

Power and Wealth

Chapter 192 – Secret hidden behind the oil painting!

Monday morning. Dong Xuebing climbed out of his bed and saw Yu Meixia had already prepared breakfast after he walked out of his bedroom.

After Dong Xuebing washes up, he patted Yu Qianqian's head and asked her to sit down together to have breakfast. Yu Meixia quickly pulled out a chair for Dong Xuebing and said. "Chief Dong, there are no eggs at home, and I went to buy rice, noodles and meat." She took out a small notebook and read out to Dong Xuebing. "The eggs cost 11.5 RMB, the rice cost..."

Dong Xuebing waved his hand. "Sit down and have breakfast."

Yu Meixia nodded and put her notebook aside. She sat down and immediately peeled a hardboiled egg for Dong Xuebing.

Dong Xuebing thanked her and took the egg from her. "Did you all have a good rest last night?"

"Yes. It's been a while since we slept so well. Sleeping by the streets in the past few months were scary. Chief Dong, thank you for giving us a place to stay." Without debts, Yu Meixia could rest comfortably and finally got a good night's sleep. Last night, she hugged Yu Qianqian and cried themselves to sleep. She also decided to be an excellent helper to Dong Xuebing and will serve him well. She does not want to let her daughter sleep along the streets with her again.

Slurp... slurp... Dong Xuebing looked at Yu Qianqian, drinking the porridge loudly and laughed. "Don't eat porridge this way. You got to use a spoon and eat without making any sounds. You are not lady-like this way."

Yu Qianqian blushed and lowered her head. "So... Sorry..."

Yu Meixia quickly said. "We are from the countryside and don't have any table manners. We... we will take note of it in the future."

Dong Xuebing laughed. "I am saying this for her good. Some bad habits must be changed. Sister Yu, I did not say anything last evening. When you served the rice

yesterday, you stick the chopsticks upright in the bowl of rice. Do you know what that means? In ancient times, only people on death row will get a bowl of rice like this in their final meal. It is inauspicious. Haha... look at you... don't apologize to me. Just don't do this when there are guests."

Yu Meixia nodded. "I will not do this again."

The people in the countryside do not mind about these taboos, but people from Beijing view these seriously. Dong Xuebing was afraid they would offend others and reminded them. If his colleagues come over to his place and Yu Meixia served them like this, his colleagues might think he did this on purpose.

After breakfast, Dong Xuebing put down his chopsticks and said. "I'm full. I will be leaving for work now."

Yu Meixia put down her bowl and ran over to bring Dong Xuebing's bag on the sofa for him. After passing him his bag, she quickly gets his coat for him and helps him put it on. Dong Xuebing smiled to himself and felt she is not his helper. She behaved more like his newlywed wife. Although Yu Meixia was clumsy at times, her massage and other services like helping him wear his coat, etc. let Dong Xuebing felt his 200,000 RMB was well spent.

"Will you be back for lunch?"

"No. You two can have lunch together."

"Ok... Please take care." Yu Meixia stood at the door and only closes it after Dong Xuebing walked down the stairs.

After leaving the quarters, Dong Xuebing strolled to the Bureau. The Buicks belong to the bureau and he cannot use it as his personal vehicle. Even Qin Yong, who was ranked higher than him in the Party Committee, did not have a personal car. That's why when Dong Xuebing is not in Hui Tian Village, he will not drive the vehicle back.

After crossing a road, he saw a young man mending a roadside stall.

That young man is selling oil paintings. There were paintings of sunflowers and sceneries. It is common to see people selling portraits, but it is rare to see oil paintings. Dong Xuebing walked nearer and looked at the paintings. "Are these your paintings? How much are you selling these for?"

The long-haired man nodded. "These are the sceneries around Yan Tai County. 300 RMB each."

Some onlookers heard it and shook their heads. “Young man, no one will spend 300 RMB for these paintings. It is too expensive.”

Dong Xuebing also felt this way. If these were portraits, 300 RMB is still reasonable. When he was about to leave, a police car stopped by. He looked over, and a pretty female officer was driving the vehicle. The rear passenger door opened, and Zhao Jingsong alighted with a smile.

Zhao Jingsong asked. “Chief Dong, are you going to the Bureau? Want a lift?”

Dong Xuebing smiled. “Thank you. I would prefer to walk as this is healthier.”

“Haha, Chief Dong, you are very healthy.”

Dong Xuebing did not have a good impression of Zhao Jingsong. Firstly, he is from Hu Yiguo’s faction, and secondly, his son had harassed Yu Meixia and her daughter. Lastly, he had heard from Qin Yong that Zhao Jingsong is an old pervert. This rumor seemed to be accurate as his driver is a pretty female officer. Rumors of him eyeing Hu Silian, a married woman, should be right too.

After exchanging some meaningless pleasantries, Zhao Jingsong returned to his vehicle.

Dong Xuebing was about to leave, but after a few steps, he realized the police car had not moved off. He turned around and saw Zhao Jingsong standing in front of the oil painting roadside stall. He was staring at a painting of a small forest with the sun rising in the background. Dong Xuebing was puzzled. What’s going on? Other than women, this Zhao Jingsong is also interested in arts?

“Where did you get this painting from?” Zhao Jingsong asked.

The young man replied. “I painted these. 300 RMB for each painting.”

Zhao Jingsong pointed to that painting. “This is which county’s scenery?”

“Yan Tai County’s Da Sen Mountains.”

Zhao Jingsong became excited. “This painting is based on the real scenery or...”

“It is the scenery there. I had painted this yesterday morning. What’s wrong?” The young man was confused.

Zhao Jingsong took a deep breath and took out 300 RMB from his pocket. “Wrap this painting up. I want it.”

Dong Xuebing, who was not far away, was surprised. 300 RMB for an oil painting? Is he crazy? There were more beautiful paintings in the malls selling for over 100 RMB. Why is Zhao Jingsong buying this painting from an unknown artist for 300 RMB? Dong Xuebing felt something was off and walked back. “Station Chief Zhao, what painting have you bought?”

Zhao Jingsong mumbled a reply and quickly carried the painting back to the police car. The painting was wrapped in a piece of cloth, and he seems to be afraid others will see the painting. Dong Xuebing felt Zhao Jingsong had treated this painting like a treasure and instinctively knew there must be something wrong with it. Although he does not know what the secret behind this painting was, he does not want to see Zhao Jingsong get this painting!

I must get this painting before him! After that, I can check for the secrets behind this painting slowly!

BACK 3 minutes!

Time returned to 3 minutes ago!

“These are the sceneries around Yan Tai County. 300 RMB each.”

“Young man, no one will spend 300 RMB for these paintings. It is too expensive.”

Dong Xuebing had returned to the time when he asked about the prices. He turned around and saw Zhao Jingsong’s police car coming closer. He did not hesitate and took out 300 RMB. “I want this scenery painting. Wrap it up for me. Oh... cover it with a cloth.”

Suddenly, there was the sound of someone closing a car door. “Chief Dong, on the way to the Bureau? Want a lift?”

Dong Xuebing quickly stepped forward to block Zhao Jingsong’s view. “Thanks for your offer, but I prefer to walk. Walking is good for your health.”

Zhao Jingsong glanced at the roadside stall behind Dong Xuebing and asked. “Chief Dong, you are interested in oil paintings?”

Dong Xuebing smiled. “Not really. I am just looking around.”

The young man had wrapped the painting: “Here is your painting. There is a hook behind, and you can hang it on the wall with a nail.” Dong Xuebing took the painting and bided Zhao Jingsong goodbye. Zhao Jingsong saw Dong Xuebing buying an oil

painting from a roadside stall and felt he was pretending to be cultured. How can there be beautiful paintings in a roadside stall?

County Public Security Bureau.

Back in his office, Dong Xuebing removed the cloth from the painting and start checking the painting. However, there was nothing special about it. Could it be Zhao Jingsong is really into oil paintings and knew this is a masterpiece from some great artist? But that young man said these are his paintings and it was Yan Tai County's scenery. Was that young man lying or there is something special in the painting which I have not to discover?

Dong Xuebing looked at the painting for almost 15 minutes and had broken the frame. But he still has not discovered anything.

Knock, knock... Dong Xuebing put the painting aside. "Come in."

"Chief Dong." Liu Dahai entered. There is a meeting in the bureau for all the Station Chief today, and he was here to report to his direct supervisor first. He said to Dong Xuebing about some sensitive cases that happened over the past few days. After finishing his report, he was about to leave.

Dong Xuebing stopped him. "Old Liu, wait a minute."

Liu Dahai sat down and knew Chief Dong have some tasks for him.

Dong Xuebing paused for a while and asked. "Are you familiar with Station Chief Zhao Jingsong? Chief Zhao likes oil paintings?"

"Oil paintings?" Liu Dahai shook his head. "I am not sure, but I have never seen him buying or collecting oil paintings. But he is interested in flowers, plants, etc. A few years back, he often brought his children to the mountains behind our Hui Tian Village to pick wild vegetables."

Dong Xuebing frowned. "Flora?"

Liu Dahai nodded. "When Chief Zhao was young, he worked in the Provincial's Institute of Botany research and is knowledgeable about plants."

Oil painting... Institute of Botany research... Plants?

After Liu Dahai left, Dong Xuebing thought about the information and clues he got. Suddenly, he banged the table and placed the painting on the table. He examined the grass, flowers, and plants in the painting. There were some grasses on the ground that

had some leaves. Dong Xuebing does not know about plants and doesn't know about the names. But he was sure that there must be some expensive plants in the painting as Zhao Jingsong had asked the young man if this painting is based on the actual scenery. He wants this painting and looks for the plants in Da Sen Mountains by himself!

It must be something extraordinary for Zhao Jingsong to want to buy that painting. Dong Xuebing brightens up. He had spent a lot of money on Yu Meixia and her daughter and does not have much left. He will not give up this chance to make some money.

During lunch break, Dong Xuebing applied for the day off with Hu Silian and drove the Bureau's Buicks home. His duties were still to oversee Hui Tian Village station and it doesn't matter if he did not remain in his office in the Bureau.

When Dong Xuebing entered his apartment, he saw Yu Meixia and Yu Qianqian having lunch.

Yu Meixia panicked when she saw Dong Xuebing. "You... Why are you back? I... I..."

Yu Meixia had prepared a few dishes for lunch. "I still have not taken lunch. Help me prepare a bowl of rice." Dong Xuebing took off his coat, and Yu Meixia ran over to hang it on the hanger. She also bends over to place the slippers beside Dong Xuebing's feet. After that, she went to the kitchen to get a bowl of rice for him. She kept turning back to look at Dong Xuebing as if she had done something wrong.

Dong Xuebing laughed. "Sister Yu, what's wrong with you."

Yu Qianqian whispered. "My mother was afraid I am hungry and... that's why she prepared a few more dishes."

Dong Xuebing said he will not be coming back for lunch and Yu Meixia should not have prepared so many dishes. But her daughter had never taken a proper meal in the past few months and since Dong Xuebing will not be returning for lunch, she prepared a few meat dishes. But Dong Xuebing returned suddenly, and she was caught red-handed. "Dong... Chief Dong... I... I will not do this again."

Dong Xuebing was speechless. "I don't know what you are talking about. It's only a few dishes, what's wrong with it?"

Yu Meixia lowered her head. "I... cooked too sumptuous for lunch."

Dong Xuebing waved to her, asking her to sit down. "This is only a small matter. Also, how can this be considered sumptuous? Sister Yu, if you cooked only vegetables for

Yu Qianqian and yourself, I would scold you. Your daughter is growing up and needs to eat more meat. You should buy fish and prawns for her next time. When I am not around, you should also prepare proper meals for Qianqian.”

Yu Meixia was afraid Chief Dong would chase them away and was relieved to know he was not angry. “Thank you.”

Dong Xuebing picked up a piece of chicken for Yu Qianqian. “Eat more. If you feel like eating anything, let your mother know and tell me if she refuses to buy it for you. I will scold her!”

Yu Qianqian nodded and felt this ‘big brother’ really dotes her.

“Sister Yu, sit down and eat together.” Dong Xuebing placed some food in Yu Meixia’s bowl. “Why didn’t you all switch on the TV?”

Yu Meixia blushed. “I... I don’t know how to switch it on.”

Dong Xuebing did not laugh at her as he knows many poor villagers cannot afford a TV. Also, the on/off button of his LCD TV is at the back. “Here, the button is at the back. You can feel it by sliding your hand on the right side. If you want to use the remote to switch it on, you can press the red button. Oh... never mind. I will teach you after lunch.”

After lunch, Dong Xuebing taught Yu Meixia how to switch on the TV, air conditioner, washing machine, etc. Yu Meixia was not very smart, but Yu Qianqian learned everything fast. She played around with the home appliances curiously, and she had never got the chance to use these things in the past.

“Are you going back to work in the afternoon?” Yu Meixia asked.

Dong Xuebing slapped his forehead. “Luckily, you reminded me. I am going to Da Sen Mountains. Do you know where it is located?”

Yu Meixia nodded. “I know. It is located in the south and has nice scenery.”

“Ok. How about you two go along with me? I don’t know the place there.” After spending a day with them, Dong Xuebing could feel a family bond with them. Since he is going to the mountains to search for the plants, he might as well bring them along and treat this as a family outing.

Yu Meixia was worried and was afraid she would disgrace Chief Dong. “What... What should we prepare?”

Dong Xuebing replied. “Bring a few flowerpots along. We might need them to bring some things back. Also, bring a tablecloth, bowls, chopsticks, etc. We will buy some food in the supermarket and have dinner in the mountains.”

Yu Qianqian was overjoyed when she heard they were going out.

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2 hours later, they arrived at the foot of the Da Sen Mountains.

Dong Xuebing drove along the rough mountain roads and parked at the foot of the mountain. He alighted and looked around. There were plants and trees everywhere. The way up the mountain is quite steep and the grass there was thick. There might have snakes among the grass.

A local villager, carrying a basket, was walking down from the mountain.

Dong Xuebing walked over with his oil painting. “Hi, do you know where this place is located?”

The villager looked at the painting. “It should be at the back of the mountain, but there are poisonous snakes there. People here seldom go there.”

“Oh, thank you.” After the villager left, Dong Xuebing returned to his car and brought out a big haversack. “Let’s go up the mountain.”

Yu Qianqian and Yu Meixia turned pale as they heard there were poisonous snakes in the mountain. They stood there and did not move.

Dong Xuebing looked at them and smiled. “Don’t worry. I am around, and you don’t need to worry about snakes.” He was not afraid of snakes and he had BACK.

Yu Meixia held her daughter’s hand and walked forward. “I... I... will help you carry the bag.”

“No need. It is too heavy for you. You just hold on to the oil painting. We are looking for a place in the painting.”

The road up the mountain was dangerous. They had only walked a few dozen meters, Dong Xuebing and Yu Meixia were tripped stones and rocks among the grass. About 200 meters later, the forest was denser and steeper. Dong Xuebing was still able to move forward, but Yu Meixia and Yu Qianqian could not. They had difficulties climbing up some slopes.

Dong Xuebing looked at the and wiped the sweat off his forehead. “Here, give me your hands. I will pull you up.”

Yu Meixia looked at Dong Xuebing’s hand and blushed. “No... No need.”

Dong Xuebing replied. “Why don’t you two return to the car and wait for me? There is quite a distance left, and we will not reach the peak like this.”

Yu Meixia and Yu Qianqian were afraid to walk back by themselves, and Yu Qianqian reached out to Dong Xuebing’s hand and her face as red as a tomato. Yu Meixia bit her lower lips. She was in her 30s, but she was still very shy. “Thank... Thank you.” Yu Meixia and Yu Qianqian had similar looks and their characters were identical too.

Dong Xuebing held their hands tightly.

Yu Qianqian’s hand was cold, and Yu Meixia’s hand was soft.

Dong Xuebing unconsciously looked at Yu Meixia’s butt and Yu Qianqian’s slim waist and pulled them up that small slope, over a big boulder. They continued their way up the mountain. Dong Xuebing’s left hand was holding the beautiful mother, and his right was holding the pretty daughter.

They make their way up the mountains slowly.

About half an hour, the three of them arrived at the back mountain.

Along the way, Yu Meixia fell 3 times and Yu Qianqian twice. But Dong Xuebing reacted fast and pulled them up before they hurt themselves. Of course, while saving them, they said somebody contacts. For example, Dong Xuebing’s arm had brushed against Yu Meixia’s firm breasts and could feel the outlines of her soft bra. He also touched Yu Qianqian’s butt accidentally.

Overall, Dong Xuebing had enjoyed himself.

Yu Meixia and Yu Qianqian were blushing and wanted to bury their heads in the ground from the embarrassment.

“This should be the place. Let’s look around.” The area at the back mountain is flat, but Dong Xuebing did not let go of the mother and daughter’s hands.

Yu Meixia tried pulling back her hand shyly. “Chief... Chief Dong... I can... You...”

Dong Xuebing feigned ignorance. “What’s wrong?”

Yu Meixia looked at his hand, which is still holding on to hers, but she dares not say it.
“Err... nothing...”

Dong Xuebing smiled. “Let’s go. Watch your steps.”