

Golden 89

Chapter 89 The Grassland Black Market (Part 4)

Every profession has its own rules.

Just like how Hong Kong filmmakers need to worship Guan Yu before filming begins, tomb raiders also need to place a lamp in the southeast corner of the tomb. To put it more bluntly, it's like how you have to give gifts to your boss if you want to get a job transfer, give kickbacks if you want to get a project contract, sleep with the director if you want to become famous, and maintain good business and tax records if you want to open a shop.

Similarly, the black market auction business also has its own set of unwritten rules: those who participate in the auction must be people in the industry, or more specifically, Chinese. This is the principle of keeping the profits within the family. However, the sudden appearance of a Japanese person means that Lang Jie has broken the rules.

The black market that Langjie set up was actually a way to sell items that couldn't be sold in the light of day or through normal channels through black market auctions. The sellers were mostly poachers or tomb raiders, all sorts of people.

The buyers who come here are mostly antique collectors, many of whom have certain social connections and status. They are not afraid of the unclear origin of these cultural relics, and naturally have ways to launder them.

As for the black market itself, it only acts as an intermediary, buying low and selling high to earn profits. However, the prices at which they resell their goods are often dozens or even hundreds of times higher than the prices at which they buy from other people. In addition, Lang Jie has many sourcing channels and often finds some good items. Therefore, he is considered a prominent figure in the domestic antique black market and often attracts many collectors to come here to hunt for treasures.

“Mr. Jiang, this isn't your first time participating in this kind of auction. You should know our rules, right? I'm in a difficult position because of what you're doing.”

Judging from Lang Jie's appearance, he seemed unaware that a Japanese person would be coming. He then spoke somewhat rudely to a middle-aged man, around fifty years old, standing next to the Japanese man.

From the moment these three people entered the tent, only a minute or two had passed. Everyone's attention was drawn to the Japanese man, and only after hearing Lang Jie's words did they turn their gaze to Boss Jiang.

No matter how Zhuang Rui looked at the man, he felt that he looked very familiar. Suddenly, he remembered that he had seen this man on the cover of a magazine. He seemed to be the CEO of a large enterprise in Sichuan. The annual profit of that enterprise was in the billions. He just didn't expect that he would come to this kind of event. Judging from Lang Jie's words, it seemed that this was not his first time here.

"Brother Langjie, bosses, this matter was due to my poor handling of things. I hope you can forgive me. Mr. Takeuchi has always been an anti-war figure in Japan and a friend of the Chinese people. I hope you can give me some face. I will give you an explanation in the future."

In fact, President Jiang also had his own difficulties. This time, his company's technological transformation involved a core technology that had not yet been developed domestically, so he had to cooperate with a Japanese company. The Japanese person who came with him this time was Takeuchi, the vice president of that Japanese company, who was also the representative in charge of this negotiation. This person was very fond of Chinese culture and had collected a lot of Chinese antiques, so he could be considered a semi-China expert.

Takeuchi overheard that President Jiang knew about the places where these black markets were held, so he specifically asked to come and see for himself. He promised President Jiang that if he could take him along when he participated in the black market auction, he would make some concessions in the negotiations. President Jiang couldn't refuse such a condition, which is why the scene in the tent happened.

Upon hearing Mr. Jiang's words, everyone in the tent fell silent. In truth, they all knew that many items on the black market, driven by the lure of high profits, ended up overseas, in the hands of international collectors. Some of those present might have even engaged in such activities. Furthermore, Mr. Jiang was indeed a man of considerable status; to refuse his humble request would be rather unreasonable. Therefore, most people tacitly agreed.

Liu Chuan, however, was not buying it. He had no idea who this Jiang was. He stepped forward and was about to speak when Zhuang Rui stopped him, and he swallowed back the words that were on the tip of his tongue.

"Wood, why are you pulling me like that? Don't you know I've hated the Japanese devils since I was a child?"

Liu Chuan muttered something loud enough for everyone in the tent to hear. They were too embarrassed to speak up, and Liu Chuan's intervention suited their needs perfectly.

"Sir, I am also strongly opposed to my country's militarism. As for the crimes my country committed in your country, I am willing to apologize to you all in my own capacity..."

Unexpectedly, Takeuchi was a China expert, listening to every word Liu Chuan said. He even walked up to Liu Chuan and bowed deeply, never raising his head again. It seemed that he would continue like this until Liu Chuan agreed to let him participate in the black market auction. It was just a mystery why Takeuchi spoke Japanese as soon as he entered the tent. Given his level of Mandarin, if he had spoken less, probably no one would have been able to recognize him.

Liu Chuan's personality was such that he wouldn't yield to force but would respond to gentle persuasion. Takeuchi's current behavior left him speechless. Besides, his grandfather had personally killed many Japanese soldiers during the war; although he had a few bullet holes in his body, he had still gained a great advantage. Thinking of this, Liu Chuan waved his hand and said, "If you want to participate, then participate. Why ask me? Go find Boss Langjie." His words implied that he didn't object.

"Thank you, young man. If you need any help from me in the future, I will do my best to help you."

After hearing Liu Chuan's words, President Jiang felt relieved. Apart from Zhuang Rui and a few others who were strangers, the people in the tent were all people he knew to some extent, and they would probably give him face. Now that Liu Chuan had agreed, no one would object anymore.

Mr. Jiang turned to a young man next to him and said something. The man immediately came out, holding a box of business cards, and handed them out to everyone in the tent with both hands.

"Hehe, that's really extravagant."

Liu Chuan took the gold-embossed business card and chuckled softly. This time, his voice was much quieter, since he no longer objected to the Japanese man participating in the auction, and there was no need to offend this seemingly influential General Manager Jiang.

"Can't you just say less?"

Zhuang Rui nudged Liu Chuan in the ribs, urging him to sit back down. Zhuang Rui had other plans in mind; with his sharp eyes, he could cause trouble for the Japanese later, so why pretend to be the villain?

"Alright, I've taken up a lot of your time today, let's get started now."

Seeing that the commotion had subsided, Langjie waved his hand, and several young men immediately came over and set up a square table in the middle of the tent. Then, one of the two men who had been standing in the corner lifted the curtain behind them, took out an object, placed it on a plate, and brought it out.

Only then did Zhuang Rui realize that this was where the auction items were placed, no wonder there had been people guarding it all along.

"As everyone knows, although I personally strongly oppose the hunting of Tibetan antelopes, there are always some people who will do it. Some time ago, through some channels, I managed to keep this shahtoosh shawl that was being shipped overseas. However, I am a businessman, and I still need to sell my goods. Today's first item for auction is a shahtoosh shawl. As everyone knows, shahtoosh means 'king of cashmere.' The starting bid for this shawl is 10,000 RMB!"

Langjie's voice rang out in the tent as he explained the origin of the auction item to everyone present. Normally, the origin of auction items here doesn't need explanation, but for Tibetans, the reputation of slaughtering Tibetan antelopes isn't very good, so he said a few more words. The young man carrying the plate walked around where everyone was sitting, showing everyone a folded shawl with beautiful patterns on it.

When the young man returned to the center of the tent, Langjie took off a ring from his hand, picked up a shawl from the plate, and threaded one corner of the shawl through one end of the ring. Langjie gently pulled on the other end of the ring, and the entire shawl, about 2 meters long and 5 meters wide, was as soft as a ball of silk and as smooth as water, passing through the ring.

This shawl was incredibly attractive to women. Even the woman in sunglasses, who hadn't spoken until now, took a deep look at the shawl and quickly started typing on her notebook, seemingly looking up something.

"Brother Ma, this shawl is so beautiful! Please buy it for me, okay..."

The seductive woman's trembling voice rang out again.

"Okay, my little darling, we'll buy it. Boss Langjie, I'll offer ten thousand."

The fat man, having just lost face in front of Zhuang Rui, seemed eager to regain it and made the first offer.

To everyone's surprise, the woman in sunglasses didn't make a bid after looking away from the computer screen. The others in the room also showed little interest in the shawl. After waiting a few minutes, Langjie said, "Since no one else is bidding, then this shawl is..."

"I'll offer 15,000..."

Zhuang Rui's voice interrupted Lang Jie's words, which also excited Lang Jie. The seller naturally wanted someone to raise the price of his item, so he immediately shouted, "Boss Liu offered 15,000 yuan, so it's 15,000 yuan now. Are there any other friends who would like to make an offer?"

At this moment, the woman in sunglasses turned her head and glanced at Zhuang Rui. Although she was wearing sunglasses, Zhuang Rui could see a hint of disdain in her eyes.

"Hey, you've got a lot of money, kid. What are you buying this thing for? Oh, I see..."

Liu Chuan was initially puzzled, but he quickly realized what was going on and chuckled lewdly.