

Golden 201

Chapter 201 The Crazy Stone (Part 11)

Thirty million!!!

The number Xu Zhendong shouted out sent a collective gasp through everyone present.

A price of 30 million RMB is rare even at major jade auctions. And today is only the first day of the Pingzhou Jadeite Rough Stone Conference. You should know that the winning bid for the rough stone at the previous Pingzhou Jadeite Rough Stone Conference was only 30 million RMB. The price that Xu Zhendong has now quoted has already matched the winning bid price of the previous Jadeite Rough Stone Conference.

At this moment, Boss Han was also a little hesitant. The price that Xu Zhendong had quoted had exceeded his bottom line. Just as Xu Zhendong had said, he had won a piece of rough jade through open bidding at the Myanmar jade auction two months ago, and he had also won one of the two pieces of rough jade in sealed bidding. As things stand, his company does not lack medium and high-grade jade raw materials.

However, the saying "rivals in the same trade" is most applicable to the jade industry. Being able to intercept other people's jadeite raw materials means that there is one less competitor in the mid-to-high-end jadeite market. Moreover, now that two people are competing, if you become weak, it will affect the company's reputation. At the very least, people will say that you are not capable.

"How about it? Xiao Han, you've made quite a splash in Myanmar. As for this rough jade, let me have it." Xu Zhendong said smugly when he saw that Boss Han hadn't spoken for a long time.

Xu Zhendong offered such a high price for two reasons: firstly, Xu's Jewelry is indeed in short supply of high-grade jadeite raw materials; secondly, they suffered a setback at the Myanmar jadeite auction a few months ago, which greatly affected the company's reputation. Xu Zhendong also wanted to take this opportunity to showcase the strength of Xu's Jewelry.

Large beads of sweat were already forming on Han Haowei's forehead, and the towel in his hand was so wet it could be wrung out. This was partly due to the hot weather, and partly because Xu Zhendong had forced him into this situation. If he were to bid, the price would be in the millions, and if he made any mistakes, it would be too late to regret it.

Thirty-one million!!!

Han Haowei shouted out the price almost word by word, his fair face flushed red, and he unconsciously tightened his grip on the towel in his right hand, with drops of sweat dripping from the towel onto the ground.

The crowd erupted in cheers once again. Last year's top bid at the Pingzhou Jade Bidding Conference was a piece of glass-type rough jadeite, which was not very large, weighing only a little over ten kilograms. It was sold to a jewelry company for 30 million RMB. This year, before the bidding even started, the record was broken, which caught everyone present completely off guard.

Now, the one hesitating is Xu Zhendong. Although he appeared calm and collected earlier, he was under considerable pressure. After all, according to his and Master Zhao's estimates, they should break even if they won the bid for this rough jade stone for under 30 million, but anything higher was uncertain.

Xu Zhendong had already decided to spend money to win the game when he offered a price of 30 million RMB. He was also confident that this price would scare Han Haowei away. However, to his surprise, Han Haowei actually stood his ground. As a result, Xu Zhendong began to hesitate.

Xu Zhendong is now in a difficult position. The assertive attitude he displayed just now would be easily ridiculed in the jade industry if word got out.

What are your opinions?

Xu Zhendong turned to Master Zhao and Xu Wei beside him and asked. Although he was a very strong parent, he was also a little undecided at this moment. After all, Xu's Jewelry had not been doing well in recent years and its funds were not so abundant. More than 30 million yuan accounted for nearly half of the entire Xu's Jewelry's working capital.

"Uncle, that kid surnamed Zhuang has a really strange knack for it. That time in Nanjing, the rough jade he cut open initially looked like nothing special, worth around three to five million, but after it was cut into finished pieces, its value skyrocketed..."

Although Xu Wei and Zhuang Rui did not get along and Xu Wei did not want to see Zhuang Rui make money, he also knew that the company was in poor condition and lacked high-grade jadeite materials. Therefore, he was still inclined to buy this rough stone.

"Judging from its current appearance, this rough stone should yield around 30 million yuan worth of jade. If it's worth more, then it's hard to say." Master Zhao's advice was quite reasonable, and the choice was left to Xu Zhendong.

If Zhuang Rui heard what they were saying, he would definitely laugh his head off. The reason why Liu Chuan's rough stone was cut into a finished piece was because Zhuang Rui did it on purpose. Since there was jade inside, it was natural to cut it into a finished piece to maximize its profit before selling it. If the rough stone really had the characteristics of those two skylights, Zhuang Rui would not have taken it out to gamble. He would have definitely cut out all the jade inside.

As for Master Zhao's claim of 30 million, that's completely wrong. If a layer of jadeite about three centimeters thick in this rough stone could be made into a piece worth 3 million, you should be incredibly lucky.

"Thirty-two million!!!"

Xu Zhendong practically gritted his teeth as he shouted out the new price. Securing this rough stone meant that Xu's Jewelry would not be out of stock for the next few months, which was undoubtedly crucial for the reputation of a jewelry company.

"Let me take another look at this raw material."

Mr. Han couldn't hold back any longer. After greeting Zhuang Rui, he squatted down next to the rough stone and began to examine it carefully again. At this moment, Han Haowei wished he had X-ray vision so he could see through the jade inside the rough stone.

"Old Master Gu is here, everyone please make way."

The events at Yang Hao's stall finally caught the attention of the official organizers of the jade gambling convention, the Pingzhou Jade Association.

Accompanied by several officials, Old Master Gu walked through the crowd to the center of the circle. He immediately spotted Zhuang Rui and was taken aback. He had only come to see the jadeite after hearing that a piece of rough jadeite had been bid up to 30 million, but he did not expect Zhuang Rui to be here as well.

"Zhuang Rui, is this raw material yours?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui surrounded by Wei Ge and the others like a star around the moon, Old Master Gu asked hesitantly.

"Hehe, Uncle-Master, I went to look at some smuggled goods with Brother Song a few days ago and bought this piece. I polished it today and I didn't expect to win big. It's all luck, luck." Zhuang Rui chuckled and nodded, admitting that the rough stone was his.

Old Master Gu stared at Zhuang Rui for a long time until Zhuang Rui got a little scared before he finally spoke: "I've been playing with jade for forty or fifty years, and I've spent most of my life in the jade gambling circle, but I've never seen anyone with your kind of luck. Now I understand why the Living Buddha bestowed the dzi bead upon you. It turns out you're just naturally blessed."

"Hehe, old man, that's all thanks to your excellent teaching."

"Bullshit, what can I teach you in just two days? Alright, stop being so smug after taking advantage of me. I'm going to take a look at your rough stone."

Gu Lao waved his hand, both amused and exasperated. Zhuang Rui had indeed consulted him a lot about jade these past few days, but that knowledge had absolutely nothing to do with gambling on jade.

When Boss Han saw Old Gu approaching, he quickly stepped aside and looked at Old Gu with hopeful eyes, hoping to get some useful information from him to decide whether to buy the rough stone.

However, the old man's performance disappointed him. After carefully examining the rough stone for seven or eight minutes, the old man walked back to Zhuang Rui's side with his hands behind his back, without making any comments on the stone.

"Old Gu, what do you think of this piece of jade? It's already been bid up to 32 million. Is it really worth it?"

"Yes, Old Age, tell us about it."

Before Boss Han even had to ask, the onlookers in the crowd had already started shouting.

"We're all in the same business. Gambling on stones is all the same. Look at the cut, look at the surface, and see how it performs after the window is opened and the small door is revealed. I don't need to say more about these things. These are all things that can be seen. The rest depends entirely on luck."

However, my nephew was quite lucky. Two months later, he unearthed a piece of icy, fully green jadeite, much smaller than this one, which sold for 20 million. As for this rough stone, whether it will yield a complete piece, and whether its color and clarity will match the outside, depends on luck.

The old man talked for a long time, but it was all for naught. He didn't comment on the quality of the raw material at all. He only talked about luck the most. However, the onlookers could understand that the old man was very optimistic about Zhuang Rui's luck.

"Alright, based on Chairman Gu's words, I'll add another 500,000, making it 32.5 million!"

Hearing what the old man said, Mr. Han seemed to be encouraged and offered a new price, which also broke the record for the highest bid at the Pingzhou Jadeite Gambling Conference.

As a result, everyone's attention was once again focused on Xu Zhendong and his group.

Today's open auction was quite an eye-opener for the onlookers. The price of rough stones soared, with two major players vying for dominance and neither willing to give way. The prices kept rising in a thrilling and suspenseful manner.

"Mr. Han, let's talk in private..."

Just as Xu Zhendong was still calculating the gains and losses, the fourth brother, who was originally standing next to Zhuang Rui, walked behind Han Haowei, gently patted his shoulder, and then leaned in and whispered a few words in Han Haowei's ear.

At first, Han Haowei's face turned extremely ugly, and his eyes kept glancing at Xu Wei standing next to Xu Zhendong. However, after Lao Si said a few more words, Han's expression gradually improved, and he slowly nodded.

At that moment, Xu Zhendong also re-quoted the price for the rough stone, "33.8 million." He added 1.3 million to the original price of 32.5 million, indicating that Xu Zhendong wanted to win in one fell swoop.

Xu Zhendong had no choice but to offer this price. Although Old Gu Tou did not explicitly say that he was optimistic about this rough stone, everyone could understand what he meant. He was supporting his nephew. If he did not offer a shocking price, the man surnamed Han would probably continue to entangle with him.

It seemed that his strategy had indeed worked. Xu Zhendong noticed that Han Haowei no longer had that confident look on his face. His eyes were slightly closed, as if he was thinking about something.

"Brother Han, what do you think? Have you made up your mind? I think you should let the old man off this time. I, Xu Zhendong, will definitely repay you next time."

Xu Zhendong was now getting a little nervous about the price of this rough stone. He was also afraid that this man surnamed Han would try to take it from him at all costs. His words were now tinged with a pleading tone. The "Little Han" he used to call him had now become "Brother Han".

After hearing Xu Zhendong's words, Han Haowei seemed to have made up his mind. He opened his half-closed eyes and looked at Xu Zhendong, saying, "Mr. Xu, you have such great courage. I am ashamed to say that this piece of raw jade belongs to Xu's Jewelry."

Han Haowei was a straightforward person. Since he had already backed down, he might as well flatter Xu's Jewelry. These words pleased Xu Zhendong, and his face was full of smiles.

Xu Zhendong was afraid that things might get complicated if he delayed. He hadn't even gotten his hands on the rough stone yet, and who knew if someone else would suddenly appear out of nowhere. As soon as Han withdrew from the competition, Xu Zhendong immediately said to Zhuang Rui, "Boss Zhuang is really lucky. This piece of rough stone has cost me almost everything. How about it, Boss Zhuang, shall we go and transfer the money now?"

"Mr. Xu, you didn't lose out either. After today's incident, who would dare to underestimate the strength of Xu's Jewelry? It's a win-win situation for both of us."

Zhuang Rui readily agreed with a smile, casually offering the kind words that didn't cost him anything, as if he had never had any unpleasant experiences with Xu Wei.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Xu Zhendong burst into laughter. Zhuang Rui's words had hit the nail on the head. Purchasing the raw material was only one aspect; his offer of a price higher than last year's top bidder for this piece of raw material was also intended to promote the Xu family jewelry brand.

At this moment, Zhuang Rui made a very good impression on Xu Zhendong. If there weren't so many people around, Xu Zhendong would have liked to teach Xu Wei a lesson. Look how polite this young man is. He's not as bad as you say.

After Zhuang Rui and Xu Zhendong completed the transaction, they transferred the money at the bank. The funds in Zhuang Rui's account instantly increased from more than nine million to more than forty million. Although Zhuang Rui was mentally prepared at the beginning of the bidding for this rough stone, he still couldn't help but feel excited after receiving the money.

After the money was exchanged and the goods were exchanged, Xu Zhendong had someone move the rough stone away. What was puzzling was that Boss Han followed behind, as if he needed to confirm something.

Zhuang Rui and the others were pulled back into the shed by Yang Hao. Yang Hao ordered a lot of dishes from a restaurant outside and insisted on treating Zhuang Rui to a meal. Of course, Old Master Gu, Song Jun, and Fatty Ma had other places to go and did not eat here.

"Hey friend, what's up?"

Yang Hao saw a young man standing in front of the stone cutting machine. He looked to be in his early twenties, with a round face and a chubby appearance. He was also holding a DV camera.

"Oh, it's nothing, it's nothing."

The young man seemed to still be reeling from the thrilling experience of gambling on stones. After answering Yang Hao's question, he turned and left somewhat absentmindedly.

What Zhuang Rui and the others in the shed didn't expect was that, several years later, a low-budget film called "Crazy Stone" would be born from that young man's hands.

Chapter 202 Even Jade Gambling Has Counterfeits and Inferior Products

June in Guangdong is rather sweltering. Although the venue for the jade gambling convention was outside the steel city, and the structures were all bamboo sheds, the midday sun shining down from above distorted the air, making it feel almost suffocating.

The two electric fans inside the bamboo shed were blowing out hot air. Wei Ge, with his chest exposed, pressed his face against the fan so hard that his small eyes were squinting into slits, but he still couldn't stand the heat and couldn't help but shout, "Mama, I can't take it anymore! This damn weather is going to cook me alive! I want to go back to the hotel!"

"Back to the hotel?"

Zhuang Rui was also somewhat tempted. After a morning of cutting and polishing stones, and scheming against the Xu uncle and nephew, Zhuang Rui was mentally exhausted. Seeing that these guys were all listless like wilted eggplants, it seemed pointless to stay here any longer.

"Okay, let's go back to the hotel. I'm a little tired too. Let's get some rest today and come back tomorrow," Zhuang Rui said.

"Coming again tomorrow? Old man, I'm telling you, you should quit while you're ahead. I've figured it out. This is no different from gambling. Money comes quickly and goes quickly. Don't be fooled by the fact that you made over 30 million today. You might lose it all tomorrow."

Brother Yue and Brother Wei have been arguing for years, and when they open their mouths, they never say anything nice; he's a real sharp-tongued person.

"Nonsense, how can you make money if you don't come? If you weren't the youngest, would you have been able to pocket 500,000? Without this 500,000, who knows when a corrupt official might have appeared."

Before Zhuang Rui could even speak, Wei Ge habitually picked up the conversation, making Yue Jing roll his eyes in exasperation.

"Hey, didn't you tell that Boss Han to come back to you? Now that you've left, where is he going to find him?"

Lao Si's words reminded Zhuang Rui that he had indeed made an appointment with Boss Han, but an hour or so had passed and he still hadn't seen him. Zhuang Rui didn't want to wait any longer.

"Brothers, go back. Yang, you know my phone number. If Boss Han comes looking for me later, give him my number."

Seeing the white lion lying listlessly on the ground, constantly sticking out its tongue, Zhuang Rui felt a little sorry for it. Tibetan mastiffs are meant to live in cold, high-altitude areas, and bringing it to Guangdong had indeed caused the white lion a lot of suffering.

"Okay, don't worry, I'll definitely pass on the message."

Yang Hao nodded in agreement. Zhuang Rui had really given him face today. Many jade business owners had mentioned that they would come over this afternoon to continue selecting raw materials when they were about to go out for lunch.

Zhuang Rui got up and called Fatty Ma and Song Jun again, wanting to tell them to continue selecting raw materials tomorrow. Unexpectedly, the two had already gone back to the hotel for a nap, leaving Zhuang Rui speechless.

Back at the hotel, Zhuang Rui turned the air conditioning on full blast, which cheered the white lion up a bit. After giving it a bath, Zhuang Rui finally relaxed.

Taking out his ICBC gold card, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but get excited. It seemed that gambling on stones was the fastest way to make money. In just one morning, after deducting the money he gave to Lao San and the others, he had made a total of 34.3 million RMB. Zhuang Rui was a finance and accounting major, so although this money was just a string of numbers at the moment, in Zhuang Rui's eyes, this wealth was incredibly real.

According to Song Jun, 18 million RMB would be enough for the villa in Pengcheng. This would leave Zhuang Rui with over 20 million RMB in cash. Holding the card, Zhuang Rui was somewhat worried. Given his major, he naturally wanted to invest the money.

However, with the stock market currently sluggish, Zhuang Rui dares not easily touch the futures market. After much thought, he still doesn't know which industry would be better to invest this money in.

Unable to come up with any solutions, Zhuang Rui simply put the card away, lay down on the bed, and prepared to take a nap to recover his energy. This mental fatigue couldn't be eliminated with the spiritual energy in his eyes.

"I wonder what kind of expressions those uncle and nephew will have after they cut open the rough stone? Hehe..." Lying on the bed, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but laugh out loud as he imagined the expressions of Xu Zhendong and his nephew after they cut the stone.

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"Brother Han, you've made me spend quite a bit of money today. Here, I'll punish you with a drink."

Just as Zhuang Rui and his group returned to the hotel, Xu Zhendong was hosting a dinner with Han Haowei and several other influential bosses in the jewelry industry.

"Hehe, Mr. Xu really has guts. I'm ashamed of myself. I'll drink this glass."

Now that the matter has been resolved, everyone is naturally happy and on good terms. As for the previous attempts to inflate prices and create obstacles, this is not the first time such incidents have occurred in this industry, nor will it be the last. Everyone tacitly understands this, and after Han Haowei praised Xu Zhendong a few times, the matter was glossed over lightly.

After serving five dishes and drinking several rounds, Han Haowei, emboldened by the alcohol, asked Xu Zhendong, "By the way, Mr. Xu, there's something I've never understood. Since the owner of that raw material has a good relationship with your nephew, Mr. Xu, why couldn't they have discussed it privately? Why did they have to put it out there and make us compete for it? Isn't that going to damage our relationship?"

"That kid and Xu Wei are on good terms???"

Xu Zhendong slowly withdrew his hand, which was stretched out in mid-air to pick up food, and looked at Han Haowei with a surprised expression, saying, "Brother Han, who told you that the kid surnamed Zhuang has a good relationship with our Xu Wei?"

Xu Wei was not at the dinner table this time; given his age and status, he was not qualified to attend such a gathering.

"It was that guy surnamed Zhuang who said it, no, it was someone close to him who told me. He said he's an old friend of your nephew and he won't let me compete for this rough stone. Mr. Xu, if the owner of the rough stone hadn't spoken up, do you think I would have given up so easily?"

Han Haowei's words were half true and half false. Lao Si did tell him that Zhuang Rui and Xu Wei had a good relationship and that he should stop raising the price. However, he also promised him a benefit. Lao Si clearly told Han Haowei that Zhuang Rui had a top-quality raw jade stone. If Han Haowei did this favor, Zhuang Rui would naturally repay him in the future.

At that time, Han Haowei was also considering backing down. After all, judging from the performance of this rough stone, the price of more than 30 million was already a bit too high. After hearing what Lao Si told Zhuang Rui, he went with the flow, giving Zhuang Rui face and also accepting Xu Zhendong's favor.

However, Boss Han naturally wouldn't mention Zhuang Rui's promise at the dinner table. Even the fact that Zhuang Rui and Xu Wei were friends was just something he asked casually out of curiosity, without any intention of digging deeper.

Han Haowei's casual question shocked Xu Zhendong. Others might not know, but he knew very well that Xu Wei and Zhuang Rui might not be mortal enemies, but no matter what, they had nothing to do with the word "friends".

At this point, Xu Zhendong had lost his appetite and was instead pondering Zhuang Rui's intentions.

"Could it be that this kid wants Xu's Jewelry to be repaired?"

Xu Zhendong immediately dismissed his idea. Although he hadn't had much contact with Zhuang Rui, he felt that the young man was very opinionated and not the kind of person who would fawn over others. Moreover, given his financial strength, he had no need to curry favor with him.

That leaves only one answer: the raw jade is defective. Thinking of this, Xu Zhendong's hair stood on end. Although the air conditioning in the hotel room was on full blast, Xu Zhendong could still feel the sweat dripping down his back, almost like a stream.

It's important to understand that while gambling on rough stones is very risky, the profits can also be enormous. Just like in the antique trade, some unscrupulous merchants, in pursuit of huge profits, resort to any means necessary, meticulously setting traps and using unexpected methods to deceive and cheat many people, even causing them to lose everything.

In the jade gambling circle, there are several common tricks and fake rough stones. One of them is called "stealing the beam and replacing the pillar". This involves cutting a piece of jade with poor quality and transplanting a piece of jade with a similar size, excellent quality and beautiful color onto the cut. The good quality of the part is used to cover up the bad quality of the whole.

Another type involves a rough stone that looks good on the outside, but turns out to be unsatisfactory after being cut open. However, it is then pieced back together to restore its original appearance. The sand at the joint of this fake rough stone is usually finer and less granular than other parts. However, it is difficult to distinguish when encountering a rusty outer layer. This kind of scam is known as "nine out of ten times out of ten" because it is very difficult to detect.

Another technique is "Fairy Scattering Flowers," which refers to a method where, on a well-grown but unblemished rough stone, glue is sprinkled on a chosen location, and then finely ground jadeite powder is applied to the surface. After repairing the stone and burying it in the soil for several days, the stone is then taken out and its surface is covered with pine flower patterns.

The most clumsy method is to pass off inferior goods as superior ones. This involves selecting a part of the rough stone, carving out a small groove, and then placing green glass, a green toothbrush handle, or even green toothpaste inside. After careful trimming, it can be passed off as superior. However, this method can only fool newcomers to the industry. For those who have been in the industry for decades, they can see through it at a glance.

At this moment, Xu Zhendong was wondering what method Zhuang Rui had used to deceive so many people. After thinking for a long time, Xu Zhendong gave up on the idea, because Zhuang Rui would not dare to defy the world in public, and besides, Old Gu, who arrived later, would definitely not be his accomplice.

Although Xu Zhendong comforted himself with this thought, he still felt uneasy, as if there was something fishy going on here.

After the banquet finally ended, Xu Zhendong rushed back to the company, leaving Master Zhao and Xu Wei to wait for him in the car.

As soon as he entered the company office, Xu Zhendong, with a stern face, said to Xu Wei who came up to him, "Xu Wei, what exactly is the conflict between you and Zhuang Rui? In particular, have there been any conflicts recently? Tell me honestly."

Chapter 203 I'd rather buy a line than a piece of land

When Xu Zhendong was questioning people, he didn't even bother to close the door, attracting the attention of everyone outside the office who pricked up their ears. Gossip really is everywhere!

"Uncle, what's wrong? I just arrived in Guangzhou yesterday, how could I possibly have any conflict with that kid?"

Seeing Xu Zhendong's unfriendly expression, Xu Wei didn't dare to reveal his actions at the airport. Besides, Da Biao was from the Northwest and was currently in the hospital. As long as he didn't say anything, no one would know about Da Biao teaching Zhuang Rui a lesson.

"That's good. Remember, don't provoke that person."

Xu Zhendong's expression softened, and he turned around and closed the office door. In his eyes, although his nephew had returned from studying abroad, he was still a bit arrogant and not as steady as Zhuang Rui.

Xu Wei nodded, but still didn't dare to ask what had happened that made Xu Zhendong seem so agitated.

"Mr. Xu, that piece of raw jade is in the warehouse. Is there a problem?"

Master Zhao was also a little puzzled. He was having dinner with Xu Wei when Xu Zhendong called him urgently, asking him to rush back to the company and inquiring whether the rough stone had been stored in the warehouse. Normally, these things are handled by others, and they don't need to ask about them personally.

"Old Zhao, you take a rest for a while. We'll start preparing to cut the stone this afternoon."

Xu Zhendong took a deep breath. For some reason, he had a lingering unease. He figured he wouldn't be able to sleep tonight until he got the jade out of that rough stone.

Master Zhao was taken aback when he heard this. He had already cut a piece of rough stone that morning. After all, he was nearly sixty years old and was tired both physically and mentally. He was not suitable to continue cutting stones. Moreover, that piece of rough stone was so precious that if there was any mistake, the loss would be heavy.

Thinking of this, Master Zhao said, "Mr. Xu, let's call it a day. Let's pick a good day, pay our respects to Guan Yu, and then do the ritual. There's no rush."

People in Guangdong place great importance on auspicious days. Not only for weddings and funerals, but even for ordinary visits to friends, they will check whether the day is auspicious. This piece of rough jade is extremely precious. If it were up to Master Zhao, a ceremony would be held.

Xu Zhendong waved his hand impatiently upon hearing this and said, "No need to worry about that anymore. Let's check if this rough stone has been tampered with in any way..."

"You tampered with the rough stone? No way, Mr. Xu. Dozens of people have examined that rough stone, and we've checked it carefully. It should be a rough stone from an old mine in Myanmar. There's no mistake about that."

When Master Zhao heard Xu Zhendong's words, his mouth dropped open in surprise. However, he had been in the jade gambling circle for decades and was confident that with his own eyesight, he was not so bad as to not be able to distinguish between real and fake rough stones.

As mentioned above, many people now use various means to fake jadeite rough stones, but those methods can generally only fool those who are new to the jadeite gambling circle and have a level of expertise like Song Jun. If someone like Master Zhao, who has dealt with jadeite rough stones all his life, could not distinguish between real and fake, he would not be able to become a jadeite gambling consultant in a jewelry company.

Xu Zhendong didn't want to hide it from them anymore. He sighed and said, "When we were eating earlier, the guy surnamed Han told me that the kid had someone tell him that Zhuang Rui and Xu Wei are good friends and that he shouldn't ask for more money. That's when I started to have some doubts. Xu Wei, tell me yourself, can you really call yourselves friends?"

Xu Zhendong finally got to say what he had been holding in for so long, and felt much better.

"Uncle, I've had bad luck every time I run into him, how could I dare to be friends with him?"

Upon hearing Xu Zhendong's words, Xu Wei panicked. Could it be that Zhuang Rui knew about his revenge against him and was now using fake wool to retaliate against him?

Xu Wei wasn't stupid. After hearing Zhuang Rui's words that morning, he knew that Zhuang Rui already knew what he had done at the airport and would definitely not be so kind as to help Xu's Jewelry get the rough stone. However, it was true that Zhuang Rui helped them get the rough stone. Could there really be something wrong with the rough stone?

Xu Wei was a bit confused. According to Master Zhao, there was clearly nothing wrong with the rough jade, but Zhuang Rui's behavior couldn't be explained. Logically, Zhuang Rui should have been doing everything he could to prevent them from buying the jade.

However, Xu Wei had no idea that Zhuang Rui had brought out this rough stone to cut open specifically to target him. If that boss surnamed Han ruined things, Zhuang Rui wouldn't be happy even if he made money. That's why he had Lao Si pass on a message to Boss Han.

Although this matter might alert Xu Zhendong if it got out, Zhuang Rui couldn't care less at that moment. If Xu's Jewelry didn't manage to acquire the raw material, all of Zhuang Rui's efforts would be in vain.

"Uncle, when I came back from the airport, a friend of mine had a little conflict with that kid, but it has nothing to do with me." Xu Wei dared not hide what happened at the airport any longer and made up an excuse to tell the truth.

"You bastard, why didn't you answer when I asked you earlier?" Xu Zhendong's expression changed drastically upon hearing this.

"Brother Zhao, let's cut the stone right away."

Xu Zhendong couldn't care less about scolding Xu Wei at this moment. This piece of rough jade was like a malignant tumor growing next to his heart. He wouldn't feel at ease until he unearthed it.

"Alright, let's go cut that rough stone now. But Mr. Xu, you don't need to worry too much. As long as the rough stone is real, no matter what tricks that young man has, he can't make it disappear. We won't lose anything."

Master Zhao's words reassured Xu Zhendong somewhat. He naturally would not have imagined that the jadeite rough stone, which was said to be impossible for any instrument in the world to see through, was as clear as a blank sheet of paper in Zhuang Rui's eyes. Even the slightest flaw could not escape the spiritual observation in his eyes.

The jadeite rough from the old mine is certainly not fake, but what they see may not be real.

The headquarters of Xu's Jewelry is right next to the Xu's Jewelry processing factory. The rough stone that was gambled on in the morning was placed in the headquarters warehouse. After Xu Zhendong gave the order, security guards and staff opened the warehouse and pushed the rough stone to the factory on a trolley.

The stone-cutting machines at Xu's Jewelry and Jade Processing Factory are much more sophisticated than those at the jade gambling venue. There are more than ten kinds of stone-rubbing machines of various sizes, and some precision instruments can even remove dust as small as dust particles from the surface of jade.

After the rough stone was brought over, the group didn't immediately start cutting it. Instead, Master Zhao personally cleaned the stone from top to bottom. At the window, he even used a brush made of pig bristles to carefully clean the dust and stone chips inside, his eyes fixed on the jade inside.

The rinsing took more than ten minutes. After standing up, Master Zhao, without bothering to wipe the dust off his face, said to Xu Zhendong, "Mr. Xu, there's no problem with this rough stone. It's a genuine old mine stone."

Upon hearing this, Xu Zhendong breathed a sigh of relief and asked, "Are there any signs of tampering?"

It's important to know that even among rough jade from old mines, there are good and bad varieties. It's possible to piece together cut rough jade pieces; this has happened before.

"No, this is a whole piece of material, it should be from the Pak Kong factory, the color is very pure, it wasn't painted on later, there shouldn't be any problem, Mr. Xu, shall we still cut it today?"

According to Master Zhao, it would be better to choose an auspicious day to cut the stone. He was indeed a bit tired today, and if he lost his temper and damaged the jade inside, the loss would be huge.

"Solve it now!!!"

Xu Zhendong nodded heavily and continued, "Brother Zhao, I'll have to trouble you a bit more today. Once the jadeite is extracted from this rough stone, our company's supply of high-end jewelry will be secured. You can spend the next few days gambling on some mid- to low-grade rough stones. After you're done with these few days, I won't treat you badly. I'll give you a few days off."

"Okay, let's do it then."

Since the boss had made the request, Master Zhao had no choice but to comply. However, none of the three people present expected that, not long after today, Master Zhao would be permanently taken off from Xu's Jewelry.

Extracting jade from rough stones is different from cutting stones. Cutting stones is a one-cut process where you can immediately tell whether the jade will be a success or a failure. Both the person cutting and the person watching will find it very satisfying.

However, cutting stones is quite tedious, especially for high-grade jadeite. You have to use a grinding wheel to carefully remove the outer layer of the rough stone bit by bit. It can take several hours or even days to cut a stone weighing tens of kilograms.

Master Zhao was also very careful. He started polishing with a grinding wheel from the first window that Zhuang Rui had opened. Judging from the shape, the jadeite in that area seemed to have seeped into the stone. According to Master Zhao's experience, there shouldn't be any more green coming out next to it.

However, just over ten minutes later, Master Zhao actually managed to wipe out another door about the size of a palm next to the skylight. He immediately frowned, rinsed the door with clean water, but did not wipe it again. Instead, he squatted there to observe it.

Seeing the newly cleaned door, Xu Wei was puzzled by Master Zhao's long face and couldn't help but say, "Uncle Zhao, it seems this really is a whole piece of jade. The green is even showing around here. There should be more material than we estimated, right?"

"Young Master Xu, let's wait and see..."

Master Zhao waved his hand, his face very serious, and even Xu Zhendong sensed that something was wrong.

In the jade gambling circle, there is a saying: "Better to buy a line than a piece." The jade connected beneath the skin gave Master Zhao a bad feeling.

Chapter 204 Heaven and Hell Are So Close

When the green color, also known as "pine flower," appears on the surface of a jadeite rough in linear or clump-like patterns, especially when these green lines are symmetrically distributed, the green extends inwards, even penetrating the entire rough stone. Such rough stones are considered top-grade and generally yield significant profits.

This type of rough stone refers to a raw stone with a good outer skin. Through the appearance of the skin, the direction of the jade inside the stone can be observed. However, the rough stone that Xu Zhendong spent more than 30 million yuan to buy is now showing a very strange appearance.

The outer layer of this rough stone did not have obvious pine flower or python pattern. Logically speaking, the chance of finding green is very small. However, both windows that were cut out revealed green, and it was a very high-quality icy green. In addition, the two windows were symmetrical, which would make people mistakenly believe that the green would run through the entire stone.

However, based on his experience, Master Zhao sensed something was amiss. This rough stone seemed to have undergone secondary weathering. If that were the case, then it would be quite certain whether green could emerge from beneath this layer of jadeite.

"Brother Zhao, is something wrong?"

Xu Zhendong also knows how to identify jadeite rough stones, but he is not very professional. When he saw that Master Zhao had polished out green again, his first reaction was the same as Xu Wei's: this rough stone must have increased in value significantly.

"It's too early to say..."

Master Zhao wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. He wasn't sure what the raw material was like, so he could only continue cutting it open.

With the sound of grinding wheels and stones rubbing together, the rough stone was gradually revealed to everyone.

One-third of the rough stone's outer layer had been wiped away, and in this exposed third, jadeite was found. Under the incandescent lights in the processing workshop, it emitted an alluring and profound glow. What was most remarkable was that the colors of these pieces of jadeite were extremely uniform, and the quality and clarity were also similar, basically reaching the icy type.

"Consultant Zhao, you certainly have a good eye! Such a large piece of jade can probably yield at least thirty bracelets. President Xu, you'll have to give out a bonus!"

"Yes, with this piece of jade, we're going to be very busy. We definitely need to give them a bonus."

At this moment, some of the carving masters from the jade factory also gathered around. Among them, some of the more senior carving masters joked with Xu Zhendong and the others.

"No problem, no problem. It's quite hot here. I'll have someone install two more powerful air conditioners in the workshop later. Once this jade is cut, we'll be counting on you all."

Xu Zhendong smiled broadly and bowed to those around him. If the raw jadeite was the guarantee of the company's terminal sales business, then these carving masters were the cornerstone of a jewelry company. When there was less work, Xu Zhendong would treat these people with great care, and now he would be even less stingy.

It's important to know that turning a piece of jade into an object involves a series of processing steps. If the process is short, it can take three to five days. If it's a delicate task, it's quite normal to produce an object in three to five months.

Ancient China had a set of procedures. The jade carving process in the Qing Dynasty included steps such as sand pounding, paste grinding, jade opening, pot making, pot rinsing, pot grinding, pot hollowing, carving, drilling, engraving, wooden pots, and leather pots. These procedures were much more advanced than those of today, as some of the techniques have been lost in modern times.

In modern times, the processing of jade artifacts is generally divided into four stages: material selection, design, carving, and polishing, each with its own specific content.

The selection of materials goes without saying; that's what Master Zhao is doing now. However, the design work must be carried out throughout the entire jade carving process. Because jade products are not mass-produced products, each piece has certain variations. Designers must design shapes based on the characteristics of the jade material to make the shapes comfortable, smooth, and pleasing to people.

But ultimately, it is these artisans who carve the jadeite into its final form. How to highlight the unique characteristics of the raw jadeite—its texture, luster, color, transparency, and so on—and bring out its warm and cool beauty, is a task that designers cannot accomplish; it must rely on these highly skilled jade carvers.

More importantly, in modern society, artisans are becoming increasingly rare. Therefore, in every jewelry company that integrates jade production and sales, carving masters are the most valued, and many companies even offer high prices to poach their talents.

The two men who were just speaking were the jade carving masters that Xu Zhendong had hired from Yangzhou at a high price. Their jade carving skills were superb, and once this rough stone was cut, it would definitely be these two who would carve it.

In the past few months, due to the shortage of high-quality raw materials, these carving masters have been quite idle. However, Xu Zhendong still has to provide them with good food and drink, because once these carving masters leave, it will be difficult to invite them back.

As for this rough stone, Xu Zhendong no longer had any doubts. Sitting in his position, he had seen all kinds of rough stones. Judging from the appearance of this rough stone, it must be a whole piece of jadeite, and much larger than they had previously expected.

"Judging from the current situation, we can find at least 40 million worth of jadeite. There shouldn't be any problem with the supply of high-end jadeite for the next six months. Let's go to Myanmar to participate in jadeite gambling again in January next year."

Xu Zhendong watched as the raw jade stones kept turning green under Master Zhao's hands, and he felt an indescribable sense of satisfaction. The problem that had been bothering him for the past few months was finally solved, and he could now devote his energy to the development of the company.

Polishing high-grade rough stones requires extreme care, because if the hand is even slightly unsteady and the grinding wheel is polished on the surface of the jade, the loss will be huge. So, after more than an hour, Master Zhao had only cut out two-thirds of the stone. This stone, weighing more than 50 kilograms, was now like a beautiful woman wearing a veil, revealing her exceptionally beautiful body.

"Brother Zhao, take a rest first. Xu Wei, why don't you get some water for your Uncle Zhao?"

Seeing the sweat dripping from Zhao's forehead, Xu Zhendong quickly stopped him from continuing to cut the stone, and helped Zhao to a chair. Xu Wei then handed him a towel and a drink.

After Master Zhao had recovered for a while, Xu Zhendong asked, "Brother, can you basically figure it out now?"

"It seems there's no major problem. This piece of raw jade is worth significantly more than what we paid..."

Master Zhao was relieved. Two-thirds of the rough jade had been cut open, and it was almost entirely emerald green. Although there was a lot of white cotton mixed in at the joints, it did not affect the overall direction of the jade. Now, Master Zhao's concern was how to cut the jade open and how to maximize its profit.

Upon hearing Master Zhao's words, Xu Zhendong was in high spirits. He turned to Xu Wei, who was standing to the side, and said, "Xu Wei, you should visit that guy surnamed Zhuang later. It's better to resolve conflicts than to make them fester. He has given us such a great benefit, so we should be generous to him."

Xu Wei was stunned for a moment upon hearing this. Wasn't this asking him to apologize to Zhuang Rui?

"Uncle, this...this isn't quite appropriate, is it?" Xu Wei was completely unwilling. That country bumpkin was just lucky; was he really worth befriending?

Xu Zhendong's face tightened, and he said unhappily, "Not suitable? What, do you think it's more suitable for an old man like me to go in person?"

"Okay, I'll go..." Seeing Xu Zhendong get angry, Xu Wei nodded helplessly and agreed.

"You're just too arrogant and can't stand seeing others better than you. Xu Wei, you need to change this habit, or you'll suffer a great loss in the future."

Xu Zhendong thought highly of his nephew. Although he had some of the common flaws of young people, he was still much better than the other young men in the family who only knew how to eat, drink, and play with women.

Seeing that Master Zhao had started cutting the stone again, Xu Zhendong didn't say anything more and turned his attention to the rough stone.

"Hmm? White cotton has appeared?"

Master Zhao stopped the grinder in his hand, and Xu Zhendong and Xu Wei quickly went over to take a closer look. They both breathed a sigh of relief.

It's impossible for such a large piece of rough stone to be entirely jadeite. Even if the remaining areas are all crystalline, the impact wouldn't be significant.

"Mr. Xu, I think we should start from these areas where the white cotton has come out and work our way in. Let's get out half of the material first, and then we can put the rest away," Master Zhao suggested after observing for a while.

"Okay, bro, you're the expert, you can make the decisions about these things."

Xu Zhendong waved his hand. If he didn't want to see the final result, he would have left by now. After all, as the president of Xu's Jewelry, he had a lot to do.

Even though Master Zhao was tired, a hint of excitement appeared on his face. After all, it was a great honor for him to see a priceless piece of jade come to light.

Just over ten minutes later, as the scattered crystalline particles from the white cotton area of the rough stone continued to fall off, Master Zhao's expression gradually turned grim. You see, they had already dug out one-third of the rough stone, and there was still no jadeite, only those hateful grayish-white crystalline particles.

Xu Zhendong also noticed this. Ignoring the flying gravel, he stepped forward and stared intently at the raw material that was constantly shedding fragments. His face, which had been flushed from drinking a little alcohol at noon, gradually turned ashen.

Another half hour passed, and the rough stone that appeared in front of everyone had been completely hollowed out in the middle. It looked like a mortar and pestle with a large hole in the center, or like a big mouth, silently mocking everyone in the room.

In just half an hour, Xu Zhendong felt as if he had fallen from heaven to hell. The huge psychological gap made his heart ache. Countless stars seemed to be flashing before his eyes, and thunder was booming in his ears. His body, which had been squatting there, silently slid to the ground.

At this moment, Xu Wei was holding onto Master Zhao, who was almost slumped on the ground, and shouted hoarsely, "This is impossible, this is impossible! How could this happen? You, Zhao, didn't you say that this piece of rough jade would definitely be a huge investment?"

Chapter 205 A Great Satisfaction (Part 1)

Master Zhao's face seemed to age considerably in an instant. His once sharp, hawk-like eyes were now dull and lifeless, and he looked at Xu Wei, who was clutching his clothes, with the vacant expression of a walking corpse, saying, "I don't know why this is happening. It doesn't make sense... Is it because we didn't pray to the gods?"

Master Zhao simply couldn't understand how such a nearly fully-developed rough stone could be ruined. Having spent his entire life in the jade gambling business, he had never encountered anything like it. His only thought was that he had offended Guan Yu (a legendary figure associated with gambling).

"What kind of god are you worshipping? You've just misjudged him, Uncle. What's wrong with you?"

Xu Wei completely forgot that he had also strongly advocated for buying the rough stone. His agitated behavior was simply an attempt to clear his name and prevent Xu Zhendong from blaming him.

Only when Xu Wei turned around to look at Xu Zhendong did he realize that his uncle had collapsed on the ground. Although his eyes were still open, they looked lifeless. Several carving craftsmen were supporting Xu Zhendong and pinching his philtrum.

After a while, Xu Zhendong slowly woke up, his mind a little confused. Looking at the familiar carving masters, he didn't understand why he was there and lying on the ground.

Seeing that Xu Zhendong had woken up, Xu Wei quickly pushed through the crowd and said to Xu Zhendong with a concerned expression, "Uncle, you're awake! You scared me to death. I just called an ambulance, and we'll take you to the hospital for a check-up later..."

"Xu Wei? Old Zhao? Raw stone... thirty-three million eight hundred thousand?"

These words popped into Xu Zhendong's mind, and some blurry images gradually cleared up.

"Old Zhao, Old Zhao?"

Xu Zhendong called out to Master Zhao with all his might, but his voice was very soft. Upon hearing this, Xu Wei grabbed Master Zhao, who was still slumped on the ground in a daze, and pulled him to Xu Zhendong's side.

"Old Zhao, how's that rough jade coming along?"

Xu Zhendong still harbored a sliver of hope. More than 30 million yuan! Thinking of this, Xu Zhendong felt as if a knife was ripping his flesh out.

"Scrap metal, worth at most one million, Mr. Xu, we misjudged it..."

Old Zhao has also come to his senses, but this blow was quite significant, and his current condition may not be much better than Xu Zhendong's.

"Old Zhao, was this rough jade stone faked? Can we sue him?"

Xu Zhendong is now preoccupied with how to recover the money. The company's financial situation is also very bad. Without the 30 million, he has no strength to bid for high-end jadeite rough. In the future, the company will only be able to become a small company that sells some low-end jade products.

"Sue? Mr. Xu, it's useless. We signed a contract and had it notarized before buying the rough stone. The money and goods were exchanged. Even if it's fake, we have no evidence now. Besides, this rough stone is indeed from the Pak Kong factory and hasn't been tampered with. We just misjudged it..."

Master Zhao's words made Xu Zhendong's vision go black, and he almost fainted again. The smile Zhuang Rui had given him at the jade gambling event immediately appeared before his eyes, but Xu Zhendong saw only pity and hatred in that smile.

Xu Wei, who was listening from the side, was displeased. Why did he keep saying "us" without dragging him into it? It seemed that Old Zhao was not going to give up. He immediately pointed at Master Zhao and said, "Old Zhao, you clearly misjudged him. What do you mean by 'us'? If it weren't for your age, I would have called security to throw you out right now."

"You...you, good, good..."

Seeing Xu Wei, who always addressed him as Uncle Zhao, speak so rudely, Master Zhao was so angry that he couldn't even speak. Master Zhao didn't intend to shirk his responsibility, but at the time, this piece of rough jade was favored by both Xu Wei and Xu Zhendong. Although he was nominally an advisor, he didn't have the authority to make the final decision to buy it.

Upon hearing Xu Wei's words, Xu Zhendong's eyes snapped open.

"Xu Wei and Zhuang Rui have a grudge, they have a feud..."

These words kept flashing through his mind. Although Xu Zhendong didn't know if Zhuang Rui knew the true situation of this rough stone, he was now almost certain that Zhuang Rui's words in getting Boss Han to give up this rough stone were definitely not well-intentioned.

"Xu Wei, come here..." Xu Zhendong beckoned to Xu Wei and struggled to sit up.

"Uncle, don't worry, it must be that brat Zhuang Rui doing it on purpose. I'll get a few people to teach him a lesson later!"

Upon hearing Xu Zhendong's call, Xu Wei immediately ran over, half-squatting down and bringing his ear close.

"I'll take care of you first!!!"

Xu Zhendong suddenly shouted, and with a force he didn't know where it came from, he suddenly sat up, spread his five fingers, and swung his right arm in a wide arc, slapping Xu Wei's cheek that was leaning towards him.

With a sharp "smack!", Xu Wei, who weighed over 100 pounds, was actually knocked to the ground by Xu Zhendong, who was over 60 years old. Half of his cheek immediately became red and swollen, and the glasses on his nose were nowhere to be seen.

"Uncle, you... ptooeey!"

Xu Wei stood up in shock and anger. He had just shouted out a sentence when he felt something in his mouth. He spat it into his palm and saw that it was two teeth.

Xu Zhendong could no longer hear Xu Wei's words. After slapping Xu Wei with all his might, he fainted again. At this moment, the sound of an ambulance wailed outside the workshop. Several carving craftsmen carried Xu Zhendong to the ambulance, and Master Zhao was also carried on due to his physical discomfort.

In the blink of an eye, only Xu Wei remained alone in the huge processing workshop, along with the piece of raw material with its mouth wide open, silently mocking him.

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Zhuang Rui had a very restful afternoon nap, though it was a little long. He didn't fall asleep until after 2 p.m. When he opened his eyes, he saw through the window that the streetlights were already on and night had fallen.

"Damn, so many calls?"

Rubbing his eyes, Zhuang Rui picked up his phone to check the time, only to find that his phone had been ringing off the hook, with over fifty missed calls.

Zhuang Rui glanced at the list and saw calls from Wei Ge and his friends, Lei Lei, Song Jun and Fatty Ma, and even Old Master Gu. What surprised Zhuang Rui the most was an international call; if he wasn't mistaken, it was Qin Xuanbing calling.

"They're so close, why are they making phone calls? They're crazy."

Zhuang Rui casually tossed the phone onto the bed and prepared to wash up. As soon as he got out of bed, Bai Shi pounced at him from the doorway. Zhuang Rui seemed to understand something; it seemed that these people hadn't failed to come looking for him, but had probably been stopped by Bai Shi.

After washing up, Zhuang Rui thought for a moment, then picked up the phone and dialed Qin Xuanbing's number.

After the phone rang twice, Qin Xuanbing answered it quickly.

"Zhuang Rui, Lei Lei can't find you, she's even calling me. What happened?" Qin Xuanbing's pleasant voice came through the phone.

"I don't know. I was a bit tired this morning and slept at the hotel all afternoon. My phone was on vibrate this morning when I was gambling on jade, so I didn't hear it. I'll call Lei Lei later..."

Zhuang Rui originally thought Qin Xuanbing had something urgent to say, but it turned out that Lei Lei wanted to see him. After chatting with Qin Xuanbing for a few minutes, he hung up the phone and called Lei Lei.

"Zhuang Rui, are you hiding in your room laughing all the way to the bank? You're not even answering my calls!" Lei Lei seemed to be in a bad mood and immediately questioned Zhuang Rui.

"I...I was asleep and didn't hear it..."

Zhuang Rui felt a little wronged. What was going on? Why was he getting angry at him for no reason? Zhuang Rui was starting to feel sorry for Liu Chuan, who was going to marry Lei Lei.

"You and Da Chuan are buddies, and you're my old classmate. You had some information but didn't tell me first. I'm very angry, but forget it, I forgive you. You did a good deed. I'm a bit busy now, I'll contact you again tomorrow."

Lei Lei chattered on and on like a frying pan, and before Zhuang Rui could react, she hung up the phone.

"Hey, hey, Lei Lei, explain yourself! What good deed did I do?"

Zhuang Rui was a little annoyed. He didn't seem to have helped the old lady cross the road or done any good deeds like Lei Feng these past few days. As for that piece of raw jade, even if Xu's Jewelry didn't buy it, they couldn't sell it to Lei Lei.

Just as Zhuang Rui was somewhat stunned, his phone suddenly rang.

"Damn it, buddy, were you fast asleep in your room? We guys practically smashed the door open, didn't you hear us?"

When the call connected, Wei Ge's voice came through. There was some noise nearby, so he probably wasn't in a hotel.

"I was really tired this morning and just woke up. I was just about to call you guys. Are you all together? By the way, why didn't you ask the waiter to open the door for you?"

Upon hearing this, Wei Ge immediately flew into a rage, yelling into the phone, "Get lost! Want to get bitten by a dog? I just knocked twice, and your white lion was growling at the door. Do you think I'd dare ask anyone to open it? Alright, enough nonsense, come and eat. Boss Song and Fatty... oh, no, Boss Ma are both here too."

Zhuang Rui looked at the white lion lying at his feet with a mixture of amusement and exasperation. A surge of spiritual energy instantly flowed into the white lion's body, and the white lion comfortably closed its eyes.

"Damn, all those calls were just to invite me to dinner?" Zhuang Rui was speechless.

"No, there's something else. It's great news! It's in the restaurant on the second floor of the hotel. Come over quickly."

Viagra sounded excited as he finished speaking and then hung up the phone.

"What kind of people are these? They only say half of what they mean, how satisfying! Could it be that..."

Zhuang Rui thought of a possibility, quickly put on some clothes, comforted the white lion, and hurriedly left the room.

Chapter 206 A Great Satisfaction (Part Two)

After walking a few steps out of the room, Zhuang Rui turned back and changed the hotel room's status to "Do Not Disturb," because he was afraid that the white lion would scare the housekeeper when they went in to clean.

While waiting for the elevator, Zhuang Rui's phone rang again. He glanced at the number; it was an unfamiliar number. Without much thought, Zhuang Rui answered it while standing at the elevator door.

"Hello, Mr. Zhuang? This is Old Han from Han's Jewelry. I really have to thank you for what happened this morning, otherwise I would have suffered a huge loss. Are you free now? How about we have dinner together?"

The voice on the other end of the phone sounded unfamiliar. Zhuang Rui thought for a moment before remembering that it was the fair-skinned, chubby man who had bid against Xu Zhendong that morning.

"Ah, it's Boss Han. I won't let you suffer any loss about what happened this morning. Don't worry, I still have a good piece of material, it's just not here. I will definitely make it up to you when the opportunity arises."

Zhuang Rui was puzzled by Han Haowei's words. Han Haowei had given him face in the morning, so why was he saying he wanted to thank him?

Fortunately, the fat man and Xu Zhendong raised the price; otherwise, that piece of raw jade wouldn't have sold for 33.8 million.

"That's not it, Mr. Zhuang. If you have a moment now, let's sit down and talk."

Han Haowei was truly grateful to Zhuang Rui. If Zhuang Rui hadn't sent someone to deliver a message to him, he might still be fighting with Xu Zhendong to the death. If he had actually gotten his hands on that piece of jade, he would have been devastated.

The news that Xu's Jewelry had lost its raw material carving business spread through various channels as soon as Xu Zhendong was sent to the hospital. The carvers were already targets of various jewelry companies, and after seeing the heavy losses suffered by Xu's Jewelry, they couldn't help but start looking for their own way out. As a result, the news is now flying everywhere.

Of course, Zhuang Rui was unaware of all this; he still thought that this Boss Han was eager to see the fine materials he had mentioned.

"Forget about dinner. I have plans with a friend tonight... uh, it's 7:30 now. If you're free around 8:30, come to my hotel and we can sit down."

Zhuang Rui spoke very politely, naturally because of the piece of red jade in his hand. You see, such top-quality jade is not something that ordinary people can afford; it is only available to a specific group of customers. Zhuang Rui wanted to get to know a few people like that through Boss Han, so that he could sell the piece of red jade in the future.

Zhuang Rui hasn't decided yet whether to cut the jade and sell it as raw material, or to have it carved into a finished product and then sell it. But no matter which method he chooses, it's always good to have a good relationship with a jade merchant like Boss Han.

"Okay, you're staying at the hotel next to Jade Street, right? I'll be there right away." Han Haowei readily agreed.

After chatting casually with Boss Han for a few minutes, Zhuang Rui went down to the second-floor restaurant and discovered that the group wasn't eating, but drinking tea. People in Guangdong love drinking tea, and many things are discussed over tea. Some people can drink tea from morning tea to afternoon tea until night.

Having expended a lot of energy in the morning and not eaten much at noon, Zhuang Rui was now starving. After sitting down, he didn't stand on ceremony and kept stuffing the meatballs, shrimp dumplings, xiaolongbao and other snacks in front of him into his mouth.

"What's wrong? Why are you all staring at me?"

After taking a sip of tea and swallowing the food in his mouth, Zhuang Rui noticed that the guys were all staring at him blankly, so he asked them curiously.

"Hey, do you know there's no jade inside that rock?" Wei Ge couldn't keep anything to himself and immediately asked.

"A stone? Which stone are you talking about?"

Zhuang Rui already guessed what it was about, but he couldn't reveal that he could see inside the raw stone, so he could only pretend to be ignorant.

Zhuang Rui was surprised that Xu Wei and the others started cutting the stone as soon as they returned to the company. He had originally thought they wouldn't find out until after the stone gambling convention ended.

"What else could it be? It's the one you sold to Xu's Jewelry. Lei Lei told us that you and that kid surnamed Xu don't get along. Old man, are you deliberately trying to sabotage them?"

The fourth brother was the one who relayed Zhuang Rui's message to Boss Han, so he was the most suspicious. Given Zhuang Rui's personality, there was no reason for him to sell good stuff to his enemy.

"There really isn't any jade in that rock?!" Zhuang Rui feigned surprise as he looked at everyone.

"You knew all along, didn't you?" It was Song Jun who spoke. Zhuang Rui's actions today had too many flaws and couldn't withstand scrutiny.

"What's going on? Tell me first, what do I know?" Acting is fucking tiring. Zhuang Rui's facial expression right now is good enough for a movie.

The third brother was the most kind. Seeing Zhuang Rui's anxious look, he said, "After Xu's Jewelry went back, they cut open that rough stone. However, there was only some jade on the surface under the outer skin. The inside was completely hollow. It's not worth 3 million, let alone 30 million. There are rumors that you faked it."

"Bullshit! Song and I bought that stone together this morning at the jade gambling fair. Hundreds of jade merchants saw it. How could I possibly fake it? Damn it, they can't stand losing and they're blaming me."

The third brother's words infuriated Zhuang Rui. If he were to gain a bad reputation in the jade industry, who would dare to buy his products in the future? After all, Zhuang Rui still had a piece of red jade worth hundreds of millions.

Upon hearing this, Song Jun waved his hand and said, "Why are you so agitated, kid? This thing has a signed contract and has been notarized. There's no need to pay any attention to them. When people lose money gambling on stones, there are plenty of people who spread rumors and cause trouble. It's okay, brother, I'll be your witness."

"Yeah, I don't believe this raw material is fake, but Zhuang Rui, I have a feeling you knew about the material beforehand?" Fatty Ma said, munching on a chicken foot, his small, narrowed eyes looking at Zhuang Rui with amusement.

"I'm innocent, Brother Ma! I bought that stone because it was cheap. Brother Song knows that. Besides, if I had known there was no jade inside, would I have bought it? I didn't even know Xu Wei and the others wanted to buy it," Zhuang Rui cried out, blaming the heavens.

Upon hearing this, everyone agreed that it made sense. If Zhuang Rui had known that there was no jade inside the rough stone, he certainly wouldn't have bought it. He couldn't tell fortunes, so how could he have known that Xu's Jewelry would pay such a high price for the rough stone?

Zhuang Rui's words were three parts truth and seven parts falsehood. The lie was that he knew exactly what was going on inside the raw material. As for the truth, he originally just wanted to sell it for a few million, but he didn't expect Xu's Jewelry to be such a sucker who walked right into it.

"Zhuang Rui, you just answered Yue Jing by saying that there really was no jade in that rough stone, which means you already knew that. How do you explain that?"

Fatty Ma was convinced that Zhuang Rui knew about the situation beforehand, so he kept a close eye on him, determined to get Zhuang Rui to reveal the details.

“Brother Ma, you’re putting me in a difficult position. When I bought the rough stone, I just wanted to get a cheap price. But when I was cutting it, I felt something was strange. I don’t know why, but I just felt that the jade inside the rough stone might not be as good as the surface of the window. That’s why I asked Fourth Brother to pass on the message and give the rough stone to Xu Wei.”

Seeing the disbelieving expressions on everyone's faces, Zhuang Rui smiled wryly and said, "Don't ask me why, I don't know either, it's just a feeling."

Zhuang Rui intends to keep his superpower to himself for the rest of his life. If it gets out, he'll probably be captured by the government for dissection and research, or he'll be held hostage by some powerful force and forced to pick out raw stones for them every day.

"I believe Zhuang Rui, Mr. Song. Have you forgotten? Last year, you unearthed that 20 million yuan rough jade stone. I told you then that it didn't look good and I wanted you to hold onto it for later. But you still unearthed it, and it still turned out badly..."

Unexpectedly, Master Peng, the jade gambling consultant who had been sitting quietly to the side, spoke up, and he was speaking up for Zhuang Rui. However, his words were rather blunt, which made his boss roll his eyes in anger.

It's hard to explain this feeling. It's like rats moving house or cattle and horses neighing during an earthquake. It's a biological instinct. Zhuang Rui used this to explain it, and Fatty Ma had nothing to say. He himself also relied on an extraordinary intuition when observing others.

Song Jun was speechless after what Master Peng said; the 20 million he lost gambling was not much less than what he lost today.

"Hey, brothers, this isn't fair! I don't even know what happened. Can someone tell me?"

Zhuang Rui only knew that Xu Zhendong and his team had failed in their stone-cutting attempt, but he knew nothing about the specifics, which made him quite curious.

Song Jun said with a gloating look, "What's there to ask? One was so angry he vomited blood, and the other was kicked out of the company. Kid, you really brought trouble upon yourself."

It turns out that after Xu Zhendong regained consciousness in the hospital, he immediately convened a meeting with key members of his family to adjust the company's business direction. From now on, the company will mainly focus on dealing in low- to mid-range jade products and abandon the high-end market.

Although this will cause a significant shrinkage in Xu's Jewelry business, there is no other way. Xu's Jewelry no longer has the strength to compete with many other jewelry companies.

As for Xu Wei, he was dismissed from all his positions in Xu's Jewelry Company, and the company's debts under his control were immediately frozen. It is said that after Xu Wei learned of this news, he rushed to Xu Zhendong's ward and slapped himself repeatedly, but he could not change Xu Zhendong's mind. From now on, Xu Wei can only receive a monthly allowance of ten or twenty thousand yuan, just like those idle people in the family.

Although Xu Wei now hates Zhuang Rui to the core, he doesn't even have the money to continue hiring Da Biao. He's even considering whether to get gold or porcelain veneers for the few teeth he's lost. It's true that good and evil will be rewarded eventually.

This news whetted Zhuang Rui's appetite, and he devoured all the snacks on the table in a flash. Just as he lit a cigarette after finishing his meal, his phone rang. It turned out that Han Haowei had arrived in the hotel lobby.

Chapter 207 Jade Gambling Consultant?

This four-star hotel next to the jade street is a regular haunt for jade merchants and clients from all over. If Han Haowei didn't have his company headquarters in Zengcheng and a separate residence in Guangzhou, he would definitely stay here too. He frequently visits this hotel to ask clients for favors, so he's quite familiar with it.

Han Haowei, who was waiting in the hotel lobby, was filled with curiosity about Zhuang Rui, whom he was about to meet.

Han Haowei initially thought Zhuang Rui was just lucky, having won two mediocre rough stones in a row. However, after making some inquiries, his impression of Zhuang Rui completely changed. He won more than 20 million yuan in Nanjing and made more than 30 million yuan in Pingzhou in just one morning. This could no longer be explained by luck.

Han Haowei wanted to see Zhuang Rui out of curiosity. After having lunch with Xu Zhendong, he found Yang Hao and learned from Yang Hao that Zhuang Rui and Xu Wei were not friends and had a very bad relationship, which made Han Haowei's imagination run wild.

Han Haowei is different from Xu Zhendong. Xu Zhendong inherited the family business, while Han Haowei started from gambling on jade in Myanmar in the mid-1980s, gradually built his company, and developed it to its current scale. In several southern provinces, he has firmly surpassed Xu's Jewelry. His expertise in raw jade stones is even above that of many so-called jade gambling experts.

Han Haowei couldn't find any flaws in the rough stone that Zhuang Rui had polished that morning. He was certain that the rough stone was definitely not fake. So, there's a question here: how did Zhuang Rui know that the jadeite in this rough stone was only concentrated on the surface? Given Zhuang Rui's relationship with Xu Wei, he certainly wouldn't kindly sell a rough stone with such a high price to Xu's Jewelry.

Han Haowei certainly didn't believe Zhuang Rui could see through the raw stone. After all, those supposed supernatural abilities like seeing through walls had long been proven to be hoaxes. Just like if someone you know told you they had supernatural abilities, your friends would probably call them crazy. Even if your friend occasionally showed some unusual abilities, they'd probably be categorized as just incredibly lucky.

Han Haowei simply believed that Zhuang Rui had a keen eye and possessed gambling skills that Han Haowei lacked, which was the main reason why Han Haowei was so eager to see Zhuang Rui.

"Brother Zhuang, over here..."

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui emerge from the elevator, Han Haowei quickly waved and greeted him warmly.

"Mr. Han, hello, I'm so sorry to have troubled you to make this trip..."

Zhuang Rui had a good impression of this Boss Han. He felt that this person was a bit like Fatty Ma. Although he was mercenary, he was still cute and did not have the arrogant and domineering air of Xu Zhendong. Although they only said a few words on the phone, Zhuang Rui felt very comfortable.

This is actually the difference between grassroots entrepreneurs and spoiled rich kids. Although Xu Zhendong is not young, Xu's Jewelry was founded before the liberation. He didn't play a part in the struggle for power. After the liberation, his family became capitalists and were not well-liked. As a result, his generation did not receive a good education and their academic qualifications were not very high.

Due to policy restrictions, Xu's Jewelry did not rise again until the 1980s. However, not all the old employees had died by then, and he was not involved in the second venture. It was not until the mid-1990s that Xu Zhendong took the position of president of Xu's Jewelry. From then on, Xu's Jewelry gradually began to decline.

Han Haowei was among the first batch of college students majoring in geology in the country in the late 1970s. He did the same thing as Zhuang Rui's grandfather, traveling to Myanmar to investigate the local geology and landforms. By chance, he came into contact with jadeite rough.

At that time, jadeite rough stones were not highly valued in Myanmar and their prices were not very high. Han Haowei, with his keen eye, quickly accumulated a fortune and founded Han's Jewelry. Therefore, whether in terms of marketing or professional knowledge of jadeite gambling, Xu Zhendong was far inferior to Han Haowei.

"Let's go to a coffee shop."

Zhuang Rui looked around. He didn't want to talk business in the hotel lobby anymore, making himself look like a panda being stared at. Luckily, there was a Starbucks on the first floor of the hotel, so the two of them sat down.

"Brother Zhuang, I really have to thank you for what happened today, otherwise I, Old Han, would have suffered a huge loss..." As soon as he sat down, Han Haowei took out a cigarette and politely offered one to Zhuang Rui.

"Boss Han..."

"Don't call me boss, it sounds weird. Brother, your net worth isn't much less than mine now. If you think highly of me, just call me Old Han."

Although Han Haowei was among the first batch of college students after the Cultural Revolution and could be considered a highly educated intellectual, the ups and downs of the business world over the past two or three decades have shaped him into someone who speaks with a (jianghu, a term referring to the world of martial arts and chivalry) accent.

"Okay, then I'll call you Brother Han..." It seems that in Zhuang Rui's circle, he is the one who is the least, and everyone has to call him brother wherever they go, so one more won't make a difference.

"Brother Han, I just heard about that rough stone. You're a straightforward guy, so I won't mince words. It's true that Xu Wei and I don't get along. At the time, I just felt that the rough stone wasn't worth that much. Even if they bought it, they might not make any money. That's why I had someone advise you, Brother Han."

Zhuang Rui knew that talking nonsense that Wei Ge and others believed was useless to someone like Han Haowei, so he went straight to the point and mentioned the conflict between himself and Xu Wei, and casually moved on from the matter of the raw materials.

Zhuang Rui's words indeed made Han Haowei have a very good impression of him. Now, rumors are spreading like wildfire in the jade gambling circle in Pingzhou and even across the country. Some say that Zhuang Rui is a master of fake rough stones passed down from his ancestors, who have been dealing with stones for generations. Others say that Zhuang Rui is a direct disciple of the old master of the Jade Association. Still others say that he has special abilities and can tell whether there is jade inside a stone just by touching it. In short, there are many different opinions, both positive and negative.

To be honest, all these rumors do have something to do with Zhuang Rui. His grandfather did indeed deal with stones his whole life, and Old Master Gu and he were old friends. As for the rumor that most people scoffed at, it was actually the most accurate guess. It's just that Zhuang Rui's special ability is not in his hands, but in his eyes.

"Did you just go by gut feeling back then, bro?"

Han Haowei frowned upon hearing this. Like Master Peng, he had also experienced choosing raw materials based on intuition.

Once, Han Haowei was looking at rough jadeite at an old mine in Myanmar. He was in a bad mood, but when he touched a piece of rough jadeite that didn't look particularly impressive, he suddenly felt very happy. So he bought the piece of rough jadeite and found that it was actually glass-type jadeite. Although the piece was not big, it was worth several million. Because he had experienced something like this before, Han Haowei believed Zhuang Rui's words to a great extent.

"To be honest, Brother Han, I bought this rough stone when I was digging up a house. I had already cut it, but I wasn't very optimistic about it. When it turned green, it was all luck. I didn't know that Xu's Jewelry would be interested in this rough stone. In short, I wasn't optimistic about it. If Xu Wei bought it and it went up in value, that was his good luck. If he lost money, I would feel better. Hehe, that was my mentality back then."

Zhuang Rui knew that if you wanted others to believe one lie, you had to tell nine truths first. So he told them the origin of the raw material, which made Boss Han's furrowed brows gradually relax.

"That's because you're lucky, brother. By the way, I heard you also have a dzi bead bestowed upon you by a living Buddha?"

Knowing that Zhuang Rui didn't have any special skills in gambling on stones, Han Haowei's attention shifted to Zhuang Rui's old dzi beads. This was something that Old Master Gu had spread intentionally or unintentionally. Young people who are successful are prone to attracting jealousy, so transferring good luck to dzi beads was not a bad idea.

"That's because I was lucky enough to gain the favor of the Living Buddha. This string of dzi beads is extremely precious..."

Seeing that Han Haowei was no longer dwelling on the topic of raw materials, Zhuang Rui breathed a sigh of relief and began to talk at length about the old dzi beads, almost claiming that he was the reincarnation of the Living Buddha.

Zhuang Rui realized that his decision to have Lao Si relay the message first was too rash and would certainly arouse suspicion from discerning people. He was now trying to make amends and believed that his conversation with Boss Han today would soon spread throughout the jade gambling circle.

"Hehe, my brother, you are truly blessed. With this string of dzi beads, good fortune will naturally accompany you..."

Han Haowei looked at the dzi bead on Zhuang Rui's wrist with envy, but he didn't mention wanting to buy it. Not to mention that someone had offered more than ten million, Zhuang Rui wouldn't sell this Buddhist treasure given his current wealth.

Upon hearing Han Haowei's words, Zhuang Rui put on a smug look and said proudly, "Hehe, since I got this old dzi bead, my luck has really been pretty good. A few days ago at the Pingzhou Ghost Market, I even found a complete set of Ru kiln porcelain fragments. After some repairs, they could be worth over a million."

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Han Haowei's last remaining doubt vanished. Porcelain and jade were completely unrelated; it could only be said that this kid in front of him was incredibly lucky.

"Brother Zhuang, I'd like to hire you as a jadeite gambling consultant for Han's Jewelry. What do you think? Are you interested?"

"What? A jade gambling consultant???"

Han Haowei's suggestion came as a surprise, leaving Zhuang Rui momentarily stunned. He couldn't even tell how many old mines there were in Myanmar, yet he was going to become a jade gambling consultant?

Moreover, in Zhuang Rui's mind, jade gambling consultants should all be old men like Master Zhao, and even the younger Master Peng is over forty years old. Asking him to be a jade gambling consultant would be like asking a blind man for directions.

"Brother, please don't misunderstand. This jade gambling consultant job isn't for you to work for me. It's just a leisurely position, and you wouldn't be interested in that little consulting fee. How about this: if a

rough stone you gamble on turns out well, you get 30% of the winnings. If it turns out badly, it's all on me. What do you think?"

Han Haowei's mind works very fast. It was just an idea that came to him on the spur of the moment, but he immediately came up with a plan.

Chapter 208 Postgraduate Entrance Examination

"Brother Han, you're not joking with me, are you? I'm still learning about jadeite rough stone identification from Master Gu. Aren't you afraid of losing everything if I become your jadeite gambling consultant?"

Zhuang Rui felt that Han Haowei's idea was rather far-fetched. Although Han Haowei's judgment was accurate, and Zhuang Rui could indeed make him win every time, this couldn't be explained solely by good luck; others would definitely suspect something. Besides, Zhuang Rui wasn't short of money and didn't want to draw attention to himself.

As the saying goes, "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down," and "People are afraid of becoming famous, just as pigs are afraid of getting fat."

After talking with Wei Ge and the others, as well as Boss Han, Zhuang Rui has made up his mind that he will never cut stones in any public place again. As for his piece of red jadeite rough, Zhuang Rui was originally considering whether to cut it open and sell it at this stone gambling conference, but now he plans to keep it at home and deal with it slowly later.

"Brother Zhuang, I already said, I'll cover any losses, but we'll split any profits, how about that?"

As Han Haowei spoke, his eyes kept glancing at the dzi bead bracelet on Zhuang Rui's wrist, making Zhuang Rui both laugh and cry. If he really relied on this thing, he would probably lose everything, not even his pants.

"Brother Han, there's no need to mention this. I'm just here for fun. I'm not very interested in gambling on stones, and I have to take the postgraduate entrance exam next year, so time is very tight. But... I have a piece of jadeite at home, it's red jade. I'll show it to you when I have time."

Zhuang Rui gave Han Haowei a heads-up and deliberately described the uncut rough jade as a finished piece, so that even if Han Haowei saw the red jade later, he wouldn't have any suspicions.

"Alright, since you don't agree, just pretend I didn't say anything. I'll definitely go and take a look at your red jadeite when I have time. Jewelry made from other colored jadeites has been selling quite well these past few years..."

Han Haowei was somewhat disappointed. He had originally hoped to take advantage of Zhuang Rui's good luck, but unexpectedly, he was rejected. As for the red jade Zhuang Rui mentioned, he didn't pay much attention to it.

Although red and blue jadeite have been extremely popular in the jade market in recent years, only the finest red jadeite of the glass type and the legendary blue jadeite are available. Such jadeite is rare and can only be found once every few years or even decades.

Generally speaking, the deep red jadeite with a hint of brown is not very valuable. It is often found in rough stones from old mines in Dakanmu factories, and even if it is a finished piece, the price is not very high.

Seeing that Han Haowei wasn't interested in the red jade, Zhuang Rui didn't say anything more. He figured that once it was made into a bracelet, he could probably sell it to Song Jun. After all, that kind of thing wasn't something that ordinary people could afford. Even some big jewelry merchants wouldn't put such things in their shops for sale; they only sold them to special customers.

"Alright, Brother Zhuang, I won't disturb your rest today. See you at the venue tomorrow, haha. I'm happy to know that old guy Xu Zhendong won't be able to come tomorrow."

Although Han Haowei didn't achieve his goal today, he was satisfied just to befriend Zhuang Rui. At least he confirmed one thing today: Zhuang Rui was indeed a family friend of Old Master Gu. In the future, when his relationship with Zhuang Rui deepened, it would be much easier to ask Old Master Gu for favors.

It's important to know that in the domestic jade industry, Mr. Gu's reputation carries significant weight.

Has Xu's Jewelry withdrawn from this jade gambling event?

Zhuang Rui didn't quite understand Han Haowei's words. It was just over 30 million yuan. A jewelry company that was well-known in China shouldn't have such a problem causing cash flow issues.

"It's practically a withdrawal, brother. Don't assume that jewelry companies are rich. Most of our money is tied up in raw jade. Xu's Jewelry lost nearly 100 million in Myanmar this year. Our cash reserves were already low, and now we have another 30 million. Even if they continue to participate in this conference, they'll probably only be able to target low- to mid-grade rough stones."

Han Haowei's analysis was accurate. Xu's Jewelry now only has less than 40 million in working capital left, and all three grades of raw jadeite are in short supply. At present, their focus can only be on the low-to-medium grade jadeite raw materials, and they have temporarily given up the high-end jade market.

"Sigh, their luck is really bad!"

Zhuang Rui said this insincerely, and after exchanging a glance with Boss Han, they laughed heartily in tacit agreement. From this point on, Zhuang Rui's hatred for Xu Wei had lessened considerably. From now on, Xu Wei was no match for him at all.

After seeing Han Haowei off, Zhuang Rui suddenly felt a little tired. Although he knew that Wei Ge and the others were still chatting happily in the hotel restaurant, Zhuang Rui didn't want to join in. After making a call to his boss, he went back to his room.

After giving the white lion a bath and drying its fur with a hairdryer, Zhuang Rui lay down on the bed, his eyes somewhat vacant and his mind a bit chaotic. This kind of life didn't seem to be what he wanted.

Money? He's not short of it. Even if Song Jun helps him buy that villa, he'll still have over 20 million left. Zhuang Rui doesn't gamble or visit prostitutes. Well, even if he did, 20 million would be enough for him to live on for the rest of his life. Speaking of which, if he were to gamble, who in this world could beat him?

Women? The thought of this made Zhuang Rui scratch his head. Being a 26-year-old virgin was a bit embarrassing to admit, but when he was with Qin Xuanbing, there was always a third wheel around. Of course, Liu Chuan also thought Qin Xuanbing was the third wheel. This meant that although Zhuang Rui and Qin Xuanbing had held hands and kissed, they had never officially crossed that line. This made Zhuang Rui feel quite ashamed in front of Liu Chuan.

Then there's Miao Feifei. Zhuang Rui has a good impression of this girl, but it's just a good impression. Girls with Miao Feifei's personality are very attractive to men, but what happened after he got drunk that day made Zhuang Rui feel a little embarrassed. Although it was just a series of misunderstandings caused by a drunk man's instincts, Zhuang Rui seemed to have discovered something from Miao Feifei's expression. In order not to deepen the misunderstanding, he hasn't called Miao Feifei these past few days. Instead, Nurse Song has called a few times to ask about Zhuang Rui's whereabouts.

Thinking of Nurse Song, Zhuang Rui was truly troubled. He wasn't stupid; ever since he helped Nurse Song with that matter, she would occasionally come to his house to cook him a meal. Although she would leave after finishing the meal and cleaning up the dishes, he could still feel the affection in her actions.

"Damn it, I still got by even when nobody wanted me. Hmm, I need to find some time to go to England and definitely win over Qin Xuanbing, so I won't have to be indecisive anymore."

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui felt a surge of excitement in his heart. However, it seemed that this excitement was caused by Lao Si. Yesterday, Zhuang Rui saw a woman with a hot figure and heavy makeup go into Lao Si's room.

"You have a beautiful bride, but we have Five Finger Mountain."

Zhuang Rui raised his right hand to look at it, then shook his head. It would hurt his health. Just as he was about to take a cold shower to cool down, his phone, which he had left aside, rang. When he picked it up and saw the number, Zhuang Rui's anger immediately subsided. He couldn't possibly get angry at a man in his sixties or seventies.

"Hey, Uncle De, it's only been a few days, and you've already missed me, haven't you?"

The call was from Uncle De. Zhuang Rui was always very relaxed when he was with Uncle De, as if he were facing a father figure, and he spoke quite casually.

"You little brat, you ran away without even a phone call. I, this old man, have been helping you with your postgraduate entrance exam preparation."

Uncle De is also preparing to leave the pawnshop. He has spent his whole life in this industry, and he has used up most of his remaining energy.

"Taking the postgraduate entrance exam?"

Zhuang Rui had just mentioned this to Han Haowei, but that was just an excuse. He didn't expect that less than an hour later, Uncle De would call.

"Uncle De, what are the requirements for taking the postgraduate entrance exam?"

After hearing Uncle De's words, Zhuang Rui calmed down. He suddenly realized that it was really good to learn something. His theoretical knowledge of antiques and other objects was indeed too lacking. There was no way around it, since his teacher, Uncle De, was a self-taught person.

"Everything's arranged for you. In October, go to Peking University and find Professor Meng in the Archaeology Department. You'll apply for his graduate program, and he'll help you register. Then in November, you'll need to handle things like confirmation and payment. The preliminary exam is in January next year, and the final exam is in March. If you can pass, the admission notice will come out in June. I'm telling you, kid, make me proud. Don't let Professor Meng look down on the people I recommend."

Uncle De had a very accurate memory of time, but he wasn't very familiar with the specifics of things. He then added on the phone to Zhuang Rui, "You can stay at Old Meng's house in Beijing. He only has one granddaughter, hehe, who knows, maybe something might happen between you..."

Zhuang Rui was just troubled by a woman, and after hearing this, he would never go to Professor Meng's house to stay, even if he were beaten to death. Although houses in Beijing are more expensive than in

Shanghai, Zhuang Rui has always been very generous when it comes to real estate investment. He can just buy one if necessary.

"Let me tell you, Old Meng's granddaughter is only twenty this year. She's a very clever and quick-witted girl, and her looks are absolutely stunning, especially her height..."

"Uncle De, the white lion is about to bite someone, let's talk about it later."

Unable to bear Uncle De's nagging on the phone any longer, Zhuang Rui hung up under the guise of Bai Shi's name. He turned to look at Bai Shi, who was staring at him with innocent eyes.

After tossing and turning in bed all night, Zhuang Rui was surrounded by three acquaintances as soon as he stepped out the next day. No, to be precise, there were six people, because each of them had an attendant with them.

Chapter 209 Blind Bidding (Part 1)

"You... how did you all end up together?"

Looking at the group of people in front of him, Zhuang Rui was somewhat surprised. Although they all knew each other, there was no reason for them to be walking together.

Song Jun looked at Zhuang Rui with a half-smile and said, "I can't get through to your phone, and there's this big guy guarding the door, so I can only wait here."

"Can't get through on the phone? That can't be..." Zhuang Rui casually took his phone out of his pocket and glanced at it, only to find it was out of battery.

"Hey bro, we made a deal the other day, you were supposed to come with me to pick out a few rough stones today. But I've really had a run of bad luck this time. The craftsman I hired is still in the hospital."

Seeing that Song Jun had spoken first, Fatty Ma was not to be outdone and asked Zhuang Rui to go with him to the jade gambling venue to select rough stones.

"Zhuang Rui, this is my cousin Wei Zijiang from my uncle's side. He came to the venue with me today. You'll have to help me take a look later. Our company is currently out of stock of some high-grade rough stones, and we're counting on this Pingzhou jade gambling event. If you don't help, I'll tell Xuanbing later."

Lei Lei was more direct, threatening him outright. However, the young man beside her seemed unimpressed by Zhuang Rui's ordinary clothes and appearance, offering only a casual greeting while keeping his eyes fixed on the white lion.

"Mr. Zhuang, is your big dog called a Tibetan Mastiff?" Wei Zijiang looked at the white lion, making no attempt to hide his affection.

"It's a Tibetan Mastiff, what's wrong? Is Brother Wei interested in this too?"

Zhuang Rui saw that he looked to be in his early twenties, five or six years younger than himself, so he addressed him more casually.

"Mr. Zhuang, I'm not your underling. This dog of yours is quite nice. Can you sell it to me? Price is not a problem..."

Wei Zijiang was somewhat displeased with Zhuang Rui's words. In Hong Kong, "little brother" implies a lackey or henchman, and he didn't think Zhuang Rui had the right to call him that. Besides, the people in front of him were all incredibly old-fashioned; he couldn't understand why his cousin insisted on asking this man for help with jade gambling.

Wei Zijiang's words immediately stunned Song Jun and Fatty Ma. Then, the way they looked at Wei Zijiang became a little strange. You little punk, you want to buy White Lion?

"Oh, this Tibetan Mastiff isn't for sale. Even if it were, I doubt you could afford it."

Having just dealt with Xu Wei, how come another arrogant person like this has appeared? Zhuang Rui was a little annoyed. He turned his head and ignored the kid, instead saying to Song Jun and Fatty Ma,

"Hey, you guys are all bosses, okay? But I didn't say I was going to the jade gambling venue today. Shall we go tomorrow?"

Zhuang Rui, with a long face, bowed repeatedly to the group. He really hadn't planned to gamble on stones today, because Yue Jing and Lao San were leaving by plane tomorrow. The brothers had already made plans to go rafting in Conghua today, and then go to a hot spring. Zhuang Rui had never done rafting before, and he was looking forward to it. He even packed his swimming trunks and sunglasses in his backpack. He didn't expect to be blocked by the group as soon as he stepped out the door.

"Tomorrow, the sealed bids will open tomorrow. By then it'll be too late. What's the point of going? Stop talking nonsense and come with me..." Song Jun adopted an attitude of "I'm not going to reason with you, what can you do about it?" which made Zhuang Rui both amused and exasperated.

"Hey, little brother, you're even faster than me! Hey, what's all this people doing at the door?"

Suddenly, the door to the room opposite Zhuang Rui's opened, and Lao Si came out carrying a backpack, followed by a woman who was hiding behind him. He was startled by the group of people outside the door.

"Fourth Brother, they're trying to kidnap me! This is outrageous! Please help me..."

"It's alright, once we get to Guangdong, it's my territory. After those two leave, the three of us brothers can go have some fun. You go with Brother Song and the others today; making money is a serious business." The fourth brother righteously refused Zhuang Rui.

As they were talking, Wei Ge and the others came out of the room. Although they felt deep sympathy for Zhuang Rui, they all agreed that Zhuang Rui should go gambling on stones with them.

"Damn, I want to go rafting too! I want to soak in hot springs too! You guys..."

As the group joked and walked into the elevator, Zhuang Rui called out from behind, only to be met with a flurry of four middle fingers.

Fortunately, Zhou Rui stayed by Zhuang Rui's side. After learning about what happened at Xu's Jewelry, he had been on guard. Once a person goes crazy, anything terrible can happen.

"Let's go, Brother Zhuang, I'll treat you to morning tea. After that, we'll head to the venue. I brought over 300 million yuan with me this time, but I haven't spent a single penny."

Fatty Ma casually said to Zhuang Rui, but inadvertently showed off his muscles.

Song Jun didn't pay much attention to what he heard. He knew this nouveau riche was wealthy. Lei Lei and her cousin, however, were startled. They didn't even know if their family's jewelry company had total assets of 300 million.

Fatty Ma made Lei Lei's cousin Wei's expression a little unnatural, because he had originally looked down on these few bumpkins from the mainland, but he never expected that the money they spent on playing with stones was more than all the money in their family combined.

"Alright, Brother Ma, stop pulling me. I can walk by myself. I can't run away."

Zhuang Rui was half-pulled, half-dragged by Fatty Ma towards the elevator. Fatty Ma and Song Jun had already reached an agreement. They would discuss the stone that Zhuang Rui had his eye on and wouldn't hurt their relationship. As for Lei Lei, neither of them took her seriously. What money could a little girl like her have to compete with them?

Lei Lei didn't have much money. Originally, she wanted her maternal grandfather and uncle to invite Zhuang Rui, but the two of them had heard about what happened at Xu's Jewelry yesterday. They were worried that Zhuang Rui was a conman and didn't agree to Lei Lei's suggestion. Lei Lei had no choice but to come with her cousin. She only had a little over a million yuan on her, which was all her own savings.

"Cousin, who are they? They just casually mention 300 million, are they just bragging?" Wei Zijiang asked Lei Lei in a low voice as he walked behind her.

"I don't know that fat guy, but what he said should be true. The other guy is also a big boss, definitely richer than our family."

Lei Lei wasn't very familiar with Fatty Ma, but she knew Song Jun. His car and villa in Pengcheng alone were worth tens of millions, not to mention that it was only a place he occasionally stayed.

"Even if you have money, you're still a country bumpkin. By the way, cousin, I just said I wanted to buy that dog, why did you stop me? If we buy it and take it back to Hong Kong, it'll be so impressive."

Although he now knew that Song Jun and Fatty Ma were wealthy, Wei Zijiang still didn't think much of Zhuang Rui and hadn't given up on the Tibetan Mastiff.

"Alright, stop embarrassing me. Zhuang Rui's dog is worth 40 million RMB. How are you going to buy it?"

Lei Lei regretted inviting her little cousin over. He was usually quite well-behaved and sensible at home, but he became arrogant as soon as they came out.

"Forty million?"

Wei Zijiang was shocked by Lei Lei's words. You see, the amount of money he could withdraw from his family in a year was only 200,000 Hong Kong dollars, and that was only after he turned eighteen. According to this calculation, the money he received from his family in 200 years might not be enough to buy that dog.

When they arrived at the restaurant for morning tea, Wei Zijiang became much more obedient and his attitude was no longer so arrogant. Instead, he flattered Zhuang Rui and the others in every way, which made Zhuang Rui change his opinion of him. However, he was a little surprised as to why the little guy had changed so much.

In fact, in the early 21st century, not many Hong Kong people came to work in mainland China. Many Hong Kong people's impression of mainland China was still the same as the negative stereotypes of capitalism: poor, dirty, and chaotic. In addition, when many Hong Kong people went to work in mainland China, their salaries and benefits were much higher than those of mainland workers, which naturally led them to develop a sense of superiority.

In reality, Hong Kong people are relatively "poor." Although Hong Kong has excellent social welfare, with unemployed people able to receive between HK\$3,000 and HK\$10,000 in Comprehensive Social Security

Assistance (CSSA) each month, and employed people generally earning a basic salary of over HK\$20,000, it's important to know that daily expenses in Hong Kong are extremely high. The cheapest bento box often costs HK\$50.

Moreover, Hong Kong people are not as wealthy as many people imagine, driving luxury cars and living in mansions. Many Hong Kong people live in extremely small houses, with five or six people crammed into a two-bedroom apartment. For example, Zhuang Rui's apartment in China Overseas, which is over 100 square meters, would cost tens of millions of Hong Kong dollars in a good location in Hong Kong. It can be said that more than 90% of Hong Kong people cannot afford it.

Although Lei Lei's maternal grandfather had some assets in Hong Kong, he could not be called a super-rich man. Their family company's assets were only around 100 million yuan, which also included some real estate. Therefore, although they lived a little better than most Hong Kong people, most of the family members lived at a standard of living that was similar to, or even slightly lower than, some high-level white-collar workers in mainland China.

Given that Zhuang Rui is a man who carries a pet dog worth 40 million yuan with him, what gives Wei Zijiang the audacity to act arrogantly? However, he is quite shrewd; after a breakfast, he was already calling Zhuang Rui "Brother Zhuang" repeatedly.

After having breakfast, the group immediately drove to the jade gambling venue. As soon as they entered the venue, Zhuang Rui felt a little puzzled, as several of the stalls seemed to have changed.

"Brother Song, where are the rough stones from the sealed bids at these stalls?" Zhuang Rui looked closely and realized that the rough stones from the sealed bids that were originally displayed with the open bids were all gone.

"In that open space inside, to make it easier for us to select items, yesterday's event imitated the Myanmar jade auction, gathering all the sealed-bid raw materials together..."

Song Jun's words put Zhuang Rui at ease. Having all the sealed bids from the entire conference laid out together would indeed make the selection process much easier.

Chapter 210 Secret Bidding (Part Two)

The jadeite dealers attending the Pingzhou Jadeite Rough Stone Fair each had several or dozens of pieces of rough jadeite for the sealed-bid auction. The rough jadeite from these hundreds of stalls, when all gathered together, amounted to tens of thousands of pieces.

The rough stones in the venue are divided into fully rough stones and semi-rough stones, which is quite a spectacular sight. It's only a little past nine o'clock, and there are already quite a few people with digital cameras and pens and paper, choosing the rough stones they like.

The bidding will open tomorrow afternoon, which means Zhuang Rui and the others have a day and a half to look at these sealed bid rough stones. In Song Jun's mind, time is already very tight.

Time was also very tight for Zhuang Rui. Although he could see through these jadeite rough stones, Zhuang Rui's spiritual energy was not like that of a mage in a game, who had area-of-effect attacks. Tens of thousands of rough stones were scattered around, and it would probably take two days to examine them one by one.

"Zhuang Rui, don't you like cutting stones? Why did you suddenly decide to look at the sealed bids?"

Seeing Zhuang Rui walk towards the sealed-bid area, Lei Lei became a little anxious. She wanted Zhuang Rui to help her find a better piece of jadeite in the open bid area to prove to her grandfather that she hadn't exaggerated.

"Brother Song and his group are buying raw stones to stock up. They don't cut the stones. We can just look at the sealed bids. But let me be clear, I only look at cheap stones, and I rely on my intuition. I can't really explain it. If there's no jade inside, don't blame me."

Zhuang Rui's words made Song Jun and Fatty Ma frown. If they wanted to stockpile goods, they would naturally buy high-quality raw materials. However, high-quality raw materials were all very expensive, and there were countless people bidding on them. According to Zhuang Rui's habits of selecting raw materials, it was not suitable for the two of them at all.

"Are you worried your brother doesn't have enough money? Just pick the best pieces to look at." Song Jun and Zhuang Rui were used to each other, so there was no need to be so polite.

"Brother Song, you guys have plenty of money, so just throw money at any good rough stones you see. Why drag your little brother into this? My intuition isn't very accurate. Remember when we were in Nanjing, we ruined a rough stone too?"

Zhuang Rui didn't want to help them select rough stones from the bottom of his heart. After these few times of gambling on stones, Zhuang Rui discovered that rough stones with good outer skin have a much higher chance of containing jadeite. However, this is not always the case. Some top-quality jadeite does not necessarily have an outstanding appearance, like that piece of red jadeite.

Song Jun and Fatty Ma don't cut stones; they only look at the appearance when selecting rough stones. If Zhuang Rui picks out a few rough stones that will yield big profits, it's all for nothing if they can't cut them open. Therefore, Zhuang Rui doesn't understand why these two dragged him to gamble on stones.

"Brother Zhuang, if we come across a decent piece of raw jade, we can certainly open it up and have some fun with it..."

Fatty Ma finally spoke his mind. He saw that Zhuang Rui had made a profit from cutting two rough stones in a row, and he was also a little itchy. People have a gambling instinct. Although hoarding goods is less risky, the profit is worlds apart from cutting stones. He must have thought the same thing about Song Jun.

"Brother Ma is right, let's go check out the dishes..."

Lei Lei was naturally more than happy to accept this offer. She didn't have enough money to bid in the sealed bid, and even in the open bid for raw materials, she probably couldn't afford the large and high-quality ones.

Zhuang Rui shrugged helplessly and said, "Whatever. If I could always tell which rough stone was good, wouldn't I be able to buy it myself? I really can't do anything with you guys. I just look at them randomly, so don't blame me if I guess wrong."

Zhuang Rui was telling the truth. If it weren't for his good relationship with Song Jun and the fact that Lei Lei was Liu Chuan's fiancée, Zhuang Rui wouldn't have bothered with them. However, Zhuang Rui was also determined not to help them choose good raw materials. Otherwise, if they won the gamble again, he would really have no way to explain himself.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the group looked disgruntled. What they had done was somewhat unreasonable. If someone could truly discern the quality of the rough jade, he could simply buy it and examine it himself. With Zhuang Rui's wealth, there were very few rough jade stones in this jade gambling market that he couldn't afford.

"Mr. Song, Mr. Zhuang is right. I feel that this kind of thing could suddenly appear at any time. I've been gambling on stones for over 20 years, and I've only had one or two such incidents."

Master Peng's words made Song Jun and Fatty Ma hesitate. They had money, but it didn't come from thin air. It would be a shame to throw it away on randomly guessed rough stones if they turned out to be worthless.

After overhearing their conversation, Wei Zijiang tugged at Lei Lei's clothes and whispered, "Cousin, you've been saving that little bit of money for years. Stop gambling. If you have too much money, give it to me. Gambling on stones is my dad and grandpa's business. What does it have to do with us?"

Within the family, Wei Zijiang and Lei Lei had an excellent relationship. After listening to their conversation, he felt that Zhuang Rui was not very reliable, and he didn't want his cousin's money to be thrown away for no reason.

"It's alright. I'll just have Zhuang Rui help me pick out a rough stone, the cheaper the better. Coming to Pingzhou and not gambling on stones is like coming for nothing, isn't it?"

Lei Lei was more generous than the two men. Besides, she didn't have much money to begin with. If she gambled it all away, she would only lose a few months' worth of money and wouldn't be too heartbroken. Moreover, after the wedding, Liu Chuan's money would be hers anyway.

"Old Ma, if it's not working out, let's look at the sealed bids first. We've only had a whole day, and I've only looked at a little over three hundred bids. If we don't look at them soon, this whole trip will be for nothing."

After much deliberation, Song Jun decided to abandon the idea of cutting the stone. People of their age and status, although they may have the desire to gamble on stones, have stronger self-control than the average person.

When Song Jun said this, it meant he would no longer trouble Zhuang Rui to help him examine the raw materials. Song Jun naturally knew more about Zhuang Rui's true skill level than others; he had only wanted to share in Zhuang Rui's good luck.

Upon hearing Song Jun's words, Fatty Ma said with a wry smile, "Boss Song, you spent over three hundred yuan on this. My consultant ended up in the hospital on his very first day. I've wasted my time here."

"Alright, since Brother Zhuang is in a difficult position, let's not press him. Helping someone choose rough stones is fine if the gamble pays off, but if it goes wrong, no one will be happy. Let's do this, let's split up and look at the sealed bids..."

Although Fatty Ma kept saying that he had made a wasted trip, there was not a trace of disappointment on his face. With his wealth, he came to gamble on stones to make money, but more than that, he wanted to experience the ups and downs of the process. If his stone gambling consultant hadn't been hospitalized, Fatty Ma probably would have already cut the stone.

"Fine, you got off easy, kid."

Song Jun glared at Zhuang Rui with displeasure, but he also knew that when selecting rough stones with hidden bids, only the appearance mattered. Since he didn't cut the stone, he didn't need to worry about whether there was any green inside. Therefore, Zhuang Rui's good luck was of little use.

"Hehe, I'm going to pick out a few rough stones for the sealed bids too. Brother Song, don't try to take them from me, we don't have your resources." Zhuang Rui chuckled as he and the others walked into the sealed bid area.

This open space was temporarily cleared, and some areas are still overgrown with weeds that haven't been cleared. The open space is quite large, and there are many security guards patrolling around it, as well as some armed police officers guarding it. These stones that ordinary people see as worthless are actually worth a fortune.

Next to each piece of rough jade is a corresponding number and a starting price. The rough jade is not arranged in numerical order, but mixed together, which is fairer to the rough jade dealers. The piece that Zhuang Rui is looking at now is number 3,980, a piece and a half of rough jade.

This piece of rough jade is quite large, weighing about three or four hundred kilograms. It looks like it was cut in half. A hint of green appeared on the cut surface, but the quality was only average. There were so many rough jade pieces here that Zhuang Rui didn't want to waste time. He directly used his spiritual energy to see through the rough jade, but it was all white.

Shaking his head, Zhuang Rui glanced at the bid next to him. It was actually 2.8 million. These rough jade dealers are really ruthless. They dare to offer such a price for such a small amount of green jade. It seems that the jade market is really booming right now.

Zhuang Rui actually knew too little about sealed bids. In the eyes of jade dealers, the bids in these sealed bids had no reference value at all. For good rough stones, these bids were simply worthless. If you wanted to win them, you would probably have to add at least one zero to the bid. As for those poorly performing stones, no matter how cheap they were, not many people would bid.

What we're looking at now are semi-rough rough stones, which are generally quite large. The cut or windowed areas are all placed face up, allowing people to see at a glance how good the rough stone is.

Zhuang Rui's way of examining raw jade was a little different from others. Although he also held a magnifying glass and pretended to bend down to examine it, he actually released his spiritual energy to observe it the moment he bent down. He would stand up and move on to the next piece of raw jade almost as soon as he squatted down and looked at it for a few seconds.

"Zhuang Rui, what can you possibly see from this?"

Lei Lei, who had been following Zhuang Rui, couldn't hold back any longer. Although she didn't know much about gambling on stones, she felt that Zhuang Rui was being too hasty and hadn't even looked at them carefully.

"Sister, those rough stones you just saw were from a new factory, not from an old mine. They were mediocre and the asking price was ridiculously high. There was no point in gambling on them at all."

Zhuang Rui stopped and explained to Lei Lei that most of the raw jadeite from the new factory was mined mechanically, which could be seen from the surface. The colors of these raw jadeite were generally not very pure, and the texture and water content were also poor. They could only be considered low-grade jadeite, so Zhuang Rui was naturally not interested.

After looking at more than thirty pieces of rough jade, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but feel disappointed. Although most of these rough jade pieces contained jadeite, they lacked color, had murky texture, and poor transparency. There wasn't even a single piece that reached the level of dry green jadeite.

"Hey, Zhuang Rui, come and see, the shape of this piece of rough jade is quite interesting."

Five or six meters ahead, Lei Lei's voice came. She couldn't distinguish wool fabrics, so she ran faster than Zhuang Rui. Only Zhou Rui, with the white lion, silently followed closely beside Zhuang Rui.