

Golden 171

Chapter 171 Old Friends

After sleeping all morning, Zhuang Rui realized that he and Wei Ge had indeed arrived a bit early. Song Jun wouldn't arrive in Guangzhou until tomorrow morning, and the third brother, who lived far away in Henan, and the second brother, whose family was in Beijing, wouldn't arrive until the day after tomorrow. After getting up and having lunch, Yang Wei and the others were a little bored.

"Fourth brother, Guangdong is your territory, take us two brothers out for some fun. It's so boring here, I wish I hadn't come so early."

A group of people sat on the sofa in the hotel lobby, watching the guests coming and going with great boredom. Most of these people were here to attend the Pingzhou Jade Gambling Conference. Although it was still three days before the official opening, many people had come in advance to make preparations.

"Aren't all these beauties enough for you to see? Look at that fat guy, doesn't he look like he's ten months pregnant? Tsk tsk, and that girl with him, she's really pretty. What a pair of adulterers..."

The fourth brother wasn't bored at all. His eyes, hidden behind his glasses, were gleaming as he sized up the female companions brought by the passing guests.

"Tch, you've been in Guangdong too long, haven't you? You actually like these kinds of girls? Hey, I have to say, this chick is actually pretty, it's just that fat guy is a bit of a disappointment. Damn it, all the good flowers are wasted on cow dung..."

To be honest, although the Chaoshan region of Guangdong does produce beautiful women, most Guangdong women represent diligence and endurance, and have little to do with beauty. Wei Ge first made a sarcastic remark to Lao Si, but his eyes were fixed on the adulterous couple he had just mentioned, and he couldn't help but be attracted to them as well.

Actually, Wei Ge and Lao Si are never short of women. Wei Ge is considered a small tycoon in Zhonghai. There are plenty of beautiful women in his parents' company who want to have a relationship with him that goes beyond friendship. As for Lao Si, you can tell what he's using his Ferrari just by looking at it. In TV dramas, it's just a prop for those showy guys to pick up girls.

These two were clearly bored today, sitting there gossiping about the women passing by. Zhuang Rui wasn't particularly interested in their conversation, instead chatting with Zhou Rui about their last trip to the bathhouse.

"Hey guys, can't you tone it down a bit? If you're looking at a woman, fine, but don't point fingers at her. You're just asking for trouble."

Seeing that Yang Wei and the other two were making a bit too much of a fuss, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but say something. He originally wanted to go to the jade street with Zhou Rui, but Lao Si and Wei Ge had been a little upset that morning and refused to go anymore. They wouldn't go themselves and even tried to drag Zhuang Rui along, not letting him go either.

"What are you afraid of? We're all together now, we're not afraid of a fight. You've been around for years, how come you're getting more and more timid?"

Wei Ge was very dissatisfied with Zhuang Rui's attitude. His reunion with Lao Si reminded him of many interesting things that happened in college. In addition, he knew some of Zhou Rui's abilities, so he became much bolder than usual. Zhuang Rui knew that Lao Da's way of dealing with people in Zhonghai was always "to win people over with virtue".

"Come on, boss, you guys chat. I'm going to take a stroll around the jade market and bring you back some nice items. Brother Zhou, you don't need to go. Just keep an eye on the white lion for me. There are too many people during the day, so it's inconvenient to take it with me."

As Zhuang Rui spoke, he stood up. The white lion lay on the ground, making a whimpering sound, but did not get up to follow Zhuang Rui.

"Hey guys, don't go. What's the point of seeing that stuff? Let's go to Guangzhou sometime. I'll show you guys some nightlife. Hey? Why is that fat guy staring at us like that? Is he looking for trouble?"

The fourth brother grabbed Zhuang Rui, preventing him from acting alone. However, he noticed that the fat man with the pretty girl, after completing the check-in procedures, did not leave but stood at the service desk, constantly glancing at them.

Although the fourth brother was respectful of ghosts and gods, he wasn't afraid of people and was rather cunning. Bored, he stood up, intending to cause some trouble, but unexpectedly, the fat man swaggered towards them.

"Brother Zhuang, is it really you? Oh my, I almost didn't recognize you..."

Even from more than ten meters away, the fat man's voice came over. When the fourth brother heard that he knew Zhuang Rui, he swallowed the provocative words that were on the tip of his tongue.

"Fatty Ma?"

Zhuang Rui hadn't paid attention to the person Wei Ge and Lao Si had mentioned earlier, but he looked over when he heard the voice. Hey, it really was a familiar face—Fatty Ma, Boss Ma, whom he and Zhou Rui had met once on the Tibetan grasslands.

"Mr. Ma, what brings you here? Are you also in the jade business?"

When Zhuang Rui saw that it was Fatty Ma, he quickly went to greet him. He had a pretty good impression of Fatty Ma. Although this guy always pretended to be weak while actually being strong, he was honest with him and was a friend worth making.

"Brother, don't be so formal. I told you last time, just call me Brother Ma. If I were a few years younger, wouldn't I look like Little Ma? Haha..."

Fatty Ma was very happy to see an acquaintance from so far away. He joked with Zhuang Rui that with his build, if you split him in half, there would still be room to spare.

"Brother Ma, let me introduce you. These are two of my buddies from university, Yang Wei and Bi Yuntao. You know Brother Zhou too, so no need for introductions. This is Mr. Ma, the richest man in Shanxi. Please get to know him."

Zhuang Rui noticed that the girl behind Fatty Ma was not the one he had met on the last trip to Tibet. However, he naturally couldn't ask too many questions about such things. He turned around and introduced Yang Wei and Lao Si to Fatty Ma.

"Brother Zhuang, are you trying to annoy your Brother Ma? What, the richest man in Shanxi? I'm just a country bumpkin. If you think I'm too kind, call me Brother Ma, or you can call me Fatty Ma. But these two little brothers' names are pretty cool, haha."

Fatty Ma wasn't someone who had been around the block; he was adept at reading people and making a living. With just a few words, he greatly increased Wei Ge and Lao Si's goodwill towards him. Although he joked about their names, it only increased their closeness and didn't make them angry.

"Brother Ma, what happened to that buddy who was with you last time?"

With Fatty Ma's arrival, Zhuang Rui was no longer able to leave, so he simply let him sit on the sofa and started chatting.

"He's here too. He just took the luggage to the room. From a distance, it looked like you, but this Tibetan Mastiff is too big for me to recognize. Brother Zhuang, is this the same snow mastiff from before?"

Fatty Ma sat down on the sofa, taking up half of it. The girl who was with him this time was quite well-behaved; she didn't wear much makeup and sat quietly next to Fatty Ma, listening to them talk.

Fatty Ma looked at the white lion with a look of disbelief. He also raised several Tibetan mastiffs and knew that it would take at least a year and a half for a Tibetan mastiff to grow to the size of the white lion.

"Hehe, I'm just the Snow Mountain Mastiff King, a bit special. By the way, Brother Ma, you're here to attend this jadeite rough stone trade fair, right?" Zhuang Rui didn't want to talk much about White Lion, so he brushed it off and asked Fatty Ma about the purpose of his trip.

"What rough stone trading fair? It's just gambling on stones. I don't have anything to do in Shanxi, so I'm just here to try my luck. Brother, you have to give me some pointers then. If there are any good items you don't like, just point them out to me, and I'll buy some to take back as gifts."

After Song Jun bought Zhuang Rui's painting of Tang Bohu's "Li Duanduan", he showed it off in the circle. Although Song Jun and Fatty Ma were not in the same circle, China values relationships, and these relationships are very complicated. The news reached Fatty Ma's ears in just a few days.

Although the messenger didn't know who the seller of the painting was, Fatty Ma thought of the fake painting Zhuang Rui had acquired, and then recalled that Boss Langjie had said in the grassland black market that Zhuang Rui was introduced by Song Jun. He could guess the truth pretty well, so he spoke highly of Zhuang Rui. However, he only guessed and didn't point it out.

After hearing what Fatty Ma said, Wei Ge and Lao Si looked at Zhuang Rui with a strange expression. They had both heard Zhuang Rui mention Fatty Ma before, and knew that a Shanxi businessman had once wanted to spend 40 million RMB to buy a white lion. Both of them were from business families, and they knew they couldn't afford to spend 40 million RMB on a pet. With Fatty Ma's wealth, he was a big shot wherever he went. Seeing Fatty Ma being so enthusiastic towards Zhuang Rui surprised them both.

It's important to understand that Zhuang Rui's background, wealth, and status are on a completely different level from Fatty Ma's. Fatty Ma's enthusiasm towards Zhuang Rui just now even had a hint of flattery, which made Yang Wei and Lao Si look at Zhuang Rui with new respect.

"A good find? By the way, Brother Ma, my brother found something pretty good this morning. Could you take a look and see what you think of it?"

Upon hearing what Fatty Ma said, Zhuang Rui immediately thought of the jade disc that Lao Si had bought. Although Lao Si said he didn't want it anymore, Zhuang Rui wasn't short of money. Besides, he didn't care about the jade disc anyway. Selling it and giving the money to Lao Si would be the ideal outcome.

"Oh, let me see it. Brother Ma is an amateur, so if I'm wrong, you guys are not allowed to laugh at me."

Fatty Ma is a jack-of-all-trades. He'll take anything that's an antique or has collectible value. He says that money in the bank might lose value, but antiques won't. Unless there's a third world war, the value of antiques will only rise.

The jade disc was in Zhuang Rui's handbag. It was worth tens of thousands of yuan. Like the broken porcelain pieces, Zhuang Rui didn't feel comfortable leaving it in the hotel room, so he simply carried it with him. After hearing what Fatty Ma said, Zhuang Rui took the jade disc out of his handbag and handed it over.

As for Fatty Ma's claim that he was an amateur, Zhuang Rui didn't really believe it. Given his eye for people, he was probably quite good at recognizing things.

Fatty Ma took the jade disc, rubbed it in his hands a few times, and said, "Brother, this jade hasn't been handled, so it probably hasn't been unearthed for very long."

Chapter 172 Pan Yu (Part 1)

"Brother Ma, you're using industry jargon. If you keep telling me you're an amateur, I'll get really angry..."

Upon hearing Ma Pangzi's words, Zhuang Rui gave him a thumbs up. The fact that Ma Pangzi could use the term "panyu" (盘玉, meaning "playing with jade") proved that he had put in considerable effort in jade collecting.

As everyone knows, most newly unearthed ancient jade pieces have been eroded by soil or burial objects over hundreds or thousands of years, resulting in various colored stains. However, these stains are not perfect in terms of color, and instead make the ancient jade appear dull and rough. Therefore, after being collected, it is necessary to use "polishing" to restore its original nature.

"Playing with jade," also known as "nurturing jade," is one of the greatest pleasures for many jade collectors. "Playing with jade" refers to a folk method of appreciating jade. By playing with jade, dull-colored jade can be restored to its original appearance, and its color can be greatly changed.

Even if ancient jade has the most beautiful color patina, if it is not polished, the patina will be hidden and not obvious, and the color of the jade's texture will be even more difficult to see. If the jade's nature is not restored, it will be like an ordinary stubborn stone. For example, the jade disc of the fourth brother is dark yellow on the surface and has no luster. However, if it is polished, it will become warm, pure and thick, and crystal clear.

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As the saying goes, jade can nourish a person, and similarly, a person can nourish jade.

Great jade collectors throughout history have all understood the art of "playing with jade," a skill akin to the art of tea ceremony. It involves appreciating and studying something, reaching a certain level of mastery, and eventually becoming a set of conventions and routines.

Imagine carrying your favorite jade piece with you, keeping it close to your body, and carefully protecting it. After a long time of playing with and wearing it, it's like a butterfly struggling through its pupa, gradually shedding its rough outer shell and regaining its former spirituality, luster, and color. Its brilliant radiance shines in your palm, and that sense of accomplishment is irreplaceable.

The price of the same piece of jade can vary greatly depending on whether it has been polished or not. For example, the jade disc that Lao Si found could be greatly increased in price if it could be polished to a beautiful and antique appearance.

"Brother Zhuang, don't try to sweet-talk me. I need to take another look at this jade..."

There are too many artificially aged antique jade pieces, so even though Fatty Ma felt they were pretty good in his hands, he didn't dare to be careless. He took out a magnifying glass the size of his thumb from his pocket and examined them carefully.

Zhuang Rui smiled. Judging from the equipment that Fatty Ma was carrying, this trip must have been planned for a long time, and it was definitely not as simple as he said, just a casual stroll.

Actually, given Fatty Ma's wealth, he wouldn't have cared much for this jade disc. However, collectors should all have experienced this: the thrill of distinguishing a genuine object from a fake is something money can't buy.

At this moment, Fatty Ma's lazy and bloated expression vanished, replaced by a sharp glint in his small, almost slit-like eyes. His focused expression made Zhuang Rui realize a completely different Fatty Ma, and his chubby face became much more adorable.

After more than ten minutes, Fatty Ma put the magnifying glass back in his pocket. His five fingers, as thick as carrots, kept rubbing the jade disc. It was clear that this was just a habit. Zhuang Rui knew that this must be "playing with jade." Although he knew a lot about "playing with jade," he had never done it himself, so he couldn't help but watch intently.

"Hey, Brother Zhuang, sorry, I wanted to play with it as soon as I got it. My technique is too clumsy, please excuse my poor skills. This jade disc is alright, it has two kinds of patina, plus the natural color of the jade, it can be considered 'Three Yangs Bring Prosperity'. It's just that I've never handled it. If you find someone who likes to handle jade, the price can be higher, but it's usually around twenty or thirty thousand..."

When Fatty Ma saw Zhuang Rui's eyes fixed on his right hand, he quickly stopped "playing with the jade." It wasn't appropriate for him to handle someone else's item, but his eye for jade was sharp, and his estimate was almost the same as Zhuang Rui's.

"Brother Ma, what are you saying? This little thing isn't worth much. My brother doesn't really like these things. If you like it, just take it and play with it. Don't talk about money..."

Zhuang Rui waved his hand. Although he spoke in a grand manner, he made it clear that the item did not belong to him. If Fatty Ma wanted it, he would naturally set a price.

Just as Zhuang Rui expected, Fatty Ma immediately said, "Brother, you're being generous with other people's money. That's not right. This thing would cost several thousand yuan even if you bought it from a street stall. I can't let my brothers suffer a loss. How about this, I'll take it for twenty thousand yuan. What do you guys think?"

After hearing what Fatty Ma said, Zhuang Rui looked at Lao Si. He originally wanted to help Lao Si sell it. The item was bought for two thousand yuan and then resold for ten times the original price. Lao Si should be satisfied.

"Okay, let's do as Brother Ma says..."

The fourth brother knew Zhuang Rui's intentions and did not refuse. None of them cared about the 20,000 yuan. If they refused again, they would be looked down upon.

"Brother Zhuang, your friends are all quite good-natured, very straightforward, just to my liking. Here, take the money, but the jade is mine."

Back in 2004, everyone, regardless of status, carried a genuine leather handbag. Of course, most people used synthetic leather. Zhuang Rui, though somewhat wealthy, only bought his bag for thirty yuan from a department store. But the one Ma Pangzi used was clearly not a fake.

As he spoke, Fatty Ma took out two dollars from his handbag and tossed them to Lao Si. Without even looking, they were all pink banknotes with bank receipts attached.

The fourth brother didn't stand on ceremony. He took the money and put it in his bag, then said to Fatty Ma, "Thanks, Brother Ma. Tonight, I'll treat you to a meal at a place in Guangzhou and have some fun."

Upon hearing this, Fatty Ma waved his hands repeatedly and said, "That's a matter for you young people. I'm too old for that. I'm tired from the flight and need to rest today."

"Brother Ma, you probably won't be able to get any rest tonight." The fourth brother's words made everyone laugh. With a beautiful woman by his side, any man would probably have trouble sleeping.

The girl who accompanied Fatty Ma this time was much better than the one Zhuang Rui met last time. She was not only very pure-looking, but also very quiet. She just sat next to Fatty Ma and didn't do anything overly intimate.

It seemed that Fatty Ma liked the girl quite a bit. He wasn't angry when he heard what Lao Si said. He chuckled and handed the jade disc to the girl, saying, "Yanzi, this jade is alright. Take it and polish it properly. If you can polish it well, you can sell it for over 100,000 even if you don't want it anymore."

"Thank you, Brother Ma..."

The girl named Yanzi obediently accepted the jade disc, but seemed a little lost holding it. She looked at Fatty Ma and asked, "Brother Ma, what does 'playing with jade' mean? How do you play with this jade?"

"Let Brother Zhuang tell you about it. I only know a little bit, so I won't embarrass myself." Fatty Ma waved his hand. The skill of polishing jade is very profound. A piece of ancient jade can be very valuable if polished well, but it may be worthless if polished poorly. There are many intricacies involved.

"Brother Ma, you've really put me in a bind..." Zhuang Rui said with a wry smile.

"You know a lot, kid, but you just don't show it off. That painting by Tang Bohu, you did it, didn't you? Stop pretending, I'm asking you to tell me, so just tell me. Yanzi, go light a cigarette for your brother Zhuang..."

Fatty Ma looked at Zhuang Rui with a half-smile, as if to say, "If you don't talk, I'll expose your secrets." He casually tossed a pack of Zhonghua cigarettes to Yanzi beside him, telling her to offer Zhuang Rui a cigarette.

"Brother Ma, if this is a celebratory cigarette, I'll smoke it."

Zhuang Rui took the cigarette Yanzi offered and joked with Fatty Ma.

"Don't provoke your brother Ma. Yanzi is studying at a university in Beijing. She hasn't graduated yet. Once she graduates, I'll marry her, and then you'll be calling her sister-in-law."

Fatty Ma seemed genuinely interested in this girl named Yanzi. His words and actions were no longer as frivolous as before, and he treated Yanzi with great respect. This made Zhuang Rui take a few more glances at the girl. Someone who could keep someone like Fatty Ma under her thumb was definitely no ordinary person.

"Brother Zhuang, don't listen to Brother Ma's nonsense. I'm just here with Brother Ma on summer vacation to see the sights."

Swallow's voice was very pleasant, soft and gentle. Judging from her current personality, she was also very docile. Zhuang Rui and the others secretly cursed Ma Pangzi for being an old cow eating young grass.

"Playing with jade, as the name suggests, is to nurture jade. Holding and playing with ancient jade in your hands often will make the jade more smooth and the color more perfect. However, there are many intricacies involved. There are many folk methods for playing with jade, but I only know a few."

As Zhuang Rui spoke, he took the ancient jade back from Yanzi's hand and played with it. Although he had never handled jade before, he was very knowledgeable about the process, which is an important part of collecting ancient jade.

Uncle De is a master of jade polishing, and he always has five or six jade pieces hanging on his waist. He has passed on all his experience in polishing jade to Zhuang Rui. If he only talked the talk but didn't walk the walk, Zhuang Rui could still fool some people.

"Hey buddy, don't talk so big, I want to hear it too..."

Zhuang Rui's words attracted the attention of Wei Ge and Lao Si. Even Zhou Rui looked at Zhuang Rui, who was often seen playing with a piece of jade. It was quite a pleasing sight. Lao Si was already regretting selling the jade disc.

Zhuang Rui glanced at Yanzi and said, "It's rare to see a girl handling jade, because this thing can't come into contact with perfumes and some chemicals, otherwise it will be corroded, the outer layer will be damaged, and the original luster will be affected."

"I don't use perfume or other cosmetics. I'm sorry, Brother Zhuang, please continue." Yanzi interrupted Zhuang Rui, feeling a little embarrassed. She gestured for Zhuang Rui to continue.

Zhuang Rui didn't mind, smiled, and continued, "Let me first explain why we should polish jade. As everyone knows, most ancient jade is unearthed from tombs. Because of the different locations where it was unearthed, the nature of its corrosion and color patina is also different."

For example, ancient jade unearthed from water-filled pits or places with particularly humid soil and water accumulation in the south often has water stains. In contrast, ancient jade from dry pits in the north often has more soil erosion. The yellow color on this jade disc is the soil staining.

Due to soil erosion and water erosion, coupled with the repeated exposure to varying degrees of dryness and humidity over the years, even the most beautiful and abundant color stains on ancient jade will remain hidden and unseen. In addition, the jade itself has varying shades of color and has also accumulated a lot of impurities.

If we don't handle and play with it, the jade's texture won't be revealed, its color won't seep out, and its impurities won't be removed. If we want a high-quality ancient jade with excellent color and patina to show the color of a gemstone, then we must use the handling method to nurture the jade.

There's a saying among antique jade collectors: "To collect without playing with it is to waste a precious resource; to obtain a treasure is like obtaining grass." This illustrates the importance of handling and appreciating jade.

"Hey, get to the point, how should we polish this jade?" Wei Ge said impatiently.

"I'm a little thirsty," Zhuang Rui said, smacking his lips.

"Here, brother has some Red Bull." Fatty Ma tossed over a can of drink in a very cooperative manner.

"Hehe, thanks, Brother Ma."

Zhuang Rui was just joking with the others. He put the Red Bull aside and continued, "There are three ways to polish jade: 'Wenpan' (gentle polishing), 'Wupan' (vigorous polishing), and 'Yipan' (intentional polishing). Some people also call them 'Huanpan' (slow polishing), 'Jipan' (rapid polishing), and 'Yipan' (intentional polishing)."

"Wenpan" refers to placing a piece of jade in a small cloth bag and carrying it close to the body every day to nurture it with the relatively constant body temperature. Only after a year can one rub and play with it in their hands until the jade returns to its original appearance.

The process of polishing jade using the "Wenpan" method is time-consuming and laborious, requiring patience and perseverance. It is also a method used by the ancients to cultivate their mind and character. Usually, after two or three years of Wenpan, the color patina on the ancient jade will only

begin to appear slightly. If the jade has been buried for a long time, it may take ten or even several decades to polish it properly.

Let me tell you a little story. In the history of the Qing Dynasty, there was a famous story about a father and son who spent their entire lives playing with a piece of jade. The jade was played with until it had a shiny patina and was incredibly lustrous. It is now in the collection of a museum in Beijing. Experts estimate that this piece of jade has been played with for more than 60 years.

This method of polishing is rarely used nowadays. However, if you encounter a piece of high-quality ancient jade with five or more colors of patina, it is still better to use this method to polish it, because only jade polished in this way will be truly precious.

Even jade artifacts of slightly inferior quality can fetch hundreds of thousands of yuan if they are polished using traditional methods over several decades.

For example, Hanhai Auction House recently auctioned a very ordinary jade pendant dating back to the Warring States period. However, it was in excellent condition, with beautiful patina and color, and sold for 2.09 million RMB.

"Hey, mine is also Han jade, the price difference is just outrageous!"

Upon hearing this, the fourth brother couldn't sit still any longer and interrupted Zhuang Rui. It wasn't that he thought Fatty Ma's offer was too low, but rather that he felt a bit unbalanced because these were all Han jade pieces and the prices differed so much.

Chapter 173 Pan Yu (Part Two)

"Outrageous? Fourth Brother, if you can handle this jade with your hands for seven or eight years, I guarantee you can sell it for hundreds of thousands. If the quality of this jade is slightly better, it wouldn't be surprising if it were worth over a million. How about you give the money back to Brother Ma and play with it yourself?"

Zhuang Rui smiled as he looked at the fourth brother. Playing with jade is a delicate art; those who don't truly love jade usually can't stick with it, and many give up halfway. Given the fourth brother's temperament, even three to five weeks would be considered a long time.

"Come on, you know I don't have that kind of patience. Tell me if there's any quick way to polish jade. If it's convenient, I'll go find another good piece of jade." The fourth brother said sullenly, still feeling uneasy about the jade disc.

"You think finding an antique jade is like buying cabbage at the market? Your bargain today was just a lucky find. Didn't you see that Wei Ge only found a Han Dynasty white porcelain piece?"

"Hey, why are you talking about me? Old man, let's not get off topic. Tell me the rest of the methods for 'playing with jade'."

The eldest brother was afraid that Zhuang Rui would reveal the story about the Han Dynasty porcelain he had mentioned that morning. If that got out, it would be incredibly embarrassing, so he quickly changed the subject.

"Well, we've already talked about the 'Wenpan' method. Now let's talk about the 'Wupan' method. The so-called 'Wupan' method is to use human force to continuously handle and play with the jade, hoping to quickly achieve the goal of becoming familiar with it. This method is more commonly used by jade merchants."

After a year of wearing and handling, the hardness of jade will gradually recover. Then, wrap it in an old white cloth (avoid colored cloth, it must be white) and hire someone to rub it continuously day and night, 24 hours a day. The jade will heat up from the friction and become hotter and hotter. After a period of time, replace it with a new white cloth and continue to rub it.

The high temperature generated by rubbing jade together can quickly force out the ash and soil buried deep underground. As the color and impurities solidify, the jade's color will become increasingly vibrant. After about a year, the jade can be essentially restored to its original state. However, this "vigorous rubbing" is very risky. When rubbing, the force applied by both hands must be even. If the force is uneven, the jade can easily be destroyed.

Unless you're in the jade business, if you manage to find a decent piece of antique jade, I personally recommend using the "slow polishing" method to nurture it. Although it takes a bit longer, the results are excellent. During the nurturing process, you'll also develop an emotional connection to the jade, which is what makes it more valuable.

Regardless of whether it's the "gentle polishing" or "vigorous polishing" method, the longer an ancient jade has been buried, the more difficult it is to bring out its original color and texture. This is because the longer and more the earth's energy penetrates, the deeper it penetrates the jade's core, and its true luster only slowly emerges. To learn how to appreciate ancient jade, simply wearing two or three pieces and polishing them for a while each day can cultivate one's refinement and patience.

In fact, when Zhuang Rui first saw the jade disc of the fourth brother, he also had the idea of picking it up himself. However, he had seen several ancient jade pieces belonging to Uncle De, the worst of which were three-color patina and were even made of mutton fat jade. So he looked down on this jade disc. However, he also had the idea of finding a good jade to play with at this jade gambling conference.

"Brother Zhuang, the 'Wenpan' and 'Wupan' you mentioned take quite a while, don't they? Could the Yipan be done a little faster?"

This girl named Yanzi, although she always appeared very quiet, playing with a piece of jade for a year or even longer was not an easy task for her. After all, it was a piece of jade to play with. Men could hang it on their waist, but it was inconvenient for women to carry it close to their bodies. That's why Zhuang Rui mentioned earlier that not many girls play with jade.

"Intentional plate? Hehe, you've got it backwards. These days, I doubt anyone would use the intentional plate method to nurture jade."

"Intentional handling" refers to jade enthusiasts holding jade pieces in their hands, playing with and appreciating them while simultaneously contemplating the virtues of jade. They continuously absorb the essence of these virtues to cultivate their own character. Over time, this can lead to a refined state of harmony between the jade and the individual. This method was particularly popular among ancient scholars and literati.

The practice of "yipan" not only nurtures the jade, but also elevates the spirit of the person who practices it. Yipan is an extremely high level of practice that requires a spirit of seclusion. Rather than saying that the person is playing with the jade, it is more accurate to say that the jade is playing with the person. The person and the jade become one, and their spirits become connected. We often say that ancient jade is spiritual, which refers to the realm of Yipan.

However, very few people in history have been able to reach such a spiritual realm, let alone restless modern people. Therefore, the "Yipan" is just a legendary state; everyone should just listen to it as a story.

After saying so much, Zhuang Rui was genuinely thirsty. He picked up the drink that Fatty Ma had tossed to him, opened it, and started drinking. All the knowledge he had just shared was instilled in him by Uncle De. Zhuang Rui had an excellent memory, and by showing it off now, no one present could see that he was just a paper tiger, all talk and no action.

As soon as Zhuang Rui finished speaking, Fatty Ma clapped his hands and said, "Brother Zhuang, what you said has enlightened me. I used to just hold the jade in my hand and play with it, thinking that was all there was to it. I didn't know there were so many intricacies involved. I've really learned something new today. Brother, let's not go to Guangzhou tonight. Let's find a place to have a drink. I have some things to ask you."

"Young man, you've really lived up to your reputation as the manager of this pawnshop. You're quite the expert on these things. I'll find a nice jade plate for myself sometime."

Wei Ge's eyes lit up as he listened. If he had an antique jade pendant hanging from his waist, and could play with it in his hand from time to time, he would be very proud to be out in public. He wasn't just playing with the jade; he was playing with a culture that had been passed down for five thousand years.

"Brother Wei, find me one too, I want to try it out."

Although Lao Si was somewhat averse to the idea that these ancient jade pieces came from tombs, he was also tempted. Of course, things that couldn't be sold couldn't be taken back, but with his and Wei Ge's wealth and background, it wouldn't be too difficult for them to find a piece of good quality ancient jade.

"Hey young man, have a smoke..."

A somewhat unfamiliar voice came from the side. Zhuang Rui looked up and was immediately dizzy. Originally, there were only him, Wei Ge, Lao Si, and Fatty Ma in the sofa area. Now, apart from the sofa he and Fatty Ma were sitting on, the other five or six sofas were completely full of people. There were

also about ten people standing next to the sofas, all looking at him. Although Zhuang Rui had been a junior leader for a few days, he was still a little scared by this scene.

"Everyone, is there anything I can help you with?"

When out and about, Zhuang Rui couldn't refuse other people's hospitality, so he reached out and accepted the cigarette. Immediately, someone else lit it for him. This sudden attentiveness left Zhuang Rui quite puzzled.

The man who offered Zhuang Rui a cigarette chuckled and said, "Hehe, young man, don't misunderstand. I do enjoy collecting jade, but after buying it, I mostly just keep it at home. I didn't know that jade needed to be nurtured. After hearing what you said today, I realize that I've been playing around with it for the past ten years."

"Yes, I knew about polishing jade before, but I didn't know there were different techniques. I've learned something new today."

"Young man, can you tell me if there are any taboos associated with this jade plate?"

"Yes, yes, young man, tell me, don't let a good piece of jade end up stuck in your hands."

Hearing the conversations of the crowd around him, Zhuang Rui realized that they had overheard all his idle chatter. He felt a chill run down his spine; he wondered what they would think if they knew he was all talk and no action.

Zhuang Rui had learned all this knowledge from Uncle De, and he didn't really have much of his own insight into it. It had nothing to do with the boasting of Fatty Ma and the others. He was still a little nervous about discussing it in front of so many people. He stood up, cupped his hands in greeting, and said, "Everyone, this is just my personal opinion. Please don't take it too seriously. You are all seniors, and everyone has their own way of playing with jade. I won't embarrass myself by offering my own opinion."

"It's alright, young man. Just tell me. I've been playing with jade for decades, and I only know about the fast and slow, gentle and vigorous methods of polishing. I don't know much about the intentional polishing you mentioned. I've learned something new today. Don't be afraid, just tell me..."

The speaker was an elderly man, who looked to be in his early sixties. He sat on the sofa opposite Zhuang Rui and encouraged Zhuang Rui to continue.

As people's living standards have improved in recent years, more and more people are collecting jade and antiques. However, most of them are beginners. They buy jade and put it at home to display. Some even make exquisite boxes to package it. For example, among the people gathered here, six or seven out of ten have never even heard of the term "playing with jade".

The "Yi Pan" method has long been abandoned and is rarely mentioned in the jade collecting circle. It was only occasionally mentioned by some literati before the liberation. That's how Uncle De learned about this method. Although the old man in front of him is not young, he also doesn't know about the "Yi Pan" method.

"Yeah, just say it, what are you dawdling for..."

An aged voice came from the back of the crowd, but the tone was rather unfriendly. It was rare to hear someone speak like that when asking for advice, which drew everyone's attention.

Zhuang Rui recognized the voice, but when he looked in the direction of the sound, he was blocked by the crowd and could not see who was speaking.

"Oh, it's Senior Uncle Gu!"

Zhuang Rui suddenly remembered who the voice belonged to. He had just sat down and hadn't even touched the sofa yet when he jumped up. He pushed through the crowd and, sure enough, Old Master Gu was standing outside the crowd, looking at him with a smile on his face.

"Uncle-Master Gu, you're making a fool of yourself by watching me." Zhuang Rui said as he ushered Old Master Gu inside.

"Hey, today's trip was worthwhile, this is the grandmaster of Jade Street."

"So this young man is an old master's nephew. No wonder he has such skill."

Ancient reputation is well-known in the jade industry, and many people know him. For a while, the people gathered around the sofa started talking about him.

Chapter 174 Pan Yu (Part 3)

"Uncle-Master Gu, what brings you here?"

After the old man sat down, Zhuang Rui asked a question, but as soon as the words left his mouth, he knew he had asked too much. Given the old man's status, it was perfectly normal for him to attend this Pingzhou jadeite rough stone trade fair.

"Shouldn't I have come? Should you have come?" Old Master Gu seemed to be in a bad mood today, and his words were somewhat sharp.

"Uncle-Master, I was invited by a friend. Otherwise, how would I know there was a jade trade fair here?"

Zhuang Rui honestly replied that he really wouldn't have known if Song Jun hadn't told him.

"Oh? Is that so? Then I misunderstood you..."

It turns out that Old Master Gu thought Zhuang Rui had tasted success with jade gambling in Nanjing and wanted to try his luck again. He was Zhuang Rui's grandfather's student and had a fondness for Zhuang Rui, treating him like a nephew. He didn't want to see Zhuang Rui addicted to jade gambling, which is why his tone was so unpleasant just now.

"Uncle-Master, I was just lucky before. These past few months in Zhonghai, I've mainly focused on studying, and I haven't been gambling on stones anymore." After understanding what Grandpa Gu was thinking, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh and cry. However, he was still grateful for Grandpa Gu's heartfelt care.

"Old Gu, it's been two years since I last saw you. You must come visit me sometime."

Fatty Ma actually knew Old Master Gu, and he came over to greet him.

"Oh, it's Mr. Ma. What have you caught this time that made you come here?"

Old Master Gu isn't completely detached from worldly affairs; sometimes he helps people appraise things. Two years ago, he appraised a few ancient jade pieces for Fatty Ma, so we became acquainted.

"Hehe, I just came to join in the fun. I didn't expect Brother Zhuang to be so familiar with you."

Fatty Ma smiled brightly, completely unconcerned by Old Master Gu's slightly sarcastic remarks.

"Xiao Zhuang and I are old friends, Mr. Ma, please take good care of him in the future."

Old Gu briefly explained his relationship with Zhuang Rui. Old Gu knew that Fatty Ma was no ordinary person. Two years ago, he knew that Fatty Ma knew nothing about jade, but among the dozen or so pieces of ancient jade in his collection, only one was a fake jade that had been artificially aged. The rest were all genuine, and there were even a few quite good and precious pieces of ancient jade. Old Gu admired Fatty Ma for having such a discerning eye, even though he was an amateur. His words just now were also a way of putting in a good relationship with Zhuang Rui.

"Old man, are the methods for 'polishing jade' that this young man just mentioned true? Could you please give me your opinion?"

The onlookers, seeing that Old Master Gu had sat down, chatted happily with Zhuang Rui and the others. Some of the bolder ones even shouted out. You see, Old Master Gu is an absolute authority in the jade industry, and he is rarely seen. Naturally, no one wanted to miss such a good opportunity to learn from him.

"Old Gu, you've just gotten off the plane. It's a bit noisy here. Why don't you go upstairs and rest? We've already arranged your room." At this moment, a middle-aged man who had been following Old Gu closely leaned over and whispered in his ear. He was probably the official who had invited Old Gu.

"It's alright, I'll sit here for a while." Old Gu waved his hand dismissively. Seeing that Old Gu refused to go upstairs to rest, the man had no choice but to go to the side, take out his phone, and make a call.

"Xiao Zhuang, I didn't expect your jade appraisal skills to improve so much in just a few months. What you said earlier was all correct. Please continue.

Seeing the expectant looks in the crowd, Gu Lao had an idea and turned the topic back to Zhuang Rui.

"Senior Uncle, this is unfair! With you here, I have no right to speak..."

The old man's words made Zhuang Rui anxious. Showing off his knowledge of jade in front of him was like trying to teach a master swordsman to use his skills in front of Guan Yu; he was just asking for trouble.

"Sit down."

The old man pressed down on Zhuang Rui's body as he was about to stand up, and said, "No matter what profession you are in, there is no order of learning. Those who are skilled are your teachers. What you just said is all correct. I have nothing to criticize. Don't be afraid, continue."

Zhuang Rui understood a little better now. The old man was promoting him. For someone of his age to say such things would probably spread throughout the jade collecting industry in no time. And the old man's words could be considered as leading him into the field.

Sure enough, after the old man said those words, the onlookers began to whisper among themselves. Some people believed Zhuang Rui's statement about "panyu," but many more still had doubts. The reason was simply that Zhuang Rui was too young. However, after the old man said those words, the way everyone looked at Zhuang Rui was completely different from before.

"Young man, since the old man asked you to speak, then speak," said the man who had just offered Zhuang Rui a cigarette.

Zhuang Rui hesitated for a moment. He did know the specific methods for handling ancient jade, but they were all theoretical. If he made a mistake, he would become a laughing stock. However, he was in a difficult situation. After thinking for a moment, Zhuang Rui braced himself and said, "The method for handling jade was taught to me by an elder. I will share it with everyone. Please correct me if there is anything I have said."

Let's leave aside jadeite and other hard jade for now and talk about nephrite. If you're lucky enough to find a piece of jade that has been unearthed but hasn't been handled yet, it's best not to start handling it right away. Instead, soak it in clean water for two days. If it's jade from a new mine (that is, jade that has just been unearthed), the water temperature should be around 70 or 80 degrees Celsius.

After soaking, a white, sticky substance will seep out from the jade. This can be called the patina of the jade. As everyone knows, the patina refers to the glossy oxide layer that forms on the surface of antique objects during long-term storage and handling.

Some people clean jade with a toothbrush after soaking it, and then hang it up and wear it the next day. This is actually not appropriate. After taking the jade out, do not clean off the sap. Instead, place the jade in a well-ventilated, cool place for 1 to 2 months and let it dry on its own. After the sap dries, the jade will become more lustrous and smooth, which is called patina or precious sap.

At this point, you can start wearing jade ornaments. Gentlemen can find a good red string to tie them around their waist, but it's a bit more troublesome for girls, especially in the summer when wearing skirts—there's nowhere to put them!

Zhuang Rui's words caused a burst of laughter from the surroundings. At this time, more and more guests came and went in the hotel, and the sofa area was surrounded by layers of people. Some people outside who did not know the situation were desperately trying to squeeze in when they heard that Grandpa Gu was inside.

"Hey bro, don't you think we should charge a fee too? Hehe." Seeing the grand spectacle, Wei Ge joked with Zhuang Rui.

"What a pipe dream! If it were Master Gu, charging would be perfectly reasonable." Zhuang Rui curled his lip, knowing that as soon as he finished speaking, there would be people nitpicking.

"Young man, stop chatting! Is there anything taboo about this jade? Tell us all..." Seeing Zhuang Rui chatting with the person next to him, the onlookers started making noise.

"There's nothing else to it. As everyone knows, 'playing with jade' simply means using the body's natural oils to nourish the jade, making it shed its dry, 'stone' nature and transform it into a smooth, 'jade' nature. However, this oil is not the sweat or grease on your nose or forehead. Some people feel that these areas are oily and will rub them with jade objects, which is a big no-no. Please don't do this."

When handling jade, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly. In weather like this, it's best to soak the jade in clean water every one or two weeks.

By the way, some friends in the jade trade, especially those in Guangdong and Hong Kong, like to use metallographic sandpaper to polish jade, and they particularly like to use it to polish antique jade that has lost its luster. This method is somewhat short-sighted and may seem to yield quick results, but it is actually very harmful. It will seriously damage the vitality of the antique jade, and the unique, deep, and aged patina on the surface of the jade will disappear, leaving it with a strange, oily, shiny, and slippery appearance.

As Zhuang Rui finished speaking, several people in the crowd looked disappointed. They seemed to be the jade merchants Zhuang Rui had mentioned. Merchants are profit-driven, and this method is very effective in fooling people who are new to collecting antique jade, and they can sell it for a high price. However, after being polished with metallographic sandpaper, the antique jade is basically ruined.

"It takes three to five years to polish a piece of jade. How do you know when it's polished enough?" someone in the crowd asked.

"Hehe, the jade we're talking about that has been polished is called mature jade. Generally, ancient jade that has not been severely eroded in the soil and whose quality is not too bad can be basically polished after one or two years of handling. However, some ancient jade that has been severely eroded or whose quality is very poor will take longer to polish."

Jade can be considered mature jade if it is polished until it is smooth and lustrous, with a patina on the surface.

Whether or not jade will show any effect after being handled or polished depends heavily on its own quality. Some jade has excellent fineness and whiteness, and after only carving and polishing, it becomes as lustrous as mutton fat, requiring no handling at all. Similarly, some jade with a high degree of stoneiness will remain dry and stone-like even after years of handling. However, we are talking about unearthed jade, in which case handling is essential.

After Zhuang Rui finished speaking, he looked at Old Master Gu and said, "Uncle-Master, I've really emptied my pockets. Please say a few words." Zhuang Rui was telling the truth. This was all Uncle De had taught him, and if he continued, he would give himself away.

Chapter 175 Identifying Jade

As soon as Zhuang Rui finished speaking, everyone gathered around turned their attention to Old Master Gu.

Gu Lao placed great importance on mentoring younger generations in the jade industry. He used to frequently travel to various jade associations to give lectures or teach apprentices, and many people knew him. However, in recent years, as Gu Lao has gotten older, he has rarely gone out to give lectures or attend various jade exhibitions. Today, having the opportunity to hear Gu Lao comment on jade is a great opportunity for everyone.

"You brat, you actually used your senior uncle as a shield..."

Seeing the expectant looks on everyone's faces, Gu Lao laughed and scolded Zhuang Rui, then took a piece of jade from his waist.

"The most popular way to play with ancient jade now is to combine fast and slow rubbing. As Xiao Zhuang just mentioned, almost no one tries intentional rubbing anymore. However, when I was young, I acquired a fine piece of jade and have been using the intentional rubbing method for decades. Let me share my experience with intentional rubbing with you."

As soon as the old man uttered these words, everyone was shocked. Zhuang Rui had already mentioned the difficulty of the Yipan and explained that it was almost a legendary method. They hadn't expected that the old man would actually pass down this method. Being able to hear the old man teach his experience firsthand, everyone felt that the trip was worthwhile. They whispered among themselves and stared intently at the jade artifact in the old man's hand.

As he spoke, Gu Lao handed the jade artifact in his hand to Zhuang Rui, saying, "Everyone knows the eight characters 'Sincerity can move even metal and stone.' In fact, this phrase comes from the ancient method of 'Yi Pan' (意盘, a method of contemplating jade). The ancients said something like this: 'Constantly caressing and contemplating the virtues of jade is enough to transform my temperament and improve my character, making me pure and free from the obscuration of selfish desires throughout my life. Sincerity can move even metal and stone.'"

I've had this jade piece for almost forty years. Now, whenever I hold it in my hand, I feel a connection between myself and the jade, as if it has a life of its own, as if it can breathe. This old man has experienced many ups and downs, but whenever I have this jade in my hand, my mind calms down. I personally believe this is the effect of "spiritual contemplation."

The old man's words drew everyone's attention to the jade piece in Zhuang Rui's hand, their eyes filled with envy. With the old man's discerning eye, the jade he played with must be of high quality. He had been handling the jade for forty years, and considering the value of the jade itself, it could almost be called a priceless treasure.

The old man took out a jade pendant, small in size, only about the size of a child's palm. The front of the pendant was carved with a mythical beast, riding on wind and clouds. It had short wings, a dragon's head with two feet, a horse's body, and qilin feet. Its shape was as fierce as a lion, with bulging eyes and long fangs. The details were carved with lifelike realism, and even the fur was clearly visible.

Zhuang Rui recognized the shape; it should be a Pixiu, a mythical creature believed to ward off evil. However, what surprised Zhuang Rui was the color patina on the jade. Holding it in his hand, Zhuang Rui carefully examined it and found that this Pixiu plaything actually had six different colors patina. It should be known that patina is formed later in life. It is relatively common for ancient jade to have two or three colors patina, but it is extremely rare to have more than four colors. Ancient jade with five colors patina is considered priceless. This jade pendant actually has six colors patina. No wonder the old master used the "intentional polishing" method to nurture the jade.

The jade pendant was tied with a dark red cord tied with a Chinese knot. Zhuang Rui pulled it hard and felt that it was very strong.

"Uncle-Master Gu, is this a piece of warm jade?" Zhuang Rui held the jade in his hand, feeling its warmth and smoothness, and couldn't help but ask the old master.

"Yes, this is warm jade from Lantian. It's of very high quality. I acquired it by chance when I was young, and it's been with me for over forty years. Although I've played with other jades over the years, I've never replaced this one. Hehe, I've relied on it many times to ward off evil spirits and bring good fortune."

The young people were quite skeptical of the old saying. They thought that the idea that jade could ward off evil was just a legend, and they had never heard of anyone being healthy and free from disasters just by carrying a piece of jade.

"Uncle-Master, I've heard that jade with five different colors of patina is very rare, and I've never even heard of jade with six colors of patina."

"Hehe, don't tell me you haven't heard of it. Not many people have actually seen a six-colored jade artifact. The Palace Museum currently houses more than 30,000 pieces of ancient jade, and you can hardly find even a few with six-colored jade." As the old man spoke, a hint of pride couldn't help but show on his face.

"This is an ancient jade from the third generation. When I first got it, it had only been unearthed for a short time. The surface color was similar to lime, and the texture was like mud. You couldn't even see the jade color when it was held up to the light. Now it's been polished quite a bit. The areas with more red staining are commonly known as 'baby's face'..."

Gu Lao took the jade Pixiu from Zhuang Rui and rubbed it carefully in his hands.

"Old Gu, how much is this piece of jade worth?" The eldest brother, a common man, asked about the price as soon as he opened his mouth, but this was also what everyone wanted to know, so they all pricked up their ears to listen.

"Hehe, this jade has been with me for decades. You could bring me a mountain of gold, and I wouldn't trade it for it..."

The old man answered with a smile, but did not mention the true price of the jade Pixiu. The eldest brother cursed inwardly: "Old fox."

"Old man, our level of understanding of this is beyond our reach. Could you please tell me about the methods for authenticating ancient jade? I've been collecting jade for several years, spent a lot of money, and none of the ancient jade pieces I've bought are genuine. The jade industry is just too murky!"

A voice emerged from the crowd, and everyone nodded in agreement. Among those present were jade merchants, all of whom had been fooled and bought fake jade.

"Nine out of ten antique jade pieces on the market now are fake. Genuine antique jade is very expensive. I don't really recommend beginners to collect antique jade. It's hard to find good pieces. You'll just waste money and make yourself feel bad."

Just recently, a large number of counterfeit jade artifacts from the Warring States and Han Dynasties suddenly appeared on the market. These included jade chariots and figures, jade chime bells, jade walking sticks, and even jade horn cups. Some people spent hundreds of thousands, while others spent millions, on these counterfeit jade artifacts.

"Old man, it must be fake, right?" someone in the crowd laughed.

"That's right. Even worse, one person bought six sets of jade burial suits, and not long after, these items kept appearing in the antique market, and they became cheaper and cheaper. You don't even need to have them appraised to know they're fake. So don't deliberately look for antique jade, otherwise you might be the next person to buy fake jade."

Old Master Gu's words immediately caused a burst of laughter from the onlookers.

Old Gu waved his hand and waited until the surroundings quieted down before saying, "Don't laugh, everyone. Even insiders often make mistakes, let alone outsiders. The batch of fake ancient jade I just mentioned happened in the life of an old friend of mine."

That was a doctoral student supervised by an old friend of mine, majoring in archaeology and museum studies. The young man often went to antique shops to pick out small items. Last year, he saw a batch of ancient jade artifacts in an antique shop, including jade scepters, jade knives, jade bi discs, jade huang pendants, and jade horn cups.

According to the shop owner, these jade artifacts date back to the Han Dynasty, with some even dating back to the Shang and Zhou Dynasties. In particular, some of the artifacts, such as jade horn cups, jade bi discs, and jade huang pendants, are typical examples of Han Dynasty jade artifacts.

As everyone knows, jade artifacts from the Han Dynasty, more than two thousand years ago, are considered the pinnacle of Chinese jade craftsmanship. Among them, the jade artifacts most representative of the Han Dynasty's craftsmanship are those used for daily life, decorative jade, and jade ornaments.

Jade horn cups are very important vessels among everyday jade items, used as drinking vessels by royalty and nobility; while jade discs and jade pendants were both ritual jades and decorative jades. These jade artifacts generally employ round carving and high relief techniques, reflecting an exquisite and noble artistic style.

This antique shop attracted many peers in the industry to come and appraise the items. The student knew some of them. When the shop owner noticed that the student was very interested in these jade items, he told the student that if he wanted to buy them, he could transfer them to him at a discounted price.

The student, around thirty-five or thirty-six years old and with a certain economic foundation, bought the jade horn cup and some other jade artifacts after several rounds of bargaining. The jade horn cup was the most expensive among them. He subsequently visited the shop many times to buy antique jade. In the past year alone, he bought more than 70 pieces of Han Dynasty jade artifacts, spending a total of more than 400,000 yuan.

I happened to visit that city last month, and an old friend asked me to take a look. Well, as you all know, it was all modern jade that had been artificially aged. The reason these fake jade pieces look antique and have realistic patina is because professional dealers use special techniques to create them.

"Old man, how can this patina be faked? And how can it be identified? I was fooled by this last year. I bought a Han Dynasty jade with three-color patina for 80,000 yuan, only to find out it was fake after authentication." A voice came from the crowd.

"Hehe, that's because you're greedy. In the antique market nowadays, Han jade is almost impossible to find. You should know that jade in the Han Dynasty was not circulated as a commodity. It was produced and used under the monopoly of the emperor."

When did ordinary people begin using jade? It was during the Three Kingdoms period. Because of the chaos of war during the Three Kingdoms period, tomb raiding was rampant. Someone unearthed a jade burial suit from the Han Dynasty. After Cao Pi of the Three Kingdoms saw it, he found that the jade burial suit could not preserve the bones as the legends suggested, so he abolished the system of jade burial suits. From then on, jade artifacts began to be used by ordinary people.

Larger Han Dynasty jade artifacts are practically nonexistent on the market. The only ones that have survived are small pieces, such as jade sword ornaments and small jade bi pendants, and even those have a very low chance of appearing on the market. Most of the other items are fake.

As for jade counterfeiting, there are many methods to form staining, no less than a dozen. Let me briefly explain one of them. One is the chemical soaking method: the jade is placed in a chemical solution containing color. After soaking for several days, this staining will appear on the surface, usually in the form of reddish-brown, yellowish-brown, or other colors.

This is the most common method of "aging" jade, also known as "artificial dyeing." Most unscrupulous merchants use this method.

Another method of forgery involves creating a dark brown stain on the surface of jade, known as the smoking method. This involves placing the object in a fire to smoke it. After a short period of smoking, the surface of the jade will have a dark brown appearance, resembling that of jade buried deep underground, giving it the feel of ancient black lacquer jade.

Actually, it's quite simple to distinguish between real and fake patina. Fake patina is usually bright and shiny. If you have any doubts about the jade you want to buy, you can take an alcohol swab and wipe the jade for a while. See if there is any patina color on the swab. If there is, then it is suspicious and most likely fake.

Another sign is that under strong light, the jade's color is very uniform and has a hazy appearance, lacking transitional colors and appearing rather monochromatic. Such jade is also questionable, and it's best not to buy it in this situation.

Sigh, people nowadays are getting more and more restless. Before liberation, those old people who made jade look old still had some "honesty" to them. They would "conceal the age but not the material." They would carve new techniques and make the jade look old on old or new genuine Hetian white jade and then sell it for a high price.

If these things were sold today, they'd be considered "good stuff"! It's just a pity that the market now sells so-called jade, glass, plastic, quartz—anything goes.

As Gu Lao spoke, he became somewhat agitated. The emergence of these unscrupulous merchants was extremely detrimental to the development of the jade industry. It was because of these people that many people interested in jade collecting were deterred. The reason is simple: if you were to buy jade and suffer losses several times, would you dare to buy it again next time?

These counterfeiters, though not highly educated, are masters at understanding human psychology. They can produce whatever jade is in high demand in the market, and their workmanship, materials, and patina are so realistic that they can fool even newcomers and seasoned veterans who have been in the business for decades.

"Old Gu, look how many people have gathered here. The hotel is getting annoyed. Why don't you go upstairs and rest for a bit? We're going to have a welcome dinner for you tonight." Seeing the crowd still asking questions, the middle-aged man with Old Gu couldn't sit still any longer and walked up to him, speaking in a low voice.

After hearing this, Gu Lao looked around and saw that the area was indeed completely surrounded. He said helplessly, "Alright, let's go upstairs first. Xiao Zhuang, I don't have time tonight. Let's have lunch together tomorrow."

Zhuang Rui had long felt uncomfortable being stared at by these people, so he quickly replied, "Okay, Uncle-Master, you go and rest first, I'll call you tomorrow."

Zhuang Rui and Wei Ge and the others went through a lot of trouble to help Old Master Gu onto the elevator. They were all covered in sweat. The fourth brother said with a smile, "Young master, you antique dealers also have a thing for idol worship."

"Alright, go upstairs and take a shower."

Zhuang Rui saw that the people in the sofa area had not yet dispersed, and couldn't help but shiver. When the next elevator arrived, he quickly slipped inside.

"Wait a moment....."

Just as the elevator doors were about to close, Zhuang Rui suddenly saw a familiar figure walk into the hotel.

Chapter 176 Business Opportunities in Jade Gambling

"What's wrong? Honey... Hey, where are you going?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui block the elevator door and run out, Wei Ge quickly shouted, turning around to see everyone waiting in the elevator. Reluctantly, he and Lao Si retreated.

"Lei Lei, what are you doing here? Didn't you say you were going to stay in England for a while?"

The person Zhuang Rui had just seen was Liu Chuan's girlfriend, Miss Lei. Zhuang Rui was also wondering why it seemed like everyone he knew had come to Pingzhou. First it was Fatty Ma, then Old Master Gu, and now even Lei Lei had come.

"Zhuang Rui? Aren't you still working in Zhonghai? Oh... I know, you must be here for jade gambling." Lei Lei was also pleasantly surprised to see Zhuang Rui here.

After Qin Xuanbing and Lei Lei returned to Hong Kong, they talked to Zhuang Rui less often, especially after they went to England recently. They only contacted each other once every week or two, so they didn't know that Zhuang Rui had resigned and was preparing to devote himself to the antique business.

Zhuang Rui felt somewhat guilty towards Qin Xuanbing because of his drunken experience before leaving Zhonghai, so he didn't call them to tell them he was coming to Guangdong.

"Ahem... well, I guess so. I've already resigned from the pawnshop, so I'll have more free time from now on..."

Old Master Gu thought he was there to gamble on stones, as did Lei Lei, and Zhuang Rui was too lazy to explain anymore.

Although Song Jun told him about the jade gambling event, Zhuang Rui did indeed intend to make a fortune. After studying antiques with Uncle De for several months and seeing a large number of rare and precious antiques, Zhuang Rui realized that with his millions of dollars, he wouldn't even make a sound in this industry. Without financial support, it would be a joke to try to keep the items he liked.

Seeing Zhuang Rui constantly looking behind her, Lei Lei immediately understood his thoughts and said with a smile, "Alright, stop looking around. I came with my grandfather this time. Xuan Bing didn't come with me; she's still in England. She took on a pretty big order this time, which will probably take three or four months to complete. If you miss her, just fly to England to see her..."

"We are innocent, unlike some people, like Liu Chuan, who didn't come to see his grandfather this time?"

Zhuang Rui and Lei Lei were old friends. Hearing Lei Lei tease him, he immediately retorted. Being a girl, Lei Lei blushed deeply at Zhuang Rui's words.

"When did you start acting like Da Chuan, becoming such a hooligan?" Lei Lei glared at Zhuang Rui angrily.

"He's never been honest, I can testify to that..."

"And me, beautiful lady, let me tell you, back in college, he slept in the bunk above me. There's nothing he can hide from me..."

Two abrupt voices came from Zhuang Rui's left and right. Wei Ge and Lao Si had appeared out of nowhere, flanking Zhuang Rui like two guardian generals, staring at Lei Lei with lustful eyes.

Lei Lei was above average in appearance, and her figure was comparable to that of a model. What was worse, because of the hot weather, she was only wearing a tight-fitting t-shirt on top and a pair of capri shorts on the bottom, which showed off her beautiful figure. Wei Ge and Lao Si almost drooled when they saw her. At this moment, they could no longer care about Zhuang Rui.

"Hey, you two, stand back! I don't know you. Damn it, this is my brother's wife. How dare you flirt with her?"

Zhuang Rui angrily pushed the two away. If Liu Chuan heard about their actions, wouldn't that ruin their brotherly relationship?

"Oh my god, why are all the beautiful girls taken? Fourth brother, why are we two brothers so unlucky?"

Upon hearing that it was Zhuang Rui's girlfriend, Wei Ge's face immediately turned sour. He exaggeratedly looked up at the sky and complained repeatedly. Of course, all he could see was the hotel ceiling.

"Hehe, you guys are Zhuang Rui's college classmates, right? I'm Zhuang Rui's junior high school classmate. I know just as many embarrassing stories about him as you do. Oh, Brother Zhou, you're here too!

Lei Lei was amused by her boss's exaggerated appearance. She had heard Zhuang Rui mention these classmates before, and then she saw Zhou Rui with the white lion behind him. She immediately took the initiative to chat with them. Although Wei Ge and Lao Si would not steal Zhuang Rui's girlfriend, chatting with beautiful women was a very pleasant thing. They actually stood there chatting and didn't want to leave.

"By the way, Lei Lei, didn't your grandfather come with you?"

Zhuang Rui noticed that Lei Lei was carrying a small bag and was alone, which was a bit strange, since she had just said that she came with her grandfather.

"It's very close to Hong Kong. I came back from England and didn't have much to do, so I came here first. My grandfather and the jade gambling consultant won't be here until the day after tomorrow," Lei Lei replied casually.

"Jade gambling consultant? What does that do?" Zhuang Rui found the term somewhat intriguing.

"You don't know this? They are people who know a lot about jadeite rough. Almost every jewelry company has such consultants, who are used to identify rough stones when the company purchases them. However, our company's jadeite gambling master has not been very lucky in the past few years. He hasn't found any good rough stones for two years in a row."

Zhuang Rui was dismissive of Lei Lei's words. If they hadn't found any good raw materials in two years, it meant they had gambled away money one after another. Even the consultants had to rely on luck when gambling on stones, so what was the point of having consultants? They might as well try their luck themselves.

Zhuang Rui was unaware that jade gambling consultants were extremely important to a jewelry company. Although they also relied on luck, they mostly judged whether jade could be found inside by observing the external appearance of the jadeite rough. Their eyesight was unmatched by ordinary people. The rough stones they valued had a much higher probability of yielding jade than those chosen by laymen. Who else in the world, besides Zhuang Rui, could directly see through these raw materials?

"Alright, stop standing here. Lei Lei, have you booked a room yet? Oh, then go and rest for a while. We'll call it a day and have dinner together tonight."

When Zhuang Rui saw the people who had been surrounding him earlier turning their gazes in his direction, he felt a little flustered. These fans were really enthusiastic. After learning that Lei Lei had already booked a room, they quickly pulled the group back to their room.

"Hey, Woody, I heard my wife saw you. You better take good care of her..."

Zhuang Rui had just returned to his room and taken a shower when his phone rang. He answered it and saw it was Liu Chuan calling.

"Why don't you come by yourself? This is a great opportunity to meet the parents."

"Bullshit, what kind of parent is her grandfather? I've already met her parents, and we're getting married at the end of this year."

Zhuang Rui was taken aback by Liu Chuan's words. Among their group of classmates, the two brothers were considered to be getting married late. Now that Liu Chuan was also getting married, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.

"You have the nerve to say that? If you hadn't called Brother Zhou, would I have gone? Now I'm the only one looking after the Tibetan Mastiff kennel. In a few days, I have to go to Nagqu, Tibet to pick up Brother Renqing Cuomu. How the hell am I supposed to manage?"

Liu Chuan's complaints continued to come through the phone. Zhuang Rui knew that after staying in Pengcheng for a few days, Renqing Cuomu returned to Tibet, ending her life as a grassland herdsman and settling down in Nagqu. She was now living with her parents. Renqing Cuomu had to attend the Shanxi International Tibetan Mastiff Exchange Conference at the end of June; otherwise, Liu Chuan and the others would not be able to control that golden mastiff king.

"Alright, who gave you the idea to build a mastiff kennel? When you see Lei Lei's grandfather later, I'll call him 'Grandpa' a few more times for you, haha..."

"Get lost! Keep a close eye on my wife! No drinking, no karaoke, no going out at night, no talking to men, no..."

"Stop, stop, stop! Are you done yet? If you've got the guts, go and say it yourself. If there's nothing else, I'm hanging up."

When Zhuang Rui heard Liu Chuan grumbling on the phone like a complaining woman, he quickly hung up. Long-distance roaming costs money, and he was just wasting his time chatting with him.

...

"Brother Song, over here..."

Zhuang Rui jumped out of the car and took the bag from Song Jun's hand. Song Jun's flight was delayed, and he had been waiting at the airport for more than two hours.

"Xiao Zhuang, let me introduce you. This is Master Peng, who has a very keen eye for jade. This is my younger brother, Zhuang Rui. You two get to know each other."

Song Jun did not come alone; he was accompanied by a middle-aged man in his forties, about the same age as Song Jun, tall and thin, with bright eyes.

Zhuang Rui knew that Song Jun was a man with high standards. Even someone as wealthy as Fatty Ma couldn't catch his eye. But now he was praising Master Peng highly. Zhuang Rui also paid some attention to him. After exchanging a few pleasantries with Master Peng, he helped the two into the car and drove towards Pingzhou.

"Zhuang Rui, I've heard that you and that kid Da Chuan have been making quite a splash in Nanjing. You didn't even see how cocky Da Chuan was when he got back to Pengcheng. He was as arrogant as a crab, and he almost bought my villa."

Zhuang Rui knew Liu Chuan's temperament. He knew that once he made tens of millions, he would definitely show off when he returned to Pengcheng. However, Song Jun's words were a bit exaggerated. Even if Liu Chuan had the guts, he wouldn't dare to be arrogant with Song Jun.

"Come on, Brother Song, we're just lucky and playing around. We can't compare to your scale. But Brother Song, you're not into jade, so why are you getting involved in this circle?"

Zhuang Rui had always had this question in his mind. Not only Song Jun, but also Fatty Ma. As the saying goes, "a trade is like a mountain to climb." Fatty Ma and Song Jun were not people in the jade industry, but they were both very interested in this Pingzhou jade gambling, which Zhuang Rui did not understand.

"I'm just spending tens of millions to play around, it's nothing. Now even some investment companies affiliated with state-owned enterprises are injecting funds into jade gambling. Zhuang Rui, you need to

understand that jade gambling has now developed into a very sophisticated speculative market, just like the stock market."

Song Jun's words stunned Zhuang Rui. He hadn't expected Song Jun to elevate the topic of jade gambling to such a level.

Chapter 177 Zhuang Rui's Thoughts

After Song Jun's explanation, Zhuang Rui finally understood. It turned out that Song Jun hadn't come to gamble on jade stones, but rather to stockpile a batch of rough jadeite stones, intending to sell them for profit a few years later.

After entering the 21st century, with inflationary expectations, the price of gold soared. Meanwhile, another speculative market, jade gambling, which had faded from people's sight for many years, also flourished and gradually entered a booming market. In this highly speculative market, jade and emeralds are considered to be collectibles with the same function of preserving and increasing value as gold.

Since mining has been ongoing in jade-producing areas such as Myanmar for hundreds of years, especially since the beginning of the 20th century, some old mines have been almost completely depleted, and more people are looking for new mining areas. As a result, the price of raw jade stones has increased significantly.

Generally, the starting price for rough jade stones is not very high, but the final transaction price is often several times or even dozens of times higher than the starting price. Around 2000, the price of old-type rough jade stones was only around 200 yuan per kilogram, but this year it has risen to around 700 to 800 yuan. If the rough stone has good appearance with green or pine flower skin, it can be bid up from a starting price of 800 yuan to tens of thousands of yuan per kilogram. This is common.

If it's an old mine jadeite rough stone with green inclusions, the price is immeasurable. Generally, the starting price for a good old mine jadeite rough stone is at least 20,000 yuan per kilogram, but the transaction price often reaches hundreds of thousands of yuan per kilogram. It's normal for a piece of raw material to cost tens of millions of yuan. This would have been unimaginable a few years ago, which shows the upward trend of jadeite raw materials.

Jade culture has a history of thousands of years in China. As a result, the business of jade products has become very mature at every stage, from raw stones to finished jade artifacts. There are circles for

gambling on raw stones, circles for jadeite, and circles for finished jade products. Among them, the riskiest circle is naturally the circle for gambling on raw stones.

However, there is another group of people who transfer the risks of jade gambling to others. These people only buy rough jade stones without cutting or polishing them. After hoarding these stones for several years, they release them into the market when the price is right. Song Jun and Boss Ma belong to this group, and the soaring price of jadeite rough stones is undoubtedly related to their capital injection.

According to Song Jun, two big names in the domestic jade gambling industry will also appear at this Pingzhou jade gambling conference. Due to the impact of the financial crisis on the real economy, these outside funds have entered the investment field of jade and gemstones. Compared with the financial market, investing in the jade gambling industry is more exciting, and the returns are greater if you are lucky.

Moreover, compared to overseas collectible markets, China's similar market is still underdeveloped and has greater potential in the future. Recently, it has been rumored in the jade gambling circle that a buyer from outside the industry in Thailand recently invested 13 million yuan to buy a batch of jade in China.

"Brother Song, how much money have you prepared this time? I'll bring my underlings along to get some of the benefits too."

As Zhuang Rui drove, he joked with Song Jun. Because Song Jun's flight was delayed, it was already past five o'clock, which was time for dinner. Lao Si had arranged a seafood restaurant in Guangzhou, and Zhuang Rui would take Song Jun there directly to eat before resting.

"Brother, you're thinking of stockpiling too? This stuff really ties up a lot of capital. If the market doesn't go well, you might end up with nothing." Song Jun said with a smile.

"Come on, seeing you and Fatty Ma rushing over like this, you must be guaranteed to make a profit. If you don't want to involve your little brother, just say so." Zhuang Rui wasn't buying Song Jun's act. The two were more than ten years apart in age, so they could be considered friends despite the age gap. Zhuang Rui and Song Jun always spoke very directly.

"Brother, are you serious? You really want to get into the market?"

Upon hearing this, Song Jun became serious. He had invited Zhuang Rui to participate in this jade gambling conference, but when he went to frame Tang Bohu's painting, he had promised to show Zhuang Rui the scene of jade gambling. He never expected that Zhuang Rui would also have the idea of making a fortune in the jade rough market.

In fact, Song Jun overestimated Zhuang Rui. With Zhuang Rui's current net worth, all of it adds up to just over 9 million RMB, which is only enough to buy one or two pieces of rough jade with decent quality. He simply doesn't have the financial strength to hoard rough jade and wait for prices to rise.

Zhuang Rui's words were merely a preemptive warning to the Song army. Due to insufficient funds, Zhuang Rui was thinking that if he had any desired raw materials and was short of funds, he could borrow some from the Song army.

However, this could not be said outright, otherwise the Song army would become suspicious: how could you be so confident that the rough stones you had chosen would be worth the bet?

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment and said, "Brother Song, I only have a little over 9 million on hand right now, as you know. Your appetites are too big, and I can't even get a piece of that. But when you go to look at raw jade, you can take me with you. First, I'll learn from you, and second, if there are any cheap raw jade pieces that you don't like, I can pick up a bargain."

Of Zhuang Rui's 9 million yuan, more than 8 million yuan was for Song Jun to buy paintings. He naturally knew this, and he readily agreed to Zhuang Rui's request. He already owed this young man a favor, so showing him around was nothing.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Master Peng sat in the back and glanced at Zhuang Rui a few more times. He didn't expect that Zhuang Rui, at such a young age, would be so wealthy. However, in his mind, he had already categorized Zhuang Rui as a prince or a rich second generation.

Some friends might say at this point, "At the Pingzhou Jadeite Gambling Conference, the rough stones are all laid out there, each with a number. If you like one, you can bid on it. Why did you need Song Jun to bring it? Zhuang Rui is capable of doing anything; couldn't he go and see for himself?"

That's true. There are generally two ways to sell rough stones at the Pingzhou Jadeite Gambling Conference. One is through bidding, where many people may bid on a single rough stone, and the highest bidder wins. The other is through jadeite gambling venues organized by some merchants themselves, where stones can be cut on-site. However, people who want to enter these venues need to have a certain economic foundation or reputation; it's not something that casual customers can just enter.

Zhuang Rui's words above did not mean that he wanted Song Jun to take him into the gambling stone venue. With Old Master Gu's name, Zhuang Rui could enter any public place. The reason he wanted Song Jun to take him was to go to those private places that even Old Master Gu could not go to.

Most of the merchants who trade in jadeite rough stones in Pingzhou rent warehouses locally, or many are locals whose homes are in Pingzhou. In addition to investing some rough stones in the jadeite gambling conventions, these people often hoard some rough stones to sell at higher prices. Their target customers are people with strong financial resources, like Song Jun. They often have specific connections and take these people to their homes or warehouses to inspect the goods.

In Pingzhou, there are always jadeite rough stone brokers. "Broker" is an ancient or pre-liberation term; now, only a few industries still use this term. Other industries use "intermediary" or "broker." Brokers generally don't have their own shops; they communicate between buyers and sellers solely through their words and actions. They are not responsible for the profits or losses of the transactions; they only collect a commission based on a certain percentage once a deal is completed.

The brokers in Pingzhou all have information on buyers and familiar customers. They invite these outside merchants to visit the homes of raw jade merchants to inspect the goods. If a deal is reached, these brokers can receive a considerable commission from the raw jade merchants. However, given Zhuang Rui's strength, he naturally wouldn't be targeted by these jade brokers, which is why Song Jun took him there.

The idea actually came from Grandpa Gu to Zhuang Rui. He knew that Zhuang Rui wanted to see more rough stones, so he told Zhuang Rui about this place. However, although Grandpa Gu was highly respected, firstly, he would not act as a gambling stone consultant for any merchant, and secondly, he disdained to go to these underground gambling stone places, so naturally no brokers would invite him.

Last night at dinner, Fatty Ma insisted on paying for the meal. He hinted that he wanted to take Zhuang Rui to see the raw material merchants' homes, but Zhuang Rui had more contact with Song Jun, so he didn't say yes or no.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Song Jun understood and readily said, "Okay, you're not bad, kid. You've only been here a few days and you've already found out about this. Someone invited me to look at raw materials tonight. Let's go after we finish dinner and rest for a bit."

"Okay..."

Zhuang Rui was delighted to hear this. Old Master Gu had said that the Song army had connections, and it was indeed true.

Seeing Zhuang Rui's joyful face, Song Jun said, "Brother, don't be too happy yet. There are some things I need to make clear to you, otherwise you might offend someone."

"Huh? There's a reason for this, Brother Song, what do you mean..." Zhuang Rui was stunned for a moment.

"Actually, it's nothing. In a setting like this, we're definitely not the only ones looking at rough stones. There are probably other people too. There's an unwritten rule in this industry: when someone is looking at a piece of rough stone, you can't ask the price first..."

"I know that. We can only watch it after others are dissatisfied or have given up, right?" Zhuang Rui interrupted Song Jun when he heard this. He had been taught this rule long ago.

"Hey, it's only been a few months, but you've improved a lot. But Brother Zhuang, listen to me, luck plays a big part when it comes to gambling on stones. You don't have much money, so take it easy and just pick up some small rough stones to play with. Don't get too addicted."

Song Jun first teased Zhuang Rui, but his expression immediately turned serious. He was really afraid that Zhuang Rui would act impulsively and gamble away his entire fortune. The jade gambling industry is very complex. Not to mention 9 million, it's not uncommon for people to lose more than 90 million.

Chapter 178 Excuse

Upon arriving at the seafood restaurant where Lao Si had made a reservation, Zhuang Rui discovered that Fatty Ma had also come. He recognized Song Jun, but the two clearly weren't close; they exchanged a few words before taking their seats separately.

Song Jun is a typical official-businessman. His first pot of gold was probably earned by reselling licenses. Moreover, most of the businesses he does now are related to the government. On the other hand, Fatty Ma is a representative of the grassroots. He went from being an errand boy to becoming a billionaire. The hardships he endured are self-evident. It is likely that the two of them look down on each other at this moment.

To Zhuang Rui's surprise, besides the girl named Yanzi, Fatty Ma was also accompanied by a gaunt old man in his fifties or sixties. Fatty Ma spoke with great respect for the old man, and Zhuang Rui understood after a moment's thought that this must be the jade gambling master that Fatty Ma had found.

"Hey, Fourth Brother, why didn't Brother Zhou come for dinner?"

Zhuang Rui looked around but didn't see Zhou Rui, which made him a little puzzled.

"It's all because of your precious Tibetan Mastiff. Brother Zhou said he's taking a white lion to the hotel and asked us to pack it up and bring it back for him." The fourth brother was ordering food from the menu and replied without looking up. Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed. Bringing a large dog to a hotel in the bustling downtown area of Guangzhou for dinner was indeed a bit inappropriate.

"Zhuang Rui, the white lion is getting bigger and bigger, it will be very inconvenient to bring it back later." Lei Lei said to Zhuang Rui from the side. She almost didn't recognize the white lion when she saw it yesterday.

"What's wrong, brother? How big is your snow mastiff now?" Song Jun still couldn't forget Zhuang Rui's white lion.

"Sigh, you'll see when you get there. Alright, let's eat."

Zhuang Rui gave a wry smile. He had no choice. The white lion was getting bigger and bigger, and it was no longer suitable to take it with him in many places. He had already resigned from his job and would have to find a new house when he returned to Pengcheng. There were too many elderly people and children in his old neighborhood. Although the white lion didn't bite, it would be a big problem if it scared someone.

The meal was a bit somber. Zhuang Rui was thinking to himself whether he should call Liu Chuan later and ask him to find a house for him. Song Jun didn't say much either, only occasionally exchanging a few words with Master Peng next to him. The same was true for Fatty Ma. Only Wei Ge, Lao Si, and Lei Lei had a rather congenial conversation.

Just as they were finishing their meal, Song Jun received a phone call. After hanging up, he checked the time, then waved to Zhuang Rui and said, "Brother, thanks for your classmate's hospitality today. The jadeite rough dealer called me earlier. He's going to someone's house to look at rough jadeite at eight o'clock in an hour. Do you have time?"

"Yes, of course we have time. We're almost finished eating, so I'll say goodbye and we'll head out now."

Zhuang Rui and Wei Ge and Lao Si didn't need to stand on ceremony. After explaining to the others, they got up with Song Jun. Lei Lei originally wanted to go and see for herself, but since their company's jade gambling master hadn't arrived yet, it would be useless for her to go, so she didn't ask for his favor.

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to leave the hotel, Fatty Ma staggered out, put his arm around Zhuang Rui's shoulder, and whispered, "Brother, that's a bit unfair of you. I called you first, but you went with someone else. I'm not happy about that."

"Hey, Brother Ma, I came to Pingzhou this time specifically to see Brother Song. We made plans a long time ago, otherwise I wouldn't have turned you down yesterday," Zhuang Rui said, feigning a bitter expression, half-jokingly.

"Alright, we'll talk about it later. Following Brother Ma won't hurt you. Our connections aren't necessarily fewer than others." Fatty Ma's expression improved after hearing Zhuang Rui's words, but he spoke as if he wanted to provoke Song Jun, which made Zhuang Rui smile wryly.

"Okay, Brother Ma, if you're free tomorrow, let's go out for a stroll again."

Zhuang Rui readily agreed. Fatty Ma's enthusiasm was almost overwhelming; just the sight of his two-hundred-plus-pound body pressing down on Zhuang Rui made it hard for him to breathe.

"Alright, then it's settled." Fatty Ma's eyes narrowed with laughter as he patted Zhuang Rui's shoulder and let him go.

"Zhuang Rui, Fatty Ma is a wolf in sheep's clothing. You should be careful when you associate with him..." Song Jun said to Zhuang Rui after the car drove onto the highway to Pingzhou.

"I know, Brother Song. Actually, I don't have much of a connection with him. We just met a few months ago at the black market on the grasslands. You know that too?" Zhuang Rui was also a little confused about what Fatty Ma was thinking. Logically speaking, when you go to select jadeite rough stones in private, the fewer people you go with, the more you can buy. There's no reason why Fatty Ma would ask him to go with him again and again.

"Okay, just be careful. That fatso is really something. Sometimes you're being used without even realizing it." Song Jun nodded, still giving Zhuang Rui a little more advice. Zhuang Rui took his words to heart. These days, there's no love without a reason, nor is there hatred without a reason. Hmm, that sounds like a line from some TV series.

Song Jun seemed to hesitate for a moment, then said, "Brother, if you see any rough stones that you like and really want to buy them, I advise you not to cut them open. Keep the stones in your hands, and in a few years, they can be worth several times more. But if you cut them open and lose money, the loss will be huge."

Song Jun meant well, and Zhuang Rui nodded. He had already made up his mind that he would only buy rough stones at this jade gambling conference. As for cutting stones, he preferred to do it on his own later. After all, the stone cutting he did in Nanjing last time had spread throughout the jade gambling circle. If he were to make a splash again this time, some people with ulterior motives would probably connect the two.

"The house, it seems we need to get the house in Pengcheng sorted out as soon as possible."

If he really finds some good raw jade, his current house probably won't be enough to hold it all. Zhuang Rui was having a bit of a headache, so he simply took out his phone and called Liu Chuan, asking him to find him a house.

"You want to buy a house? Well, it's true, it's not very convenient to live in the city center with a Tibetan Mastiff..." Song Jun said after overhearing Zhuang Rui's phone call.

"Yes, the white lion is too big now. Taking it out will scare people. We'll have to live in Pengcheng Township from now on."

Zhuang Rui said somewhat helplessly that although having a car would be very convenient, he would definitely feel uncomfortable leaving the old house where he had lived for more than ten years. More importantly, Zhuang Rui had not yet figured out how to persuade his mother to move out and live with him.

"There's a vacant villa near where I live. The previous landlord got into some trouble, and all his assets were confiscated, so the villa will probably be auctioned off, but it won't be cheap..."

Song Jun's words stirred something in Zhuang Rui's heart. To say that he didn't like the environment of Yunlong Villa would be pure nonsense. Putting aside everything else, Zhuang Rui was extremely envious of the basement behind the garage of that villa. He had seen it at Song Jun's house before. That basement was more than 30 square meters, more than enough to put a small stone-cutting set. Moreover, the soundproofing was good. He probably could set off firecrackers in there without anyone bothering him.

"Brother Song, what's the approximate price of that villa?" Zhuang Rui asked cautiously.

"It's a government auction. The starting price shouldn't be too high, around 8 to 10 million. But there are quite a few people eyeing that house. I estimate the final price will be between 15 and 18 million. What, you really want to buy it?" Song Jun knew Zhuang Rui's background.

"I want to buy it!"

Zhuang Rui nodded heavily, then said with a wry smile, "But I don't have that kind of money. How about I take a gamble this time and bet on a few stones? Damn it, I have 9 million in assets now. I'll take out 4 million to gamble. Brother Song, if I lose, that's my bad luck. But if I win, you have to keep an eye on that villa for me."

"You kid, you usually seem pretty steady, but you're even wilder than Da Chuan. Okay, as long as you can raise 15 million, I'm confident I can help you get that house."

Zhuang Rui put on a gritted-teeth expression. Song Jun had originally intended to say a few words of advice, but seeing Zhuang Rui's expression, he didn't say much. Given his status, if he spread the word that he wanted that house, some people would probably give him some face.

"Okay, then I'll thank you in advance, Brother Song."

Zhuang Rui was overjoyed. Gambling on stones is either a win or a loss. With this excuse, if the stone he cuts turns out to be a good one, others will just think he was lucky. Of course, Zhuang Rui has always had good luck, having received a dzi bead bracelet from the Living Buddha.

"You'll be crying when you lose the bet. I gambled too much last year and lost over 20 million..." Song Jun shook his head sullenly at Zhuang Rui's excited look, but said nothing more.

After arriving in Pingzhou, Song Jun first had Zhuang Rui park the car in the hotel parking lot, and then stood at the hotel entrance to wait. About five or six minutes later, a man in his thirties with a mustache came up to Song Jun and said apologetically, "Mr. Song, I'm so sorry I'm a little late. Shall we go now?"

Song Jun seemed to know this man quite well, and said with a smile, "Little Lin, you've got some guts this time. Last year, I bought over 20 million worth of rough jade, and it turned out to be a piece of garbage. The money is a small matter, but I lost face big time."

"That's right, that's right. The rough stones from the place we went to today are all sourced from the old mines in Kokang, Myanmar. They must be of good quality. Mr. Song, you look radiant today, you must be very lucky."

The man with the mustache smiled and nodded to Zhuang Rui and Master Peng, clearly classifying them as Song army followers.

"Get out of the way. Your face is red from drinking. Stop talking nonsense and lead the way," Song Jun said with a laugh.

Chapter 179 Wool Warehouse

"Brother Song, are we heading to the jade market?"

Zhuang Rui followed behind the mustachioed broker, realizing they were heading towards the jade street. He muttered to Song Jun, "In this day and age, you have to be careful in everything you do. You know, even a notorious gangster like Yip Kai-foon, who terrorized Hong Kong, was from Guangdong."

"Yes, that's where we check the goods, but it could also be in the warehouse. Anyway, it's not far, just a short walk away..."

As they walked, Song Jun explained to Zhuang Rui that many shop owners on Jade Street not only sold finished jade pieces but also dealt in raw jade stones. After the shops closed in the evening, they would receive customers who came to see the raw stones.

"Why don't you come to look at the rough jade during the day? Compared to their jade wholesale business, the business of rough jade should be more profitable, right?" Zhuang Rui asked, somewhat puzzled.

Zhuang Rui spoke rather loudly. The man with the mustache who was leading the way turned around, smiled at Zhuang Rui, and said nothing. However, Zhuang Rui could tell from the look in his eyes that this man regarded him as an amateur.

"Brother, it's hard to see the rough stones at night. These unscrupulous merchants are just hoping you'll buy a bunch of worthless stones. You'll see once you get there; there's not much difference between day and night."

Song Jun's words left Zhuang Rui completely confused. How could there be little difference between day and night? However, seeing the smile on Master Peng's face, who clearly disagreed with what he had said, Zhuang Rui could only keep the question to himself.

The man with the mustache who was walking in front turned around and said to Zhuang Rui, "This brother isn't in this line of work, is he?"

The man with the mustache initially thought Zhuang Rui was a follower of the Song army, but judging from their conversation, they seemed more like friends. He became curious, knowing that people who went to others' homes to inspect goods were usually industry insiders, as they were there to discuss business. Given the sensitive location, homeowners generally didn't welcome outsiders who came to watch, and these people rarely bought raw materials, meaning the brokers wouldn't earn any income. Therefore, they weren't particularly interested in such people.

"Brother Zhuang hasn't been in the business for long, but he'll still make a move when he sees a suitable rough stone, and you'll definitely get your commission."

Knowing what the man with the mustache was thinking, Song Jun said something, paused, and then added, "That jadeite rough worth 20 million yuan that was unearthed in Nanjing a few months ago was cut by my little brother himself. So, are you relieved now?"

"How could I not trust the people that Boss Song brought? This young man is really lucky."

The jade gambling circle in China is not large, and it's mostly the same people coming and going. The news that Zhuang Rui had unearthed two top-quality jadeite pieces in Nanjing had already spread throughout the circle, and this guy with the mustache certainly knew about it too. When he looked at Zhuang Rui again, his eyes were full of envy.

"Damn it, buddy, you're just relying on your eyesight, and you actually said I was lucky..."

Zhuang Rui was initially a little depressed, but then he thought better of it. Since everyone thinks I'm lucky, let's try our luck again this time.

The jade market was very close to the hotel, and the group arrived on the street shortly after they started talking. It was just past eight o'clock, but many shops were already closed, and it was much quieter than during the day.

The man with the mustache led a few people through a small alley in the jade market and they arrived at the back of a shop. Zhuang Rui glanced at it and saw that the house also had a local earth god statue outside, with incense burning on it. The only difference was that the gate was a bit too wide, a thick iron gate that was at least four or five meters wide, with a small door in the middle. The wall was also a bit too high, and there were even security cameras pointing at the entrance from the two corners of the wall.

The man with the mustache spoke a few words in Cantonese into the intercom next to the door. Less than two minutes later, footsteps sounded in the yard, and then the small door opened from the inside. A somewhat thin, middle-aged man poked his head out, smiling, and said, "Xiao Lin, thank you for your help.

The man with the mustache pointed at Song Jun and said, "Boss Yu, this is Boss Song. He's a big shot in the area. If you take good care of him, you won't have to worry about business in the future."

Boss Yu quickly stepped aside and invited Song Jun and the others into the courtyard. As soon as Zhuang Rui entered, he heard a low whimpering sound coming from the doorway. Looking in the direction of the sound, he saw two Kunming dogs with yellow backs and white bellies. They seemed to have been trained. They were lying down and watching Zhuang Rui and the others very warily. It was estimated that if Boss Yu hadn't come out to lead the group himself, the two dogs would have pounced on them.

Although it's said that "a dog that bites doesn't bark," these two dogs were quite competent at guarding the house, but Zhuang Rui naturally didn't take them seriously. If he had brought White Lion along, these two dogs would probably have already tucked their tails between their legs and run away.

"Hehe, for a small, humble place like this, I don't feel at ease without a few dogs guarding the place," Boss Yu called out, and the two Kunming dogs lay down on the ground again without making a sound.

"Boss Yu, let's take a look at the goods first. I came here as soon as I got off the plane."

Not to mention Zhuang Rui, even Song Jun looked down on these two wolfhounds. Seeing that Boss Yu still wanted to show off, he couldn't help but urge him on.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Song, you were one of the first people to see my inventory."

Without further ado, Boss Yu led the group across the courtyard to a large iron gate.

Song Jun smirked. He figured Boss Yu would say something like that every time a group of people came. The order in which the rough stones were inspected was extremely important. The reason was simple: there were only so many rough stones, and those who came first would definitely buy the best ones, leaving those who came later to pick up what others had left behind.

"Mr. Yu's business is very large..."

After entering the courtyard, Zhuang Rui looked around and discovered that the courtyard was actually a combination of the back rooms of the three shops. That meant that the three jade shops on the street in front all belonged to this Boss Yu. Zhuang Rui couldn't help but look at the thin Boss Yu with new respect. In this place where every inch of land is precious, being able to occupy three shops must mean that his business is quite large.

"Not at all... not at all, it's just a small business. I rely entirely on your patronage to make a living. This young man is truly promising." Boss Yu smiled and probed Zhuang Rui's background. He had originally thought that Zhuang Rui was Song Jun's follower, but now it seemed that was not the case.

"Hehe, I'm just making a living by following Boss Song," Zhuang Rui said with a chuckle.

"Get out of my way. In just a few months, you've already made over ten million from me."

Song Jun said with great dissatisfaction that Tang Bohu's painting, plus Wang Shizhen's manuscript, was already worth more than 12 million RMB.

"Please wait a moment..."

After hearing Song Jun's words, Boss Yu felt relieved. To him, as long as someone had money, they were welcome customers. After apologizing to Zhuang Rui and the others, Boss Yu took out a bunch of keys from his waist and fiddled with the dark iron gate. It took him more than three minutes to finally open the big iron gate.

When Boss Yu opened the iron gate, Zhuang Rui noticed something and was surprised to find that the iron gate was over 30 centimeters thick, comparable to a bank vault.

After entering the warehouse, Boss Yu turned on a light at the entrance and casually closed the iron gate. The warehouse immediately became dark, with only the dim light serving its purpose. Zhuang Rui then understood why Song Jun had said that day and night were the same. It turned out that once the iron gate was closed, even if the sun was shining brightly outside, not a single ray of light could get in.

This rough jade warehouse is not very big, only about 20 square meters. In the center of the room, there are dozens of rough jade pieces of various sizes. Around the warehouse, there is a row of iron racks more than a meter high, which are also filled with rough jade pieces. However, unlike the rough jade pieces on the ground, these rough jade pieces have been cut or had windows opened, while the rough jade pieces on the ground are almost all completely uncut rough jade pieces. Naturally, they are treated differently.

"Please feel free to look around, everyone."

Boss Yu took out several cans of drinks from the refrigerator in the corner of the room and handed them to Zhuang Rui and the others. Although his storeroom was not big, it was fully equipped with a TV, refrigerator, air conditioner and other items. There was even a cot in one corner.

"Master Peng, thank you for your trouble..."

This highlights Master Peng's importance. Song Jun was a complete novice and relied entirely on Master Peng's expertise. Master Peng was a specialist in identifying rough stones and was known as the "eye" in the jade gambling industry.

Master Peng nodded reservedly, put down his drink, and headed straight for the shelf by the wall. Zhuang Rui found this a bit strange and grabbed Song Jun, who was about to follow, and asked, "Brother Song, why don't you look at these rough jade stones?"

"You think I have the same kind of luck as you and that kid Da Chuan?"

Song Jun glared at Zhuang Rui with annoyance, but knowing that Zhuang Rui was even more naive than him, he still offered to explain things to Zhuang Rui.

The reasoning is simple: although the price of fully rough jade is relatively low and the profit is high if it turns out to be green, the profit and risk are equal. Moreover, the price increase of fully rough jade is far less than that of well-performing semi-rough jade.

For Song Jun, who wanted to stockpile and resell, the natural choice was to select semi-rough jadeite that had been partially exposed or had its green color revealed. Although the price was much higher than that of fully rough jadeite and the chances of losing money were also high, Song Jun did not cut the stones. He was just stockpiling them. As long as the jadeite market continued to rise, he would make a steady profit.

Seeing Zhuang Rui's eyes constantly scanning the rough stones on the ground, Song Jun frowned and said to Zhuang Rui, "Brother, if you want to cut stones, you'd better look at the semi-rough stones instead. That way, the risk will be much lower."

To be honest, Song Jun was really good to Zhuang Rui. There were only so many rough stones available for a half-gamble, and the best ones were probably only a few pieces. The fact that he said that meant he was willing to give way to Zhuang Rui.

Chapter 180 Heirloom Raw Materials

Zhuang Rui, his arm being pulled by Song Jun, reluctantly headed towards the area where Master Peng was looking at rough stones. He was seething with resentment; he'd come here specifically to gamble on rough stones, not to look at semi-gambled stones. However, Song Jun meant well, so Zhuang Rui had no choice but to look at the semi-gambled stones first.

Master Peng was clearly very knowledgeable about gambling on stones in Pingzhou. He already had a full set of tools at hand, especially the thick flashlight that was as big as a child's arm. Its brightness was dozens of times stronger than the dim light bulb in the warehouse, illuminating the entire warehouse.

Boss Yu smiled and didn't stop them. He offered cigarettes to the group and started smoking. The custom of examining stones was passed down from the elders: look later in the day, not earlier. In the past, when gambling on stones, they would light a candle and hold it in their hand for you to see. It was common for people to burn their hair while trying to remove the candle. Now, using a small ten-watt light bulb is already considered very generous.

However, if the guest brings their own tools, the host cannot interfere.

"Mr. Song, all of my raw materials are transported from the Mogalong and Chiao Ou mining areas in Pagoda. There are very few places in Ping Chau that can directly pull raw materials from there."

Boss Yu stood by, chattering away as he introduced the raw materials on the shelf to Song Jun.

In recent years, the Myanmar government has imposed extremely strict restrictions on the export of jadeite raw materials. However, due to the fragmentation of Myanmar into various warlord regions and the uneven strength of various armed forces, most jadeite mines are jointly owned by the military and large local Myanmar merchants. If some well-connected raw material merchants in China can afford to pay the toll fees, they can also smuggle some old mine raw materials out through various channels.

"Boss Yu, most of the rough stones from the Pak Kong factory are low to medium grade. Why go through all this trouble? You might as well get the better quality stones from the Lei Da or Mo Gang factories, where they produce high-quality green jadeite."

Song Jun and Zhuang Rui didn't understand these old Burmese jade mines, but Master Peng clearly knew them inside and out. His words left Boss Yu speechless. After a long pause, Boss Yu said with a bitter face, "This master is truly an expert. He knows so much about the mines in Burma. But as you know, the Mogaung mine has been mined for over 200 years, and the Lei Da mine is almost completely depleted. Both mines are controlled by major Burmese jade merchants. We don't have those connections. Although the Hpakant mine doesn't produce much high-green jade, it has always been a mainstay of the domestic jade market."

Master Peng nodded upon hearing this and said, "What you said is true, but the price difference is quite significant."

"Please take a look first, and we can talk after you've made your decision..."

Boss Yu's old face was wrinkled like a chrysanthemum, as if he had suffered a great injustice.

Zhuang Rui secretly praised the jade expert that Song Jun had found. He was indeed skilled. If it were someone with a good eye but who didn't know much about the origin of jade, they might have been fooled by this Boss Yu. You know, even though they are all old mine jadeite rough stones, their prices are very different.

"Brother Song, take your time looking around. I'd rather go look at the rough stones. They're cheaper there, and I can cut a few more pieces. Our villa project depends entirely on these broken stones."

Zhuang Rui followed behind Song Jun, quite impatient. He looked at several semi-rough stones. Although some of them had good openings, the jade inside was really terrible. Not only was the content low, but the quality was also poor. Judging from Boss Yu's nervous look, the price probably wouldn't be low. Zhuang Rui really couldn't muster any interest in these semi-rough stones.

"You've got a real gambling streak, kid. Whatever, don't blame me if you lose."

The money belongs to Zhuang Rui, and Song Jun can't stop him from spending it however he wants. Seeing that Zhuang Rui was determined to see all the rough stones, Song Jun waved his hand helplessly.

"Young people are energetic and have a lot of firepower; who knows, they might just find some top-quality jadeite! Young man, this ground is full of rough, uncut jadeite. Don't worry, the price is absolutely fair."

Song Jun spoke quite loudly, and Boss Yu heard him clearly. He quickly introduced Zhuang Rui to him, thinking that Zhuang Rui, an outsider, was obviously easier to fool.

It's true that these jadeite rough stones from old mines belong to Boss Yu. However, the best-looking rough stones have all been stored in another warehouse in preparation for the jadeite gambling convention that opens the day after tomorrow. As for these rough stones, although there are a few that look good, they are just for Boss Yu to fish for. He's not refusing to sell them, but the price will not be lower than the transaction price at the jadeite gambling convention.

As for these rough stones, they also vary in quality, but there are more worthless ones. Many stones that experts would consider worthless are mixed in. Some of these were stones that he had kept from the past and couldn't bear to throw away, while others were mixed in with the stones he brought in from Myanmar this time. In short, Boss Yu didn't care much about these rough stones. Since Zhuang Rui wanted to see them, he introduced them to him with the mindset of selling one stone if he could.

Zhuang Rui's Grand Cherokee also had a flashlight and a magnifying glass in it. He had taken them with him when he got out of the car, and now he could use them to pretend to look at them. He turned on the flashlight, squatted down, and began to examine them in a serious manner.

The rough stones on the ground vary in size, ranging from fist-sized stones weighing a few kilograms to stones weighing hundreds of kilograms and the size of an adult. However, the outer skin is similar, mainly gray-white and yellow, which is typical of rough stones from the Hpakant mine.

"The saying 'one cut makes you poor, one cut makes you rich' is all bullshit here. With these rough stones, every cut will make you poor..."

Zhuang Rui squatted on the ground for more than half an hour, and couldn't help but curse inwardly. Everyone said that Pingzhou was a paradise for gambling on stones. He had looked at more than 20 rough stones, and only a few of them contained jadeite. However, the quantity and quality of the jadeite were terrible. If he cut them, he would definitely lose money.

Standing up, Zhuang Rui stretched his limbs, only to see that Song Jun had already selected seven or eight rough stones of varying sizes, piled them up, and were waiting for Master Peng to finish selecting them all so they could discuss the price.

"Hey buddy, have a smoke."

Boss Yu suddenly appeared out of nowhere. His thin body looked like a ghost in the dim light, which startled Zhuang Rui.

"So, is there anything you like? It's your first time here, let's be friends, I can give you a discount."

Boss Yu lit a cigarette for Zhuang Rui with a grin. His feigned generosity made Zhuang Rui feel disgusted. They were both in the raw material business, but this boss wasn't as well-liked as the young man from Nanjing.

"Hehe, I'm just an amateur. I'm here with Brother Song to broaden my horizons. Boss Yu, you take care of things over there. I'll look around by myself."

Zhuang Rui's words disappointed Boss Yu, who then turned and walked over to Song Jun and the others.

Zhuang Rui continued to squat down and examine the rough stones. He wouldn't be satisfied if he came all this way without finding anything. Even if none of the rough stones contained any good jadeite, he could at least gain some experience in observing rough stones and find some clues.

However, Zhuang Rui was soon disappointed. As the saying goes, "Even immortals cannot judge the quality of jade," and this is absolutely true. Zhuang Rui saw several pieces with pine-flower and python patterns on the outer skin, and the weathered surface was yellowish in color. They were very pure Hpakant rough jade. However, upon closer inspection, he found that apart from white cotton-like and misty crystals, the inside was empty, without a trace of jade.

However, the rough stone that Zhuang Rui is looking at now is a bit strange. It is also a rough stone from Hpakant, but the appearance of the outer skin is just average. The grayish-white surface is pitted and uneven. The whole stone is oval in shape and weighs about thirty or forty pounds.

What makes it strange is that Zhuang Rui discovered that less than three inches below the outer layer of the rough stone, the green color appeared, and it was a high-quality green with a very vibrant color. Furthermore, there was no asbestos present next to that layer of green, and the area covered was almost half the size of the rough stone.

Generally speaking, such rough stones have a very high probability of yielding top-quality pieces. If Boss Yu were to polish this rough stone and open up the window to reveal even a hint of green, this rough stone could sell for at least five million.

But as Zhuang Rui looked further inside, he was both amused and exasperated. Beneath the layer of jadeite, all that remained was a pure white expanse. Even after seeing through the stone, there was no

trace of jadeite. In other words, apart from a very thin layer of decent-quality jadeite covering the outer skin about three inches deep, the rough stone was utterly worthless.

Looking at the rough stone, Zhuang Rui's heart stirred. If he polished it in a crowded place to bring out its green color, someone would probably want it. As for whether others would make a profit or a loss, that was not Zhuang Rui's concern. With that thought, Zhuang Rui bent down and laboriously carried the rough stone out.

As soon as Boss Yu looked up, he saw Zhuang Rui struggling to carry the rough stone to the door. He couldn't help but laugh and say, "Hey, young man, if you like it, just remember which stone it is. You don't need to carry it out. You can just push it out in a cart later."

"Hehe, it's alright, we've already carried it out, it's not that heavy."

Zhuang Rui is lying through his teeth. He was sweating profusely in this air-conditioned warehouse, and it wasn't even that heavy.

"Hey, Mr. Yu, is this stone also a rough jadeite?"

When Zhuang Rui put down the piece of raw jade in his arms, he noticed that one of the legs extending to the support frame next to the iron gate was much shorter than the rest. Under that short leg was a square stone, about 40 centimeters thick and 60 centimeters wide.

Upon hearing the sound, Boss Yu walked over. After seeing the stone Zhuang Rui was pointing to, his eyes darted around and he said, "Of course it's a rough stone. This is a rough stone from the old mine pit in Damukan, Myanmar. It's been passed down in my family for two generations, and we've kept it as a keepsake."