

Golden 221

Chapter 221 The Flag Rises, the Winds of Change Stir (Part 10)

"RMB 66.66 million is not only the top bid at this jade auction, but also the highest bid in the history of jade gambling in China. This bid also breaks the previous record of RMB 58.8 million for the highest single bet on jade gambling in China. Congratulations again to the winning bidder!

The host's inflammatory words reignited the excitement of the crowd. Witnessing the birth of a record would certainly give them more bragging rights in the industry.

"What I need to tell everyone is that the second bid for this D98 lot was 65 million RMB, which also broke the record for the highest price ever paid for a rough stone in China. It's just that this friend wasn't very lucky and lost to the friend with lot number 88."

The host's words sparked endless speculation among the audience about this D98 rough stone. Both bids were over 60 million, leaving everyone wondering what kind of stone it was.

Those who had paid attention to this rough stone began to show off, sharing their insights with others. The bidding site was now as noisy as a market.

"Brother Ma, you just want to cut a stone, right? I'll let you cut that rough stone I bought later." Seeing Fatty Ma's dejected expression, Zhuang Rui comforted him.

Among the crowd, the most disappointed was Fatty Ma. He had only gambled on this piece of rough jade, and someone else had won the bid. He couldn't help but feel disappointed. Moreover, their bids weren't even second to none, which made Fatty Ma doubt his own judgment.

"I don't understand. Damn it, go check who number 88 is. I wonder which bastard bid such a high price. We should have bid 80 million. Damn it, it's just money. Hey... Lao Song, we didn't even win the bid, why are you so happy?"

Fatty Ma was seething with hatred for the person who offered 66.66 million, cursing under his breath, when he saw Song Jun had already squeezed to the front four or five meters away, his face flushed and his fists waving. He couldn't help but pull him back. 🌟 ©9sHuX.com 🍷 🐼

"Why aren't you happy? We won the bid!"

Song Jun's words confused Fatty Ma, and even Zhuang Rui looked at Song Jun with a puzzled expression. The final bid they discussed was 63 million RMB, which was more than 3 million RMB lower than the winning bid. How could Song Jun say that he won the bid?

Seeing the puzzled looks on Zhuang Rui and Fatty Ma's faces, Song Jun revealed a hint of smugness and said with a smile, "I didn't tell you before, but I was afraid the bid was too low, so I added more than three million. This sixty-six million six hundred and sixty thousand is quite auspicious, isn't it?"

Song Jun's words delighted Fatty Ma. Forgetting that he wasn't very familiar with Song Jun, he stepped forward and punched Song Jun in the shoulder, saying, "Damn it, why didn't you give me a heads-up? I thought I'd come all this way for nothing..."

Song Jun was also very excited at this moment. He could understand Fatty Ma's feelings and didn't mind his actions. He explained, "I felt that 63 million wasn't very safe, so I added 3.66 million. The reason I didn't tell you was that if we still couldn't win the bid at this price, then there would be no point in talking about anything else. If we did win, we brothers would split the cost. Zhuang Rui, what do you think? Isn't I brilliant and powerful? Haha..."

After listening to Song Jun's words, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but give him a thumbs up. The host had just said that the second highest bid was 65 million. If Song Jun had continued to bid at the agreed price, he would have ended up with nothing.

"Brother Ma, what you just said might have offended you, but Brother Song and I didn't. Think about how you're going to apologize to us." Zhuang Rui looked at Fatty Ma with a wicked smile. In his panic, Fatty Ma had called the person who won the bid a bastard.

"Swearing? What swearing?" Song Jun had been charging ahead and hadn't heard what Fatty Ma said.

"Don't listen to Zhuang Rui's nonsense, it's not true. Alright, Lao Song, we don't need to split that three million, I, Lao Ma, will pay for it. Our share will still be the three of us. 🎲🎲 6 95hùx.cøM 2🎲"

Fatty Ma was genuinely happy at this moment. He had thought the raw materials were no longer his, but now that they were back, he became generous. Moreover, after this incident, his relationship with Song Jun became closer, and the title he had always used for Song Jun, "General Manager Song," was now "Old Song."

"Alright, so you're finally willing to spend money, you stingy old man from Shanxi? Then Brother Zhuang and I won't stand on ceremony. You'll transfer 12.66 million to my account later..."

Zhuang Rui and Fatty Ma have each allocated 12 million to the Song army. If calculated based on the winning bid of 66.66 million, Zhuang Rui would still need to pay 10.22 million. Now that Fatty Ma is willing to pay an extra 3 million, he only needs to transfer another 9 million to the Song army.

Song Jun spoke with great enthusiasm, the disappointment he had shown yesterday completely gone. Although his original plan to stockpile rough stones at this jade gambling conference failed due to reasons on the Myanmar side, winning this top-bid rough stone was still a worthwhile trip.

The bidding site was in chaos, with everyone speculating about the identity of the winning bidder. No one expected it to be Zhuang Rui and his two companions. It took more than ten minutes for the venue to quiet down and the bidding to continue.

"Bid number d485, 90,000, winning bid number 245..."

"Lot D486, failed to sell..."

As the bidding process progressed, more and more rough stones failed to sell. Although the news that Myanmar had banned the sale of rough stones to foreign buyers had a significant impact, these jade merchants would not waste their money on those rough stones that performed poorly and had no gambling potential.

When Zhuang Rui heard bid number d486, his ears perked up, because the rough stone that Lei Lei had bid on, numbered d490, was about to arrive.

Lot d487 failed to sell...

'Bid number d488, 120,000, winning bid number 544...'

"Lot D489, failed to sell..."

“Bid number d490, 180,000, winning bid number 522...”

Upon hearing the price of lot d490, Zhuang Rui breathed a sigh of relief. Although he hadn't won the bid himself, at least the prize hadn't gone to someone else.

After the news from Myanmar broke yesterday, although many people went to bid, they focused primarily on the high-performing rough stones, paying little attention to those with lower bids and mediocre performance.

Less than three minutes after the bidding for that piece of rough jade began, Zhuang Rui's phone rang. When he answered, Lei Lei's excited voice came through: "Zhuang Rui, where are you? I've won the bid!"

"Hehe, congratulations! Song and I partnered up to buy a rough stone and won the bid too. We'll be cutting it this afternoon." The venue was too noisy, so Zhuang Rui greeted Wei Ge and the others, then took his phone and walked out.

“Okay, can you help me cut open my rough stone too? If you have good luck, you’ll definitely be able to cut out a rough stone that’s even better than the one Da Chuan gambled in Nanjing.”

It was noisy on Lei Lei's side too, but the voices gradually became clearer. Zhuang Rui looked up and saw her walking outside with her phone in hand. The two saw each other at the same time and couldn't help but laugh.

"Forget it, old classmate. Your family has jade gambling consultants; let them help you cut it open..."

Zhuang Rui flatly refused Lei Lei's request. He didn't want to be in the limelight at all. However, Zhuang Rui was also a little curious. Lei Lei's blue jadeite was bought with her own private money. According to

the current market, the price would definitely increase several times after it was cut open. He wondered whether her grandfather would pay for it or keep it for himself.

"Fine, if you won't help, I'll cut it myself this afternoon. I have a feeling the jade inside this rough stone is no worse than Da Chuan's."

Lei Lei said confidently, "It turns out that this girl is not only competing with her grandfather, but also mentally challenging Liu Chuan. However, Zhuang Rui has seen this kind of premonition in many people in the past few days. Before cutting the stone, they all said they had a premonition that it would turn out to be green, but after cutting it, they all became dejected and never mentioned the word 'premonition' again."

"Hehe, Lei girl's here too. Come on, let's pay first, Brother Song will treat us to lunch..."

While the two were chatting, Song Jun and Fatty Ma also came out. The later bids were all of poor quality, so Song Jun didn't bid. So far, he had won seven bids, and with this giant rough stone, he was already very satisfied.

"You guys go ahead, I have to spend lunch with my grandpa. Zhuang Rui, you absolutely have to come when we're cutting the stone this afternoon, I'm not sure if I'll make it..." Despite Lei Lei's confident demeanor just now, she was still a little nervous.

After greeting Song Jun and the others, Lei Lei returned to the bidding site.

After Lei Lei left, Song Jun patted Zhuang Rui on the shoulder and said, "Brother Zhuang, how about we entrust you with cutting that rough stone this afternoon?"

"It doesn't matter who cuts it. It's such a big piece of rough jade. Just cut it in the middle. If there's no green in the middle, then we've lost money. No matter how we cut it, it won't matter. Brother Ma is paying more, so let Brother Ma make the first cut..."

This rough stone is the most expensive rough stone in China. Whether the gamble pays off or not, it will make him famous. Zhuang Rui doesn't want to be in the limelight; making money quietly is the best way.

"Okay, I'll cut it. Fatty's luck has never been bad..." Hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Fatty Ma couldn't stop smiling. This kind of opportunity was very rare.

Song Jun nodded in agreement. Just as Zhuang Rui had said, if such a rough stone weighing several tons couldn't be cut out of the green, it would be a complete waste. Ordinary stone-cutting techniques were useless here; one cut would immediately reveal whether it was real or fake.

However, the work of extracting the rough stones after cutting them open needs to be done by professionals. There's no need to worry about that. Master Peng, whom Song Jun invited, and the jade gambling consultant who was just discharged from the hospital and whom Fatty Ma invited, are both capable of handling this kind of work.

Chapter 222 The Flag Rises, the Winds of Change Stir (Part 11)

After the sealed-bid auction ended, the number of people at the jade gambling venue not only didn't decrease, but actually increased significantly compared to the previous days. For many, the jade gambling event was only just beginning.

In any jade auction, open bids are not given special attention. Most of the high-performing jade rough stones are classified as sealed bids. Whether it's outside capital wanting to hoard goods, jade merchants coming to buy jade raw materials, or professional jade gambling groups from the Chaoshan region, their target is sealed bids.

The news of Myanmar restricting the export of raw jadeite has stirred up a storm at this jade gambling event, with the record-breaking price of RMB 66.6 million for a single rough jadeite lot in the morning being the best proof of this.

Many jade merchants are now gathered at the jade gambling venue. Firstly, they are paying the remaining amount to receive the raw jade. Secondly, after the sealed bid, there will inevitably be a stone-cutting conference, and the time for them to purchase raw jade has arrived. After all, a large number of people gamble on stones with the purpose of cutting and selling them. These jade merchants are the largest consumer group.

At noon, Song Jun treated everyone to a meal at a famous seafood restaurant in Guangzhou. The end of the sealed bid also meant that Zhuang Rui's trip to Guangzhou was coming to an end. Since he didn't need to personally handle the stone cutting in the afternoon, he simply ordered a few bottles of Wuliangye liquor and drank with Song Jun, Wei Ge, and the others.

"Zhuang Rui, could you please talk to the guy selling rough stones and ask if I could borrow his stone-cutting tools?"

After they had eaten and drunk their fill, Zhuang Rui and Song Jun were already quite tipsy. Fortunately, Fatty Ma and Lao Si hadn't been drinking, which meant they had two extra drivers. Just as they arrived at the jade gambling venue, Zhuang Rui received a call from Lei Lei.

"Which one sells wool fabric?" Zhuang Rui was still a little dizzy at this moment.

"Isn't that the guy surnamed Yang? The one you and Da Chuan bought wool from in Nanjing?" Lei Lei's voice sounded anxious on the phone.

"Oh, it's Yang Hao. Just go find him and say he's my friend. He'll lend it to you. I'm going over now..." Hearing that Lei Lei wanted to cut the stone, Zhuang Rui sobered up a bit.

"Brother Song, my classmate wants to have a stone cut, are you guys going to come and take a look?" After hanging up the phone, Zhuang Rui asked Song Jun and Fatty Ma.

"No, Lao Song and I will go get the raw materials first. Seeing how drunk he is, we don't want to make a mistake later."

Watching others cut stones may be interesting, but nothing beats the thrill of cutting them yourself. Fatty Ma is just waiting to receive his giant rough stone so he can personally take the plunge and cut it.

Inside the venue, there were stone-cutting and polishing tools provided free of charge by the organizers. Of course, there was only one set. The Lei family had a good harvest this time, so they wanted to cut open a few rough stones that were not performing well first, and take the rest back to Hong Kong. However, there was already a long queue next to the stone-cutting machine provided by the organizers. Only then did Lei Lei remember Zhuang Rui.

The Lei family also suffered a setback at the Myanmar jade auction a few months ago. If Liu Chuan hadn't happened to find a piece of icy jadeite rough in Nanjing, the Lei family's jewelry company would

probably have run out of mid-to-high-end jadeite ornaments. Originally, Qin Xuanbing also intended to buy that rough, but in the end, she gave it to Lei Lei.

The fact that Liu Chuan and Lei Lei's marriage was able to pass Lei Lei's maternal grandfather's approval so smoothly was also related to this matter.

At this Pingzhou Jadeite Gambling Conference, the Lei Lei family raised more than 40 million yuan to purchase some raw materials to take back to Hong Kong. Moreover, they have certain connections in Myanmar and learned about the situation there yesterday. They promptly changed their bids for the rough stones and won thirteen decent pieces, making the trip worthwhile.

Zhuang Rui first went with Song Jun and others to the bank's branch office and transferred nine million to Song Jun. Then, he took Wei Ge and Lao Si and slowly walked towards Yang Hao's stall number eighty-three.

When Zhuang Rui was still twenty or thirty meters away from Yang Hao's stall, he saw that a crowd had already gathered there, and they must have already started cutting stones.

Today, the sealed-bid auction was underway, and stone cutting was happening almost everywhere, so there weren't many people gathered here. Zhuang Rui and his group easily squeezed in, and as soon as they entered the circle, they heard the people around them sigh in unison.

"It's collapsed?"

Zhuang Rui didn't look at the rough stone fixed on the stone-cutting machine first. Instead, he looked at the few people standing next to the machine. Sure enough, the faces of these people were not very good. Wei Zijiang had a mournful face and his eyes were fixed on the rough stone on the stone-cutting machine.

Seeing Zhuang Rui enter, Lei Lei simply nodded but did not go over. The rough jade she had just cut had cost 4.8 million yuan to bid on. Although it turned out green when cut in the middle, it was only a low-quality bean-type jadeite, a low-grade rough jadeite, worth at most a few hundred thousand yuan. It could be said that she had lost everything on this rough jadeite.

"Let's take off a piece..."

Lei Lei's grandfather took a deep breath, straightened his back, and instructed his son that among these people, he was the most composed. Back then, he had smuggled himself from the mainland to Hong Kong alone and built this family business over decades of trials and tribulations. A loss of a few million dollars could not dampen his spirit.

This time, Lei Lei's grandfather planned to first unravel nine of the thirteen winning rough stones, but unexpectedly, he failed to unravel the most expensive one, which gave Lei Lei and the others a bad feeling.

The second piece of rough jade weighed about 70 or 80 kilograms. It also had a window cut into it, but the window wasn't very good. Although it revealed green color and the water content was quite good, reaching the level of icy jade, there was also a crack along with the green.

It seems this rough stone is flawed and has a crack. There's no need to polish it anymore; just cut directly at the crack. Whether it has any material or not, one cut is all it takes.

"Cut it from the crack?"

The person who cut the stone was Lei Lei's uncle. He was born after Lei Lei's maternal grandfather went to Hong Kong. He was only in his forties and in his prime. After asking his father, he used the grinding wheel in his hand to cut into the crack of the rough stone.

"It went up, then turned green, oh well, what a pity."

Those with sharp eyes in the crowd had already spotted the cut surface. There was green inside, but the crack was quite deep, which had damaged the jadeite inside. The jadeite that could have been clustered together was now scattered, only enough to make some small pendants.

It's important to know that jadeite jewelry is also categorized. Bangles are usually the most expensive. Not to mention glass-type full green or blood jade bangles, even bangles made of high-ice-type bright green or floating flower jadeite, as long as the texture and color are good, can generally sell for more

than 500,000 to 600,000 RMB. However, a pendant of the same material will only cost around 100,000 to 200,000 RMB at most. The difference between the two is too great.

"Thankfully, we didn't lose money. Let's continue..."

Lei Lei's grandfather remained expressionless. He had bought the rough stone for 680,000 yuan. Although the jade inside couldn't be used to make bracelets, he could still extract two or three kilograms of jade to carve into finished products for sale. He shouldn't lose money.

"Lei Lei, where's your piece of raw jade?"

Zhuang Rui moved behind Lei Lei and asked in a low voice. He noticed that the rough stone containing the high-grade icy jadeite with floating flowers was not on the ground.

"It stinks! What are you men drinking for lunch? Don't set a bad example for Dachuan in the future." Lei Lei noticed the smell of alcohol in Zhuang Rui's mouth and took a few steps forward.

“我带坏他？算了吧，那小子早上都喝白的，更别提中午了。”庄睿被雷蕾说得有些哭笑不得，刘川那老子爱喝酒，刘川打小没少因为偷酒喝而挨揍。

"You've come at the right time. Help me get the raw materials. I haven't had a chance to pay the balance yet." Although there were trolleys for moving raw materials at the venue, Lei Lei naturally wanted to grab Zhuang Rui, who was readily available as a helper.

After Zhuang Rui accompanied Lei Lei to pay the remaining balance and pushed the fifty or sixty-pound rough stone back to Yang Hao's stall, they found three more rough stones cut in half on the ground. Lei Lei's uncle and Wei Zijiang's expressions also became increasingly grim. Without a doubt, three rough stones had been cut in half in the time they left.

The nine rough stones are worth more than 20 million yuan in total. Five of them have already been cut open, and only one can barely guarantee the minimum cost. This is a double blow to Lei's Jewelry, which is already in a bad situation. Even Lei Lei's grandfather, who had been very calm, turned pale.

"Grandpa, let me cut it first. This is the raw material I bought myself." Lei Lei walked to her grandfather's side and took the old man's arm.

"Leilei, stop fooling around. Wait until I'm done solving it before you solve it."

Before Lei Lei's maternal grandfather could speak, her uncle, with a displeased expression, cut several pieces of raw jade in succession. Although he wasn't exactly furious, he certainly didn't have a pleasant look on his face.

"Maybe I can get a good deal, and then you might want to buy it, but I might not sell it." Lei Lei wasn't afraid of her uncle. She shook her grandfather's arm, looking like she wouldn't give up until he agreed.

Lei Lei's maternal grandfather doted on her and said, "Let Lei Lei try first. If you can win the bet, what's wrong with me spending money to buy it?"

"Zhuang Rui, come help me, help me carry this up..." Lei Lei's words made Zhuang Rui smile wryly. He hadn't even taken care of the stones he had picked up himself, but here he was being asked to be a helper.

"Zhuang Rui, how do I cut this?"

After the raw stone was moved onto the stone cutting machine, Lei Lei looked at Zhuang Rui with a worried expression.

"If there's a weakness, just cut into the rock, why even ask?" Zhuang Rui rolled his eyes and replied irritably.

"No, I mean where to cut from."

Zhuang Rui thought about it for a moment and realized that made sense. The jade inside this rough stone wasn't very big. If it was cut properly, it could yield three pairs of bracelets. But if it wasn't cut correctly, its value would plummet.

"Cut it from here, why bother with all that fancy stuff on this broken stone?"

Zhuang Rui picked up a piece of chalk, looked at the crowd outside, and casually drew a line on the piece of wool with his right hand. His nonchalant manner made Lei Lei stomp her feet in anger.

Chapter 223 The Flag Rises, the Winds of Change Stir (12)

"Zhuang Rui, can't you be serious for once?"

Seeing that Zhuang Rui hadn't even looked at the stone before drawing a line, Lei Lei instinctively assumed that he was just going through the motions. Not only her, but most of the onlookers thought the same.

"Old classmate, you're just doing this for fun. You can't just cut it cleanly and neatly in one go. Don't you see there are still several pieces of raw jade waiting to be cut?"

Zhuang Rui's words made Lei Lei's eyes widen. Unfortunately, Liu Chuan wasn't there, and no one was there to support her. She could only angrily lift the handle of the stone cutter and try to match the line Zhuang Rui had drawn.

"Leilei, let your uncle cut it."

Lei Lei's uncle watched her gesturing for a long time without being able to cut, so he came over, patted Lei Lei on the shoulder, and gestured for him to cut it himself.

"No, I'll do it myself."

Lei Lei stubbornly shook her head, then exerted force downwards with both hands. The rapidly spinning gears cut deeply into the stone along the line drawn by Zhuang Rui, and the "crunching" sound of the gears and the rough stone was incessant.

This piece of rough stone weighs fifty or sixty pounds and is quite large. As the gears went deeper, Lei Lei's forehead was covered with beads of sweat, and her bangs were soaked with sweat. Cutting stone is also a physically demanding job. Lei Lei's usually steady hands were now trembling slightly.

With a soft "snap," the piece of raw jade was finally cut in half. Lei Lei didn't even bother to wipe her eyes, which were almost completely covered by sweat. She quickly picked up the half of the raw jade that had fallen to the ground and looked at the cut.

"Where's the jade?"

The white patch at the cut immediately disappointed Lei Lei, but she didn't notice that everyone's eyes were fixed on the cut of the half-piece of rough stone on the stone cutting machine.

"It's rising...it's gone up..."

Lei Lei's uncle, who was closest to the stone-cutting machine, was now stammering. He couldn't believe that his niece's casually bid piece of rough stone, with the young man simply drawing a line, had actually yielded jade. He was bewildered; was he just incredibly unlucky, or was his niece just incredibly lucky?

"Uncle, are you laughing at me too? What kind of increase is it if it's not even green? Don't think I don't know anything." Lei Lei was still struggling with the other half of the rough stone on the ground.

"Cousin, I'm not talking about what's in your hand. Look over here! Oh my god, are you trying to kill me?"

Everyone was speechless at Lei Lei's somewhat careless behavior. It was Wei Zijiang who reminded her, but unexpectedly, after hearing this, Lei Lei threw the stone in her hand, which, by sheer coincidence, hit Wei Zijiang's foot, causing him to start doing a one-legged dance in pain.

"The price has gone up! It's really gone up! This is my rough jade, I bought it, everyone please make way..."

Lei Lei pushed through the crowd who were examining the rough stone, rushed in, and, ignoring the dust and stone chips on it, hugged it tightly and refused to let go.

"I know it's yours, you crazy girl. Move aside and let your grandpa see it. I won't take it for free. I'll pay for it myself."

Lei Lei's maternal grandfather, Old Master Wei, was also at his wits' end with his money-grubbing granddaughter. He had to coax and trick her into giving up the raw materials.

"This...this luck is just too good!"

Even though Old Master Wei had remained calm and composed since the stone was being cut, he was still dumbfounded when he saw Lei Lei's cut. It wasn't because the jade in the rough stone was of good quality, but because he was amazed by the skill in cutting the stone. If Lei Lei hadn't cut it herself, he would have thought that the cut was made by a master stone gambler.

Looking at the cut surface of this rough stone, you can see that the cut was just right. If it were any deeper, it would damage the jadeite; if it were any shallower, the color would be invisible. It's as if it was cut with X-ray vision glasses.

"Where's that young man? He's a true god..."

Grandpa Wei turned to look for Zhuang Rui, but he was nowhere to be seen. Zhuang Rui was currently sitting in the shed drinking tea with Yang Hao; the midday drinking had left him a little tipsy.

"I'm the better one, okay? Zhuang Rui just drew randomly, it was me who cut it well!" Lei Lei was unhappy when she heard her grandfather's words.

"That's true. Our Leilei is really something. Come on, move aside so your uncle can take this piece of jade out."

Grandpa Wei recalled the situation just now, and it was indeed the case. The young man hadn't really looked at the rough stone much; it must have been a lucky coincidence.

However, Old Master Wei never expected that Zhuang Rui had already thoroughly understood this rough stone when they were in the sealed bidding area, and he naturally knew where to start cutting it.

The jadeite on the cut surface only revealed a little color. Under the sunlight, it showed a sky-blue luster and was about the size of a thumbnail. Although it had been rinsed with water, it could only be discerned that the texture and water content were good. As for the rest, it was still impossible to see. Therefore, Grandpa Wei called Lei Lei aside and let his son go forward to cut the stone.

The ups and downs of gambling on rough stones all hinge on that one cut. But once the green is revealed, the work of cutting out the jade is a real art. You have to slowly polish away the surrounding stones, and Lei Lei is not capable of such delicate work.

With the grinding wheel making a "ch-ch" sound, gravel kept falling to the ground, and the area of jade exposed gradually increased. Now, jade the size of a baby's palm has been revealed, its deep blue color like the sky, leaving the onlookers in awe.

"Not bad, Dad (Cantonese for father), it's icy jadeite, and very pure, it's high-grade icy jadeite, and it's also a rare blue-water jadeite, Lei girl, you're really something..." Lei Lei's uncle's voice was full of joy.

High-quality icy jadeite, even colorless jadeite, is quite valuable. If it has even a little color, its value increases a hundredfold. This piece of blue-water jadeite has a uniform color, although it is slightly pale, it is still very precious.

Judging from the current performance of this blue jadeite, it is already much better than the semi-rough piece they spent more than 10 million yuan to buy. Moreover, that piece of rough jadeite only revealed green after being polished, and its actual performance will only be known after it is cut open. Whether it will be a good or bad investment is still uncertain.

"Young lady, are you selling this rough jade? I'll offer three million for it, what do you think?"

"Young lady, I'll offer you 3.5 million, how about you sell it to me?"

"This is blue jadeite, and the texture is quite good. I'll offer 4.8 million, which is quite a price. Who knows how big the jadeite inside is?"

After seeing the jadeite, the onlookers, like sharks smelling blood, swarmed around and started bidding. Stimulated by news from Myanmar, the price of the jadeite soared. The final offer of 4.8 million was indeed quite high for a rough piece that was still considered a gamble.

"We're not selling it; it's for our own use at home."

Lei Lei decisively rejected everyone's offers, much to the delight of her uncle. Lei Lei had originally bid for this rough jade privately, and if she wanted to sell it, her family had no objections.

Upon hearing that the rough stone was to be cut for personal use, everyone dispersed. Today, the venue was filled with people cutting and preparing stones. Their purpose in coming here was to collect jadeite raw materials, not to watch others cut and prepare stones. Before long, only Lei Lei and a few others remained in front of the stone-cutting machine.

The work of cutting the stone is very delicate, because if you are not careful, you will damage the jade inside the rough stone. Uncle Lei Lei worked for more than an hour before he finally cut out this piece of blue water jade. The jade was so big that you had to spread your five fingers to hold it, and there were some white crystalline substances mixed in with the edge of the jade.

"It weighs seven or eight pounds, and I estimate that four pairs of bracelets can be made from it. Leilei, your rough stone has really increased in value."

The four icy blue jadeite bracelets are worth more than five million each. Moreover, the hollowed-out material can be used to make many ornaments. The ones bought for 180,000 are definitely a huge increase in value.

"Girl, your grandfather has bought this piece of jade. It will be included in your dowry. By the way, go and thank your classmate. If it weren't for the line he drew for you, the value of this jade would probably have plummeted."

When Grandpa Wei saw this piece of jade, he was very happy. At present, hundreds of jade merchants in the market are facing the situation that even if they have money, they cannot buy good materials. This bracelet made of blue water jadeite can be considered a treasure of the store, even if it is not perfect.

"By the way, where's Zhuang Rui?"

Upon hearing her grandfather's words, Lei Lei remembered her old classmate. She ran to the shed and found only Yang Hao and his brother inside. After asking them, she learned that Zhuang Rui had left forty minutes earlier.

"Zhuang Rui, where are you? The rough stone I cut has increased in value significantly, it's no worse than the one Da Chuan had in Nanjing."

Lei Lei took out her phone and called Zhuang Rui. Of course, sharing the good news was only one aspect; she also wanted to show off a bit.

"Uh, congratulations! You'll have to show me that rough stone later. I'm at the stone-cutting machine provided by the organizers now. Brother Song and the others are getting ready to cut the stone. This is today's top lot! Do you want to come over?"

The noise from Zhuang Rui's side was a bit loud, but Lei Lei heard the words "top bidder" clearly.

"Of course we need it. Don't rush to solve it, I'll be there soon."

Lei Lei wasn't the only one curious about what was inside the more than 60 million yuan worth of rough stones. After hearing Lei Lei's words, Grandpa Wei and the others immediately decided not to cut the stones for the time being, and instead stored the remaining rough stones before rushing to the stone-cutting area of the conference.

Yang Hao also went along, but the glorious yet arduous task of inspecting the raw materials stall was naturally left to his cousin Yang Jun, whose fists were smaller than his own.

At this time, the stone-cutting area of the conference was packed with people, with seven or eight hundred people surrounding it. If it weren't for the armed police and security guards maintaining order in the innermost circle, the stone-cutting would not have been able to proceed at all.

"Brother Zhuang, why am I a little nervous?"

Fatty Ma tightened his belt by one buckle, looked at the enormous wool fabric in front of him, and said to Zhuang Rui with a bitter expression.

Chapter 224 The Chaotic Stone-Cutting Scene

Lei Lei, though she prides herself on being a beauty and was dressed exceptionally provocatively today—a tight white t-shirt paired with super-short denim shorts that perfectly showcased her stunning figure—was wearing a revealing outfit.

However, in this setting, the enormous piece of wool in the middle of the crowd was clearly more attractive than Lei Lei. After squeezing through the crowd for a long time and being pushed out countless times, Lei Lei finally gave up.

Zhuang Rui didn't have time to care whether Miss Lei had arrived. He was encouraging Fatty Ma, because the originally confident old man had suddenly backed down at the last minute and insisted that Zhuang Rui take the first step. Zhuang Rui had already decided to keep a low profile and make his fortune quietly, so he naturally didn't want to stand out.

"Brother Ma, be a man! Yanzi is watching. Don't embarrass yourself."

Zhuang Rui had spent half a day trying to reason with him, but nothing worked, so now he even resorted to provocation.

"Get out of here. Whether your Brother Ma is a man or not, Yanzi knows it all too well. Do you need to tell me?"

Fatty Ma swelled up his big belly and patted it hard twice, making Yanzi, who was standing next to him, blush with embarrassment.

"Alright, if you're not going to cut me, I will. If you're going to be so slow, don't ever say you know me again..."

Song Jun and the others were getting impatient; they were standing under the blazing sun, and their anger was rising.

"No, let me do it..."

Feeling somewhat embarrassed by Song Jun's words, Fatty Ma pulled his trousers up high and walked to the front of the woolen fabric.

This enormous piece of raw jade was pushed over by a bulldozer. Directly in front of the raw jade, there is a stone platform about one meter high. Although it is not as high as the raw jade itself, people can stand on it and operate the huge stone-cutting machine above the raw jade.

At the stone-cutting area provided by the event, there were specialized machines for these extra-large rough stones. Instead of fixing them to the machine, they could be placed directly on the ground. A huge, high-quality steel gear suspended above the stone; all Ma Pangzi had to do was grab the handle and pull downwards.

"Hey bro, why am I feeling dizzy standing up here? Do I have a fear of heights?"

Fatty Ma climbed onto the small platform, but then it malfunctioned again. He developed a fear of heights from being less than a meter high. Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated, wishing he could kick him down. It seemed like just the day before yesterday, Old Ma was boasting to himself about the duplex apartment he bought on the 18th floor in Taiyuan.

"Hey fat guy, it's okay, I'll catch you if you fall."

"I think you've wasted those two hundred-plus pounds of weight. If you don't understand, get down here right now."

The surrounding crowd was getting impatient and began to criticize him. Judging from their expressions, if Fatty Ma didn't cut the stone soon, they might drag him down and beat him up. It's no wonder the crowd was so impatient; in this hot weather, they just wanted to get it cut out and find a cool place with air conditioning.

Normally, given Ma Pangzi's experience, he shouldn't be this nervous. However, this is his first time gambling on stones, and even more so, his first time cutting a stone. Whether this cut will result in over 60 million RMB going down the drain or getting a great deal is entirely in his hands. Therefore, Ma Pangzi can't help but feel a little anxious.

This is also why Song Jun is unwilling to cut the stone. Last year, he ruined a rough stone worth more than 20 million yuan, which made him feel bad for a long time. This year, he is unwilling to do anything about this top-bid stone himself.

"You bastard, you die and your bird faces upwards, what am I afraid of, Fatty?"

Spurred on by what was happening below, Fatty Ma cursed loudly in Shanxi dialect, turned on the power to the stone cutter, gripped the handle with both hands, and pressed down hard.

The steel grinding wheel, nearly a meter in diameter, spun rapidly. Upon contact with the stone, it immediately emitted an unpleasant "sizzling" sound, and tiny fragments of stone flew out, occasionally hitting Fatty Ma's hands and face.

At this moment, Fatty Ma perked up. Although his face twitched occasionally from being hit by stone chips, his hands remained steady, and the huge gear gradually sank into the stone.

"Sizzle... crackle..."

Seeing that half of the gear had been cut in, Fatty Ma quickly lifted the handle and pulled the gear out of the stone. The rough stone was too big to be cut in one go.

Just as Fatty Ma turned off the power to the stone-cutting machine, several jade merchants who were acquainted with Song Jun gathered around. Some brought water, some took brushes, and began to wash the cut area. Some were even impatient and shone flashlights inside, trying to find some clues so they could quote prices later.

"Old Zhao, you have sharp eyes, did you see anything?" The man cleaning the raw materials felt he had been cheated and asked the man who was shining a flashlight inside.

"I can't see it, it's too deep, come and take a look..."

The gears of the stone cutter are very thin, just a slit, so you can hardly see anything during the day. But you can see something when there is no light.

"Everyone, please step aside. Once this rough stone is cut open, everyone will understand."

Song Jun stepped forward. Although he was more anxious than anyone else, he remained calm and urged the others to make way so that the machine could be used to turn the rough stone over and continue cutting it.

"Mr. Song, you're really generous! If this rough stone were in the middle, wouldn't you have suffered a huge loss if you cut it like that?"

A jade merchant had some doubts about this one-cut method. For such a huge piece of rough jade, it is best to cut a window along the four sides, polish out the green color, and then slowly cut the stone. It is not very common to cut directly from the middle like Fatty Ma did.

In fact, Master Peng, Song Jun's jade gambling consultant, also made such a suggestion, but Zhuang Rui rejected it. If that method were followed, it would indeed be possible to extract the jade from the rough stone very completely, but such a rough stone weighing three to five tons would probably take several days to cut, and Zhuang Rui did not have the patience to wait that long.

Returning to the point, Zhuang Rui knew very well the situation inside this enormous rough stone. Unlike the one Lei Lei cut, where even a slight deviation would affect its price, this piece of jadeite could yield hundreds of kilograms of icy jadeite with floating flowers. Losing a little bit wasn't a big deal for Zhuang Rui.

Once everyone had made room, the bulldozer drove in and flipped the rough stone over. Old Ma stood on it and got busy again. This time, he was very skilled and quickly cut more than half a meter deep into one half. But that wasn't the end of it. He had to turn it over again and cut it again. He flipped it over and over again four times before he finally split the giant rough stone in half.

When people encounter a crisis or are in a frenzy, their potential is indeed limitless. The group of jade merchants did not even use a bulldozer; they rushed forward and flipped the two halves of the rough jade over. Instantly, the crystal-clear jade dazzled everyone in the room under the sunlight.

"My God..."

"My God..."

"Oh, Allah..."

"The Three Pure Ones, the Buddha..."

A huge gasp of amazement erupted in the room. Hearing this, Zhuang Rui realized that there were actually so many believers of various religions in China.

However, most of the people in the venue were making sounds from their throats that they didn't even know themselves, purely instinctive groans, which were of course completely different from the groans made when doing certain sports.

"It's gone up! It's gone up a lot! The top-selling bid has gone up a lot!!!"

It's unclear who shouted this, but the entire venue erupted in excitement. People at the back pushed forward, while those at the front tried to break through the armed police and security guards to get a closer look. The scene instantly became chaotic, with dozens of armed police and security guards bobbing up and down like small boats on a vast ocean under the impact of the crowd.

Song Jun and Zhuang Rui were also getting anxious. Although the rough stone was large and they weren't worried about it being stolen, they couldn't stop some people from chipping off a piece or two. Just when things were getting tense, a crisp gunshot rang out, and the crowded people quieted down.

"Who fired the shot? Who gave you orders to fire without them?"

Upon hearing the gunshot, the armed police lieutenant leading the team became anxious. Although only the sound of gunfire could maintain order in the current situation, if a stray bullet were to injure someone, his military uniform would be effectively worn out.

"Report, Captain, we didn't fire the shots..."

The soldiers were also confused; their bullets weren't in the magazines at all, but in another magazine placed in a bullet pouch.

"Comrade of the Armed Police, it was me, I fired the shot."

Just as the lieutenant was preparing to conduct a search, a middle-aged man with a wig in his hand and a receding hairline stepped forward. Zhuang Rui recognized this man; he was a junior leader in the organizing committee, specifically in charge of the opening ceremony of the conference, and was now assigned to oversee the stone-cutting machine.

The gun in his hand brought a sigh of relief to the still-shaken crowd, who burst into laughter. It turned out to be a starting pistol. Presumably, this comrade had been pushed so hard that he pulled out the starting pistol used in the opening ceremony and fired it into the air.

"Everyone, please step back and cooperate. Do not cross this warning line..."

With this buffer, the armed police and security guards quickly sprang into action, setting up a cordon of about 20 to 30 square meters in the center. Only jade merchants who had been granted permission by Song Jun and others were allowed to enter and view the raw jade.

Although Song Jun wasn't in the jade business, he had been in contact with several big names in the industry. As he called out the names, more than ten jade merchants entered the circle, including Boss Han.

"Zhuang Rui, let us in..." Lei Lei's voice came from the crowd.

Zhuang Rui looked in the direction of the sound and was startled. Lei Lei was in a terrible state. Not only was her hair disheveled, but there was also a dark handprint on her white t-shirt. If Liu Chuan saw this, he would definitely bring out the assault rifles of the armed police and fire a burst of bullets at the crowd.

Chapter 225 The Sky-High Bidding King (Part 1)

News of the winning bid spread like wildfire, lingering even within the jade gambling venue. From raw jade merchants to jade dealers, everyone flocked to the stone-cutting area, which was already packed with people. However, this didn't stop the crowd from listening to the excitement from a distance.

"Have you heard? What they extracted from it was imperial green jade of the glassy variety, several hundred kilograms of it..."

"You're talking nonsense. Several hundred kilograms of imperial jadeite of the glassy type would fetch billions..."

"I heard it's a glass-type jadeite, but with purple eyes, no less beautiful than imperial green jadeite..."

"It's not as sinister as you guys say. Just now, it was rumored to be an icy type of jade with floating flowers..." The person who said this was a knowledgeable person.

"Come on, if it were just ice-type jade, would so many people be gathered around?"

The man's words sparked a rebuttal. Such incidents are constantly occurring on the periphery of the circle, with the core of the debate revolving around the quality and quantity of the record-breaking auction piece.

Too far away to witness the spectacle, one can only listen. News from within the circle is constantly spreading outwards. These people, lacking the resources to get a share of the raw materials, find it enjoyable to gather here and share their insights.

Summer is hot, and people wear less clothing. Many of the merchants who come to the jade gambling convention bring female companions, who are all young and beautiful. So, there are also some who try to take advantage of the situation.

The man in the crowd was like that. He had already groped several girls in the chaos, and now he had his eye on another target, a girl standing not far in front of him. She had a small braid, a long neck, was tall, had a slender waist, and was wearing tight jeans. Her round buttocks seemed about to burst out of the jeans.

This bespectacled, seemingly refined middle-aged man squeezed himself behind his target, looking straight ahead, while his right hand quietly rested on the target's buttocks, stroking them incessantly, inwardly marveling at the amazing feel of the touch.

"Smack!"

A crisp sound came from the middle-aged man's face. The person who had been touched turned around and slapped him. The force was so great that the glasses on the refined middle-aged man's face flew off. The severely nearsighted middle-aged man fumbled in his bag and took out a spare pair of glasses before he could see the face of the person in front of him.

"Damn it, you pervert, what are you doing touching me like that?"

A young man with thick eyebrows, big eyes, and several pimples on his face was looking at the middle-aged man with an angry expression, waving his fist as if he wanted to teach the middle-aged man a lesson.

The middle-aged man knew he was in the wrong and could only blame himself for being blind and unable to distinguish between men and women. He lowered his head and slipped out of the crowd, which made the onlookers burst into laughter.

This was just a minor incident in the crowd. In the middle of the circle, while jade merchants, including Lei Lei's maternal grandfather, were examining the rough stone, Zhuang Rui was urgently discussing with Song Jun and Fatty Ma how to sell it.

"Hey brothers, these raw stones have already been cut open, why don't we just pack them up and sell them?"

This was Zhuang Rui's suggestion. Liu Chuan had been calling him these past few days, urging him to go back quickly. Moreover, he was thinking of going to Zhonghai first to hand over the Ru kiln porcelain brush washer to Uncle De for repair. He really didn't want to waste any more time in Pingzhou.

In Zhuang Rui's opinion, the jadeite revealed from the two cut surfaces was enough to tempt these jade merchants.

Upon hearing this, both Fatty Ma and Song Jun shook their heads. They disagreed with Zhuang Rui's statement. Although the rough stone had been cut open, it was still considered a semi-gambling material. No one could say for sure how much jadeite could be extracted from the two halves. If they wanted to maximize their profits, they would have to take another gamble.

"Brother, selling it like this now, the price will probably only be around 80 or 90 million. Since we've already gambled, why don't we cut all the jadeite open and then divide it into several lots for auction? That would be more cost-effective.

Fatty Ma was eager to try again. The huge increase in value from cutting the stone earlier gave him a sense of satisfaction that he couldn't get even when riding on Swallow's back. Now he wanted to experience it again.

"Old Ma is right. The price of raw jadeite has skyrocketed. It would be more profitable for us to cut it into finished pieces and sell them. I just asked Master Peng, and judging from these two cut surfaces, we should be able to get over a hundred kilograms of jadeite." Song Jun also agreed to take another gamble.

After hearing what the two were saying, Zhuang Rui understood. If they didn't continue to cut the stones, these two rough stones would still be considered gambling stones, which would be risky and the price would naturally be lower. He had been a bit presumptuous. He knew the amount of jadeite inside the rough stones, but that didn't mean the jade merchants who wanted to buy them knew it too.

"Okay, then let's unscrew the sale."

Zhuang Rui has no grudge against money, so it's naturally good to earn more.

"Mr. Song, Han's Jewelry will take this half of the rough stone on the left for 48 million. What do you think?"

Just after Zhuang Rui and his group made their decision, the jade merchants who came to inspect the rough stones gathered around. Boss Han called out from a distance, as if afraid that if he was too late, the rough stones would be snatched up by someone else.

"Boss Han, this is such a big piece of raw jade, are you sure you can handle it all? You can't just hog it all..."

"Exactly, forty-eight million is too cheap. Mr. Song, I'll offer fifty million..."

Boss Han's words aroused public outrage and criticism. However, the two prices he shouted were somewhat unexpected for Zhuang Rui and others. Half a piece of rough jade was priced at 50 million, which was much higher than they expected. Moreover, judging from the situation, the price could be raised even more.

"So, are we still going to solve it or not?"

Before everyone else arrived, Song Jun whispered to Zhuang Rui and Fatty Ma, "Judging from this, even if we don't unravel it, the two rough stones should still fetch over 100 million."

"untie!"

This time, Zhuang Rui became the one who insisted on cutting the stone. He knew very well the jadeite content in the rough stone. He had extracted hundreds of kilograms of icy jadeite with floating flowers from just half a piece, and its value should be far more than fifty million.

"Okay, then let's untie the sales."

Song Jun nodded, made up his mind, and walked towards the jade merchants who had gathered around him.

"Gentlemen, these two rough stones are a bit too big. I'm afraid that if one of you buys them, the others won't be happy. I think you should wait a while, and we'll take the jade out of these rough stones and divide them into several pieces so that no one will be left out. What do you think of this?"

Song Jun's words drew the attention of the twenty or so jade merchants who were still arguing. However, some of them nodded in agreement with Song Jun's opinion, while others shook their heads in disagreement.

The reason for shaking their heads is simple: judging from the cut surface of this rough stone, there must be a lot of jade inside. If it were bought as a semi-rough stone, the price would naturally be much cheaper. However, after it is cut into finished pieces, the price will be based on the market price. Given the current rise in the price of rough stones, the Song army will definitely rip them off.

Those who nodded in agreement also had their own ideas. Some of them had relatively small companies, and it was beyond their means to spend tens or hundreds of millions of yuan to compete for half a piece of rough jade. However, with the current shortage of jadeite, they wanted to get a share of the pie, so they could only hope that after the rough jade was cut into several pieces, they could compete for one of them.

The owner of the raw materials was Song Jun. Regardless of what these people were thinking, in the end they could only watch with their own thoughts as Master Peng and another person began to break down the raw materials.

Fatty Ma wanted to go up and help, but Zhuang Rui stopped him. The stone cutting earlier was out of necessity, but now cutting along the edge of the green stone is a very delicate task that requires a lot of skill and stability from the stone cutter.

If someone were to make a few more large cuts like Fatty Ma, who knows how much jade material would be wasted? That would just be doing more harm than good.

These two halves of the rough stone are really too big. Master Peng and the jade gambling consultant brought by Fatty Ma are working together to cut one piece of rough stone, but they are very slow. At this rate, it will probably be difficult to cut out even half of the rough stone by nightfall.

"Storing this thing will be a problem after dark," Zhuang Rui thought anxiously. He spotted Yang Hao standing with Lei Lei's grandfather and the others and went up to him, saying, "Brother Yang, how about lending a hand?"

"Brother Zhuang, you also have a stake in this rough jade?"

Seeing how attentive Zhuang Rui was, Yang Hao understood the situation somewhat.

"Hehe, Brother Song and the others dragged me along to play, I just took a small share." Zhuang Rui smiled and didn't say more.

"Zhuang Rui, is this rough jade yours?"

Lei Lei, who was standing not far away, had sharp ears and heard the conversation between the two. She immediately ran over and pulled Zhuang Rui back, who was about to go forward to cut the stone himself.

"It's not mine. It was a joint production between me, Brother Song, Brother Ma, and me. So what?"

When it comes to Lei Lei, Zhuang Rui naturally has to tell the truth.

"Oh, then you go and get the stone cut first."

Lei Lei didn't say much, which relieved Zhuang Rui. If she had made any demands, Zhuang Rui would have been in a difficult position, since the rough stone didn't belong to him alone.

Zhuang Rui knew the direction of the jadeite inside the rough stone, and he worked very quickly without attracting much attention. At most, people would just think he was a skilled stone-cutting master. Yang Hao came from a family of jade gamblers and was also very skilled at stone cutting, so he immediately sped up his stone-cutting speed.

Even so, it took four or five hours to cut this half of the rough stone. By then, it was completely dark. After discussing with the organizing committee, Song Jun decided to cut the rough stone open that very night and put up several strong lights around it, illuminating the open space as bright as day.

The half-piece of rough jade that Zhuang Rui and Yang Hao had cut out had already revealed the entire piece of jade. A huge oval-shaped piece of jade weighing two to three hundred pounds was presented to everyone, shimmering with iridescent light under the strong light.

Chapter 226 The Sky-High Bidding King (Part Two)

"Have something to eat first, you two have worked hard today..."

While the jade merchants inspected the rough stones, Song Jun beckoned Zhuang Rui and Yang Hao to the side. He laid a newspaper on a rock, on which were several fast food meals and a few bottles of beer.

"Hey Viagra, have you guys taken yours yet?"

Seeing the eldest brother busy arranging food on the stone, Zhuang Rui felt a little embarrassed. Wei Ge and Lao Si had been keeping him company all day because of his own business.

"Alright, hurry up and eat. I ordered this takeout myself."

Wei Ge rolled his eyes. He had just been wandering around when Song Jun conscripted him.

"Burp... That feels good, Brother Yang, have some more..."

Zhuang Rui had drunk baijiu at noon, and his mouth was very dry. After drinking a bottle of ice-cold beer, he felt much better. Seeing that Yang Hao had also finished his bottle, he quickly opened another bottle and handed it to him. If it weren't for Yang Hao's help today, he probably wouldn't have been able to unravel the rough stone until midnight.

After eating and drinking his fill, Zhuang Rui returned to the jadeite, feeling quite proud. Such a large piece of jadeite had actually been created by his own hands, making him somewhat reluctant to sell it.

On this piece of jadeite with floating flowers, green and blue hues are irregularly scattered in thread-like and dot-like patterns. Under the strong light of an incandescent lamp, it is as bright and deep as the night sky above, making people involuntarily mesmerized.

"The texture and water content are good, almost reaching the level of high-ice type. As long as you pay attention to the distribution of floating flowers when cutting the material for bracelets, you can produce many fine pieces."

"Old Han is right, but this material certainly won't be cheap."

"Yes, Mr. Han, you're so wealthy and powerful, we can't compare. When you're eating the meat, you'll have to leave some soup for us, okay?"

Listening to the conversation of the people around him, Zhuang Rui walked over to Song Jun, who was still watching Master Peng cut the stone.

"Brother Song, it's so late, what are we going to do with these two pieces of jade?"

Master Peng and his team quickly cut open the entire rough jadeite. The two pieces of jadeite were of similar quality, except that about ten kilograms of material at the edge was slightly inferior, which did not have a significant impact on the overall quality.

Song Jun pointed to a bank armored truck parked not far away and said to Zhuang Rui, "It seems the auction won't be going to happen today. I found a bank to take it back to their vault for safekeeping tonight. I just discussed it with the organizing committee of the conference, and we'll borrow their equipment tomorrow to cut these raw materials in half. They'll then arrange a small auction for us."

After listening, Zhuang Rui nodded. This was the best solution. Although there were still more than ten jade shop owners who hadn't left, the event would attract even more people after its promotion. This way, the organizing committee could increase its influence, and they would also benefit. Everyone would be happy.

Another half hour passed before Master Peng and his team finally managed to extract all the jadeite from the rough stone. After an afternoon of cutting stones, both of them were exhausted. Led by Fatty Ma and with Lao Si as their guide, the group drove to a sauna in Guangzhou.

Song Jun and Zhuang Rui were left behind. They carefully loaded the jadeite into the armored truck and, together with the bank staff, delivered the two large pieces of jadeite to the bank.

Upon arriving at the bank, the person who greeted them was actually the bank's top executive, who showered Song Jun with flattery. The group then sat in the executive's office drinking tea.

If the bank manager hadn't been so obsequious to Song Jun, Zhuang Rui would have almost forgotten Song Jun's identity. These days, some things can't be solved with money alone. If it were Fatty Ma, the manager probably wouldn't even acknowledge him.

Before long, the staff had completed the formalities. He declined the bank manager's invitation to go out and have some fun, as Zhuang Rui was exhausted after a day of running around.

Back at the hotel, Zhuang Rui didn't even bother to comfort the white lion he hadn't seen all day. He took a quick shower and went to bed, falling into a deep sleep. For him, tomorrow's auction would be an even more nerve-wracking event.

The next morning, Zhuang Rui was woken up by Song Jun. The two went to the bank and retrieved the two pieces of jadeite. The bank's car delivered them to the venue, but instead of cutting the stones, it was placed at the bidding location.

There are hardly any people here now, except for a few security guards, Zhuang Rui, Song Jun, Fatty Ma, Master Peng, and others. Although some jade merchants arrived early, they were not allowed to enter.

Most of the original dozens of rows of chairs were removed, and a laser cutting instrument was placed on the empty floor. For jadeite rough, ordinary stone cutting machines cannot be used to break it down, as that would cause too much damage. Using a laser to cut it is not only extremely fast, but also causes virtually no damage to the jadeite.

"Boss, these two pieces of jade can be divided into about twenty pieces. The ones on the edge are of poor quality, about two of them. The rest are of icy jade with floating green flowers. Do you think this is acceptable?"

Master Peng and his men had been waiting here for a while. As soon as the jade arrived, they got busy, marking lines and measuring on the two pieces of material. It took them about 20 minutes before they came over to ask Song Jun for instructions.

"Okay, you and Xiaoyu can cut it as you see fit, and it's best if each piece is about the same size."

Song Jun had no objection to this and let Master Peng handle the division, since there were still hundreds of jade merchants waiting outside.

The laser cutting equipment provided by the organizing committee was provided by the local jade association. It is specially used to cut precious jade and is very expensive, estimated to be around 2 million US dollars. If it weren't for the need to use this piece of jade to increase influence, they probably wouldn't have lent it out so easily.

Master Peng was already skilled in jade carving and had a thorough understanding of jadeite. Under his hands, pieces of crystal-clear jadeite were broken down and the edges were cut into arc shapes. This allowed jade merchants to extract as many bracelets as possible after purchasing the jadeite and minimize the loss of the jadeite material.

Around 9:30, the two large pieces of jadeite were divided into twenty portions, each weighing about thirty to forty pounds. Zhuang Rui and others then weighed them and labeled them with their numbers, textures, colors, and weights.

The organizing committee took this auction very seriously. They provided the venue and equipment, and even brought twenty large platters covered with red silk. The twenty pieces of jade were placed on the platters and arranged in a row on the table at the front of the stage for the jade merchants to choose from.

Not only that, but there were also several cameras set up in the venue. Zhuang Rui took a look and found that one of them was from Guangzhou TV. The pretty female host was interviewing Fatty Ma.

Zhuang Rui was so scared that he quickly hid in a corner and sat down. Wei Ge and Lao Si were eager to try their luck and stood next to Fatty Ma, hoping to get some screen time.

At 10 a.m., the security guards at the entrance of the venue let the jade merchants who had been waiting in. However, the scene was much smaller than yesterday's bidding. There were only a little over a hundred jade merchants who were qualified to participate, and including the people they brought, there were only a little over two hundred people.

For the first half hour, the jade dealers were allowed to closely examine the jadeite pieces displayed on the table. Each piece was numbered from one to twenty. The last two pieces were of the oily clear variety and were also marked. The dealers examined them very carefully, taking notes in their notebooks, presumably assessing the value of these jadeite pieces.

Apart from the two pieces of material with slightly lower quality, the rest are all icy green with floating flowers. The weight of each piece is almost the same. Some of them have floating blue flowers. Jewelry made from these two colors are priced similarly and each has its own consumer group.

According to the estimates made by Song Jun, Zhuang Rui, and others, an experienced craftsman could extract at least a dozen pairs of bracelets from this piece of jade, worth around eight million. This doesn't even include the jewelry made from the remaining material. Roughly speaking, these twenty pieces of jade should fetch an astronomical price at auction.

Seeing the jade shop owners' eyes gleaming with fervor, Zhuang Rui pulled Song Jun aside and whispered, "Brother Song, I know these jade bracelets are valuable, but with this much material, we can make hundreds of bracelets. Can we still sell them at this price?"

"What's this, brother? You underestimate the consumption level in our country. Don't think that these people are scattered in various cities across the country. Take Pengcheng for example. We can sell a hundred or so jade bracelets that cost five or six hundred thousand yuan each. Believe it or not, there are plenty of hidden millionaires these days."

Song Jun was rather dismissive of Zhuang Rui's question, and then said, "These materials are not the best jadeite. Jewelry made of glass-type jadeite, even if the color is a bit pale, can sell for millions. If it is top-grade red jadeite or purple-eyed jadeite, it can probably sell for tens of millions of yuan a piece. There are people in your circle who like to collect these."

Song Jun's words stirred something in Zhuang Rui's heart. When he had some free time, he could cut open that piece of red jadeite and make a few pairs of bracelets for Song Jun to test the waters first.

Once all these jadeite pieces with floating patterns are sold, Zhuang Rui, with his wealth, will probably no longer need to sell that piece of red jadeite to make money. He can keep it, carve it, and play with it himself.

"Zhuang Rui, this is your phone. Xuan Bing is looking for you."

While Zhuang Rui and Song Jun were chatting, Lei Lei also walked into the venue. Upon seeing Zhuang Rui, she quickly raised her phone to signal to him.

Why didn't Xuanbing call my phone directly?

Zhuang Rui glanced at his phone; it had power. He muttered to himself, then took the phone from Lei Lei with a puzzled look.

Chapter 227 The Sky-High Bidding King (Part 3)

"Hey, Xuanbing, why did you call Lei Lei's phone?"

As Zhuang Rui spoke on the phone, Qin Xuanbing's beautiful face, so stunning it seemed almost untouchable, floated into his mind. Although he was already quite familiar with Qin Xuanbing and had vaguely confirmed their relationship, Zhuang Rui always unconsciously became serious when facing her, rarely joking with her.

"Why can't I call Lei Lei? I got to know you through Lei Lei. By the way, Zhuang Rui, I heard from Lei Lei that the rough stone you won the bid for turned out to be an icy jadeite with floating flowers, is that right?"

Although Qin Xuanbing's voice sounded the same as usual on the phone, Zhuang Rui could still detect a hint of coquetry in it, which put him in a good mood. He said, "It was me, Brother Song, Brother Ma, and I who bid together. The material is pretty good, and it will be auctioned off soon..."

Zhuang Rui had a vague idea of what Qin Xuanbing meant by calling, but since the jadeite wasn't entirely his, he couldn't make a grand promise. After all, these twenty pieces of jadeite were worth a fortune, and although Zhuang Rui could afford to give them away, he didn't want to mix money into their relationship.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Xuanbing paused for a moment, as if organizing her thoughts, before finally speaking: "It's like this, Zhuang Rui, our family didn't participate in the Pingzhou jade gambling convention this time. I only heard about this from Lei Lei yesterday. I would like to ask you for a favor and ask you to keep two pieces of jade and not auction them off yet."

My daddy left Hong Kong for Pingzhou this morning and should arrive in about an hour. He'll buy those two pieces of jade for no less than the price you auctioned today. Is that alright with you?

After saying this, Qin Xuanbing felt a little uneasy. She knew that her request would put Zhuang Rui in a difficult position, but there was nothing she could do about it. She was far away in England and already knew about the surge in the price of jadeite rough. Her family already lacked medium to high-grade jadeite materials. If they missed this opportunity, they didn't know how high the price of jadeite rough would rise next time.

"Hey Zhuang Rui, say something. If it's making things difficult, then forget it..."

Qin Xuanbing waited for about two minutes but did not hear Zhuang Rui's reply. She thought that Zhuang Rui was unwilling to agree and couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.

Actually, she misunderstood Zhuang Rui. At this moment, Zhuang Rui was not thinking about the jade material at all, but was thinking about Qin Xuanbing's words that her father was coming. Since ancient times, mothers-in-law like their sons-in-law more and more, but it is hard to say what fathers-in-law think of their sons-in-law.

"Xuanbing, how is your father? Does he know about our relationship?" Zhuang Rui, ignoring Qin Xuanbing's earlier words, voiced his own thoughts.

"Zhuang Rui, what are you thinking? My dad has no idea about what's going on between us. I'm talking about jade."

Qin Xuanbing, who was far away across the ocean, knew that Zhuang Rui had misunderstood and couldn't help but stomp her feet in anger.

"What's going on between us?" Zhuang Rui chuckled mischievously on the phone, finally getting a chance to tease Qin Xuanbing.

"You...you cheated..."

Qin Xuanbing's words almost made Zhuang Rui stumble; he never expected Qin Xuanbing to utter the word "scoundrel."

Zhuang Rui knew that Qin Xuanbing was easily angered and was afraid that she would really get angry if he continued, so he quickly said, "Alright, I agree to the jade matter. Call me after your father arrives."

Lei Lei was standing right next to him, so it wasn't appropriate for her to say anything tender. Zhuang Rui chatted with Qin Xuanbing for a few more minutes, asked about her return date, and then hung up the phone and handed it back to Lei Lei.

Seeing the smile on Lei Lei's face, Zhuang Rui said irritably, "What's so funny? You and Da Chuan are secretly getting married, and you're laughing at us?"

"By the way, aren't you going to bid on a piece of these materials? Should I reserve one for you?"

Having promised Qin Xuanbing to leave two pieces of jadeite, Zhuang Rui didn't mind leaving one more. After all, they were paying for it anyway, and he figured Song Jun and Fatty Ma would give him that favor.

"No need. My grandfather raised some funds yesterday, so we should be able to bid two yuan. You're going to make a fortune this time."

Lei Lei's answer was somewhat unexpected for Zhuang Rui. He had thought that she also wanted him to take care of her, but he did not expect this answer.

Since the Lei Lei family wanted to participate in the auction, Zhuang Rui turned to Song Jun and explained the matter. Song Jun knew Qin Xuanbing, and after thinking for a moment, he nodded in agreement. Just as Zhuang Rui had thought, it wasn't like it was being given away for free, and gaining a favor wouldn't hurt.

Fatty Ma had no objections. After hearing about the relationship between Qin Xuanbing and Zhuang Rui, he generously offered to sell the materials to Qin Xuanbing's father at the lowest price offered by the auction. Zhuang Rui waved his hand, as he hadn't yet had any real relationship with Qin Xuanbing, and such behavior would inevitably arouse suspicion.

Seeing that the jade merchants who had been appraising the rough stones were gradually returning to their seats, Song Jun knew that the auction was about to begin. He quickly found the person in charge of the auction and told him that he wanted to keep two of the eighteen pieces of icy jadeite, which belonged to Song Jun. Although the person in charge had some objections, he still agreed.

The organizing committee had set up a small platform behind the front row of jade pieces, and the auctioneer for this auction was already standing on it.

The person hosting the auction was the same host who opened the bids yesterday. His voice was still a little hoarse, but perhaps because a TV station was broadcasting it, he was full of energy. He was standing on the stage introducing the auction items to the audience, and he had found a special auction gavel in his hand from somewhere. With his black tuxedo, he did look quite like an auctioneer.

"Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to this auction of the top-selling jadeite material, featuring items provided by Mr. Song and with myself as the auctioneer."

The auction features eighteen pieces of jadeite rough, sixteen of which are icy jadeite with floating patterns, and two are oily clear jadeite with floating patterns. I believe you have all examined them yourselves. The sixteen icy jadeite rough pieces have a starting price of five million RMB each, with a minimum bid increment of 100,000 RMB...

"Please wait a moment, I apologize for interrupting you, but I have a question. There were clearly eighteen lots of icy jadeite jadeite, so why are there sixteen?"

A voice from the audience interrupted the host. The fact that two pieces of jade were no longer in the bidding meant they were being deprived of two opportunities, a concern shared by all the jade dealers in the audience.

The host smiled, pointed to Song Jun sitting in the back rows, and said, "I have no right to dispose of these precious jadeite pieces. It was Mr. Song who decided to keep the seventeenth and eighteenth pieces at the last minute. Please have this gentleman discuss the specific reasons with Mr. Song."

Alright, if none of you have any further questions, the auction will now begin. We are now bidding on lot number one: an icy jadeite with floating patterns, weighing 41.35 kilograms, with a starting price of 5 million RMB. Interested parties, please place your bids.

Upon hearing that Song Jun had detained the two rough stones, everyone was helpless. These jadeite pieces belonged to Song Jun, and whether to buy or not was their own business, so no one could say anything. Moreover, the host's next words drew everyone's attention to the first rough stone that had already been auctioned.

However, after the host announced the starting price, for some reason, no one made a bid, creating a slight silence.

"Lot number one, an icy jadeite with floating patterns, starting at only five million. Anyone bidding?"

The host, being a self-taught professional, became a little anxious when he saw no response from the audience. He quickly called out again, but still no one answered.

In fact, the jade shop owners below are also observing the market. Although the price of raw jadeite stones has soared, the price of jadeite jewelry in China has not yet started to rise. Therefore, they are unsure what price these icy jadeite stones with floating flowers can fetch, which is why the market is currently in a slump.

"I'll offer ten million..."

Just as the host was about to shout out a couple more times, a voice broke the silence, drawing everyone's attention. The one shouting the price was a young man, almost too young, looking no more

than eighteen or nineteen years old. He raised his right hand high, as if afraid the host on stage wouldn't see him.

Who is this person?

"So young, is she even qualified to participate in the auction?"

"Ten million, that price is a bit too high..."

"Yeah, that kid is asking for prices randomly. Could he be a shill hired by the owner of this material?"

Seeing that the young man making the bid was unfamiliar, the crowd began to discuss it. It was obvious that he was not from the circle, and some people were even speculating about his background.

"Ten million, this gentleman has bid ten million RMB... Are there any other bidders? You know, there are only sixteen icy jadeite lots in this auction. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Ten million... Is there anyone bidding more than ten million?"

When someone made a bid, the host on stage got excited, waving his right hand and trying to encourage the business owners in the audience, but the effect didn't seem to be very good.

These business owners, who have been dealing with jade for many years, are all shrewd and calculating. The starting bid of five million RMB was immediately raised to ten million RMB in the first bid, which inevitably made them feel a little uneasy. In their opinion, the real price of this rough jade should be around eight million RMB. Therefore, the host called for a full five minutes without anyone raising the price again.

"Ten million for the first time... Any other bidders? Ten million for the second time, this is your last chance. Ten million for the third time, congratulations sir, the number one jadeite rough is yours, *slap*!"

Seeing that no one was bidding, the host on stage reluctantly brought down his gavel. In his opinion, the price should be negotiated several times to demonstrate his hosting skills.

"Please come here, sir, to complete the formalities."

This impromptu jade auction was far less formal than those held by auction houses. No numbers were assigned to the bidders with the financial means. As soon as the gavel fell, the host immediately told the young man to complete the formalities, because he didn't know him. If the young man was there to cause trouble and bid but didn't buy, the auction would become a joke.

"Little guy, you can't just shout out that price randomly. Do you even have that much money?"

"Exactly, if you take a picture but don't have the money to buy it, you'll be held responsible."

"Who brought this child in? No manners..."

Upon hearing the host's words, the audience erupted in commotion, with many business owners directing their anger at the young man who had stood up.

Regardless of the circumstances, the fact that the first piece of raw jade has already been auctioned off is irreversible. Those bosses who were planning to wait and see are now filled with regret. Just as the host said, with each of the sixteen lots sold, there are fewer and fewer available. Every time someone else buys one, they lose one more opportunity.

"Hey, let's bid on the second piece of raw jade later, I still want to buy it."

As the young man walked aside to complete the transfer procedures, he didn't forget to shout something at the stage. His arrogant demeanor made the audience grit their teeth in anger, but no one knew his background.

"What's this kid up to?"

Of all those present, only Zhuang Rui, besides Lei Lei's family, probably knew the young man's background. However, he was puzzled as to why Wei Zijiang had directly raised the price to ten million

RMB and hadn't even sat down with Lei Lei and the others. Zhuang Rui absolutely didn't believe it wasn't at the behest of his family.

Song Jun also had some impression of Wei Zijiang. He nudged Zhuang Rui with his elbow and asked, "Zhuang Rui, wasn't that young man with Lei Yatou?"

"He's Lei Lei's cousin. I don't know what's going on."

Zhuang Rui replied with a wry smile, "According to our previous estimates, the price of the first few pieces of raw jadeite was estimated to be around seven to nine million. We didn't expect the first piece to fetch ten million. If this trend continues, these sixteen pieces of icy jadeite alone could very well sell for a sky-high price of over 200 million."

Zhuang Rui looked around but didn't see Lei Lei. He then took out his phone and dialed the number.

"Don't ask me, I don't know the reason either. That's what my grandfather told me to do." After the call connected, Lei Lei's voice came through before Zhuang Rui could ask any questions.

"The second item up for auction is a piece of icy jadeite with floating flowers, weighing 40.8 jin (approximately 20.4 catties). The starting bid is 5 million RMB. Interested bidders are welcome to place their bids."

Just as Zhuang Rui and the others were somewhat confused, Wei Zijiang had finished the formalities and sat back down in his chair, and the second round of auction began.

"I'll offer five and a half million..."

"Six million..."

"Twelve million!"

That hateful voice rang out again, and once again shouted out a price that left everyone speechless.

Chapter 228 A Stone Stirs Up a Thousand Waves

"Twelve million RMB..."

This was another bid that silenced everyone. Seeing the kid holding his right hand high, everyone present, except for Zhuang Rui and his group, wanted nothing more than to teach him a lesson.

"Twelve million, this gentleman has bid again, twelve million RMB, is there anyone else offering a higher price, twelve million once..."

Not to mention the jade dealers present, even the host on stage didn't have a good impression of Wei Zijiang. It's fine to bid, but if you bid little by little and suddenly the price is twice as high as others, it deprives the host of the opportunity to show off his auction skills and style.

"Twelve million for the second time... twelve million for the third time. Congratulations, sir, the second piece of jadeite is yours again! *slap*"

Seeing that no one below was willing to raise the price any further, the host quickly ended the auction, though he felt slightly annoyed as he brought down the gavel.

Zhuang Rui was surprised to find that these scions of wealthy families could be kind of cute when they put on airs. Of course, Wei Zijiang, who was walking with his head held high to complete the formalities, was seen as nothing but hateful by others.

Some people looked at the fourteen remaining pieces of icy jadeite on the stage and seemed to understand something. Hundreds of people were vying for these ten or so pieces of jadeite. If the price was raised little by little, it might not be possible to get them for less than ten million. This young man shouted out two prices that were slightly higher than what the crowd could afford, but he still managed to win two pieces of jadeite. It wasn't necessarily a loss for him, because the fewer pieces of jadeite left on the stage, the more intense the competition would become.

"Next up is the third piece of icy jadeite with floating patterns for today's auction. Lot number three weighs 41.02 jin (approximately 26.6 kg) and has a starting price of 5 million RMB. Please place your bids..."

After Wei Zijiang completed the formalities and sat back down, the guest auctioneer on stage began calling out the names of the third piece of jadeite.

"Eight million..."

"Eight million three hundred thousand..."

"Eight million eight hundred thousand..."

"I'll offer nine million..."

This time, the bidding was different from the previous two. There was no initial probing. The first bidder offered eight million, exceeding the reserve price by three million, and the subsequent bidders followed suit, quickly pushing the price up to nine million RMB.

When the price reached nine million, everyone paused and turned their attention to Wei Zijiang. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the young man spread his arms and stretched out his arms in his chair, making everyone's hearts jump. Fortunately, he did not make a bid.

"Hold!!"

Everyone was secretly giving the kid the middle finger, wishing they could beat him up. The boss who had shouted out a price of nine million felt a little more at ease. Without this troublemaker interfering, nine million should be enough to get a piece of jadeite, right?

"Nine million two hundred thousand..."

Unfortunately, things didn't go as the boss had hoped. Less than thirty seconds later, a new quote was generated.

"Nine million two hundred thousand, this friend shouted out a price of nine million two hundred thousand..."

The host on stage finally realized the proper way to conduct an auction and immediately called out the latest bid through the microphone.

There was a moment of silence in the room, but it was more like the calm before the storm. Sure enough, as soon as the host finished speaking, Mr. Han, the owner of Han's Jewelry, finally made his offer: "I'll bid ten million!"

Perhaps this price would have intimidated the audience two rounds ago, but given the previous example of a 12 million deal, Mr. Han's price didn't last long, and was broken before the host even had to repeat it.

"Ten million two hundred thousand..."

"Ten million three hundred thousand..."

"I'll offer 10.5 million..."

"Okay, this gentleman has bid 10.5 million. Are there any other bidders?" The host was excited by the steadily rising bids; this was exactly what he wanted.

"One thousand and seven hundred thousand..."

"I'll offer eleven million..."

It seems that the owners of the jewelry companies have realized that it is almost impossible to acquire a piece of raw jade cheaply, and the price has been gradually driven up.

It wasn't until someone shouted out eleven million that they realized this price was already higher than the ten million yuan that the first piece of jade had sold for. The young man who had won two pieces of jade in a row, however, did not make any further bids.

"Damn it, this isn't some little kid who hasn't even grown his first hair yet, he's a real old fox."

Everyone understood the young man's bidding strategy: he started by bidding at a price higher than people's psychological tolerance to secure the raw material. Although the price seemed high, it avoided the risk of competing with others. Moreover, the price he was bidding now was no lower than his original bid.

"Brother Zhuang, is there a master in your friend's family?"

When Wei Zijiang shouted out ten million, Fatty Ma guessed his intention. Even he had to admire the person who came up with this idea. Both bids were either the reserve price or double the bid from others. This not only required an accurate assessment of the actual value of the jade, but also a judgment on the psychological activities of the crowd. It was not something that an ordinary person could do.

"Old ginger is indeed spicier!"

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but look at Lei Lei and the others sitting in the row behind Wei Zijiang. Old Master Wei seemed to sense Zhuang Rui's gaze and turned around to smile at him.

In fact, Mr. Wei had his own difficulties. Wei's Jewelry was not very famous in Hong Kong and could only be considered one of many companies in the jewelry industry. It was incomparable to Qin Xuanbing's family. Moreover, just a few months ago, their jade gambling in Myanmar ended in failure. Not only was the company facing a shortage of raw materials, but even the turnover of funds was not so flexible.

That's why Grandpa Wei, at over seventy years old, personally participated in this jade gambling conference. However, the few rough stones he won yesterday weren't entirely satisfactory. If it weren't for Lei Lei's successful bet on that rough stone, he would have returned empty-handed this time.

When Zhuang Rui's winning bid for the rough jadeite turned out to be a success, Old Master Wei immediately made a decisive move, borrowing 30 million (commonly known as usury) from underground banks in Hong Kong overnight for today's jadeite auction. Fortunately, Wei Zijiang performed well, winning two pieces of jadeite at a price lower than Old Master Wei's expected price. This is enough to ensure that Wei's Jewelry will not have to worry about mid-to-high-end jadeite finished products for a long time.

Some readers might be thinking, "What if I can't repay the loan I borrowed from loan sharks to participate in the auction?" Actually, Hong Kong's underground banks aren't as exaggerated as depicted in those gangster movies. They mostly serve as short-term cash flow for business people. Although the interest rates are higher, it's a mutually agreeable arrangement between the lender and borrower.

After returning to Hong Kong, Mr. Wei had plenty of time to use one of the jade pieces or his own property as collateral to borrow money from a legitimate bank and pay off his loans from underground money lenders.

"11.8 million, this gentleman has offered 11.8 million. Does anyone else have an offer?"

Regardless of Zhuang Rui and the others' own thoughts, the auction was still going on, and the price had been raised to 11.8 million, which was only 200,000 less than Wei Zijiang's second bid. Judging from the momentum, there should still be bidders.

"Twelve million five hundred thousand!"

Sure enough, before the host could finish speaking, Mr. Han stood up and called out the highest price in the room.

"Twelve million five hundred thousand... This gentleman has bid twelve million five hundred thousand. Any other bidders? Twelve million five hundred thousand once... Twelve million five hundred thousand twice... Twelve million five hundred thousand three times... Sold! Congratulations, sir. Please proceed to complete the formalities..."

In the end, Mr. Han won the bid for the third piece of jadeite for 12.5 million yuan. However, he felt a little bitter because the price had actually exceeded his expectations.

However, there's nothing that can be done about it. The price increase in the domestic jadeite raw material market is a foregone conclusion. What follows will inevitably be a significant increase in the price of mid-to-high-end jadeite jewelry. If you don't stock up on some jadeite raw materials now and wait a while, who knows how high the price will rise? Although you know you're at a disadvantage now, no one can say for sure that you'll be getting a good deal in the future.

"Wow, old man, you've already sold these three pieces of jade! Let me do the math: one thousand plus one thousand two hundred and twenty, plus one thousand two hundred and fifty, that's thirty-four million five hundred thousand! You've already recouped more than half of your investment..."

Sitting next to Zhuang Rui, Wei Ge did a rough calculation and was shocked. Although his family's business was quite large, he was still surprised by Zhuang Rui's speed in making money. If all the jadeite materials below could be sold at this price, even if Zhuang Rui only took a third of the share, he would become a near-billionaire.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui was somewhat dazed. Although he had come to this jade gambling convention for money, he was not mentally prepared to become a legendary billionaire. Thinking back to the joy he felt a few months ago when he sold a cricket gourd for over 100,000 yuan, his current feelings seemed quite similar. Could it be that having more money really is just a string of numbers?

Of course, Zhuang Rui could only think about it in his heart. If he dared to say it out loud, he would definitely be beaten up by Wei Ge and Lao Si. These two freeloaders were now extremely envious of Zhuang Rui's achievements... uh, or rather, his wealth.

"Now let's begin the auction for the fifth piece of jade..." Just as Zhuang Rui was in a daze, the fourth piece of jade had already been auctioned off.

"How much did the fourth one cost?" Zhuang Rui casually asked Wei Ge next to him.

"Thirteen million eight hundred thousand!"

Viagra's answer left Zhuang Rui speechless for a long time, and Wei Zijiang's actions were absolutely like a stone thrown into a calm lake, causing a huge uproar.

Chapter 229 The Birth of a Nearly Billionaire

"Today's eighth item is an icy jadeite with floating patterns, weighing 39.88 jin (approximately 14.48 catties). The starting price is 5 million RMB, with a minimum bid increment of 100,000 RMB. Please place your bids..."

The auction was still ongoing. From the third piece of icy jadeite onwards, the price had consistently exceeded 13 million. The seventh piece of jadeite had just been sold, reaching a staggering 15.8 million. The emotions of the jade dealers in the audience were completely stirred. Zhuang Rui and his group, of course, saw this and were secretly delighted.

"Thirteen million..."

"Thirteen million eight hundred thousand..."

"I'll offer 16.5 million..."

The jade dealers present all knew that it was almost impossible to acquire these jadeite pieces at a low price, so the bidding became fierce from the start. However, the last somewhat hesitant bid still startled everyone. After only three bids, the price had already reached over 16 million, drawing everyone's attention to the source of the sound.

"Why is it a foreigner?"

To everyone's surprise, the person bidding was a white foreigner with a high nose and blue eyes. It was hard to tell his age from his appearance. His clothes were also very ordinary, and his jeans had several holes worn out at the knees.

At this moment, the foreigner was looking at everyone with an innocent expression, somewhat puzzled by their slightly hostile gazes. He was also wondering to himself, since no one had stipulated that foreigners couldn't bid.

"Am I not allowed to make a bid?"

Finally, unable to withstand the stares from all directions, the foreigner stood up and loudly asked the host on stage. Although his Chinese wasn't very fluent, everyone clearly understood what he meant.

The temporary auctioneer on stage seemed a bit lost. This jade auction was touted as an international event, so surely foreign participants shouldn't be excluded?

"Sir, of course, your bid is permitted. Please have a seat..."

After exchanging a few words with the people behind him, the host gave the answer. Although it displeased some of the business owners in the room, they had no choice but to accept it: the highest bidder wins—a timeless truth in the auction world.

"Don't let those foreign devils buy up the jade!"

"Exactly! Everyone should bid! It's embarrassing to lose to a foreigner when there are so many people bidding against him..."

Various murmurs arose in the auction hall, but they were all talk and no action. After waiting for a full three minutes, perhaps unable to bear it any longer, Boss Han called out a price: "Seventeen million..."

"Seventeen million five hundred thousand..."

The foreigner immediately added another 500,000, and even Boss Han remained silent. He was there to do business, not to argue with the foreigner. Besides, he had already won two pieces of jadeite, so he wasn't so eager for the remaining pieces.

In fact, there were quite a few people in the market who had the ability to bid high prices, but they all made a common mistake: they had a wishful thinking mentality, believing that there were still seven or eight rough stones left, and that they might be able to buy them at a lower price. However, they forgot the lesson they learned when Wei Zijiang had just won two rough stones at the lowest price.

"I feel like I've seen this person somewhere before?" Song Jun, sitting next to Zhuang Rui, frowned.

"Oh right, I remember now, I've seen this person in Myanmar, and Lao Han and the others should know him too," Song Jun muttered to himself.

"Brother Song, what's this foreigner's background?"

Zhuang Rui didn't really care who got the jade as long as they paid. Jade wasn't a national treasure of China, so let whoever wanted to fight for it fight for it. It would just drive up the price, and maybe he could even earn foreign exchange. However, Zhuang Rui was very curious about the origin of the only foreigner in the room.

"Hehe, this foreigner is British, his name is Christy, he's quite famous in Myanmar. Don't let his casual clothes fool you, he's a genuine billionaire..."

The Song army seemed to have heard about this man's background from somewhere else, but if it were true, this Englishman named Christy was indeed a legendary figure.

As everyone knows, Myanmar is the birthplace of the jade gambling industry. Because of this, many people who dream of getting rich have tried every means to go to Myanmar to take risks. Most of them are people with hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars in their pockets, thinking of getting rich overnight.

However, gambling on stones is inherently a matter of profit and risk. Some self-proclaimed experts who spend hundreds of thousands or millions of yuan to buy "jade" are often just ordinary stones. Nine out of ten of these people are known for losing money. However, some are lucky enough to find stones that sell for exorbitant prices, but the chances of that happening are usually less than one percent.

Christie was originally just a small British jeweler. After arriving in Burma, he tried his hand at gambling on rough jade several times, but he lost money each time. Later, he changed his strategy and only bought jadeite that had been cut open.

Christie searched for information throughout Myanmar, and as soon as she learned of anyone who had cut, clean, high-quality jadeite, she would rush to meet with them.

The mentality of jade gamblers in Myanmar is different from that in China. Those who win big in Myanmar are eager to sell as long as they are paid in cash, and Christie can always meet their demands.

Since most of the jadeite he bought were raw jadeite, which was already very expensive, he didn't make a huge profit. However, Christie made a fortune by reselling the jadeite pieces one by one, and over the years, he became a multi-millionaire. This story has become a legend in Myanmar.

At this point, some people in the room recognized Christie, and there was a flurry of discussion. However, no one made any more bids. After a while, the auctioneer brought down the gavel, and Christie won the eighth piece of rough stone for 17.5 million.

However, in the subsequent auction, these jade dealers who had been hoping for a lucky break tasted the bitter fruit of their wait-and-see attitude. None of the eight pieces of icy jadeite sold for less than the price Christie had paid.

Some friends said, "If it's too expensive, I can just not buy it. But if I don't buy it now, the price will only be higher later." The Pingzhou Jade Bidding and Trading Fair can almost be said to be a barometer of domestic jade prices. The price auctioned today has actually set a price point for domestic jadeite rough.

The auction's popularity not only surprised many jade dealers, but also Zhuang Rui and others. Starting with the third piece of jadeite, the price kept rising.

Starting with the twelfth rough stone, the price per piece exceeded 20 million. When it came to the last two pieces of icy jadeite, they were auctioned off for 22.8 million and 24.5 million respectively.

"The last item up for auction today, a clear, oily jadeite with floating patterns, starting at 500,000..."

The two pieces of raw jadeite of the last variety, known as "oil-clear jade," are currently being auctioned. Since the two pieces together weigh only a little over ten kilograms and are of similar quality, they have been auctioned together.

"Five hundred and fifty thousand..."

"Six hundred thousand..."

"Six hundred and eighty thousand..."

Perhaps stimulated by the price of the previous icy jadeite, this piece of average-quality oily jadeite was also snapped up by everyone, and the price rose steadily.

"Mr...Mr., this is incredible! Do you know how much these sixteen pieces of icy jadeite sold for?"

At this moment, the auction was nearing its end. While Zhuang Rui was chatting quietly with Song Jun, Wei Ge was using his phone to calculate the total price of the jadeite sold, with an incredulous expression on his face.

"How much? More than a hundred million, I guess?" Zhuang Rui asked casually.

"Not counting this one we're filming now, it's already 204.8 million! Buddy, you're really rich now..." Wei Ge was so excited, as if the money belonged to him, that he held the numbers on his phone up to Zhuang Rui's eyes.

"Wow, there really are that many?"

Zhuang Rui was also taken aback by the number. He had initially tried to calculate it, but then became too lazy to bother. He hadn't expected that just sixteen pieces of material would already be worth over two hundred million. If he included the two pieces he had left for Qin Xuanbing, wouldn't it be...?

Zhuang Rui didn't dare to think any further. He had fantasized about it when the auction started, but the situation was still unclear then. Now that the auction was about to end, the money would really be his, although he would only get a third of it.

"Smack!"

A gavel struck from the stage.

"Congratulations, sir! The last lot, a clear, oily jadeite with floating patterns, is yours for 1.12 million. Ladies and gentlemen, today's auction has concluded. All seventeen lots sold successfully. Thank you for your support, everyone..."

With the host's closing remarks, the auction came to a successful conclusion. Of course, the word "successful" could only describe the jadeite holders like Song Jun. Those who bid on the jadeite all had tense expressions, without a trace of joy.

Those who won the bid for the jade were unwilling to accept defeat, and the bosses who didn't were equally unwilling. Perhaps only Zhuang Rui and his group, as well as Lei Lei's grandfather and his family, actually made a profit. Putting aside everything else, if they had been willing to sell those two pieces of jade, they could have immediately made around 20 million. This shows the importance of keen eyesight and experience.

"Zhuang Rui, don't turn off your phone, someone will be looking for you later."

After Lei Lei gestured to Zhuang Rui as if she were making a phone call, she left with the others. Now, only Song Jun, Zhuang Rui, and the other parties involved remained. Meanwhile, Fatty Ma was talking to the organizing committee while skillfully distributing thick red envelopes to several staff members. Zhuang Rui saw Fatty Ma stuff two red envelopes into the pocket of the host, whose voice was practically hoarse from shouting.

These red envelopes were prepared last night, each containing 10,000 yuan. According to Fatty Ma, these are called "lucky money," similar to how people give red envelopes to staff members when they win big from slot machines in Macau casinos.

Chapter 230 Mother-in-law Sees Son-in-law

The once-grand auction hall was now nearly empty, with only a handful of people remaining: two security guards, a bank employee, Zhuang Rui, and Wei Ge. The rest had been dragged away by Song Jun and Fatty Ma to a victory celebration.

This auction not only made Song Jun and his associates a fortune, but also brought fame to the organizers. It is said that people from CCTV's news channel came to their door, discussing with the organizing committee whether the news could be broadcast on CCTV. For some leaders, this is a real achievement.

Of course, what made the grassroots staff happiest was the real red envelope. Although these people usually had their share of extra income, it was rare to see them give out tens of thousands of yuan. Even the beautiful TV host put aside her reserve and kept calling Song Jun "Boss Song".

It was already past noon, and Zhuang Rui was starving. Unfortunately, Qin Xuanbing's father had just called to say that they would arrive in half an hour, so Zhuang Rui had no choice but to wait there obediently.

The bank staff in charge of the transfer, along with the two security guards at the entrance, all stayed there. However, before leaving, Fatty Ma gave each of them a red envelope. These people were quite willing to do it. What a joke! Skipping a meal won't kill anyone, and they can even earn ten or twenty thousand. Anyone can do the math.

"That fourth brother is really dishonest. He kept saying he'd have the hotel deliver takeout when he left, but it's been over half an hour and we haven't seen a trace of him. Hey, give me some water, I'm hungry..."

Wei Ge lay listlessly in the chair. He had been even more excited than Zhuang Rui that morning. He had calculated the seventeen pieces of jade that had been auctioned off that morning several times, using mental arithmetic, written calculations, and the calculator on his phone. He even made a few mistakes along the way.

However, Wei Ge, hearing his stomach rumbling, already regretted staying with Zhuang Rui. Who told him to be so curious and insist on meeting Zhuang Rui's legendary girlfriend's father?

"Alright, look at your potbelly, it's about to grow big. You won't starve if you skip a meal. By the way, Wei-ge, there are only eight or nine days left until Third Brother gets married. Are you coming back to Pengcheng with me first, and then we'll go together, or what?"

The third brother has already returned to Shaanxi and just called to say that the banquet is on the 20th of this month. The second brother just took leave and can't go. The rest of them are all free now and have already decided to attend..

"Take me back to Zhonghai first, then I'll fly directly to Xi'an..."

The third brother's family lived in Weinan, which was only an hour or two away from Xi'an. Wei Ge knew that the road from Henan to Shaanxi was not easy to travel, but this time he refused to ride in Zhuang Rui's car again.

Zhuang Rui nodded in agreement. He would first go to Zhonghai to hand over the Ru kiln porcelain fragment to Uncle De. After the item was repaired, he planned to keep it for himself. Anyway, he wasn't short of money now. Since such an item was almost impossible to buy even with money, Zhuang Rui wouldn't try to sell it for money like before.

"Mr. Zhuang, two guests are looking for you..."

Zhuang Rui and Wei Ge were chatting when the security guard at the door walked in, followed by two other people.

Zhuang Rui quickly stood up and looked at the newcomer. The man in front of him was about fifty years old, about the same height as Zhuang Rui, with a square face and a serious expression that gave off an air of authority. He walked steadily toward Zhuang Rui.

Behind him followed a woman. If it weren't for the crow's feet around her eyes that revealed her age, Zhuang Rui would almost have thought that it was Qin Xuanbing who had returned from England. Without a doubt, this was Qin Xuanbing's mother; they looked exactly alike.

"Didn't you say you didn't know our relationship? Why is your mother-in-law here?"

Zhuang Rui greeted her with a smile, but felt a little uneasy. He wanted to call Qin Xuanbing to ask her something, but it was too late.

"Mr. Zhuang, is this you? Hello, this is Qin Haoran. We just spoke on the phone. This is my wife. I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting.

As Zhuang Rui approached, he was still pondering how to address the other person when Qin Xuanbing's father extended his hand and introduced himself.

"No, Xuanbing and I are friends. Uncle Qin, just call me Xiao Zhuang..."

Zhuang Rui quickly grasped Qin Haoran's hand. Judging from his expression, it seemed that he really didn't know that he was dating Qin Haoran's daughter.

"Xuanbing? Zhuang Sheng, aren't you and Xiaolei classmates?"

Qin Haoran frowned almost imperceptibly, and asked in a seemingly casual manner.

"Yes, Lei Lei and I were junior high school classmates. We haven't seen each other for almost ten years. We just happened to run into each other this year, and that's when I met Miss Qin."

Zhuang Rui cursed himself inwardly for being a big mouth, calling the other party by their nickname in front of their parents—wasn't that just like protesting too much?

"Oh, I see. I heard from Xiao Lei that Zhuang Sheng is truly a promising young man. He really shone at the jade trade fair held in Pingzhou..."

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Qin Haoran did not dwell on the matter any further. Instead, he smiled and praised Zhuang Rui.

"Not at all, Mr. Qin is the senior in the jewelry industry. I was just lucky. Please have a seat, I'll go and get the two pieces of jade I left behind."

Perhaps it was psychological, but after Qin Haoran smiled, Zhuang Rui felt much more relaxed. However, he couldn't bring himself to call him "uncle" anymore. Everyone had pointed out that he and Lei Lei were classmates, so they couldn't discuss their relationship through Qin Xuanbing.

Each of the two jade pieces weighed nearly twenty kilograms. Zhuang Rui called out to Wei Ge to go move the jade pieces, leaving Qin Haoran and his wife sitting on the chairs waiting.

"Haoran, Xuanbing doesn't have many friends..."

After Zhuang Rui left, Qin Xuanbing's mother, Fang Yi, whispered to her husband, Qin Haoran. Qin Haoran understood what his wife meant; she meant that his daughter didn't have many male friends. Qin Haoran knew that it wasn't just few, it was practically none.

"The young man called his daughter's name so naturally, he must call her that often, right?"

Seeing that her husband didn't respond, Fang Yi continued, "Women are always very sensitive about this."

Qin Haoran looked at his wife and said nonchalantly, "We're here to buy jade..."

"What's wrong with buying jade? Xuanbing has a boyfriend, can't we even ask about it?" Fang Yi was very dissatisfied with her husband's attitude, and her voice was slightly raised.

"Shh, keep your voice down, don't let that young man hear you. It would be so embarrassing if it wasn't true."

Qin Haoran was quite helpless about his wife's behavior at the moment. She was usually a strong woman at the company, but now when it came to their daughter, she was no different from any other mother in the world.

Fang Yi knew that her daughter was proud and aloof, and the family had introduced her to no less than a dozen boyfriends, but none of them were to her liking. She was about to turn twenty-five after the New Year, and Qin Xuanbing had already been born when she was that age. As a mother, she couldn't help but feel anxious.

"Haoran, I think this young man is quite good. He's tall and has a good appearance. Lei Lei said he's worth nearly 100 million. He's a good match for our Xuanbing..."

"Yes, this young man is polite and knows how to behave properly. He must be from some family in the mainland, right?"

"Ugh, what are you talking about? You've confused me too. Alright, let's not talk about this anymore. We're here to buy jade today, you know. Why don't you just ask your daughter about it when you have time?"

Qin Haoran was initially led astray by Fang Yi's words, only realizing halfway through his sentence that he had come to look at jade today, not to find a son-in-law.

"You may not care about your daughter, but I will. Alright, go look at the jade. I'll go call Xuanbing."

Fang Yi rolled her eyes at her husband, picked up her phone, stood up, and went to the side to make a call.

At this moment, Zhuang Rui and Wei Ge also came over carrying the jadeite. After placing it on the table next to Qin Haoran, Zhuang Rui said, "Mr. Qin, the winning bid of this jade gambling competition yielded eighteen pieces of icy jadeite with floating flowers. The quality and weight are similar to these two pieces. Please take a look..."

Upon hearing this, Qin Haoran stood up, took out a magnifying glass from his bag, and carefully examined the jadeite on the table. The more he looked, the more satisfied he became. One piece was a high-ice type of floating green jadeite, and the other was a high-ice type of floating blue jadeite. Both were of extremely high quality and could fill the gap in Qin's Jewelry's recent supply of mid-to-high-end jadeite.

"Who knows, maybe my daughter really does have some kind of relationship with this young man?"

Putting down the magnifying glass, Qin Haoran had a thought: such precious top-grade jadeite would definitely fetch a much higher price at auction than he had offered. Yet, his daughter's phone call had convinced her to keep both pieces. As someone with experience, Qin Haoran absolutely did not believe there was no trickery involved.

Thinking of this, Qin Haoran's tone became much warmer: "Xiao Zhuang, Lei Lei just told us that you auctioned off a total of sixteen pieces of jadeite today, and the prices of the last four pieces all exceeded 20 million."

We're already sorry we're late. Here's the deal: I'll offer HK\$40 million for these two pieces of jade. Of course, RMB is also acceptable. Is this price acceptable to you?

In 2004, the exchange rate between Hong Kong dollars and RMB was approximately 1 to 1.06, with Hong Kong dollars being slightly more expensive than RMB. The price Qin Haoran offered was already considered quite high.

"If it's not too much trouble, let's use RMB. This top lot was won by three people together, so paying with RMB will be more convenient."

Zhuang Rui didn't want to make a profit of 0.06% of the exchange rate difference, and as someone who studied finance, he knew that the exchange rate might drop at any time, so the RMB was more stable.

"Haoran, let's do as Xiaozhuang says. By the way, Xiaozhuang, how old are you this year? Who else is in your family?"

Before Qin Haoran could reply, Fang Yi had already finished her call and walked over with a smile. However, the question she asked left Zhuang Rui and Qin Haoran feeling rather helpless.