

Middle Age 94

Chapter 94: Revealing the Painting

The three of them arrived outside the shop, and Shi Feng noticed Qi Yun's BMW 5 Series, immediately brightening up and teasing, "Wow, seems you've been making quite a bit of money recently."

Qi Yun laughed heartily, "I'm just making a little money from recycling; I can't compare with Boss Shi."

Shi Feng rolled his eyes at him, "Let's take your car; mine's out of gas."

Qi Yun shrugged and responded, "Alright, if Boss Shi has spoken, how could I refuse."

Half an hour later, the car stopped steadily at the entrance of that familiar little courtyard.

The person Shi Feng mentioned was Old Chen.

He led the two inside the courtyard with ease, and they saw the garden was tranquil and serene, with flourishing greenery.

On the stone table in the courtyard was a set of quaint tea utensils, and on the bamboo chair beside it, an elderly man was resting with his eyes closed, looking at ease.

Shi Feng stepped forward and respectfully called out, "Old Chen, sorry for disturbing your rest."

Old Chen slowly opened his eyes, glancing over the three, finally resting his gaze on the scroll in Qi Yun's hands.

"Bring it over and let me have a look."

Qi Yun didn't dare delay and promptly handed the scroll over with both hands.

Old Chen took the scroll, expertly and slowly unfurling it. His gaze swiftly passed over the painting and began to examine the rice paper instead.

Qi Yun and the others stood aside, hardly daring to breathe, afraid of disturbing him.

After a long while, Old Chen rolled the painting back up and stood, addressing the three, "Indeed, it's a painting within a painting. You all wait here."

With that, he went into the eastern hall, closing the door behind him.

Shi Feng turned to explain to Qi Yun, "The skill of unveiling paintings is labor-intensive. Old Chen needs a quiet environment."

Qi Yun nodded in understanding.

The three sat by the stone table, and Shi Feng picked up the kettle, pouring tea for Qi Yun and Zhong Rui, whispering, "Have some water while waiting; it might take a while."

"This skill of unveiling paintings isn't common nowadays. In the north, maybe only two or three people still possess it."

"Hmm," Qi Yun responded, glancing at the teacup in his hand, sensing a distinctiveness about it.

The texture was delicate with a warm feel, with elegant ink bamboo painted on it, lifelike in appearance.

Seeing this, Shi Feng laughed, "So, Brother Qi noticed the uniqueness of this teacup? It's a Ming Dynasty treasure, not from an official kiln, but still of considerable value."

"I helped Old Chen acquire this set of tea utensils; one cup costs eighty thousand."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun managed to stay calm, while Zhong Rui quickly retracted his half-extended hand.

He wouldn't dare use an eighty-thousand-yuan teacup; if he accidentally broke it, he couldn't afford to compensate.

"And the flowerpot in the corner is also from the Ming Dynasty."

"..."

After Shi Feng's introductions, Qi Yun had a more direct concept of Old Chen's prowess; the courtyard was filled with priceless treasures, not to mention the actual collectibles.

The three chatted idly for over an hour until Old Chen opened the hall door and walked out.

He appeared slightly worn-out, with fine beads of sweat on his forehead, indicating the energy the work had consumed.

Upon seeing him, Qi Yun and the two stood quickly, their gazes fixated on Old Chen's hands, full of anticipation.

Old Chen slowly approached, gently placing the rice paper on the stone table, and unfurled it.

Revealed was Zhang Ruitu's "Five-character Poem in Running Script," with powerful strokes and a unique charm flowing between the characters.

Qi Yun wasn't too surprised; he had been aware of it long ago.

Shi Feng, however, was utterly stunned, bending over to scrutinize it closely, muttering, "It's actually Zhang Ruitu's calligraphy."

He straightened up, turning to Qi Yun with astonishment, "Old Qi, did you know beforehand?"

Qi Yun slowly shook his head, explaining with a wry smile, "How could I know? I just suspected it when I felt the paper didn't seem right."

Nonetheless, this awkward excuse was clearly unconvincing to Shi Feng, but he didn't pursue the question further; after all, everyone has secrets.

Qi Yun turned to Old Chen and bowed respectfully, expressing gratitude, "Thank you, Old Chen!"

Old Chen casually waved, "I haven't seen this craft in years; it's fortunate to see it again today."

He resumed examining the rice paper, appearing somewhat indifferent to the Zhang Ruitu piece.

Qi Yun took the opportunity to pull Shi Feng aside and whisper, "How much should I give Old Chen?"

Shi Feng shook his head with a smile, "I told you last time, Old Chen rarely gets involved unless he's interested, so he's not in it for the money. If you want to show appreciation, bring him some good tea next time."

Qi Yun nodded, noting it internally.

Shi Feng shifted, grinned with a merchant's demeanor, "I'm quite interested in this piece; sell it to me?"

If it were anything else, Qi Yun surely wouldn't refuse.

But Wang Fei had specifically asked him to keep an eye out for Zhang Ruitu's calligraphy, and selling it elsewhere seemed inappropriate.

After pondering, he shared his concerns with Shi Feng.

Shi Feng understood and refrained from saying more, only sighed, "Looks like I'm not destined for this treasure."

Qi Yun patted him on the shoulder, "Haha, no need to sigh, there will be more opportunities."

Half an hour later, Qi Yun once again thanked Old Chen before driving away.

He first dropped Shi Feng off at the shop, then Zhong Rui at his apartment search location, before pulling out his phone to contact Wang Fei.

"What's made you call me? Worried I'll run off with your money?" Wang Fei's voice sounded lazy over the phone.

Qi Yun ignored her teasing, directly stating, "You wanted Zhang Ruitu's calligraphy, got it."

Upon hearing this, Wang Fei's voice instantly became spirited, with a higher pitch, "Really?"

Qi Yun chuckled, "Am I bored enough to mess with you?"

"Bring it to me quickly; let's meet at the teahouse like last time!"

"Okay."

After hanging up, Qi Yun started the car and headed to the teahouse.

Just as he parked, he saw Wang Fei alighting from a Bentley.

She saw him too, and quickly ran over in her high heels, "Brother Qi, let me see quickly."

Qi Yun smiled helplessly; he had never seen her so eager.

He handed over the scroll tube, and Wang Fei grabbed it, pulling him by the arm to stride into the teahouse.

Qi Yun let her pull him, as a distinct fragrance wafted to his nose.

The two arrived at the private room they had visited before, and Wang Fei finally let go, quickly opening the scroll tube and carefully retrieving the rice paper inside.