in its firing process, it was almost flawless in terms of shape and painting.

However, one thing is certain: the gleaming sheen on that porcelain piece indicates that it is definitely a newly made piece, completely lacking the profound sense of historical vicissitude that antique porcelain possesses. Yehe dares to swear on his life that he is not mistaken.

Yes, Ye He was not mistaken. Although Zhuang Rui had enough time to age the pieces, he did not do so because if the two porcelain pieces were exactly the same, the authorities probably would not agree with Professor Tian's opinion.

Zhuang Rui has orchestrated a grand scheme. From releasing the rumors to selling the porcelain, and now to the tit-for-tat confrontation, this scheme is nearing its end and has reached its climax.

Of course, Zhuang Rui hadn't thought that far ahead, but things had just progressed to this point, and Zhuang Rui, sitting in front of the television, was a hundred times more excited than anyone else present.

...

"Yoga-kun, do you mean... we can gamble with the other party by destroying the porcelain?"

Seeing Nogai's confident expression, Yamaki's confidence also increased. He was knowledgeable about ceramics and had noticed that the two pieces Nogai had taken out were slightly different from his own porcelain.

"Of course, Mr. Yamaki, you must understand that as long as they can't find any evidence after smashing the porcelain, then we have won. In front of the whole world, we have given the Chinese a resounding slap in the face. This is more important than the porcelain itself. I believe you will become a hero of our Yamato people..."

"Also, you can ask for a very high price, which would make up for the loss caused by the broken porcelain..."

As Yehe spoke, he became excited. He seemed to see people in China's scientific research community crying, and he saw the Chinese people, who had always been proud of their ancient culture, bowing their proud heads before him.

Yamaki was also excited by the talk of the wild union. The only thing the two brothers didn't think about was what kind of consequences it would bring to them if the porcelain was really fake.

"Professor Tian, in order to prove that these two porcelain pieces are indeed part of the civilization of our Yamato people, I am willing to accept your conditions..."

Yamaki and Noga walked together to the table at the press conference. After agreeing to Professor Tian's conditions, Yamaki continued, "Art is priceless. If Professor Tian insists that I put a price on these two pieces of porcelain, I think they should be worth at least 5 billion yen!"

"If Professor Tian can come up with this money, I'm willing to... conduct this unique appraisal with you right now!"

After Yamaki said those words, he felt a chill run down his spine, and his blood was boiling. It seemed as if the entire nation was cheering for him, and he could already see the frustrated and disappointed expressions on the faces of the Chinese people.

"My God, five billion yen?"

"This is way too expensive!"

"Quickly calculate, how many US dollars is 5 billion yen?"

"Yes...it's fifty million US dollars, which definitely exceeds the price of that Yuan blue and white porcelain piece auctioned two years ago..."

After Yamaki announced the price of the two porcelain pieces, the entire press conference erupted in excitement, with all the reporters trying to convert the figure of 5 billion yen into a monetary amount they could understand.

Finally, the reporters discovered that this was a bet of up to fifty million US dollars.

Yamaki bought these two porcelain pieces for less than 200 million RMB. Now he's asking for around 400 million RMB. Even if he only breaks one piece, he'll still recoup his costs.

This was a win-win situation, and Shanmu stared intently at Professor Tian. At this moment, he actually hoped that Professor Tian would agree.

In that case, he would be a hero of the Yamato people, someone who... shattered the rumor that Japanese culture originated from China.

Of course, the fact that he acquired these two porcelain pieces from China has now been automatically filtered out of Mr. Yamaki's mind. Academically speaking, this is called self-hypnosis, treating something illusory as reality.

All eyes were on Professor Tian, and even the cameras were pointed at his face.

Yamaki has already issued a challenge, and will Professor Tian, who has been pressing him relentlessly beforehand, accept the challenge? This has put the hearts of viewers, including those watching on television, on tenterhooks.

"Hehe, there's an old Chinese saying: 'What's fake can't become real, and what's real can't become fake.' Mr. Yamaki, here's a promissory note from a Swiss bank, with a face value of eighty million US dollars..."

All the reporters present and the millions of viewers watching on television can testify that if smashing the porcelain fails to prove it's fake, you'll immediately receive fifty million US dollars!

Professor Tian's hand trembled slightly as he pulled out the check. He was just a scholar who would never argue with anyone normally, but at this moment, for the honor of his country, Professor Tian spoke those words with a resounding voice.

"Quick, turn on the TV, it's that Phoenix channel!"

"What are you watching? Change the channel, hurry up, or I'll beat you up..."

"That concludes today's meeting. Now, let's watch together a clash between our Yamato people and Chinese culture. I believe that *** will prevail!"

In countless places across China and the United States, the same scene is playing out, with countless people glued to their television sets, waiting for the answer to be revealed.

Chapter 875 Ethnic Groups (Part 1)

"Xiao Rui, do you... do you think this porcelain is real or fake?"

Back in Zhuang Rui's home in Beijing, even though it was still the dead of winter in February, Qin Haoran was sweating profusely as he watched. While the fifty million US dollars weren't even on his radar, this was a gamble concerning national dignity.

Therefore, this porcelain appraisal has risen to several levels, not just an academic exchange, but a collision between the civilizations of two countries. This has brought many people who were originally indifferent to collecting to sit in front of the television.

"It must be fake, Dad. Do you really believe that Japan could produce such exquisite porcelain 1,000 years ago?"

Zhuang Rui replied with a smile that he hadn't intended to make such a big deal out of it, but the island nation had taken advantage of him, so this was reaping what he sowed.

"But..." Qin Haoran was still a little worried.

"No buts, kid, why so many questions? Look, it's about to start..."

Grandpa Qin was much calmer than his son, teasing his former granddaughter in his arms while scolding Qin Haoran.

The group's attention returned to the television screen. Zhuang Rui saw that the security guards at the press conference venue had cleared out a 10-square-meter open space, and the two pieces of porcelain were placed on a table in the open space.

Although Professor Tian firmly believed that Zhuang Rui would not lie to him, he was still a little nervous in this situation. The "ancient porcelain" incident, which had been making headlines for more than a month, was about to come to an end today.

"Professor Tian, please..."

Yamaki took a step back and gestured to Tian Fan. In his view, the Chinese man's actions were bound to be futile, and his name would resound throughout Japan from this day forward.

A staff member handed over an electrician's hammer, which had just been found. Professor Tian took the hammer, took a deep breath, and said, "To help everyone more clearly understand that these four artifacts were made by the same person, I think we should start with the porcelain I brought..."

"It will be all right....."

Shanmu waved his hand dismissively. "It's your right to smash your own things, but if you're going to smash mine later, you'd better be prepared for that fifty million dollars to change hands."

"Professor Tian, smashing an object to authenticate a work of art is unprecedented. Are you confident in your ability to do so?"

A female reporter, holding a long microphone, passed it from beside the security guard to Professor Tian. This was the first question from a reporter at today's press conference.

"I'll say it again: the truth will out, and the falsehood will become the truth. We'll soon find out whether it's real or fake. Facts speak louder than words. Once you smash these porcelain pieces, you'll know..."

Professor Tian was also somewhat helpless. Using this method to appraise objects was a sign of the appraiser's incompetence. Professor Tian was forced into this situation; he couldn't just let himself be humiliated by the island nation like this.

At the same time, Professor Tian also felt deep admiration for this counterfeiter. To be able to imitate the fake so realistically, his craftsmanship was unmatched even by national-level craftsmen. This manufacturer was capable of establishing his own school of thought and forming his own system.

After answering the female reporter's question, Professor Tian picked up the hammer in his hand, walked to the table, and raised the hammer high in front of the genital device that Peng Fei had brought him.

At that moment, everyone present at the press conference and those watching on television held their breath, their eyes glued to the raised hammer.

"Smack!"

The crisp sound was amplified by the excellent sound effects, as if it were striking the fragile hearts of everyone present, causing each person's body to tremble slightly.

Turning our attention back to the porcelain piece, the square surface of the vessel had been smashed, revealing a black hole the size of a baby's fist. The camera zoomed in on the hole, but the contents were still not visible.

"Slap...slap slap!"

The sound of hammer striking porcelain continued. When Professor Tian struck the fifth time, the square porcelain ware finally disintegrated, with scattered shards of porcelain irregularly distributed on the table.

Because the outside was blocked by security guards, all that was left in front of the broken porcelain were Professor Tian and Shanmu. Professor Tian casually threw down a hammer and started rummaging through the broken pieces.

The object was not large to begin with, and just a few dozen seconds later, Professor Tian raised his head with a happy expression, holding a palm-sized porcelain shard in his hand, with the inner wall facing out, and displayed it in front of all the cameras.

"Xu, November 12, 2006..."

Under the high-magnification zoom of the camera, the line of text, slightly larger than a grain of rice, was clearly transmitted to the audience around the world watching this press conference.

"It's fake, it's fake..." someone shouted at the scene.

"Nonsense, of course it's fake. This one was brought by Professor Tian..." Another reporter glanced disdainfully at his rookie colleague next to him. What was this kid thinking?

"How...how is this possible?"

Standing next to Professor Tian, Yamaki could clearly see the small characters on the inner wall of the broken porcelain even without a magnifying glass. He looked somewhat dazed and had a very ominous premonition.

At that moment, Yamaki even had a urge to stop Professor Tian from continuing to smash the porcelain; he was afraid.

Seeing that Yamaki looked somewhat lost, Yehe walked over to him and whispered in his ear, "Yamaki-kun, that was a fake to begin with. The inscription on the inner wall isn't anything special. You have to trust science. Both of our porcelain pieces have been carbon-14 tested..."

"Eek! Thanks for the reminder, Yehe-kun. It was my fault..."

Yamaki suddenly lowered his head and bowed deeply to Nogai. He realized that he had been somewhat out of line. He was now facing a television audience across Japan and even the world, and he was representing the image of Japan.

"Next, I'm going to smash this same porcelain utensil. Everyone, take a good look..."

Yamaki's emotions, which had just calmed down, were suddenly made tense again by Professor Tian's words, because the porcelain he was about to smash was the utensil he had bought from China.

The broken porcelain piece was collected in a basket by the staff and placed aside. Once there were no more broken pieces on the table, Professor Tian raised his hammer to another identical piece of porcelain.

"Slap... slap slap..."

As Professor Tian's hammer fell, the exquisite porcelain was instantly reduced to a pile of shattered pieces. Everyone in the room held their breath, their eyes fixed on Professor Tian's hands.

Professor Tian was also extremely nervous. When his hands, gloved in white, appeared in the camera lens, they trembled noticeably. Everyone could see that Professor Tian's inner state was not as relaxed as he appeared on the outside.

Suddenly, Professor Tian's hand stopped, a glint of light flashed in his eyes behind his thick glasses, and his lips trembled involuntarily as he tightly clutched a small piece of porcelain, no bigger than a baby's palm, in his hand.

"Blood, there's bleeding..."

"Professor Tian, your hand is bleeding..."

In his excitement, Professor Tian did not notice that a sharp piece of porcelain had already cut his palm, and blood was flowing from between his fingers, staining the broken porcelain red.

"Found it...I found it..."

Professor Tian paid no attention to the blood on his hands; his lips moved, emitting sounds that only he could hear.

It's important to understand that Professor Tian faced immense pressure during the process of deciding to break the porcelain for identification. If he failed to find any clues in these two pieces of porcelain, not only would he be ridiculed by the world, but the entire Chinese academic community would be ashamed of him.

Of course, this situation no longer exists, because on the inner wall of the porcelain shard in Professor Tian's hand, there is a line of text engraved with "Xu, April 4, 2006".

"Professor Tian, what are you talking about? Can you show us the porcelain shard in your hand?" Seeing Professor Tian's excited appearance, everyone realized that the result was finally in.

Standing to the side, Yamaki's face was ashen. He could sense that the seemingly erratic developments were not going as he had expected; the thing in Professor Tian's hand was definitely not going to harm him.

"See? This is the evidence. I am utterly outraged by the despicable behavior of the Japanese ceramics academic community!"

The reporter's words startled Professor Tian. Tian Fan opened his hand, pinched the porcelain shard with two bloodied fingers, and displayed the words inside the shard to the cameras in front of the room.

Chapter 876 Ethnic Groups (Part Two)

On the subway platform, in the middle of the square, at the crossroads, all the Japanese people who were watching this press conference felt a bitter taste in their mouths and a deep sense of guilt. Their once proud heads drooped, as if they wanted to bury them in their crotches.

"No, this is impossible, impossible..."

Yamaki's mind went blank. He couldn't understand how the porcelain, after carbon-14 dating, could be a modern imitation. "Could it be that the testing equipment is playing a joke on me?"

"Yokai-kun, you said these two porcelain pieces were definitely real, so why, why is this happening?!"

Yamaki was trying to control himself, but the fear and anger in his heart made his voice grow louder and louder, and with the shout, he reached out and grabbed Yehe's collar.

In Yamaki's mind, all of this was caused by their affair, by the porcelain he encouraged him to buy from China, and by the fakery he encouraged him to fabricate, thus creating this series of events.

In short, at this moment, Yamaki has shifted all the blame onto Yehe, but he doesn't seem to realize that if it weren't for his own greed, would things have come to this?

"I don't know, I don't know why this is, and there's also a piece of porcelain..."

Yehe was completely dumbfounded. The scene he had imagined of slapping the Chinese hard did not happen. Instead, he was hit on the head with a stick, which made him dizzy and disoriented.

When Yehe saw the four-element bottle on the table, his eyes immediately turned red, like a gambler who had just lost his wife. He seemed to draw strength from nowhere, shoving aside Yamaki, who was twenty or thirty years younger than him, and rushed to the table.

"Smack!"

Instead of using a hammer, Yehe picked up the porcelain and smashed it hard on the ground. The shards of porcelain scattered everywhere, causing everyone to scatter. Yehe, like a stray dog, lay on the ground, searching for the broken pieces.

"I haven't lost yet, Japan hasn't lost yet, a piece of porcelain doesn't prove anything!"

Yehe's elbows and knees were cut and bleeding from the sharp shards of porcelain on the ground, but he didn't care at all. His obsession made him forget the pain, and he continued to search on the ground.

"Haha, hahaha, no, there are no words inside this porcelain. Chinese, you've lost, you've lost!"

After prying together all the broken porcelain in front of him, Yehe laughed loudly as if he were insane. There was a cut on his face that had appeared out of nowhere, and blood was dripping down his cheek and onto his body. He looked like a madman.

Compared to Professor Tian's unwavering resolve, Ye He's current behavior is like that of a clown presented to the world. His attitude speaks volumes.

"Mr. Yehe, is this the porcelain shard you're looking for?"

A fluent American English voice rang out in the hall, attracting everyone's attention.

It was an American female reporter with golden eyes and blue hair. In her hand, she held a broken piece of porcelain. On the inner wall of the porcelain, facing the crowd, were clearly engraved the words "Xu, April 4, 2006"!

It is obvious that the two so-called "antique porcelains" were made on the same day by the same person. This is irrefutable evidence, and all the reporters and cameras faithfully recorded everything that happened here.

"This... how is this possible? How could newly fired porcelain be identified by carbon-14 dating as an artwork from a thousand years ago?"

Yehe was completely stunned, standing there blankly. When he saw the porcelain shard in the American female reporter's hand, he was overcome with anger and rage, and with a "poof!" he spat out a mouthful of blood and fell backward.

His fainting spell caused chaos, and the staff at the venue quickly called for an ambulance and carried him outside.

These Japanese people witnessed what happened today and knew the reason for it all: this person who fainted brought shame to the whole of Japan that is hard to wash away. Therefore, they had no good feelings towards the illegal union. After they hurriedly carried him out, they threw him on the bench outside.

Unaware of the chaos, Yamaki, surrounded by bodyguards, hastily left the venue. He didn't know how to face the questions from the Chinese people or how to explain his so-called "ancient porcelain" to the nation.

Watching the miserable state of Yehe on TV and hearing the question Yehe had just uttered, Zhuang Rui, far away in Beijing, revealed a cold smile.

China's technique for imitating antiques can be said to have reached a level of unparalleled skill.

When Xu Guoqing first made these two items, he collected a large number of Cizhou kiln shards. He scraped off the glaze from the shards, then ground the porcelain body into powder, mixed it into the porcelain blank, and then fired it in the kiln.

Once the porcelain has been fired to about 80% of its full potential, it is then colored with the original glaze and fired again. This process is extremely complicated. If there is even the slightest mistake, the entire batch of porcelain will be ruined. Otherwise, Xu Guoqing would not have spent more than 10 million yuan on Zhuang Rui.

Porcelain fired in this way is impossible to determine even with carbon-14 dating unless the entire piece is broken up for testing. Simply scraping off some glaze powder from the base is insufficient to determine its true age.

There's an old saying that's true: if you want to destroy someone, first make them crazy. After carbon-14 dating, Yehe thought he was foolproof, which is why he provoked China. However, he didn't expect that technological means would be ineffective in the face of the powerful "Made in China".

"Great! That's truly satisfying!"

Upon seeing this, Qin Haoran clapped his hands heavily, almost dropping his grandson. His mother-in-law, seeing this, immediately picked up Fangfang and pinched her husband's waist.

"Oh, Xiao Rui, when Professor Tian returns to China, you absolutely have to introduce him to me. He'll truly bring glory to our nation..."

After Qin Haoran cried out in pain, he looked at the television again. At this moment, all the news media were surrounding Professor Tian, while no one was paying attention to the whereabouts of Yehe and Shanmu. Losers are never well received.

"Fellow journalists, the truth is now clear to the world. The so-called 'ancient porcelain' by the Japanese is a complete farce, and their previously published academic articles are all fabricated. I hope the relevant authorities can come forward and explain why such a despicable thing happened."

Professor Tian was, after all, a scholar. Although he was furious, using the word "despicable" was already his limit. If Zhuang Rui had been in that position, he would have directly shouted that the entire nation was despicable. Of course, in that case, he probably wouldn't have been able to leave Japan.

After saying those words, Professor Tian had someone clean up the broken porcelain shards and hurriedly left the venue. However, just as his figure disappeared behind the door, Zhuang Rui saw a familiar back view.

"Brother Zhuang, how was it? Was the show entertaining?"

About an hour later, Zhuang Rui received a call from Peng Fei. After glancing at his father-in-law, Zhuang Rui took his phone and went outside.

February in Beijing was still bitterly cold, and the cool breeze dampened Zhuang Rui's earlier excitement considerably.

"You be careful, and protect Professor Tian too. Right-wing elements in Japan are still quite rampant..."

Zhuang Rui knew that Peng Fei had been in the venue the whole time, but he had been well hidden and had not been exposed to the cameras.

"I know, Professor Tian just went to rest and will be returning to China tomorrow. Brother Zhuang, you should have been the hero. How are you feeling? A little disappointed?" Peng Fei laughed on the phone.

"Get out of my way, what do I have to be disappointed about?"

Zhuang Rui chuckled and cursed. He was very satisfied with the result. He absolutely couldn't let this get out of the way, otherwise, anyone with eyes could see that this was a setup by Zhuang Rui.

"Alright, I'll pick you up from the airport tomorrow night..."

After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui let out a long sigh of relief. He was looking forward to seeing what kind of face the Japanese government would have when all the major media outlets were reporting on this matter tomorrow.

Chapter 877 Aftermath (Part 1)

The next afternoon, Zhuang Rui drove to the airport early and waited for more than two hours before his flight from *** to *** finally landed at Beijing Capital International Airport.

"Peng Fei!"

Zhuang Rui waved to Peng Fei as he stepped off the plane. Peng Fei, carrying a suitcase, immediately ran over and said, "Brother Zhuang, it's almost Chinese New Year, and you're so busy at home. I told you not to come pick me up..."

"You little brat, you're just being smug after getting the benefits..."

Zhuang Rui laughed and punched Peng Fei in the chest. He looked up and saw Professor Tian walking towards him, so he quickly went to greet him.

Although Zhuang Rui's plan didn't have any major flaws, if it weren't for Professor Tian's cooperation, and if Yamaki had insisted on not damaging the porcelain, it's hard to know how this matter would have ended.

Zhuang Rui extended both hands and shook hands with Professor Tian, smiling as he said, "Professor Tian, I witnessed your righteous words repelling the Japanese invaders yesterday..."

"You little rascal, that wasn't very ethical of you. You scared me so much yesterday I almost had a heart attack. Don't let it happen again..."

Although Professor Tian was criticizing Zhuang Rui, he had a smile on his face. Seeing the *** people suffer a setback was definitely the happiest thing for Chinese people, especially the older generation.

After this incident, Professor Tian and Zhuang Rui became much closer. After all, they were comrades-in-arms in the same trench, one charging ahead and the other offering advice from behind.

"Professor Meng, someone from the association is waiting for you outside, so I'll be going now. I'll be hosting a dinner in a few days, so please do me the honor of joining us..."

Tian Fan's visit to *** has caused quite a stir, not only in the academic community but also in relevant national departments. There are at least several hundred people waiting to greet Professor Tian outside the airport, which is why Zhuang Rui made those remarks.

"No, I, Lao Tian, am most afraid of this. I don't even like going to meetings. I'll just go with your car..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui bring this up, Professor Tian's face immediately fell. Despite his composed demeanor on television, he was actually a man of few words and hadn't mentally prepared himself to play the hero.

Zhuang Rui hesitated for a moment and said, "This... isn't that a bad idea? So many people are waiting outside..." If Professor Tian really runs away with him, wouldn't all those people outside have come for nothing?

"I, Lao Tian, have never enjoyed that kind of treatment in my entire life, nor do I want to seek that kind of limelight. Besides, the expert group isn't just me..."

Professor Tian paused for a moment, then continued, "Some people love excitement, so I'll leave the opportunity to them. Xiao Zhuang, you tricked me this time, so you'll have to help me out with this little favor..."

As Professor Tian spoke, he opened the car door and got in. Before his press conference, there was a lot of internal disagreement. Not only did the experts who went to *** disagree, but even the team leader disagreed.

In the end, Professor Tian withstood the pressure and wrote a guarantee, which earned the tacit approval of the relevant leaders. As a result, Professor Tian was the only expert present at the press conference.

Therefore, Professor Tian was not particularly fond of these people. He preferred to go home and eat a meal cooked by his wife rather than engage in formalism such as celebration parties, which would only help those so-called leaders increase their political achievements.

"Alright, since you've given the word, I'll comply..."

Zhuang Rui suddenly remembered his father-in-law's instructions and continued, "Professor Tian, if you get in this car, you're not allowed to run away when I celebrate your success..."

Before Professor Tian could even speak after hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Zhuang Rui waved to the group of people who had just gotten off the plane and drove off, leaving the others looking at each other in confusion, wondering what had happened.

...

The welcoming party for the expert group was of a very high caliber, including leaders from the Palace Museum, leaders from the Ministry of Culture, the president of the *** Association, and representatives from various non-governmental organizations—a total of several hundred people gathered at the airport exit.

Several large signs read "Welcome Professor Tian from the Expert Group," but after everyone had left, only a few other experts were seen; Professor Tian was nowhere to be found.

"Where's Professor Tian? Why are there only a few of you?" A man with a large belly, who looked like a leader, asked the leader of the expert group.

"Director Wu, Professor Tian... Professor Tian has been picked up by Teacher Zhuang..." The team leader, who was from the Ministry of Culture, was now stammering when he saw the leader.

"Nonsense! What Teacher Zhuang? There are so many of us waiting here, isn't this disorganization and lack of discipline? Call that Teacher Zhuang and tell him to come back!"

Well, when Director Wu heard that someone had more influence than him, he immediately flew into a rage. Among the people present, he had the highest administrative rank, and he immediately lashed out.

"Director Wu, that Teacher Zhuang..."

Someone in the expert group recognized Zhuang Rui and whispered a few words in Director Wu's ear. Director Wu's expression changed as he said, "All of you experts have worked hard this time. Please get in the car; the ministry has prepared a celebration party for you..."

Director Wu seemed to have forgotten his earlier displeasure. After shaking hands with each of the experts without changing his expression, he led the way out of the airport.

However, the main figure has disappeared, and the remaining experts have not appeared on television or made any statements, so this welcoming event has ended in a very anticlimactic manner.

However, Director Wu did not dare to utter any more harsh words or flaunt his official power. How could he possibly offend the nephew of a high-ranking official?

...

"Brother Zhuang, *** is still the best, the streets are so festive..."

The day after tomorrow is Lunar New Year's Eve, and the city is now decorated in its newest colors, filled with the festive atmosphere of the New Year.

As people's lives have improved in recent years, they increasingly reminisce about the atmosphere of celebrating the New Year in the 1970s and 80s. The ban on firecrackers has also been lifted, and sitting in the car, one can occasionally hear the sporadic sounds of firecrackers from the streets.

"Yeah, you're going to be a dad soon, time really flies..."

Zhuang Rui was also intrigued by Peng Fei's words. This was the second year he had spent the New Year in ***, and almost every year brought new changes. If it weren't for the birth of his children, Zhuang Rui would almost feel like it was all unreal.

"Things have been better these past few years; the festive spirit of the old folks has returned, but it's still far from what it was in the 70s and 80s..."

Professor Tian also felt a bit emotional. Society is developing faster and faster, but some old traditions have been eliminated. For example, monkey trainers, people selling magic pills and sword swallowing tricks were the most common street performers in Professor Tian's time.

"Hey, Xiao Zhuang, where are you taking me?"

As Professor Tian was talking, he noticed that the car was heading towards the suburbs, which puzzled him.

"Hehe, Professor Tian, a casual dinner has been prepared at home. We'd love for you to tell us about the thrilling story of your trip to ***..."

Zhuang Rui laughed when he heard this. He had just sent a text message to his mother, planning to entertain Professor Meng at home that evening, so that his father-in-law could meet him. Qin Haoran had been nagging Zhuang Rui about it until midnight last night.

"You little rascal, I haven't even seen my wife yet, don't think something's happened to me..."

Professor Tian shook his head, took out his phone and made a call home. Actually, he also greatly admired the mysterious person who made these porcelain pieces and wanted to talk to Zhuang Rui about it.

...

"Dad, this is Professor Tian, Teacher Tian. This is my father-in-law. He admires you very much. That's why I brought you here on his orders..."

After spending more time with Qin Haoran, Zhuang Rui felt that his father-in-law was very open-minded, so he would often crack a few jokes with him.

Qin Haoran, like a star-struck fan, stepped forward and tightly grasped Professor Tian's hand, saying, "My name is Qin Haoran. Welcome, Professor Tian. Professor Tian's charisma on television makes us feel ashamed of our own..."

"I don't deserve such praise. I was merely an executor; Xiao Zhuang was the mastermind..."

Seeing Qin Haoran's gentle and refined demeanor, Professor Tian didn't dare to be negligent. He smiled and continued, "I'm a few years younger than you in England, so just call me Brother Tian..."

"What executor, what mastermind?"

Qin Haoran seemed a little confused, but he still stepped aside and invited Professor Tian into the living room. Old Master Qin also stood in the hall to greet him, and everyone exchanged greetings again.

The meal at home had been prepared long ago. In order to allow the men to chat better, Ouyang Wan took her wife and mother-in-law to another restaurant for dinner, leaving the place for Zhuang Rui and the others.

Grandpa Qin was in poor health and was already over eighty years old, but he still insisted on toasting Professor Tian with a glass of wine before going back to his room to rest with Qin Xuanbing's help.

"Professor Tian, congratulations on your successful trip to ***, which has enhanced our national prestige. Let's have a drink..." After the old man left, Zhuang Rui raised his glass and toasted Professor Tian.

In fact, Zhuang Rui had prepared more than one plan when he sent Peng Fei to ***. Explaining the whole story to Professor Tian was just one of his plans.

Although Zhuang Rui had had many contacts with Tian Fan before, he never expected that Professor Tian would have such integrity, bearing enormous pressure and actually managing to get this matter done.

"Xiao Zhuang, you know the truth of this matter better than anyone else, so there's no need for you to try and whitewash me, Lao Tian..."

Professor Tian downed his drink without touching his chopsticks, and continued, "Although you took a risk, the outcome was thankfully good, but you can't do it again. This kind of thing is one-of-a-kind..."

"Teacher Tian, I understand. In any case, I still want to thank you for this. Otherwise, I really wouldn't know how to handle things..."

Zhuang Rui nodded, adopting a humble and receptive expression. The uproar and impact of this matter far exceeded Zhuang Rui's expectations. He really wouldn't dare to play such a game again.

"Brother Tian, what... what are you talking about?"

Qin Haoran had been wondering about this ever since they were at the door. Now, after hearing their conversation, he was even more confused. It seemed that his son-in-law was connected to the "ancient porcelain" incident.

Chapter 878 Aftermath (Part Two)

"Brother Qin, you don't know?"

Professor Tian paused for a moment, glanced at Zhuang Rui, and then said, "This whole affair was caused by your son-in-law from beginning to end..."

Tian Fan was unaware that Zhuang Rui had kept this matter so secret, not even from his father-in-law. He blurted it out without thinking, and he couldn't help but feel a bit of revenge on Zhuang Rui; the kid's previous actions had practically used him as a pawn.

"What?!"

Qin Haoran spat out the glass of wine he had just drunk, and looked at Zhuang Rui with an expression of disbelief.

"Dad, please don't get agitated..."

In his excitement, Qin Haoran sprayed a mouthful of wine all over Zhuang Rui, who frantically grabbed tissues to wipe it off.

"Xiao Rui, is what Brother Tian said true?"

Qin Haoran never expected that his son-in-law, who was usually quite low-key, would actually orchestrate such a big event. It could be said that in the past two months, relations between China and Japan have become somewhat tense because of this incident.

Of course, the relationship between the two countries has never been truly good; it has always been merely a facade of friendship.

The living room was heated. After Zhuang Rui took off his coat, which reeked of alcohol, he looked at Qin Haoran and said, "Dad, I didn't expect this matter to cause such a big commotion."

Here's what happened: Some time ago, a ceramics research institute I invested in successfully fired imitation porcelain from the Cizhou official kiln...

Originally, I wanted to take it to a friend's auction house to test the waters and see if it could be appraised. Who knew that this guy named Shanmu insisted on buying it? I had already raised the price quite high, but he still bought it. He was practically stuffing money into my hand; I couldn't just refuse, could I?

Zhuang Rui wore a wronged expression, leaving Qin Haoran and Professor Tian speechless. This kid was a typical example of someone who took advantage and then acted innocent, even slapping the other person across the face at the end.

If you don't want to sell, there are plenty of ways. Just smash it on the spot, why bother deliberately raising the price to get someone else to buy it?

Qin Haoran realized for the first time that his seemingly honest son-in-law was actually the kind of person who was wise beyond his years and would even help Zhuang Rui count the money after selling him out!

"Then...why didn't you tell me yesterday?"

Qin Haoran was stunned by the twists and turns of the story. After Zhuang Rui finished speaking, he remembered that yesterday, when they were all anxious, his son-in-law had acted as if he was very confident.

"Dad, isn't it because they're shy about praising themselves?"

Zhuang Rui's words were even more damaging, causing Professor Tian and Peng Fei, who were sitting to the side, to both spit out their drinks, and a burst of laughter filled the room.

"We have a breaking news report: a suicide has occurred at the Ginza Building in Tokyo, Japan..."

It has been confirmed that the deceased was the 52-year-old president of the Japan Ceramic Association. He died instantly after falling from the building. Preliminary investigation indicates that the act of having sex in the wild was a suicide, but the specific reasons are still under investigation...

Just as Zhuang Rui and the others were chatting happily, a news report on the television suddenly drew their attention, and the room fell silent for a moment.

Those most shocked were naturally Zhuang Rui and Professor Tian, who had just left Japan. Neither of them could have imagined that Ye He would end his life by suicide in response to this scandal in Japan.

Although the news reports that the cause of the suicide is unknown, everyone knows that the trigger for the suicide was this "antique porcelain" incident.

Fearing that Zhuang Rui and the others might feel guilty, Qin Haoran quickly said, "Xiao Rui, Brother Tian, this isn't your fault. It's entirely the Japanese's own fault..."

"Exactly, bro, if it were up to me, we'd just take care of those two..."

"Alright, Peng Fei, go keep your wife company, stop talking nonsense..." Zhuang Rui interrupted Peng Fei. No matter what, this was still a life lost.

"Xiao Zhuang, no matter how many Japanese devils die, we won't be sad. Back in the day, my grandfather was in the 29th Army's Big Sword Squad, and he personally chopped off the heads of twenty-two Japanese devils..."

Professor Tian was completely unaffected. After hearing the news, he actually drank three glasses of wine in a row. Especially after he said those words, Professor Tian's thin body gave everyone a sense of rugged heroism.

"Hehe, I'm fine, it's just that the news came a bit suddenly..." Zhuang Rui laughed upon hearing this.

In fact, after that trip to the island, Zhuang Rui's temperament was not as fragile as everyone thought. At least he did have the intention to kill Muta. If Jin Gang hadn't done it for him, Zhuang Rui would have killed Muta himself.

So the fact that the suicide by wild sex only made Zhuang Rui feel a little awkward was only natural. Anyone who knows that someone they have seen or know has died, whether that person is a friend or an enemy, will definitely have some emotional fluctuations.

Zhuang Rui looked at the news reports and saw that there was no mention of Japan's attitude towards the "ancient porcelain" incident. He already knew in his heart that even after Yehe died, he would be smeared with mud.

"If my grandfather hadn't been stabbed a few times in his early years, he wouldn't have passed away after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Come on, let's drink!"

Professor Tian's performance today impressed Zhuang Rui. He was originally a very refined and quiet person, but he also had a bold and generous side. Although he was not tall, he had a strong presence.

"Teacher Tian, tell me about your grandfather..."

Zhuang Rui didn't want to dwell on the "antique porcelain" incident any longer, so he deliberately changed the subject.

"Hey, speaking of my grandfather, he was quite a figure back in the day. He wielded a big sword so powerful that even Chiang Kai-shek knew about him, and he was even awarded that 'Order of the Blue Sky and White Sun'..."

Professor Tian was also slightly tipsy, and when he heard Zhuang Rui mention his ancestors, he immediately began to speak animatedly.

After Professor Tian recounted his family history, Zhuang Rui and the others realized that Professor Tian's ancestors were indeed quite distinguished.

It turns out that Professor Tian's ancestors were from a family of martial arts practitioners, who were very famous in Hebei Province. However, in the 1920s, Professor Tian's grandfather joined Feng Yuxiang's Northwest Army.

That old man followed Commander Feng in his campaigns across the country. He was a battalion commander when he participated in the Battle of Xifengkou on the Great Wall, and was promoted to regimental commander because of his bravery in battle.

However, Professor Tian's grandfather later left the army because he was no longer fit to stay in the military due to multiple injuries.

Back then, in the Kuomintang army, whether they were regular troops or local troops, and whether they were heroes of the War of Resistance against Japan or vanguards of the Civil War, almost every officer was corrupt.

Professor Tian's grandfather was the same. He served in the army for more than ten years and accumulated a lot of money. After returning to civilian life, in addition to his first wife, he married two more concubines when he was over fifty years old. I don't know how his body could withstand it.

Professor Tian's father was a student at Peking University. After graduation, he used the money his father embezzled in the army to open an antique shop in Beijing. He did not inherit the family business and chose to pursue a career in literature instead of military service.

Although the antique shops disappeared after the liberation, Professor Tian, under his father's influence, still made a living in the antique business and has achieved some success so far.

However, Professor Tian still carries the tough blood of his ancestors in his veins, and he went to Japan with the mindset of fighting another war against Japan.

Therefore, Professor Tian and the Japanese can be considered sworn enemies. Seeing Ye He commit suicide, he felt only joy, and the wine tasted even better.

The meal lasted for more than three hours. The people present were all knowledgeable and well-versed in history and current affairs, and they had a very enjoyable conversation. In the end, Professor Tian also drank too much and sang "The big sword is slashing down on the heads of the Japanese devils" before Zhuang Rui helped him to the guest room to rest.

In the days that followed, news from Tokyo kept reaching Zhuang Rui's ears. To his surprise, after Ye He's suicide, Yamaki also followed suit and committed seppuku in his apartment. His death was more courageous than Ye He's.

When authorities searched their residence, they found that both men had left suicide notes. Yamaki had also left a video recording in which he stated that the incident was their private act and expressed remorse for the harm caused to the Japanese people.

The suicide notes of the illicit couples were all similar, apologizing to the Japanese government or people, but none of them mentioned the negative impact the incident had on China.

After seeing the news report, Zhuang Rui's last trace of guilt vanished.

Subsequently, the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs held a press conference to give a summary report on the incident, the main theme of which was, of course, to smear the two dead men, with the government only taking responsibility for inadequate supervision.

Thus, this event, which had caused a great uproar for more than two months, has finally come to an end.

However, this incident still had a profound impact. At the very least, the Japanese academic community never dared to say anything about Chinese culture being inherited from Japan again.

Even the South Koreans, who had previously been loudly proclaiming Qu Yuan and Confucius as citizens of their country, have since fallen silent and stopped mentioning the topic. It's just that "Made in China" is too powerful; it not only cheated out of hundreds of millions of dollars but also drove two people to their deaths. Who would dare to cross that line?

After a lively New Year, Zhuang Rui focused his energy on his studies. This year is his final year of graduate school and will be the busiest, as he not only has to write his graduation thesis but also participate in archaeological excavations.

However, Zhuang Rui felt that two years was simply not enough time for him to understand the profound history of ancient China, so he ultimately chose to continue his doctoral studies under Professor Meng.

Chapter 879 Funerary Objects (Part 1)

"The origin of tombs in my country can be traced back to the Neolithic Age, but large-scale and structured tombs originated in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties. Large tombs were common in the Spring and Autumn Period, but their scale was much smaller from the Warring States Period to the Qin Dynasty. Of course, the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor is an exception..."

The golden age of Chinese tombs was during the Han Dynasty, when lavish burials were prevalent, and the funerary objects in the tombs were the most abundant and exquisite of all dynasties...

Most Han tombs are cliff tombs. In the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, cliff tombs are mostly the mausoleums of princes or nobles. They generally have a tomb passage, corridor, side chambers, a middle chamber, and a rear chamber, and are filled with a large number of exquisite artifacts. Today, we will talk about the distribution of cliff tombs in the Han Dynasty and their influence on later tombs..."

Zhuang Rui sat in the classroom, diligently taking notes. Today's class was one of the few open classes Professor Meng taught each semester. Not only him, but Dr. Ren and Kan Yuhan were also present, taking careful notes.

More than two months had passed since he returned to school after the New Year. This was the first time Zhuang Rui had seen Dr. Ren and Kan Yuhan. Professor Meng told him that the two of them had gone to another city for on-site excavation.

Before class, Zhuang Rui greeted them. At the graduate level, the friendship between classmates was not as sincere and pure as it was in college. In the past year or so, Zhuang Rui had not interacted with them much.

Kan Yuhan was a bit darker than when Zhuang Rui first met her. This was because she had been in Sichuan for the past six months overseeing the excavation of a large Han Dynasty tomb, and being exposed to wind and rain all day long naturally affected her skin.

However, Kan Yuhan was in good spirits. At the age of twenty-five or twenty-six, she was able to lead a major archaeological excavation project and had many senior researchers in their forties and fifties under her command. It can be said that Professor Meng's influence played a part in this.

Dr. Ren was riding high. Last year, a research project he assisted Professor Meng in leading achieved a breakthrough, which led to Dr. Ren officially staying on at the university and being promoted to associate professor. An associate professor in his thirties is considered a model of youthful promise even at Peking University.

As for Zhuang Rui's other two doctoral "senior brothers," they had already graduated in June or July of last year.

Dr. Jiang, who didn't get along with Zhuang Rui, tried hard to repair his relationship with Zhuang Rui afterward, and Zhuang Rui didn't make things difficult for him. However, Dr. Jiang ultimately failed to stay in Beijing and returned to work at a local museum. After joining the museum, he was specially appointed as the deputy director, with a fairly good salary.

Wu Zhao, who had always maintained a good relationship with Zhuang Rui, joined Zhuang Rui's Dingguang Museum after graduation.

Dr. Wu's abilities are indeed remarkable. After joining the museum, he rose from a very ordinary manager to become the deputy curator of the Dingguang Museum in just six months, which surprised Zhuang Rui.

Zhuang Rui even asked Huangfu Yun about it. According to Huangfu Yun's explanation, he was in charge of external liaison, while the other deputy curator was in charge of technology. Wu Zhaoren was young and had both technical and management abilities, so he was promoted to deputy curator. Hearing Huangfu Yun's explanation, Zhuang Rui was relieved.

"Huh? Whose call is that?"

Zhuang Rui, who was diligently taking notes, suddenly felt his phone vibrate in his pocket. He looked around and, thankfully, was sitting near the classroom door. Zhuang Rui stood up and quietly slipped out.

That's the good thing about university; you can come and go freely during class. Of course, this isn't a market, so you can't disturb the professor when you come and go.

"Hey, Monkey, what's up? I'm in class right now..." Zhuang Rui walked to the corridor outside the classroom and pressed the answer button.

"Brother Zhuang, someone just brought over a few items, but I wasn't sure what they were, so I called you. If you have time, could you come and take a look? It's been a while since I've seen you. Why don't you come and check on the work?"

Monkey has been at *** for almost three years now, and he's become much more mature than before. His speech is less impetuous and more refined.

Over the past few years, Monkey has learned the art of seal carving from Master Ge. He spends all his time in Panjiayuan and has seen and handled a great many objects. His eye for quality has also been honed, and he can now offer some insightful opinions on the identification of certain objects.

Master Ge is getting old and his hands are a bit unsteady, so he rarely carves seals himself anymore. Most of the seals are handled by Monkey. Although Monkey doesn't charge as much as Master Ge, he still makes a lot of money, at least 30,000 to 50,000 a month, which makes Da Xiong a little envious.

Upon hearing Monkey's words, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh and scold, "You little rascal, if you want me to treat you, just say so! Why beat around the bush? Is your wife keeping your salary again?"

Monkey got married last autumn. His wife was a divorced young woman he met in the neighborhood. She had a two-year-old daughter, which made Monkey a father.

This woman treats Monkey well, doing his laundry and cooking for him every day. The only problem is that she can't stand seeing Monkey with money in his pocket. The reason is that her previous husband turned bad when he had money, so she has put economic control over Monkey.

Zhuang Rui also kept his promise and transferred the three houses he had extorted from Ouyang Jun to Monkey and Da Xiong respectively. Monkey had no relatives left, while Da Xiong had taken his mother to live with him. He can be considered a model of a prodigal son returning home.

"Brother Zhuang, my wife is very generous; she gives me at least the equivalent of a pack of Zhongnanhai cigarettes a day..."

Monkey is living a very happy and content life now. He comes home to hot food, hot soup, and a warm bed, and he has a child who looks like a porcelain doll calling him "Dad." So even though he smokes a six-yuan pack of Zhongnanhai cigarettes every day, he is always beaming with joy.

"Heh, that's all the ambition you have, kid. Alright, stop talking nonsense. Don't you understand what it is? Tell me over the phone first..."

Zhuang Rui knew that Monkey had been influenced by Panjiayuan over the past few years and could not be fooled by ordinary items. If he was now unable to make up his mind, then he had really encountered a problem.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the monkey stopped joking and said seriously, "Brother Zhuang, there are several bronze artifacts and a jade figure. The items don't seem fake, but... they should all be funerary objects. I'm not sure whether to accept them or not..."

Mingqi refers to funerary objects, which, as the name suggests, are objects made specifically for burial.

They are generally made of ceramics, wood, jade, or stone, but some are made of metal or paper. In addition to replicas of daily utensils, some royal tombs also contain idols of people, animals, and models of vehicles, ships, buildings, tools, weapons, and furniture.

The funerary objects naturally come from tombs, which is why the monkey was undecided.

It's important to understand that while those in the antique business may collect funerary objects, it depends on the specific item. For sensitive items like bronze tripods, reputable antique shops (called art

shops in China, as the approval process for antique shops is not yet open) dare not accept them. If something goes wrong, they'll not only fail to get any money but also get into serious trouble.

"Oh, is that so? Then I'll head over now. You call Da Xiong and Lao Zhao, and we'll have lunch together. You make arrangements for the afternoon, and I'll take a look at the things and then we'll talk..."

As Zhuang Rui spoke, he glanced at his watch; it was already 11 a.m. After hanging up, he sent a text message to Dr. Ren, asking him to explain the situation to his teacher. He then went to the parking lot, got in his car, and headed towards Panjiayuan.

...

"Hey, monkey, you're not going to be outdone, are you? The whole family of three came..."

Xuanrui Zhai's designated restaurant is a hotel restaurant not far from Panjiayuan. They usually order lunch from there. As soon as Zhuang Rui entered the private room, he saw a monkey playing with his daughter.

"Hehe, Brother Zhuang, my daughter is growing up a lot, so of course I have to come and get a share of the good stuff since you're treating us..."

The monkey, thick-skinned, didn't take Zhuang Rui's words to heart at all. However, his wife stood up and greeted him as "President Zhuang."

"Come here, Niu Niu, let Uncle give you a hug..."

As soon as Zhuang Rui sat down, he picked up the monkey's adopted daughter. The little girl was half a year older than his two children, and she was very cute with her rosy cheeks.

Da Xiong's wife works at a jewelry store and doesn't have time to come over at noon. It's just Monkey's family and Zhao Hanxuan, who are considered some of Zhuang Rui's earlier staff.

"Old Zhao, you've looked at the stuff, right? What do you think?"

After all the dishes were served, Zhuang Rui handed the little girl over to his mother, ordered a few bottles of beer, and started drinking with Zhao Hanxuan and the others.

"Hey, don't bring up things you don't want to talk about. I already said I won't look at bronze artifacts anymore, those things are too irritating..."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Zhao Hanxuan glared at him irritably. Ever since he paid ten million in tuition fees last time, he would get angry with anyone who mentioned bronzeware to this guy. Even though Zhuang Rui was the boss, when Old Zhao got angry, Boss Zhuang had to put on a smiling face.

"Alright, never mind, I'll ask the monkey..."

Zhuang Rui knew that Zhao Hanxuan wasn't really angry, so he turned to the monkey and said, "Can you tell if it's real or fake? Can you guess which tomb this object came from?"

Zhuang Rui was trying to investigate the monkey. Nowadays, when Xuanrui Zhai collects antiques, the monkey usually takes the lead. Zhuang Rui only comes to take a look around when the amount of money involved is relatively large.

Getting down to business, Monkey straightened his expression and said, "Brother Zhuang, in my opinion, this is probably something important. The shape of the object looks like it's from the Han Dynasty, so it's at least a royal tomb, and..."

The monkey glanced at the mother and daughter sitting opposite him and lowered his voice, saying, "And this thing looks like something that was buried alive..."

Most antiques in the world come from tombs, but they are divided into "raw pits" and "cooked pits." "Cooked pits" refers to items that have been unearthed for a long time, with the period before liberation as the dividing line, and these are antiques that can be circulated in the market.

"Shengkong" refers to objects unearthed after the liberation, which are explicitly prohibited from being resold by the state. If they are very special items, they might be charged with receiving stolen goods if discovered. Chapter 880 Funerary Objects (Part Two)

"Oh? I'll have to see for myself then. After dinner, Monkey, you take Niu Niu home, and then we'll arrange for them to come over this afternoon..."

Zhuang Rui's eyes lit up when he heard it was a newly unearthed funerary object. Although he had handled many antiques, most were well-documented and had been excavated for many years. Aside from the stolen goods belonging to Boss Yu, Zhuang Rui hadn't really dealt with newly unearthed antiques much.

Knowing that he would be going to do an on-site excavation internship soon, Zhuang Rui naturally didn't want to miss the opportunity to see unearthed artifacts.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Monkey's wife quickly replied, "Mr. Zhuang, my daughter and I can walk by ourselves later. We have a car, so there's nothing to worry about..."

"Yeah, Brother Zhuang, I'll call them right now. These two don't seem like experienced people; they're looking for people to watch the goods everywhere. Who knows how late they'll take to arrive..."

As the monkey spoke, he took out his phone and got up to make a call. Not forgetting to slip a pack of Zhonghua cigarettes that Zhuang Rui had left on the table into his pocket.

"Old Zhao, business has been good lately, you guys have worked hard..."

Zhuang Rui toasted Zhao Hanxuan. Although Monkey and Da Xiong had grown up, the shop still couldn't function without Zhao Hanxuan. He had been in this business for over twenty years and knew far more people than Monkey and Da Xiong could.

"Why bring that up? If you hadn't given me a hand back then, I, Old Zhao, would be begging for food somewhere right now..."

Zhao Hanxuan waved his hand. He was living a good life now, earning two to three million yuan a year. He was making just as much money as before, and without any risks. Old Zhao had long since given up on the idea of starting his own business.

"Hehe, Lao Zhao, even without me, you would have made a comeback. A temporary setback is nothing..."

With Zhao Hanxuan managing "Xuanrui Zhai," Zhuang Rui hardly had to worry about anything. In the past few years, Xuanrui Zhai had generated nearly ten million yuan in profit for Zhuang Rui, and now Xuanrui Zhai's stationery was renowned throughout the entire city.

Just then, Monkey walked in with his phone and said, "Brother Zhuang, it's all arranged. They'll be at the restaurant at 1:30. Have we almost finished eating?"

Zhuang Rui glanced at his watch; it was almost one o'clock. He stood up, picked up his glass, and said, "Drink up!"

"Uncle, I want one too..."

When Niu Niu saw the group of adults stand up, she broke free from her mother's arms and said in her childish voice, which made everyone burst into laughter.

Looking at Da Xiong and the monkey, Zhuang Rui's thoughts drifted. When he first met these two guys a few years ago, they were just thugs who would stage accidents and set traps. Now they've changed their ways and become respectable people.

Before leaving, Zhuang Rui ordered a lot of food to be packed up from the restaurant, since there were still two waiters at the door.

...

Panjiayuan seemed even more lively than before, with bargaining voices in various languages rising and falling, which made Zhuang Rui, who had lived in the suburbs for a long time, feel a bit novel. He started looking around at the stalls.

However, his luck was clearly not good today. He looked at more than ten antique-looking and exquisitely crafted items, but they were all modern imitations. Moreover, the stall owner was asking for prices that were even higher than the real items. Zhuang Rui shook his head repeatedly, realizing that the antique business was getting harder and harder to do.

Back at "Xuanrui Zhai", after having a cup of tea and waiting for a while, two short young men walked into the shop.

"Boss, the things are here..."

The young man walking in front spotted the monkey at a glance, went up and slammed the object wrapped in a floral cloth onto the counter in front of the monkey with a loud thud.

The person behind the young man was also carrying a package. Both packages were about a meter long and wide, and it was clear that they were filled with a lot of things.

"Hey buddy, can we be a little gentler? Your things won't break, but my cabinet is made of glass..."

The monkey picked up the package, glancing at the glass case with a pained expression. Actually, he was pretending; the case, containing pirate gold coins and jewels, was made of specially made bulletproof glass.

Zhuang Rui obtained far too many gold coins and jewels from the Klaus Treasure; a batch was placed in the museum, and many more remained at home.

These antique items certainly couldn't be sold at the price of gold, so Zhuang Rui simply displayed them in part of "Xuanrui Zhai". And sure enough, some discerning foreigners bought quite a few at high prices.

"Sorry, brother, we're just country folk, please don't take offense..."

The young man behind quickly pulled his companion aside and carefully apologized to the monkey.

Zhuang Rui frowned as he looked at the two men's attire and demeanor.

These weren't the professional tomb raiders he'd ever seen before! They were just two farmers. Zhuang Rui didn't mean to discriminate against farmers, but compared to the Yu family's tomb raiding gang from back then, these two were incredibly unprofessional.

Putting everything else aside, the way the two of them casually brought the antiques into the store left Zhuang Rui speechless. Weren't they practically asking the police to arrest them?

You should know that there is a police station in Panjiayuan specifically targeting these antique dealers.

Zhuang Rui didn't know if these two guys were just lucky or what, but after wandering around Panjiayuan for so long, they hadn't been taken in by the police yet.

Zhuang Rui couldn't stand it any longer and stepped forward to ask, "Gentlemen, what are your names?"

The hothead who started it all sized up Zhuang Rui and asked, "Who are you?"

"This is our boss..." the monkey said from the side.

"Your boss? So you're not the boss? Then why did we waste so much time talking to you?"

That hothead almost made Monkey choke on his own words. That guy was so sarcastic! No matter what, Monkey is now the head manager of the antique shop, the third manager of "Xuanrui Zhai," and a well-known figure in Panjiayuan.

"Erniu, will you die if you don't talk? Damn it, I'll teach you a lesson when we get back. Sorry, boss, he's just a troublemaker, he didn't mean it..."

Fortunately, there was a sensible person following behind this man, otherwise Zhuang Rui really wouldn't know how to deal with them.

The person behind them introduced them, and it turned out they were brothers. The elder brother was called Zhang Daniu, and the younger brother was called Zhang Erniu. Both of them were from Henan. It was their first time in Henan. After getting off the train, they asked where to buy antiques and were directed to Panjiayuan.

"Da Niu, Er Niu, you two should eat something first..."

After exchanging a few simple words, Zhuang Rui could tell that the two brothers were quite down-to-earth. Although Da Niu had a bit of a farmer's cunning, he was much more honest and simple than city people, which made Zhuang Rui feel good about the two brothers.

Moreover, Erniu's eyes had been fixed on the two waiters who were eating ever since he entered the shop. He kept swallowing and his Adam's apple bobbed up and down. Judging from this, Zhuang Rui knew that the two of them probably hadn't eaten yet.

"Great, great! Things in this *** city are damn expensive. A bowl of rice and a few vegetable leaves cost twenty yuan. Isn't this ripping us off as out-of-towners?"

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Er Niu's eyes lit up, and he walked unceremoniously toward where the two waiters were eating.

Da Niu quickly grabbed his brother and looked at Zhuang Rui, saying, "Boss, this...this is so embarrassing. How about I give you a discount on the items later..."

Although Da Niu was more sensible than his brother, he was also reluctant to spend the money to eat out. The two brothers had a total of three hundred yuan in their pockets. If a meal cost forty yuan, should they still go home?

Zhuang Rui smiled and waved his hand, saying, "It's alright, you guys eat first. The food won't taste good if it gets cold. We can talk after you finish eating..."

Zhuang Rui ordered four dishes and a soup from the restaurant, which was quite a generous portion, more than enough for six people.

However, Zhuang Rui clearly underestimated the Erniu brothers. As soon as the two brothers sat down at the table, they devoured the food in no time. Erniu seemed to still be hungry, and he picked up the soup bowl and drank the last bit of soup.

"Sorry, brothers, you're still not full?"

Da Niu looked at his two dumbfounded colleagues and felt a little embarrassed.

"No...it's nothing, I'm full, I'm full..."

In the antique trade, it's crucial to avoid judging people by their appearance. So, although the two shop assistants only ate about three-tenths of their fill, they didn't show any displeasure, since these two were customers of the shop after all.

Erniu patted his stomach. He had never eaten such delicious food in his life, but the portion was a bit small. Although Erniu was a scoundrel, he knew how to repay kindness. He lowered his voice and said to Danu, "Brother, this boss is a nice guy. Why don't we give him the smallest one?"

Although he lowered his voice, Erniu's voice was still loud enough for everyone in the store to hear. Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh and said, "Da Niu, Erniu, come in when you're full, let me see your stuff..."

Zhuang Rui went into the back room first, stopped at the door, and said to Monkey, "Order a few more dishes. I don't think Xiao Yu and Xiao Li are full..."

When Erniu heard that there was still food to eat, his eyes widened and he blurted out, "I...I'm not full either..."

"Can't you be a little more dignified? I'm not taking you out next time..."

Da Niu, embarrassed by Er Niu's words, turned bright red and kicked Er Niu in the butt.

"It's alright, it's alright, everyone who comes is a guest, having a meal is no big deal..."

Zhuang Rui caught Er Niu, mainly to prevent the package in Er Niu's hands from falling to the ground. He had just used his spiritual energy to scan the contents of the package, and the items inside were no ordinary items; they exuded a rich purple-gold spiritual energy in Zhuang Rui's eyes.

These two brothers are really something else. They're carrying such a treasure, yet they're so careless. There are several terracotta figurines in that package; even the slightest bump or scratch would greatly reduce their value.

After entering the private room, Zhuang Rui asked the two to sit down and said, "Gentlemen, let's not look at the things yet. I need to ask you something first..."

"We don't know you, how would we know what you're asking?"

Erniu, that rascal, is a bit clueless and always likes to interrupt. One sentence from him almost made Zhuang Rui forget what he was going to ask.