

Golden 441

Chapter 441 Treasure Map

The silicone needs time to cool down. After Zhuang Rui stirred the silicone in the hole with the thin steel wire, two round wax balls the size of eyeballs rolled out.

"There really is something there?!"

Peng Fei had been staring at the spot with his head tilted to the side. When he saw Zhuang Ruizhen rummaging around inside and pull something out, he was so surprised that he almost threw the ivory Buddha statue he was holding away.

"Brother Zhuang, what is this?"

Peng Fei carefully placed the ivory carving on the ground, then moved closer to Zhuang Rui, examining the two wax pellets that Zhuang Rui had slipped into his left palm with a puzzled expression.

These wax balls weren't made very well. The white wax skin was covered with cracks, making it look like it was made by melting down an ordinary household candle, kneading it into a ball, and then letting it air dry. You could vaguely see the paper balls inside through the cracks.

"I don't know what it is either, we'll find out once we open it..."

The answer was right in his hands. Zhuang Rui was a little excited. He took a deep breath, pinched a wax ball with his right thumb and forefinger, and with a little force, the wax ball broke open. The white dried wax fell to the ground, and what remained in Zhuang Rui's hand was a rolled-up piece of paper that had been folded several times and was a little yellow.

Zhuang Rui didn't rush to open the crumpled paper. Instead, he crushed the other wax ball, took out a pair of white gloves from his suitcase, put them on, and then pulled out a magnifying glass. Zhuang Rui had a feeling that these two crumpled papers seemed to hide a huge secret.

After preparing everything, Zhuang Rui carefully unfolded a crumpled piece of paper under Peng Fei's curious gaze. The paper didn't seem to be of very good quality; it was quite fragile due to its age and could easily tear if not handled carefully.

Although it appeared small when folded into a ball, when Zhuang Rui unfolded it on the table, it was the size of a magazine page. Without even needing a magnifying glass, Zhuang Rui recognized it as a map. The mountains, terrain, railways, and highways were drawn in great detail, except... some annotations were in Japanese.

Although Zhuang Rui did not understand Japanese, Japanese itself evolved from Chinese characters. Apart from some characters that had been modified in a nonsensical way, Zhuang Rui could recognize the rest of the characters. The marked characters seemed to be place names in Myanmar.

After looking at it for a while, Peng Fei said, "Brother Zhuang, this is a blueprint..."

"Say something constructive, of course I know it's a blueprint..."

Zhuang Rui was both amused and exasperated by Peng Fei's words. The blueprints were drawn in such detail that anyone could understand them.

"No, I mean this is a military blueprint, drawn by the Japanese, dating back to the 1940s..."

Peng Fei felt a little embarrassed by Zhuang Rui's words and quickly added that although he was still somewhat out of place in the lives of ordinary people, he was confident that he would not be wrong when it came to military matters.

"Let's ignore that for now and see what the other one is..."

Zhuang Rui spread the map out on one side of the table, then unfolded another crumpled piece of paper. This time, however, Zhuang Rui was a little stumped. This piece of paper was smaller, and it looked like it had been torn from a diary. It was covered with dense Japanese writing, and the handwriting was very messy.

Zhuang Rui could understand the simple Japanese, but he was completely baffled by the handwriting on this diary. Apart from the dates and commonly used characters, he couldn't figure out what the first sentence meant, even after trying to guess.

"Brother Zhuang, let me see..." The handwriting on this piece of paper was quite low, and since the front was facing Zhuang Rui, Peng Fei couldn't see it very clearly from the side.

Humans are arguably the most curious creatures on Earth. Although Peng Fei had undergone rigorous training in the military, he still showed a hint of excitement, filled with curiosity about the contents of the paper.

"You understand Japanese?"

Zhuang Rui asked casually, but he was thinking that if he couldn't recognize it, he would buy a dictionary and translate it after returning to China. In short, this thing should not be known to anyone other than himself and Peng Fei.

"I understand some things; I have no problem with listening, speaking, and writing..."

Peng Fei nodded. Basic Japanese conversation and writing were essential courses for him in the army. Not only Japanese, but also English, Arabic, and local languages such as Thai and Burmese, Peng Fei could not say he was fluent, but he had no problem having conversations.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui looked at Peng Fei and after a while said, "This thing may contain a piece of history that has been buried for a long time. I don't want anyone other than you and me to know about it. Can you do that?"

To be honest, if the person in front of Zhuang Rui right now were Zhou Rui, Zhuang Rui would hand over the paper covered in Japanese without hesitation. However, he hadn't known Peng Fei for long enough to establish that kind of understanding and trust.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the slightly excited look on Peng Fei's face disappeared, replaced by a solemn expression. He said very seriously, "Brother Zhuang, don't worry, I guarantee in Ya Ya's name that I won't utter a single word about this piece of paper..."

After his sister went to Zhuang Rui's house and regained her smile and happiness, Peng Fei secretly resolved to protect everything he had now, because Peng Fei knew how important family was to a child's healthy growth, something that money couldn't simply buy.

Zhuang Rui nodded, moved the piece of paper in front of him to a different position, and placed it in front of Peng Fei.

Peng Fei lowered his head and began to examine the paper carefully. As his gaze moved, his expression gradually became serious, and an incredulous look appeared in his eyes. Clearly, the contents of the paper had greatly shocked him.

Four or five minutes later, Peng Fei let out a long sigh of relief and finally looked away from the paper.

Zhuang Rui remained silent, watching Peng Fei quietly, waiting for him to explain the contents of the document.

Peng Fei didn't mention what was written on the paper first, but pointed to the map next to him and said, "Brother Zhuang, this...this map really is...a treasure map!"

"Explain in more detail, what exactly happened?"

Zhuang Rui had already guessed a bit about it. Hiding such a detailed map so secretly inside the ivory Buddha carving must mean that something was buried there.

"The contents written on this piece of paper were left by a man named Yamaki Ichiro..."

As Peng Fei recounted his story, a piece of history that had been sealed away for nearly sixty years was unveiled to Zhuang Rui.

In 1941, while launching a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese army also divided its forces to invade Southeast Asian countries and occupied Kawthaung, the southernmost town in Burma, and three

airfields. In early 1942, 100,000 Japanese troops invaded Burma in three routes, quickly defeated the British army, captured Rangoon, and occupied the entire territory of Burma.

The Japanese army occupied Burma for military reasons, cutting off the Burma Road, but it was also for the purpose of plundering resources from Burma and Thailand. While carrying out military aggression, they also plundered wealth and transported it back to Japan.

Colonel Yamaki Ichiro was one of the main officers in charge of transporting the looted goods back to Japan. The document on this piece of paper contains the last batch of goods that the Japanese army failed to transport out of Burma when they withdrew.

That was in 1945, when the Japanese army was already in decline. The Sino-American Allied forces captured Myitkyina at the heavy cost of more than 5,000 casualties, forming a favorable situation of encircling the Japanese army on three sides.

Seeing that he couldn't escape the Allied encirclement with these things, Yamaki Ichiro buried all the gold and silver jewelry in a secret place in Burma. He also drew a map and hid it inside this ivory Buddha statue, hoping to return and dig out the treasure when he launched a counterattack in the future.

To prevent the news from leaking out, all the Burmese laborers who were digging the cave to bury the treasure were killed by Yamaki Ichiro, and the Japanese in charge of supervising them were also killed on the spot. Only Yamaki Ichiro, with the ivory carving that contained the great secret, broke through the encirclement with the main force.

The record on that piece of paper ended there. How the ivory carving ended up in the hands of Li Yunshan's grandfather is unknown. Whether Yamaki Ichiro is still alive is also a mystery. Perhaps only Li Yunshan's deceased grandfather can answer the question.

The matter is actually not complicated. As a soldier who failed in the first expeditionary force, Li Yunshan's grandfather and a group of veterans stayed in Burma. When the second expeditionary force entered Burma, these veterans took up arms again and participated in the mopping-up of the remaining Japanese troops. Yamaki Ichiro died at the hands of Li Yunshan's grandfather, and this ivory carving became his trophy.

After the Burma expedition ended, the Allied forces left some people to garrison Burma, including Li Yunshan's grandfather. Later, when the civil war broke out and the Kuomintang was defeated in Taiwan, Li Yunshan's grandfather and a group of veterans had no chance to return to China. This ivory carving has remained in Burma ever since.

"Brother Zhuang, this shipment contains ten tons of gold and thirty boxes of jade, gemstones, and jewelry..."

Peng Fei pointed to the Arabic numerals on the paper and said a number that left Zhuang Rui speechless: the value of ten tons of gold was already over one billion RMB, not to mention the priceless jewels and jade.

Zhuang Rui took out cigarettes from his pocket, offered one to Peng Fei, and lit one for himself. The two smoked in silence, neither knowing how to deal with this fortune. Even Zhuang Rui was in a state of utter confusion.

Handing it over to the Myanmar government? That's obviously impossible; Zhuang Rui doesn't have that kind of relationship with them.

Chapter 442 Myanmar Jadeite Auction (Part 1)

"Bring these things back to China and hand them over to the relevant departments?"

The thought flashed through Zhuang Rui's mind, but he quickly dismissed it. Even if he could find them, whether he could actually move them back was another matter entirely.

On the other hand, these items weren't stolen from our country, so there's no need for us to be so noble.

It can now be confirmed that the information recorded on this paper is the goods and money that the Japanese plundered from Thailand, Myanmar and other places back then.

Japan is an island nation with scarce resources. The reason why it wanted to expand and wage war back then was nothing more than for resources. They plundered a large amount of resources such as steel,

gold, silver and coal from Southeast Asia and the Northeast at that time, which barely kept the war going. Otherwise, Japan's domestic economy would have collapsed long ago.

"Peng Fei, what do you think about this?"

After finishing a cigarette, Zhuang Rui broke the silence in the room with his words.

"Brother Zhuang, I'll listen to you..." At this moment, Peng Fei's eyes had returned to calm, just like when Zhuang Rui first met him, without the slightest fluctuation.

To say that Peng Fei wasn't tempted by this windfall would be utter nonsense. Firstly, although Peng Fei was young, he had seen many life-and-death situations and was more resistant to material possessions. When he was on a mission, he didn't even care about his own life or death, so why would he care about things that couldn't be eaten or drunk?

Secondly, the most important person in Peng Fei's heart is his younger sister. Now that his sister is living a happy life, Peng Fei is unwilling to change the trajectory of his life because of this money.

So when Zhuang Rui asked for his opinion, Peng Fei answered calmly. He could accept whatever Zhuang Rui did with these things. Besides, in Peng Fei's mind, Zhuang Rui was the one who discovered them; he had just stumbled upon them by chance.

"This map and this matter are definitely real, but whether those hidden items still exist is uncertain. Although this ivory carving is lost, if Yamaki Ichiro is still alive, he would definitely know the location where the items were hidden, and might have already taken them..."

Zhuang Rui paused for a moment, then continued, "Let's put this matter aside for now. We're here to participate in the jade auction. After the auction, we'll see if we have time to look for it at the location marked on the map..."

Although money can be tempting, Zhuang Rui hadn't forgotten the purpose of his trip. He wouldn't go looking for something that might not even exist just for a treasure map.

Another point is that even if the gold is found, how to transport it back to China is an even bigger problem. Although China and Myanmar are supposed to be friendly, if Myanmar finds out about this, they will definitely not let it go.

"Brother Zhuang, this place..." Peng Fei looked at the map, hesitating to speak.

"What's wrong? Do you know this place?" Zhuang Rui asked.

"Yes, this place is close to the Myitkyina region in northeastern Myanmar. There's a mountain range there, surrounded by tropical rainforests. The terrain is very complex, and people unfamiliar with it could easily get lost. By the way, many jade mines are located there..."

Peng Fei frowned. There was something else he hadn't mentioned. Because the most concentrated jade mines in Myanmar were located there, various forces had moved in, making the situation quite complicated. It was somewhat like the warlord era in China, where each side occupied a territory and was armed. The domestic jade merchants that Peng Fei had rescued before had been kidnapped by these same people.

"What equipment do we need to go there? Prepare it in the next few days. We might go and take a look after the jade auction is over..."

Men are naturally drawn to treasure hunting and adventure, and Zhuang Rui also wanted to know if the buried gold was still there. If it was, even if he couldn't take it now, there would be opportunities later.
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Zhuang Rui, having unleashed his adventurous spirit, forgot his principle of prioritizing safety.

"Brother Zhuang, this place is not easy to travel in, and it's easy to catch diseases. I think we should go there another time..."

If Peng Fei were to go alone, there would be no need to worry at all. He would adapt to that environment like a fish in the ocean. But it would be hard to say if he were to bring Zhuang Rui along. Although they wouldn't be kidnapped by the local forces, Peng Fei was afraid that Zhuang Rui wouldn't be able to withstand walking in the jungle alone.

"It's alright, I'm perfectly healthy. Let's go take a look. If the environment is too dangerous, we can just come back..."

Zhuang Rui replied nonchalantly, "With spiritual energy by my side, even in a contest of endurance, I'm confident I'm no worse than Peng Fei."

"Alright then, Brother Zhuang, if you absolutely have to go, you have to listen to me once we're in the jungle..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was determined, Peng Fei didn't say anything more. He was already thinking about what kind of equipment he needed to bring. The more prepared he was, the less dangerous the jungle trip would be.

Having made up his mind, Zhuang Rui relaxed. He took out his digital camera from his bag and photographed the two pages of paper on the table from various angles, adjusting the focus as needed. Then he took out the memory card and handed it to Peng Fei, saying with a smile, "This thing is worth ten tons of gold! Keep it safe with you. Our treasure hunt depends entirely on it..."

Peng Fei was somewhat puzzled by Zhuang Rui's actions. After taking the small memory card, he saw Zhuang Rui pick up a lighter and light the two yellowed pieces of paper. Only then did he understand Zhuang Rui's meaning. From now on, the secret in the ivory carving had completely disappeared, and the clue to finding that batch of gold was in the memory card in his hand.

As Zhuang Rui said, this thing was indeed priceless. Zhuang Rui entrusted it to Peng Fei for safekeeping. While Peng Fei was moved, he also felt a bit of pressure.

After thinking for a moment, Peng Fei flipped his wrist, and the small knife, which he didn't know where it was hidden on his body, appeared in his palm. The handle of the knife could be unscrewed. Peng Fei inserted the memory card into the handle and then tightened the screw. Peng Fei was confident that as long as he was alive, no one could take the card from him.

"Alright, let's go eat, it's already dark outside..."

Seeing that Peng Fei had hidden the item in his knife, Zhuang Rui felt relieved. After finishing his work, his stomach started growling. He checked the time and was startled to find it was almost 8 p.m. He quickly pulled Peng Fei down to the second-floor restaurant for dinner.

The jade auction will officially open tomorrow. After dinner, Zhuang Rui went back to his room to rest, but he didn't sleep soundly. The image of gold scattered all over the floor kept appearing in his mind. He tossed and turned in bed for half the night before finally falling into a deep sleep.

...

Although he didn't sleep well yesterday, Zhuang Rui still got up very early the next day. After washing up, he invited Qin Haoran and his wife to have breakfast together. He had neglected his mother-in-law yesterday, and Zhuang Rui wanted to make it up to her.

After breakfast, Zhuang Rui simply took Peng Fei and followed Qin Haoran and his wife, along with their company's jadeite experts, towards the hotel entrance. The Myanmar organizers provided special vehicles to pick up and drop off these jadeite merchants from all over the world. The saying "the customer is God" is not unique to China.

When the group arrived at the hotel entrance, it was already packed with people. It seemed that all the hotel's guests had gathered there. Zhuang Rui glanced around and saw quite a few familiar faces, including the head of Xu's Jewelry.

Xu Zhendong naturally saw Zhuang Rui as well, but he immediately turned his face away and vowed in his heart that he would never buy the stone that the kid had his eye on. His condition was not yet stable, and Xu Zhendong did not want to be stimulated again. Moreover, Xu's Jewelry could not withstand any more setbacks. The last time they were defeated by Zhuang Rui, the company suffered a great loss of vitality.

"Zhuang Rui, you're really not being a good friend. We came together, so if we're going to the public auction, we should go together too..."

Song Jun spotted Zhuang Rui from a distance and quickly squeezed over with Fatty Ma. When they got closer, they saw Qin Haoran and his wife. The group had met yesterday, so they naturally huddled together, ready to wait for the car to arrive so they could head to the public auction together.

Zhuang Rui is now a star in the jade gambling circle. Many people who know about his jade gambling achievements in Pingzhou, China, have flocked to him, hoping to get some of his good luck.

About twenty minutes later, the organizing committee's bus finally arrived. However, this so-called special vehicle was rather shabby. It was an old public bus, and most of the windows were missing glass, not to mention air conditioning. This made the faces of the billionaires present not very pleasant.

While the Myanmar side demonstrates a service-oriented mindset, their infrastructure is simply too inadequate.

However, circumstances are beyond our control. This Myanmar jade auction is a bellwether for the price of jade jewelry, and Myanmar is the only place in the world that produces jade. If you don't get on board, others will be eager to get their hands on it, which means one less competitor to bid.

There were eight buses in total, and the doors were crowded with people. Although I was annoyed, I still had to get on the bus. Did they come to Myanmar just for tourism?

When boarding the bus, there was a Burmese soldier carrying a weapon at the door, and two other people checked the invitation letters of the passengers. According to the regulations of the Myanmar organizing committee, an invitation letter is required to participate in the jade auction; otherwise, you cannot even get on the bus.

As mentioned earlier, the invitations came from three sources: first, guests invited by various levels of government in Myanmar; second, guests invited by various levels of jewelry associations in Myanmar; and third, invitations issued by jewelry trading companies in Myanmar. In Myanmar, these so-called jewelry trading companies are actually owned by the government.

Chapter 443 Myanmar Jade Auction (Part 2)

However, the latter two invitation methods require the inviting party to submit a guarantee to the organizing committee for review and approval. Merchants bidding on jade rough stones are like those buying tickets to board a bus; only with an invitation letter can they have the opportunity to get on board.

Of course, it's not impossible to enter the auction without an invitation letter, but you must be guaranteed by a Myanmar jewelry company and pay a deposit of 10 million kyats per person to the organizing committee before you can enter the auction. The deposit will be fully refunded to the guarantor after the auction ends.

Each invitation allows two people to enter. Zhuang Rui and Song Jun's invitations were issued by the Myanmar Jewelry Association, while Qin Haoran and his wife were invited by the Myanmar Jewelry Trading Company. As for how Fatty Ma obtained his invitation, they had no idea.

Behind these buses, there were several other vehicles parked, all belonging to local Myanmar jade trading companies, brought in their clients.

"Zhuang Rui, Mr. Song, let's take this car..."

Someone came to greet Qin Haoran and his group in a small minibus. Qin Haoran called out to Song Jun and the others, and they all boarded the minibus. Although the air conditioning inside was not very effective, it was much better than the large bus with hot air blowing from all sides.

After everyone boarded the minibus, it started moving, instead of following the large bus behind. The venue for this auction was located more than 50 kilometers away from Yangon, in the opposite direction from the hotel where Zhuang Rui and the others were staying. It required passing through Yangon city to reach the location.

Yesterday, Zhuang Rui and his group went to the Shwedagon Pagoda, which is also on the outskirts of Yangon. Sitting on the minibus, this was the first time Zhuang Rui had observed Yangon's exotic scenery so closely.

Yangon resembles a giant park, filled with plants, flowers, and pagodas. Barefoot monks in red robes, their left shoulders bare, walk the streets, each carrying a brown-red oil-paper umbrella under their arm, occasionally greeting passersby with their hands clasped in prayer.

The buildings in Yangon clearly bear the style left over from the colonial era. The dark red roofs are typical of British architecture. The roofs of Hindu temples are covered with moss and inlaid with various statues of gods. The roofs of modern square boxes are also present. There are pagodas, churches, and pigeons playing in the sky.

All the cars driving on the streets look like they came from a junkyard, mostly covered in rust. Due to the Western blockade, it is difficult for Myanmar to import cars, and many of them are from the Ne Win era. Vintage cars, jeeps, and old-fashioned British-designed Indian-made buses are everywhere.

In comparison, the taxi that Zhuang Rui and his group took yesterday could be considered a brand new car.

What surprised Zhuang Rui the most was that there were many open-air bathhouses on both sides of the road, separated from the street by a wall. A group of women were wrapped in skirts, and Zhuang Rui, sitting in the car, could clearly see some plump shoulders and arms peeking out from the top of the wall.

The driver's eyes seemed to be glancing in that direction intentionally or unintentionally. The car was driving very slowly, and you could even hear the sound of them splashing water on themselves with wooden buckets, along with loud laughter. The women who had just finished bathing walked along the roadside wearing only a towel around their necks, twisting their hair with their hands, their snow-white thighs and full breasts almost completely exposed.

Luckily, Zhuang Rui was sitting in the back seat, otherwise his gaze would definitely have been caught by his mother-in-law. He had just peeked ahead and found Qin Haoran staring intently at the front of the car. Zhuang Rui was full of admiration for him. Little did he know that his mother-in-law's little hand was secretly pinching the soft flesh of her husband's waist.

After leaving Yangon, the car started to accelerate, but it was an old car and didn't go very fast. According to the driver, it would take another hour to get to the jade auction.

"Brother Ma, why is this place for trading jade called a public auction?"

Zhuang Rui was a little bored, so he chatted with Fatty Ma and the others in the car. He'd heard the term "public auction" all the time, but he really didn't know what it meant.

"You brat, you don't even know this, yet you come here to gamble on jade? This public auction is... is..."

"Come on, Brother Ma, you're just putting a scallion in a pig's nose—pretending to be an elephant..."

Upon hearing this, Fatty Ma first ridiculed Zhuang Rui, but when it came to his turn to explain, the guy scratched his head and stammered, unable to speak. It turned out he was just a half-baked expert.

"Hehe, a public auction refers to the seller publicly displaying the items to be traded on the market, allowing industry professionals or the market to evaluate the items based on their quality and determine the lowest generally accepted transaction price, and then buyers bid on the items based on that price."

However, locals call the jadeite auction "MCC," while in Pingzhou, on the mainland, it's called "Jadeite Auction"...

Qin Haoran, who was sitting in front, laughed and gave Zhuang Rui and the others a lesson. He explained in detail the origin and development of the Myanmar jade auction.

The earliest jade auction in Myanmar dates back to 1962. After the military took over the government, in order to prevent tax revenue loss and generate more foreign exchange revenue for the country from the scarce jade resources, a jade rough auction was launched in March 1964.

Qin Haoran added that the estimated price of raw jadeite at the public auction is determined by industry insiders or the market consensus, and there is no need for special appraisal of the item. This is because some sealed bids cannot be appraised and can only be priced by the owner of the raw jadeite.

Myanmar's Jewelry Law stipulates that all jadeite rough stones mined from mining areas must be collected in Yangon for classification, grading, numbering, and setting a reserve price. Jewelry merchants from around the world are invited to Yangon regularly or irregularly each year to appraise and bid on these rough stones, and whoever offers the highest price can buy them.

Today, the jade auctions in Myanmar are quite formalized. Like the Pingzhou auction, they are conducted through both open bidding and sealed bidding. Of course, the Pingzhou auction completely copied the practices of the Myanmar auctions.

After filling in the bidding form with the number issued to the bidder by the organizing committee, the bidder's name, the raw material number, and the bid price, the merchants put it into the bidding box marked with the raw material number. Since the bidders do not know the bidding items and bid prices of each other, it is called "sealed bidding".

This is somewhat different from the Pingzhou Gemstone Auction. In the Pingzhou Gemstone Auction, all the sealed bids are put together, which makes it very troublesome to count the bids during the opening. It is much more convenient to open bids when each piece of raw material is in a separate container, unlike the Myanmar Gemstone Auction.

During the bidding process, the winning bidder and the bid price are announced publicly according to the rough stone number. In each public auction of jadeite rough stones, more than 4/5 of the rough stones are sold through sealed bids, which can be said to be the main way to sell rough stones.

Open bidding is naturally an on-site auction. All the raw material dealers gather in the trading hall. Each time the auction staff announces a raw material number, the bidders take turns bidding on the spot. Whoever offers the highest bid wins the bid.

"By the way, Zhuang Rui, if you win the bid, it's best to pay all the formalities on the spot. The organizing committee will handle customs clearance and transportation procedures or issue sales and processing permits for you free of charge on-site. This will save you a lot of trouble..."

After Qin Haoran introduced the details of the auction, he specifically explained the procedures for winning the bids. If the winning bidders did not pay the full price of the raw materials on the spot, they would only sign a "Winning Bid Contract" with the organizing committee and would not need to pay any deposit. However, the winning bidders must transfer the winning bid amount to the Myanmar bank account designated by the organizing committee within 3 months, and the organizing committee would handle customs clearance, transportation, and other matters for them free of charge.

Of course, small pieces of raw materials can also be taken with you, and the certificate issued by the organizing committee can be used for customs clearance.

The organizing committee creates special files for the winning raw material merchants, granting them preferential access procedures for future public auctions, somewhat like VIP treatment.

If raw material merchants win the bid and then evade the bidding, the penalties are quite severe. The organizing committee will impose an indefinite ban (for Burmese nationals) or a 10-year ban (for foreign nationals) from participating in the public auction. Foreign merchants will also be restricted from entering the country for five years.

As everyone talked, the car arrived at the venue for this jade fair in Myanmar: the Myanmar National Gem and Jewelry Exchange Center. Zhuang Rui and the others got out of the car and looked at the place, which resembled a military camp more than a place for buying and selling jade.

At the entrance to this public auction, there were not only heavily armed soldiers, but also an armored vehicle. Outside the steel-structured wall, squads of soldiers were patrolling to prevent anyone from scaling the wall and entering.

"Let's go, there are fewer people now, let's hurry up and get the admission pass..." Qin Haoran got out of the car and went straight to the window at the entrance of the public auction. Zhuang Rui was a little confused. Didn't we already have an invitation? Why do we still need to get an admission pass?

"You really don't know anything, kid. That's called a deposit. If you buy something and then sell it without paying, the money isn't refunded. If you don't buy it, it will be refunded to your designated account..."

Fatty Ma knew this, and proudly boasted to Zhuang Rui for a while before swaying his fat body and running over. When the bus arrived, it would be quite crowded.

"Damn, ten thousand? In euros? Why don't you ask in dollars?"

Zhuang Rui was speechless after hearing what Peng Fei, who was temporarily acting as the translator, said. He didn't have euros, and the check was in US dollars. He didn't know what the organizing committee was thinking. The US dollar is a hard currency in Myanmar, but they insisted on using euros for the transaction.

Fortunately, the US dollar could also be used for payment according to the exchange rate. After filling out a personal information form and paying the money, Zhuang Rui and Peng Fei each received an admission pass that they could hang around their necks. Each pass had a number on it, and when they entered the venue to bid, they would need to write down the number on their admission pass.

Chapter 444 Ming Biao (Part 1)

The venue at the Myanmar Gemstone and Jade Exchange Center was much larger than the Pingzhou jade gambling venue, covering tens of thousands of square meters. It was entirely filled with rough jade stones for the trade. At this moment, besides the staff, only a handful of out-of-town rough stone merchants, including Zhuang Rui, were present, making the space feel quite empty.

"Zhuang Rui, this auction runs from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. They'll clear the area as soon as the time is up, so let's split up and look at the rough stones. Let's not waste any time..."

While Zhuang Rui was still looking around, Qin Haoran had already led the jade gambling consultants toward the rows of neatly stacked jade pieces.

Due to the scarcity of raw materials, one of Qin's Jewelry's processing plants has already stopped operating. Not only them, but many jewelry companies are also struggling to keep up with the demand for raw materials and are hoping to find some at this jadeite auction.

It's important to understand that in ancient times, or even just a few decades ago, jade mines were mined by hand, yielding only a handful of top-quality jadeite rough stones each year. Now, with advanced equipment, a mountain can be leveled in just six months.

Jadeite is only produced in Myanmar, primarily concentrated in the Myitkyina region of northeastern Myanmar, spanning an area approximately 150 kilometers long and 30 kilometers wide. The formation of each piece of jadeite requires extremely demanding natural conditions and at least 200 million years. Therefore, jadeite can only become more expensive.

It has been estimated that the amount of jadeite mined in a single year now is equivalent to that mined in the past three hundred years. If this trend continues, jadeite mines in Myanmar may be depleted or even disappear within the next fifteen years.

If this is true, it would be a disaster for Chinese jewelry merchants, as the number of people buying jadeite luxury goods as collectibles in China is increasing daily.

Zhuang Rui once saw data provided by a jade association. It showed that although jadeite originates from Myanmar, the market is in China. Every year, 90% of the jadeite rough mined in Myanmar is bought by mainland Chinese buyers, and 80% of the raw materials are processed and sold in mainland China. China has become a major global market for high-end jadeite.

From the early 1980s to the present, China's jewelry industry has experienced unprecedented development, with its output value growing from 100 million yuan to nearly 100 billion yuan. The price of jadeite has increased more than three hundred times, making it a major player in the jewelry market. This enormous market has everyone eyeing it with envy.

Hong Kong jewelry companies have seen the demand in the domestic market. Due to the gradual depletion of resources in Myanmar's mining areas, well-known jewelry companies, including Qin's Jewelry, have brought back mid-to-high-end jadeite pieces that were collectibles decades ago to the mainland in order to cope with the booming mainland market.

However, this behavior is tantamount to drinking poison to quench thirst. Although Qin's Jewelry has seized a lot of market share in the mainland by relying on decades of accumulated raw material inventory, the inventory of raw materials is running out, which has led to the shutdown of a processing plant in Guangdong. If it cannot purchase jade raw materials this time, it is likely that it will lose the market share it has previously occupied.

In today's product sales, distribution channels are king. If the dozens of jewelry stores in mainland China were to lose their customer base, it would be a fatal blow to Qin's Jewelry.

This time, the Qin family patriarch also placed all his bets on the Myanmar jade auction, mobilizing all of the family's cash, totaling nearly 100 million euros, all of which was brought to Myanmar by Qin Haoran. It can be said that he was going all in. Therefore, as soon as Qin Haoran entered the gambling venue, he immediately took the gambling consultants to look at the rough stones.

Standing at the entrance of the venue, looking out, next to the hundreds of thousands of rough stones, there was a small red bidding box. Beside each box was a glass drawer containing bidding forms. If you liked a particular piece, you could simply take the form, fill in the stone's name and the number on your admission pass, and drop it into the bidding box.

However, there is one thing to note: when you fill out the bid form, you must calculate the exchange rate between Euros and RMB, otherwise you will suffer a great loss. As Qin Haoran just mentioned, many people from the mainland who come to gamble on jade have had to leave in tears because they

wrote down the RMB amount they had calculated in their minds instead of Euros when filling out the bid form, and they will not be allowed to enter here again for ten years.

Last year, someone had his eye on a piece of raw jade. The starting price for that piece was 100,000 euros. The person thought he could get it for around 300,000 euros. He did a quick mental calculation and figured it was about 3 million RMB, so he casually wrote down the number 3 million.

A week later, when the bidding opened, he naturally won the bid for the raw material with his three million, but he had to pay in euros. The man was devastated and could only accept his bad luck and leave in disappointment. His deposit of ten thousand euros was also gone.

"Brother Zhuang, how about we go for a walk together?"

When Ma Pangzi and Song Jun arrived here, they were also a bit lost. The huge area was full of jadeite raw materials, with countless semi-gambled and fully gambled pieces. Under the scorching sun, the green jadeite on the surface emitted an alluring luster.

"Gentlemen, feel free to look around. There are so many materials; you couldn't possibly look at them all in 10 days, let alone a month. Just try your luck..."

Zhuang Rui didn't want to be with the two of them. They knew him very well, especially Fatty Ma, whose eyes were sharp enough that if he were to observe the raw materials at such a speed, Fatty Ma might notice something amiss.

"Whatever, but Brother Zhuang, if you find something you like but can't stomach, you should let us know..."

Fatty Ma didn't force them. Neither he nor Song Jun were short of money. They came here more to seek thrills. The reason why gambling on stones is so attractive is all about the gambling itself. The thrill of going from heaven to hell with a single cut when cutting a stone is enough to make these two bored big shots' blood boil and their hearts race.

After Fatty Ma and Song Jun left with their bodyguards, Zhuang Rui didn't rush to look at the raw materials. Instead, he flipped through the venue guide in his hand, which was given to him for free upon entering the venue. It had annotations in Chinese, Burmese, and English.

According to the guide, Zhuang Rui learned that the entire venue was divided into two areas. Ninety-five percent of the space was used for the placement of sealed bid rough stones, while only five percent was for open bid betting. This shows how disparate the two areas were.

According to the guide, the bidding for open-bid materials, or the on-site auction, is held once a day, unlike the sealed-bid materials which have to wait a week. Zhuang Rui plans to go to the open-bid area to see if there are any suitable materials and to make a note of them so that he can see if he can win a piece when the bidding opens.

"Brother Zhuang, where are we going?"

After seeing Zhuang Rui flip through the guide in his hand, Peng Fei quickly followed. He knew nothing about gambling on stones and was now regretting his actions. He wished he had gone to prepare the equipment for his trip to Myitkyina.

Zhuang Rui replied with a smile, "Let's go see Ming Biao and Peng Fei. There'll be a good show this afternoon..."

The two walked for seven or eight minutes before passing through the sealed bidding area and arriving at a corner of the venue. There were no more obvious bidding boxes next to the raw materials on the ground, and apart from the armed soldiers standing in the distance, the entire venue consisted only of Zhuang Rui and Peng Fei.

"Peng Fei, there are chairs over there, go and rest. Call me when it's noon..."

Zhuang Rui greeted Peng Fei, took a pen and notebook, and carried a backpack containing a magnifying glass, a small brush, and other items before entering the bidding area.

Although the number of open bids was not large, that was relative. Compared to the Pingzhou market, it was probably no less than the number of sealed bids there. There were tens of thousands of rough

stones, neatly piled on the ground, and each piece of jadeite rough stone had its number written in a conspicuous place.

Taking advantage of the fact that there were few people around and no one was paying attention to him, Zhuang Rui entered the bidding area and, without even bending over, immediately released his spiritual energy to examine each piece. He didn't bother to check the details of the raw materials; he simply sensed whether there was any spiritual energy inside. If there wasn't, he wouldn't even stop walking.

In just a few minutes, Zhuang Rui walked more than ten meters inside. Since the raw materials were arranged in rows on both sides of the road, Zhuang Rui was seen swaying his head from side to side. If others saw him doing this, they would definitely think that he was some wealthy tourist who had sneaked in to watch the excitement.

"Damn it, are all the jadeite rough stones here shipped from Pingzhou for export and then resold domestically?"

In that minute, Zhuang Rui had examined hundreds of rough stones, only to find that almost none of them contained jade. Even those with green on the cut surface were completely devoid of jade, leaving Zhuang Rui utterly disappointed.

The Myanmar jade auction is similar to the Pingzhou auction; they throw materials with poor performance into the open bidding area. To put it bluntly, some jade mine owners simply throw in large boulders with no jade-like qualities. Since there are many people eager for jade raw materials, they might be able to sell them.

Zhuang Rui looked around for another half hour and had already walked more than 30 meters into the designated bidding area. He did manage to spot two pieces of material that he liked. Although the quality was average, they contained green jade, so they could still be used to make some low-end jewelry. Zhuang Rui wrote down the numbers of the two pieces of rough jade in his notebook.

"Huh?" When Zhuang Rui's eyes inadvertently swept over a piece of rough jade, he stopped in his tracks, because he sensed that the oval-shaped piece of rough jade under his feet contained extremely rich spiritual energy.

"Brother Zhuang, you're here too?"

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to squat down to examine it more closely, he suddenly heard a greeting. Looking up, he saw Yang Hao and several middle-aged men walking into the bidding area.

Chapter 445 Ming Biao (Part Two)

"Brother Zhuang, I was looking for you when I got off the bus. You're really fast! Oh, by the way, this is my uncle..."

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui, Yang Hao was excited and ran over eagerly. The two middle-aged men behind him also brightened up upon hearing Zhuang Rui's name and followed him.

"Mr. Zhuang is truly a big spender. The top lot he won in the Pingzhou jade market is known to everyone. I'd love to learn from Mr. Zhuang's experience sometime..."

Yang Hao's uncle immediately grabbed Zhuang Rui's hand. His enthusiastic manner made Zhuang Rui both amused and exasperated. What experience did he have? He relied entirely on his eyes. But even if he told him, he couldn't just gouge it out of him, could he?

"Mr. Yang, you flatter me. It was all luck. What brings you gentlemen to the open bidding area?"

Zhuang Rui was somewhat puzzled. The raw jade stones at the Myanmar jade auction were worth hundreds of thousands, while the open bids were only worth tens of thousands. Logically, these people should be focusing on the sealed bids.

"Hehe, we'll look at the open bidding for the first few days to see if we can win a few pieces. The competition in the sealed bidding is too fierce. If we don't win, we'll go home empty-handed..."

Zhuang Rui understood what the other party was saying. It turned out that the other party felt they didn't have enough capital to compete in the sealed bid, so they came to the open bid to pick up cheap goods.

Zhuang Rui was right. These rough jade dealers from Chaozhou, like Yang Hao, are considered speculative investors in the jade auction market. When friends and family pool their money to gamble on stones, they don't put all their eggs in one basket. Instead, they cast a wide net and buy a little of everything.

Due to extensive mechanized mining, the depletion of Myanmar's jadeite veins is inevitable. In another ten years or so, there will likely be no new jadeite raw materials produced. Therefore, the competition at each annual jadeite auction will be exceptionally fierce, and companies or individuals with insufficient financial resources will gradually be eliminated.

"Mr. Yang, you all go ahead with your work. I'm just here to take a look and join in the fun..."

After chatting with Yang Hao and the others for a while, Zhuang Rui prepared to continue looking at the same piece of material. After a long time, he finally spotted a rough stone with abundant spiritual energy, which Zhuang Rui was determined not to let go of.

"Mr. Zhuang has his eye on that piece of material? Let us broaden our horizons..."

Uncle Yang Hao's words made Zhuang Rui, who was about to squat down, straighten up again. "If I had my eye on something, would I tell you? This is just asking for trouble."

"Just browsing, hehe, just browsing..."

Zhuang Rui chuckled twice, walked to the piece of material in front of him, and pretended to look at it, while he scribbled on his notebook with a pen in his hand.

"Zhuang Rui, you keep watch for now, we're going over there..."

Yang Hao greeted Zhuang Rui somewhat embarrassedly, then pulled his uncle to another row of stalls to check out the raw materials. Everyone knew that there was a shortage of raw materials in the domestic market, so no one would tell you about the materials they had their eye on. Yang Hao's uncle's question just now was a bit inappropriate.

After Zhuang Rui and the others had walked far away, he didn't turn back. Instead, he squatted down and looked at the jadeite rough stone that contained spiritual energy.

The rough stone was quite large, oval-shaped and lying horizontally on the ground. Zhuang Rui estimated that it weighed three or four hundred pounds. It was a completely rough stone, without any edge polishing or window cutting, and it didn't have an outer skin. It looked no different from a regular stone. Zhuang Rui knew that this should be Xinchang jade.

The difference between so-called "old mine jade" and "new mine jade" lies in the fact that old mine jade always has an outer skin and is generally not large in size, while new mine jade is rough stone mined mechanically along jade veins. Without cutting it open, it's very difficult to tell if there's jade inside.

Gambling on jade from new mines is much riskier than gambling on jade from old mines. Although the price of these new jade pieces may be lower, the possibility that they contain nothing at all is much greater.

Zhuang Rui didn't rush to look inside the rough stone, but instead focused his attention on the sign next to it. Sure enough, this piece of material came from the Masa New Factory in Myanmar.

By this time, Zhuang Rui was no longer a complete novice in Pingzhou jade gambling. He had some understanding of the mine. The Masa mine's jade varied in quality, with some pieces having a glassy texture and others having a lot of poor quality. It was a type of jade with a high degree of risk, and its only characteristic was that the green color was relatively light, which was also the most common feature of raw stones from new mines.

"High-quality icy jadeite, what a pity, the color is too light..."

After examining the external appearance, Zhuang Rui immediately began to observe the internal structure. The texture and clarity were indeed excellent. When the spiritual energy had just penetrated seven or eight centimeters into the stone, jadeite emerged, resembling ice frozen in winter. The transparency was very high, but the color was somewhat pale. It was estimated that this material could only be used to make some mid- to low-grade bracelets.

However, the jadeite inside the rough stone was quite large, with two sections of about 1.2 meters in length showing green color. Zhuang Rui estimated in his mind that it shouldn't be a problem to extract about 70 or 80 kilograms of jade.

Based on current jadeite raw material market prices, the price of this icy jadeite has increased fivefold compared to six months ago. If 70-80 kilograms of jadeite were put on the market, the price would conservatively be over 20 million.

Of course, if Zhuang Rui were to win the bid, he wouldn't sell it. The items carved from this piece of jade would perfectly fill the gap in Qin Ruilin's mid-to-low-end jadeite jewelry collection in Beijing. If we disregard the limited variety of colors and textures, this piece of jade alone would be enough to sustain Qin Ruilin's mid-range jewelry collection for more than two years.

"So cheap? Only 20,000?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback when he saw the low price of the rough stone. Such a large piece of material, even if it was from a new mine, should be worth around 70,000 to 80,000 yuan. It was only priced at 20,000 yuan. He guessed that the organizers of the conference were not very optimistic about it during the evaluation.

Unlike the Myanmar jade auction and the Pingzhou jade auction, the raw jade stalls here are unattended. Only soldiers are watching the merchants who come to buy raw stones. As long as you don't take a hammer to cause damage, no one will care how much you observe.

"Number 129..."

The fact that no one else is optimistic is the perfect opportunity to snag a bargain. Zhuang Rui was overjoyed and quickly wrote down the serial number of the rough stone, then made a small, inconspicuous mark next to it. He was already thinking about what price it would fetch later.

"Offering around 500,000 should be about right, considering the asking price was only 20,000..."

As Zhuang Rui walked down the row of stalls, he mentally set a price for the piece of material, but he always felt that something was amiss, though he couldn't quite put his finger on why.

"Damn, 20,000 is in euros, holy crap, I almost forgot about that..."

When Zhuang Rui's eyes swept over the question mark on a price tag, he suddenly remembered that the settlement at the Myanmar jade auction wasn't in RMB. This 20,000 yuan was in Euros, which was equivalent to 200,000 RMB.

After thinking it through, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but curse inwardly at the outrageous price. The material had no appeal whatsoever, yet it was priced at 200,000 RMB.

However, Zhuang Rui was also somewhat relieved. Fortunately, this was an open bidding area, where all the materials were for auction. If it had been a sealed bid, he would have lost a lot if he had entered a figure of two million. The jade in this piece was only worth about twenty million RMB.

As time went on, the number of people in the open bidding area gradually increased. There were quite a few people with the same idea as Yang Hao and others. Taking advantage of the rising price of jade, speculative merchants from China who wanted to make a quick buck gathered in Myanmar. Their funds were insufficient to compete for sealed bids, so open bidding became the best option.

Tens of thousands of jadeite rough stones, even just walking around them once would take a lot of time. After marking the stone, Zhuang Rui started searching again. However, the rough stones in the marked area were all stones that others didn't think much of. Even when he saw the rough stone numbered 381, Zhuang Rui didn't find anything.

It's not that none of these 300+ rough stones contained jade; on the contrary, more than 200 of them had a hint of green. However, the color and clarity were so poor that it wouldn't be an exaggeration to describe them as "dog shit." The pendants and bracelets carved from those stones could only be sold at street stalls for 30 to 50 yuan each.

Zhuang Rui only has Luo Jiang as a jade carving master, and Luo Jiang's annual salary is not low. He would never give Luo Jiang these poor jade materials to carve, as that would be a pure waste of time, money and energy.

"Xiao Rui, you're here too?"

As Zhuang Rui was seemingly wandering aimlessly through the stalls, his mother-in-law's voice suddenly rang out. Looking up, Zhuang Rui realized that he had just turned a corner and returned to a place not far from the entrance of the bidding area.

"Aunt Fang, didn't you go to check on the sealed bids?"

Next to the rough stone where Fang Yi was standing, there were seven or eight other people. To Zhuang Rui's surprise, Xu Zhendong, the head of Xu's Jewelry, was also examining the stone. It was truly a case of enemies meeting again.

What Zhuang Rui didn't know was that after Xu Zhendong spent 30 million to buy a worthless stone from him last time, which was so cheap it wasn't even hard enough to use as a seat cushion, Xu's Jewelry was already in dire need of working capital. This time, they only managed to raise 50 million RMB to purchase raw materials after all the sales revenue of their domestic jewelry branches were transferred to the head office.

To be honest, 50 million RMB is an astronomical figure in the eyes of ordinary people, but in the context of the Myanmar jade auction, it wouldn't even make a ripple.

It's worth noting that at the Myanmar jade auction last March, the final transaction amount reached as much as 3 billion RMB. Compared to that, 50 million RMB is really insignificant.

Chapter 446 Ming Biao (Part 3)

"Your Uncle Qin is looking at the sealed bids, while Master Li and I are looking at the open bids. Our company is almost out of stock of mid- to low-grade jade, except for a few high-grade pieces. We're counting on this public auction to buy some raw materials..."

Fang Yi had already come to regard Zhuang Rui as her son-in-law. After stepping out of the crowd, she frowned and explained the current situation of Qin's Jewelry to Zhuang Rui.

Qin's Jewelry appears to have brought in a lot of funds this time, but this Myanmar auction is destined to drive everyone crazy, because last year's transaction volume of 3 billion RMB occurred before the Myanmar government issued that announcement.

"Aunt Fang, don't worry. The jade market is short of raw materials, and it's not just us. Maybe we can find some good pieces this time..."

Seeing his mother-in-law's worried expression, Zhuang Rui offered some words of comfort, wondering if he could give them some advice. After all, the dowry given by Old Master Qin was quite substantial; Qin Ruilin in Beijing, including the shops and goods, was worth hundreds of millions.

"Oh right, Xiao Rui, I almost forgot you know about jade too. What do you think of this piece?"

Fang Yi suddenly remembered that the top bidder at last year's Pingzhou Jadeite Auction was her future son-in-law. His expertise should be no worse than the jadeite gambling consultant hired by the company.

"Okay, let me take a look first..."

Zhuang Rui didn't stand on ceremony and walked past Fang Yi. The people who were originally gathered around the rough stone also made way for him. Zhuang Rui's status in the jade gambling circle was earned through real cutting and cutting of stones, which was more convincing than anything else.

"Hmm? It's a piece of red jadeite?"

Walking over to the rough jadeite, Zhuang Rui frowned. This piece was quite large, weighing probably five or six hundred pounds, making it a large jadeite rough. It also had a shell, meaning it was from an old mine. One side of the rough had been rubbed, revealing a red mist, indicating a high probability of finding red jadeite inside.

Zhuang Rui was puzzled. Logically speaking, this piece of material was much better than the piece of red jadeite he had cut out. Why was it displayed in the open bidding area? Moreover, judging from the expressions of the people around him, they all seemed to be interested in this giant piece of red jadeite.

Zhuang Rui was unaware that this whole affair was his fault. Ever since he took those icy red jadeite pieces to sell at Qin Ruilin in Beijing, he had boosted the multi-colored jadeite market. Not only red

jadeite jewelry, but also yellow, blue, and purple jadeite were all popular with consumers. Even colorless jadeite jewelry, which had always been inexpensive, saw its price quadruple.

"Boss Zhuang, what do you think of this piece of material?" A familiar voice rang in Zhuang Rui's ears.

"Oh, Mr. Han, you're a senior figure here. I should be asking you this. This material looks pretty good, so why is it displayed in the open bidding section?"

Zhuang Rui was genuinely puzzled, so he simply asked. He didn't have the air of a "master" like in the movies; in his heart, Zhuang Rui still felt like a complete novice.

"Hehe, Mr. Zhuang, why don't you take a look around..."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui walked behind the rough stone and narrowed his eyes. He finally understood why the stone was placed there.

On the back of this enormous rough stone, a crack more than 100 centimeters long has appeared from top to bottom, almost running from head to toe through the entire stone.

The most undesirable feature of jadeite is cracks. Too many cracks will greatly affect the value of jadeite. Raw stones without cracks are relatively rare. However, there are several types of cracks. It is not that the presence of cracks will necessarily render the jadeite inside useless.

The most common type is the "skin-inclusion crack," which is a deep crack visible on the jadeite rough stone, with obvious rust or other discolored substances at the opening. This type of crack can be easily opened by gently tapping it a few times with a hammer, and it generally does not affect the internal structure of the jadeite.

Cracks that grow in an orderly fashion along the direction of the green or other colored edges are called "following cracks." There are also cracks that appear as a single water line or no trace on the rough stone, but become very obvious after being cut open. These are called "hidden cracks" and are quite harmful to jadeite. The so-called "gambling on cracks" usually refers to these two types.

The types of cracked jade mentioned above are all worth gambling on. However, if you encounter a flawed jadeite, everyone will avoid it. A flawed jadeite is a crack that can be seen on the surface of the raw stone and extends over a large area. Some flawed jadeites may also have various colored impurities seeped into them.

This piece of red jade is like that. The meandering, stream-like fissure is visible to the naked eye at its extension. Brownish-red, black, and white crystals are mixed together, and even when shone with a strong flashlight, it is impossible to see what's inside.

To seasoned jade gamblers, a rough stone exhibiting this characteristic is a gamble where one bet results in a nine-out-of-ten chance of winning. In other words, there's only a 10% chance of winning, but a 90% chance of losing everything.

As the saying goes, seeing is believing. Zhuang Rui has experienced a lot of rough stone gambling. He has even cut open rough stones that were once considered waste and found to be of glassy quality. Naturally, he would use his spiritual energy to examine them before he would feel at ease.

Following the crack, Zhuang Rui's spiritual energy continued to extend inward, penetrating almost thirty centimeters. The crack still existed, and inside the stone, there were pink crystal particles, but no trace of red jade was visible.

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to withdraw his spiritual energy, his eyes lit up. Ten centimeters from the other side of the stone, a red light finally appeared. "Glassy type!" Zhuang Rui was thrilled. This was the second time he had looked at the material from the Dakan timber yard, and he hadn't expected to see glassy type again.

As Zhuang Rui continued to examine it, he couldn't help but feel a little disappointed. The red jadeite, which should have weighed more than 30 kilograms, was a little lighter in color than chicken-blood red. It was a petal red color. Although the quality was good, its value was many times lower than that of the blood jade bracelet.

Furthermore, this piece of material doesn't have any icy or other derivative jadeite varieties; it's just a single, isolated piece. Zhuang Rui estimated in his mind that although this jadeite couldn't be made into a blood jade bracelet, its glassy texture alone would be enough to sell a bracelet for one or two million.

It weighs over 30 kilograms and is all bundled together. It should be no problem to extract 70 or 80 bracelets from it. Adding the other hollowed-out fragments, its value will definitely exceed 150 million.

With this rough jadeite, plus the icy jadeite he just saw, if he can acquire both, Qin Ruilin will have no shortage of mid-to-high-end jadeite jewelry for the next few years. At that time, he only needs to gamble on a few pieces of low-grade jadeite, such as oily green jadeite, and have them processed by Qin's Jewelry to completely solve the problem of supply.

"Sigh, nine out of ten pieces will break. This material isn't just risky, it's practically worthless..."

Although he was overjoyed, when Zhuang Rui returned to the front of the group, his face was grave, and he immediately sentenced the rough stone to death.

"Aunt Fang, I just saw a nice piece of material, let's go take a look..."

As Zhuang Rui turned around, he had already firmly memorized a set of numbers: number 5220. He had made up his mind to use all the money he had brought to acquire this rough stone. However, the number was a bit late in the auction, so he estimated that it wouldn't be up for auction in the next day or two. It seemed that he would have to come and check out the open auctions every day from now on, otherwise, if someone else snatched it away, he would suffer a huge loss.

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the crowd dispersed in a flurry. Of course, some remained undeterred. Xu Zhendong, for example, took a small high-powered flashlight and pondered the back of the wool fabric for a long time before finally shaking his head and leaving with a disappointed look.

"Zhuang Rui, is there really no risk in gambling on that piece of jade?"

Fang Yi understands jade, but not gambling on stones. She doesn't understand why Zhuang Rui is so sure.

"Mrs. Qin, that's a bad piece. Even if there's jade inside, it's all damaged. It's not worth much..."

Before Zhuang Rui could reply, Master Li beside her offered his explanation. Fang Yi nodded, seemingly understanding, and glanced at her watch. It was already past noon, so she quickly contacted Qin Haoran and arranged to have lunch together.

With Mr. Li present, Zhuang Rui didn't offer any explanation.

In the afternoon, everyone separated again. There were too many rough stones in the venue, and it would be better to divide them into different areas, count the valuable rough stones, and then analyze them slowly when we got back. After all, the time to observe rough stones each day is only from nine in the morning to five in the afternoon. How many stones can we see in just eight hours?

In the afternoon, the venue was even more crowded. According to Qin Haoran, this jade auction was estimated to have a record-breaking 3,000 attendees, whereas in previous jade auctions, a little over 1,000 attendees was considered quite remarkable.

Zhuang Rui had already seen the jadeite pieces numbered after 5000 in the open bidding area. Because that giant red jadeite piece was relatively close to the entrance of the open bidding area, it attracted a lot of people, but after examining it, they all left with a sigh.

The area with the most people in the open bidding section was the area with the first 2000 rough stones, which were the 2000 rough stones to be auctioned today. The auction was scheduled to begin at 3:00 PM. As time went on, everyone was eagerly waiting for the auction to start so they could get the stones they wanted.

The auction was not held at the jade gambling site, but in an auditorium in the jade trading center. This sizable auditorium was divided into ten auction rooms, each with a huge display screen on the wall, which was constantly scrolling through the numbers of the jade pieces to be auctioned.

Two hundred rough stones were divided into two auction areas. The icy jade stone that Zhuang Rui had his eye on was number 129, so it was naturally placed in auction area number one. After showing his admission pass and registering, Zhuang Rui received a number plate and sat down in the chair in the middle of the row.

Chapter 447 Ming Biao (Part 4)

"Excuse me, sir, please take your seat according to your number..."

Zhuang Rui had just sat down when he was greeted and a staff member speaking fluent Mandarin came over.

"You can't just sit anywhere?"

Zhuang Rui was taken aback. Back in Pingzhou, if you arrived early, you could get a seat, but if you arrived late, you could only stand. So Zhuang Rui had been waiting here all along, but he didn't expect that he would have to find a seat.

"Of course you can't just sit anywhere. Each auction room here can only accommodate 100 people to participate in the auction. If you arrive late and don't get a numbered ticket, you can't participate..."

The staff checked Zhuang Rui's number plate and then led him to the front of the first row of chairs. Zhuang Rui's number plate was 8, making him one of the first people to enter the auction hall.

"Damn, is that even a saying?"

Zhuang Rui was feeling frustrated. It seemed that he had to figure out the auction venue for that giant red jadeite by 3 PM the next day or the day after, and then apply for the bidding number. Otherwise, he would lose a lot of money if he didn't even qualify for the auction.

Actually, the Myanmar Jade Trading Center is considered one of the more luxurious buildings in Myanmar. It has a huge venue, a large auditorium that can accommodate thousands of people, and the air conditioning is very strong, so there is no feeling of heat outside.

"Hmm, what is this?"

After Zhuang Rui sat down in the front row, he noticed an object resembling a card reader placed on the armrest of the chair. It had an electronic screen with buttons numbered 1-10 on the panel. The armrest of the chair next to him was also specially made, with a buckle to secure the object.

"Hehe, Brother Zhuang, you don't even know this, yet you've come to the auction house?"

Suddenly, Zhuang Rui heard Yang Hao's laughter behind him. Turning around, he saw Yang Hao and his uncle sitting in the row behind him, fiddling with the thing stuck in the handle. Zhuang Rui looked around and realized that there was one of these things at every seat.

"Brother Yang, what's this thing for? What's its purpose?"

Zhuang Rui hurriedly asked, "What if the auction starts later and I'm still confused? If someone snatches that piece of icy jadeite, I'll be terribly wronged."

Yang Hao chuckled, waved a small booklet in his hand, and said, "Brother Zhuang, when you got your number plate earlier, you were given a booklet like this, right? You'll understand once you take a look..."

"Hmm? It really is..."

Zhuang Rui had assumed the booklet was some kind of promotional material and casually put it in his bag. Now, after finding it again, he saw the words "Auction Instructions" in several languages on the cover.

"That's really quite advanced..."

After reading the booklet, which consisted of only two pages, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but sigh. It turned out that the number plate he was given was just for matching numbers, not like in the movies or at auctions he had participated in before, where you could raise your hand and bid.

The thing Zhuang Rui didn't understand was called the bidding device. The entire process of the open bidding auction depended on this bidding device. It was an electronic program that Myanmar had specifically developed and designed for open bidding auctions abroad.

When the open bidding begins, the rough stones will be numbered from 1 to 2000 on the large electronic screen in the auction hall. Yes, from 1 to 2000, not the 200 rough stones that Zhuang Rui thought each auction hall could only auction. As long as you are in any of the 10 auction halls, you can bid on all the rough stones that are up for auction.

In other words, Zhuang Rui doesn't necessarily have to sit in Auction Hall Number One. Even if he arrives late, as long as there aren't 1000 applicants, he still has a chance to participate in the auction. In previous years, only around 1000 people have participated in the Myanmar auctions, so there's practically no issue of not having enough seats.

Once the auction begins, the starting price for each piece of raw jade will appear below each number displayed on the large screen.

If you have your eye on a particular rough stone, you can first enter the bid number on your bidding device, then press the space bar, and then enter the amount you want to bid. The numbers on the big screen will immediately change according to your operation, and the amount displayed on the big screen will always be the highest bid.

In this way, there's no need for the auctioneer to say anything; everyone present can see the changes in the bidding and decide whether to raise the price based on their own needs.

The auction guide also emphasizes that all raw stones will be auctioned for exactly two hours, from 3 pm to 5 pm. If no one bids during this time, the stone will be considered unsold. If someone bids, the winner will be the person with the highest bid at the time limit.

It's worth mentioning that all the unsold rough stones will be auctioned again a week later. Those who didn't manage to sell, or those who initially didn't think much of them but later wanted to buy them, will have another chance.

All the bidding devices are connected to computers. If you win a bid, the computer will immediately tally the results. When the auction is over, you can use your bidding number to pay and collect the raw materials, or you can arrange on-site shipping.

Of course, if you want to have your stone cut on-site, the organizing committee will welcome you and provide you with a full set of stone-cutting tools. After all, on-site stone cutting can stimulate people's desire to buy, especially if the gamble pays off.

After reading the booklet, Zhuang Rui suddenly realized that he had been thinking that if each auction hall had 200 pieces of raw jade, and if they were auctioned off one by one by people, even if each piece was sold out every three minutes, it would take 600 minutes, a full 10 hours.

The open auction time set by the conference was only from 3 pm to 5 pm every day. Only by using this auction method could all the raw materials be sold.

Zhuang Rui originally thought that dividing the auction into ten halls was to speed up the auction process, but now it seems that it might be for the convenience of bidding. After all, with more than a thousand people sitting together, those at the back probably wouldn't even be able to see the prices on the screen.

"This method is good..."

After reading the booklet, Zhuang Rui nodded. He would keep an eye on lot number 129. There was a trick to it: he didn't need to bid at the beginning. He just needed to enter a higher price than everyone else when the bidding time was about to end.

Of course, Zhuang Rui wasn't the only one with this idea; all the raw material merchants present had the same thought. It all came down to who was quickest and who offered the highest starting price. It was estimated that those raw materials that were highly regarded might receive bids from hundreds of people at the last minute.

If you want to bid on several rough stones at the same time and win them all at the last minute, you can only apply for multiple bids and ask others for help. However, people who come to Myanmar are never alone. People like Qin Haoran and his group had a clear division of labor beforehand, so this problem is easy to solve.

Just as Zhuang Rui finished reading the auction instructions, a short, somewhat thin middle-aged man, led by a staff member, arrived at Hall One. He walked straight to the head table below the screen, sat down, and said, "My name is Hu Rong. I will be supervising this jade auction. The auction is now beginning. Please pay attention to the auction prices and your bids. Thank you..."

The man named Hu Rong first repeated the above words in Burmese, and then repeated them in Chinese and English respectively. He spoke very clearly and fluently, and through the loudspeaker, Hu Rong's voice spread throughout the entire auction hall.

As soon as he finished speaking, the large screen above his head started flashing rapidly, with white numbers from 1 to 2000 appearing densely on it. Below the numbers was a clear red reserve price. Zhuang Rui immediately spotted lot number 129, with a reserve price of 20,000 euros.

"I didn't expect it to be Master Hu who's supervising. This conference really has some serious influence..."

Just as Zhuang Rui was about to take a look at the other prices he had been eyeing, Yang Hao's mutterings sounded behind him.

"Yang Hao, who is Master Hu? The one sitting in the front?"

Zhuang Rui was somewhat confused. The middle-aged man was unremarkable in appearance, around forty years old, with a somewhat aged face. He was wearing a traditional Chinese thin silk brown short jacket. In short, Zhuang Rui couldn't see a trace of the demeanor of a master in that man.

At the start of the auction, everyone was relaxed. However, the last few minutes of the auction were the most intense, so even if people had their eye on the raw jade, they wouldn't make a move rashly, as that would only attract attention and be counterproductive. Therefore, Zhuang Rui turned around and asked Yang Hao a question.

"Brother Zhuang, that man is no ordinary person. He's a Chinese in Myanmar, and a big shot in the global jade and jewelry industry. I've seen his picture before, but I never expected to see him here..."

When Yang Hao spoke of that person, his expression was very respectful. Zhuang Rui knew that for Chaozhou people, there were generally two types of people they respected: one was someone who was richer than themselves, and the other was someone who had achieved great success and was very hardworking. This was because Chaozhou people were called the Jews of China by foreigners because of their perseverance and ability to endure hardship.

As Yang Hao recounted the story, Zhuang Rui's expression gradually became serious. This Burmese Chinese named Hu Rong was indeed no ordinary person.

Hu Rong is not only the richest Chinese tycoon in Myanmar, but also a famous jade designer. He is a designer, not a designer, which is why Yang Hao calls him a master.

In addition, Hu Rong has another extraordinary identity that left Zhuang Rui speechless: he is the owner of 18 jade mines in Myanmar.

Chapter 448 Ming Biao (Part 5)

Jadeite and nephrite are both types of jade, and nephrite, such as Hetian jade, which is produced domestically, should be considered the elder brother. Throughout Chinese history, it has been highly valued, and even the imperial seals used by emperors were carved from nephrite.

However, in modern times, especially since the reform and opening up in the early 1980s, the price of jadeite has skyrocketed. At a dazzling speed, the price has increased hundreds of times in just twenty years. Now, the market price of top-quality jadeite jewelry far exceeds that of nephrite jewelry.

Zhuang Rui only owns one Hetian jade mine, yet his real estate alone exceeds 500 million. Hu Rong, on the other hand, owns eighteen jadeite mines. What a fortune that must be! Even if they are all new mines, their value is immeasurable.

Zhuang Rui once read an article that reported on some of the world's hidden billionaires. It said that Bill Gates, the so-called richest man in the world, is actually a bit undeserving of the title because most of his money is in the stock market. Let alone cashing out, even selling a portion of his shares could cause panic and significantly reduce his assets.

Not to mention the fluctuations in the stock market; otherwise, the top-ranked individuals on the annual Forbes rich list would have their net worth fluctuate by tens of billions.

The report stated that the world's truly wealthiest people should come from either the Arab royal family or the Brunei royal family. They have one thing in common: they are all resource tycoons who monopolize a country's resources. Unlike the stock market, their wealth doesn't fluctuate because they possess non-renewable resources, which are extremely precious at all times.

Hu Rong is another example. With jade mines gradually depleting, he still owns 18 mines. His wealth is so immense that it would not be an exaggeration to say that he is richer than a country.

Of course, this wealth wasn't created by Hu Rong alone. Born into a Chinese family in Hpakant, Myanmar's largest jade mining region, his family had been involved in jade mining and rough stone trading since his great-grandfather's generation. The Hu family, operating in northern Myanmar for over a century, now owns 18 jade mines.

Like many children in Myanmar, Hu Rong's education began in a temple. At the age of nine, he was sent to a temple to become a monk. He returned home at the age of 15 and then went to the Golden Palace Monastery in Mandalay, Myanmar, to meditate and study Buddhism.

In 1983, Hu Rong entered Mandalay University, majoring in mineralogy and philosophy. Starting in 1985, the adult Hu Rong began to take over the family business, traveling between Myanmar and Thailand to trade in rough jadeite, rubies, and sapphires. At the same time, he also began to learn gem cutting techniques and jewelry design.

Hu Rong holds a pivotal position in the jade industry not only because he owns 18 jade mines, but also because he is an outstanding jade designer and sculptor. One of his designs, "Rooted in Elegance," was described by Qin Xiaoyi, the director of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, as "unique and extraordinary, unprecedented in history."

Many collectors know that the "Jadeite Cabbage," a national treasure of the National Palace Museum in Taiwan, was originally part of the dowry of Consort Jin, the concubine of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty. It was carved from a piece of jade that was half white and half green, and the cabbage was so lifelike that it could be mistaken for a real cabbage. There were two small insects on the leaves, a grasshopper and a locust.

Hu Rong's "Roots of Elegance," carved from withered lotus leaves in three colors of jade, presents a brocade-like intricate network. The veins branch out yet are arranged in a harmonious and orderly manner. The delicate, net-like veins curl inward, exuding a serene and elegant beauty. On the lotus leaves, there is also a carved golden tortoise. The work is not only full of poetry but also has a unique style of noble and unrestrained elegance.

According to Dean Qin, this piece of jadeite withered lotus is comparable to the "Jadeite Cabbage" treasure in the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. This assessment also confirmed Hu Rong's reputation in the jadeite industry.

After learning Hu Rong's identity, Zhuang Rui's gaze couldn't help but fall on him. The two were sitting only a few meters apart. As if sensing Zhuang Rui's gaze, Hu Rong looked at Zhuang Rui, smiled slightly, and nodded. His seemingly ordinary face, once it showed a smile, gave people a very friendly feeling.

After returning a smile, Zhuang Rui began to pay attention to the prices displayed on the big screen. After all, no matter how rich Hu Rong was, it had nothing to do with him. However, as a fellow Chinese, Zhuang Rui still admired the Hu family who remained in Myanmar.

All the bids on the big screen were initially red, but as soon as someone bid, the color immediately turned blue, making them extremely conspicuous among the red and white numbers on a black background. Now that the numbers have changed, some impatient people have started bidding.

However, these people were still a minority. Only a few dozen numbers on the big screen changed, which were probably just testing the waters. Zhuang Rui observed carefully and found that no one had bid for the icy jade he had his eye on.

Zhuang Rui was quite confident in acquiring that rough stone, because from its appearance, it looked no different from a piece of junk. The only attractive thing about it was not the stone itself, but the annotation next to it that it came from the Masa mine, explaining the stone's origin. This might tempt some people who cast a wide net to try their luck, but the price they would offer would probably not be too high.

Unlike the tense auctions Zhuang Rui had witnessed in China, the open bidding auction at the Myanmar jade auction was remarkably calm. The venue was filled with a buzzing sound, the voices of businessmen chatting as they waited for the final moment.

And the phone kept ringing. Zhuang Rui had just received a call from Qin Haoran, who asked him a few questions about the auction. Qin Haoran hadn't participated in the open auction and was still outside selecting raw materials for the sealed bid. Yang Hao, behind Zhuang Rui, was also talking quietly to his uncle, the content of which had nothing to do with the auction.

As time went on, the numbers on the big screen gradually began to change. Not everyone waited until the end to place their bids. They also wanted to see how many people were interested in the rough stones they had selected, so they could adjust their prices later to secure them.

Although gambling on jade can be crazy, no one's money comes from thin air and they don't just throw it away on these stones for no reason. Of course, everyone here wants to bid as close to the reserve price as possible, so it is very necessary to open a bid slightly higher than the reserve price to test the waters.

Most auctions are quite exciting and thrilling, but this kind of auction was very dull and tense in silence, making people feel a bit depressed, as if a huge rock was blocking their chest. Only when the auction ended could they breathe freely.

Chatting is the best way to relieve this oppressive atmosphere, so while waiting for the final moment to arrive, Zhuang Rui would occasionally turn his head to chat with Yang Hao and his nephew behind him. Time passed quickly, and before they knew it, more than an hour had passed.

"Um?!"

Zhuang Rui's eyes suddenly fixed on the big screen, because at that moment, the number below lot number 129, which was priced at 20,000 euros, suddenly jumped and turned into blue 25,000 euros, indicating that someone had made a bid.

Suddenly, Zhuang Rui felt nervous. He had never experienced this kind of auction before and didn't know if it was speculative capital casting a wide net to try their luck or if someone really had their eye on this rough stone. For a moment, Zhuang Rui's expression became serious.

"Brother Zhuang, has someone made an offer for the material you've been eyeing?"

When Yang Hao saw Zhuang Rui suddenly stop talking, he knew it must be the material that Zhuang Rui had his eye on, and someone had submitted a bid.

"Um....."

Zhuang Rui nodded, feeling somewhat irritated. The market value of this piece of icy jade was at least around 20 million RMB, and if it were processed into jewelry, it would be worth no less than 50 million RMB.

So Zhuang Rui was determined to win the bid no matter what, but he was definitely unhappy if he offered too high a price. If no one else was bidding, Zhuang Rui would have just added 10,000 euros to take it over, but now that someone was scouting ahead, he was unsure of himself.

"Xiao Zhuang, it's alright, don't be nervous. In this kind of open bidding, many people deliberately cast a wide net and randomly bid on some rough stones with relatively low starting prices, but their purpose is to confuse others and thus get the rough stones they want..."

Seeing that Zhuang Rui was a little nervous, Yang Hao's uncle explained to him and followed Zhuang Rui's gaze to the big screen. He wanted to see which bid this lucky boy had placed.

However, Uncle Yang Hao was destined to be disappointed, because the dense numbers on the big screen made it impossible for him to know the rough stone number in Zhuang Rui's mind. In the end, he could only reluctantly withdraw his gaze and focus on the rough stone he had his eye on.

"To confuse others?"

Zhuang Rui's mind was sparked by Uncle Yang Hao's words. The prices of these bids were not very high. Even if he bought them, it would only cost a few hundred thousand yuan. Moreover, not all of the rough stones were devoid of jadeite; it was just that the quality of the jadeite was average.

Thinking of this, Zhuang Rui pulled out his notebook containing records of jadeite, and looked through the numbers of the rough stones that looked good but had average jadeite quality. He then had an idea in mind.

"Lot 318, nobody's bidding? I'll bid 31,000 euros. Lot 420, I'll bid 51,000 euros. Lot 769, damn, the starting bid of 60,000 euros has already been driven up to 280,000. I'm not going to join this frenzy, I'll bid on something else..."

Zhuang Rui started working non-stop. He added one or two thousand euros to the bids for the rough stones that looked good on the outside. Zhuang Rui wasn't worried that no one would bid higher. Given the current booming jade market, those rough stones were sure to attract a lot of attention.

Zhuang Rui's disruption was not a big deal, but it made everyone in the hall restless.

Chapter 449 Ming Biao (Part 6)

The rough stones Zhuang Rui invested in all contained jadeite. Although the quality wasn't top-notch, they could still be used to make some low-end jewelry. Even if no one bid higher, he wouldn't lose money buying them. After all, a jewelry store isn't solely supported by pieces worth hundreds of thousands or millions.

Zhuang Rui's disruption threw the entire auction hall into chaos. The once noisy hall suddenly fell silent, as if someone had muted a TV, so quiet you could hear a pin drop. Everyone wore a look of astonishment.

The silence lasted less than ten seconds before a loud "boom" rang out, and some people were making phone calls; these were probably henchmen sent by the boss to quote prices.

Some people were muttering to themselves, calculating how much the rough stone they had their eye on would cost, and whether they needed to re-bid. Others were looking around, trying to find the person who had submitted the bid.

It's important to understand that nobody's money grows on trees. Although the people in the auction hall were eager to acquire some rough stones, they were all quite restrained. Apart from a few exceptionally good rough stones, there was basically no malicious bidding for the remaining stones. Now, someone has intervened and submitted bids on more than sixty rough stones in succession, causing a huge uproar.

Some friends may not understand why, with more than 2,000 bids for the raw jade to be auctioned, only more than 60 bids were submitted. Wouldn't that be too conspicuous?

If you think that way, you're wrong. Although there are quite a few rough stones up for auction, only a couple hundred pieces are worth anything, or at least look good. These rough stones are being closely

watched by people with ulterior motives, just like Zhuang Rui. When he saw someone bid on rough stone number 129, his heart immediately jumped.

"Xiao Rui, you're in the auction hall, right? Don't be nervous. Just follow your pre-determined plan and don't change your bids randomly. Call Auntie if anything happens..."

Fang Yi, noticing Zhuang Rui's impatience, quickly made a phone call. Although she wasn't good at gambling on stones, she was very adept at business operations. Fang Yi immediately realized that this bulk bidding and price-increasing behavior was simply someone trying to sabotage the operation.

Don't be fooled by the fact that the highest bid is only 600,000 euros. Once the bidding opens, it's estimated that none of the best-performing pieces will be below 600,000 euros, which is more than 6 million RMB. If the bidders want to acquire all these rough stones, they probably won't even be able to think about it without spending 500 to 600 million RMB.

"Thank you, Auntie, I understand..."

Zhuang Rui replied politely, and after hanging up the phone, he was laughing so hard his stomach almost hurt. What did his buddy need to worry about? Looking at the chaotic auction hall, Zhuang Rui felt a sense of pleasure after successfully pulling off a prank.

"Brother Zhuang, you weren't the one who did that just now, were you?"

Yang Hao leaned close to Zhuang Rui's ear and whispered a question. He had just seen Zhuang Rui turn his head and then keep operating the bidding device. He guessed that Zhuang Rui was most likely the one who did it.

"Brother Yang, it definitely wasn't me. Don't make things up..."

Zhuang Rui, feeling guilty, glanced around. If he admitted it, he would become a public enemy. He had already heard a lot of cursing and swearing around him. If everyone knew that he was the one who did it, some impulsive people might come and challenge him to a fight.

"Hehe, it's okay even if you did it..."

Seeing Zhuang Rui's actions, Yang Hao immediately understood. Knowing it was Zhuang Rui, he felt more at ease and resumed chatting with his uncle, occasionally observing the condition of the rough jade they were interested in.

Wow, one million euros?!

Suddenly, a voice rang out in Hall 1, followed by gasps of amazement from the adjacent auction halls. No matter how good the quality of the materials in the open auction was, it was still relatively inferior to those in the sealed auction. 1 million euros was more than 10 million RMB, which was considered a relatively high price in the open auction.

Zhuang Rui took a look and said that the rough stone was a pretty good one among the first 2,000 rough stones. It could yield dozens of kilograms of green jadeite, but its value was at most six or seven million RMB. 10 million would be too high. Even if it was made into jewelry, it wouldn't make much money.

"Damn it, I pressed the wrong button!"

A bloodcurdling scream suddenly came from four or five rows behind Zhuang Rui, causing everyone to turn their heads to look. Even Hu Rong, who was sitting on the platform, couldn't help but chuckle.

Although such things have happened at previous Myanmar jade auctions, the probability is very small. Most of the time, it's just that the wrong form was filled out during the sealed bid and an extra zero was added during the open bid auction. This is very rare, and this person is really unlucky.

"Who was bidding recklessly just now? Come out here if you dare..."

After sitting there for a few minutes with a long face, the unlucky man shouted loudly, looking indignant. He had been a little impatient and was about to raise the bid from 70,000 euros to 100,000, but in his nervousness, he accidentally entered an extra zero. He didn't realize it at the time and just pressed the confirm button. It wasn't until someone in the auction hall shouted that the unlucky man came to his senses, realizing that this had happened to him.

Seeing the man's bowed head and stamped feet, Zhuang Rui couldn't help but shrink back, but he was somewhat unconvinced. What does it have to do with me? He entered the wrong amount himself. His mental fortitude is lacking. Don't make excuses.

"Sir, please sit down..."

The staff maintaining order at the scene came over with smiles on their faces. It wasn't that they were gloating, but such things were really rare. With just one entry and one exit, the price increased tenfold.

The man shook his head and sat down helplessly. He knew he couldn't really blame anyone else. He lowered his head and began to calculate in silence, wondering how much money he would have left after deducting the million euros, and whether he should give up on this auction and find someone else to represent him next time.

However, the man ultimately decided to buy the rough stone for 1 million euros, because he expected it to be worth a lot more, and he figured he wouldn't lose money gambling. He gritted his teeth and gave up his idea of avoiding the auction and not entering Myanmar for 10 years.

Because of this whole mess, no one raised the price for the rough stone, allowing this person to successfully bid on it. Compared to the high prices that followed in the next few days, he got a great deal. But that's another story.

"Ten minutes left..."

As time went by, Zhuang Rui checked his watch. There were still ten minutes left before the deadline for today's open tender. The number under bid number 129 on the big screen was still 25,000 euros. In other words, the price had not changed since someone placed the bid, indicating that not many people were paying attention.

The blue numbers on the big screen gradually increased, and about 1,400 to 1,500 bids showed that someone had bid. As for the other rough stones, if no one bid after the time limit, they would go unsold. Of course, there were also those who made a last-minute effort.

"Wow, three million two hundred thousand euros..."

A sigh caught Zhuang Rui's attention. Lot number 1888 had its price raised to 3.2 million euros, which was the highest price currently displayed on the big screen, equivalent to more than 30 million RMB.

Zhuang Rui still remembered this piece of rough stone. It was a semi-rough stone, weighing about 100 kilograms. The cut surface showed green color, and the quality was quite good, reaching the level of icy jade. However, there was a crack on the other side of the rough stone; otherwise, it would have been placed in the sealed-bid area.

The person who offered this price is clearly a master at gambling on cracks. He's betting that the cracks won't penetrate too deeply, which means the chances of finding high-quality green glass-type jadeite are still quite high.

However, experts are usually trampled on. Zhuang Rui knew in his heart that the crack in that rough stone almost ran through the entire piece, while the person who cut the stone was the real expert. That cut surface was the best part of the entire rough stone. The person who bid for the 30 million yuan was destined to lose everything.

"Could it have been Aunt Fang who threw it..."

A thought popped into Zhuang Rui's mind. Seeing that there were still five minutes left, he quickly took out his phone and dialed Fang Yi's number.

"Xiao Rui, what's up? Is there something you don't understand? Don't force yourself to bid if you're not sure..." Fang Yi was a little surprised to receive Zhuang Rui's call. The bidding was about to begin, and she really didn't have time to talk much.

"No, Aunt Fang, I wanted to tell you something. Please don't bid on that rough stone numbered 1888. I don't think it's a good choice. That crack could very well ruin the entire stone..."

Zhuang Rui's voice was somewhat urgent and self-reproachful. He had watched the commotion for so long without thinking to remind his mother-in-law that they would soon be family.

"Oh? Xiao Rui, are you sure?"

Fang Yi's fingers, which were typing numbers, stopped on the keys. Her expression turned serious as she asked, "My jade gambling consultant is very optimistic about this piece of jade. However, Fang Yi is very calm and is prepared to enter four million euros at the last minute to secure it in one fell swoop."

"I'm 80% sure this gamble will fail..."

Zhuang Rui's words made Fang Yi completely remove her fingers. She wouldn't gamble with a 20% chance of winning. After all, Zhuang Rui was one of her own and wouldn't speak carelessly. Moreover, in terms of reputation and track record in the jade gambling circle, the jade gambling consultant she had hired was not as good as Zhuang Rui.

Chapter 450 Ming Biao (Part 7)

Fang Yi hesitated for a moment, but ultimately decided to give up bid number 1888. She was the only one who entered the auction hall, but her bidding plan had been prepared beforehand. Zhuang Rui's phone call had disrupted her plans.

In fact, Zhuang Rui disrupted more than just Fang Yi's bidding plan. There were more than 800 people in the room, and at least 700 of them were probably affected by him. Zhuang Rui's widespread actions just now could also be the work of domestic capital tycoons. Therefore, everyone carefully raised their expected bids significantly in the final bidding.

"Three minutes left..."

Looking at the countdown numbers on the big screen, Zhuang Rui felt a little nervous. The No. 129 rough jadeite could relieve the pressure on Qin Ruilin's store in Beijing for a year or two in terms of mid-to-high-end jadeite jewelry. Zhuang Rui was determined to get it.

The entire hall became quiet; no one spoke, except for a strange sound that echoed through the hall, a "whooshing" sound like a bellows, which was actually the sound of everyone holding their breath and breathing heavily.

"Two minutes..."

Zhuang Rui saw that the price of bid number 129 on the big screen was still 25,000 euros, and breathed a sigh of relief. He held the bidding device in his left hand and operated the buttons with his right hand.

"200,000 euros, we should be able to secure it without a problem..."

Looking at the 2 and five 0s on the LCD screen of the bidding device, Zhuang Rui breathed a sigh of relief and placed his finger on the input key.

According to Zhuang Rui's opinion, the rough stone did not show any characteristics of a raw stone. If it weren't for the annotation below, many people would definitely have thought it was a piece of discarded broken stone. This is one of the reasons why new mine jadeite cannot be sold at a high price. The appearance of their outer skin is not as outstanding as that of old mine jadeite.

"Damn it, no way, add another 100,000..."

Seeing that only one minute remained, Zhuang Rui's heart skipped a beat. He felt that 200,000 euros wasn't enough, so he canceled the bid on the bidding machine and re-entered 300,000 euros. In his haste, he almost entered 3 million.

Zhuang Rui was so nervous because someone had raised the price of the rough stone he had his eye on by five thousand euros. He wondered how many euros the organizing committee had earned from his earlier shady dealings. Many people were afraid of not being able to bid on the rough stone they wanted, so they all added a lot more money to their original price range.

If the Myanmar authorities find out about this, I wonder if they'll award Zhuang Rui a "Best Customer Welcome Award." But if those businessmen find out, Zhuang Rui will definitely become a pariah, hated by everyone.

"Ten seconds... nine seconds... seven seconds... five seconds..."

When the number on the big screen reached five seconds, Zhuang Rui pressed the confirm button on the bidding device heavily with his right index finger. Instantly, the number under bid number 129 on the big screen changed to 300,000 euros, replacing the original 25,000 euros.

Zhuang Rui chose to bid in the last five seconds because five seconds was not enough time for others to calculate and change the bid amount. Even if others also took a liking to the material, they probably wouldn't have time to re-enter the numbers.

Just after Zhuang Rui pressed the confirm button, the numbers on the entire screen started jumping wildly. In that instant, no one knew what was happening, and no one could see any number on the screen clearly, because everyone was focused on bidding at that time, and the screen was flashing so fast it was dazzling.

For a full ten seconds, everyone in the auction hall was dazzled by the flashing numbers, and no one knew whether their bid had been successful.

Zhuang Rui inwardly scoffed at the Myanmar organizing committee. The bidding deadline was supposed to be 5 PM, but it took almost twenty seconds for the numbers to stop flashing. Looks like he'll have to bid later next time; maybe he can change his bid.

"I won! I won!"

"Damn, how is it so tall..."

"Does money grow on trees? Someone actually offered a million for this worthless rock?"

After the numbers on the big screen stopped flashing, everyone was looking for the final price of their bids for rough stones. For a moment, the entire auction hall was noisy. Some winners were dancing with joy, while others were hanging their heads in dejection and cursing under their breath. Laughter and disappointment were on everyone's faces, a microcosm of the diverse aspects of society.

"I got it!"

Zhuang Rui finally found lot number 129. The conspicuous figure of 300,000 euros made Zhuang Rui stand up excitedly and pump his fist.

Although Zhuang Rui could see through rough stones and find jadeite, this bidding method was too uncertain. Before the bidding opened, no one could say that they were sure of winning the bid. So Zhuang Rui was extremely excited. He felt that this was even more exciting than gambling on stones.

The experience of gambling on jade can be a rollercoaster of emotions, sometimes going from heaven to hell in a single cut, which can take several minutes or even half an hour. But in a direct auction, the feeling can be a whirlwind of emotions in just a few dozen seconds, making it incredibly thrilling.

"Brother Zhuang, you won the bid?"

Yang Hao's voice rang out from behind Zhuang Rui.

"Yes, we won a prize. How are you guys doing?"

After Zhuang Rui asked the question, he sensed something was wrong because Yang Hao and his nephew looked disappointed. Without even asking, they knew they hadn't passed.

"We didn't win. We submitted six bids and didn't win a single one. It looks like this year's Myanmar jade auction is going to set another record..."

Yang Hao's uncle replied with a bitter expression that he had already increased his conservative price by a considerable amount, originally hoping to win one or two rough stones, but unexpectedly, he suffered a complete loss and did not get a single one.

Upon hearing Uncle Yang Hao's words, Zhuang Rui looked up at the big screen and was also taken aback. The original rough stone, which was priced at 3.2 million euros, had actually reached a final transaction price of 5.8 million euros, which is nearly 60 million RMB.

The high prices achieved on the first day of the auction have already broken the record for the Myanmar jadeite auction in previous years. Not only Zhuang Rui, but everyone present felt a heavy weight in their hearts, as it seemed that the competition to come would be even more intense.

Currently, only a little over a hundred of the numbers on the screen haven't changed color. Those extremely few red numbers stand out starkly against the blue background. Of the 2,000 rough stones, only a little over 100 have failed to sell. Among the 1,000-plus rough stones that were sold, who knows how many people spent huge sums of money to buy such worthless stones?

"Brother Zhuang, we're leaving now. See you tomorrow..."

Yang Hao and the others did not win the bid, and he was no longer in the mood to ask Zhuang Rui to go sightseeing in Yangon. After saying goodbye, he walked out of the auction hall. However, the auction was not over yet. Three languages were spoken in turn in the auction hall, instructing the successful bidders to take their bid number plates and go to complete the formalities.

"Xiao Rui, did you win the bid?"

Fang Yi and Zhuang Rui had arranged to meet at the entrance of Hall One. As soon as she saw Zhuang Rui, Fang Yi asked him the question, a hint of smugness on her face. Zhuang Rui guessed that his mother-in-law had probably hit a few targets.

Zhuang Rui smiled and said, "I won one. Aunt Fang, did you win one too? Which ones did you win?"

"I won three prizes, the prices are decent, totaling two million three hundred thousand euros..."

Fang Yi handed the notebook in her hand to Zhuang Rui. These were all top secrets of the company, but Fang Yi obviously didn't bother to guard against Zhuang Rui.

"Two million three hundred thousand euros..."

Zhuang Rui glanced at the numbers. There were so many rough stones, even those that yielded green jadeite, that Zhuang Rui couldn't possibly remember them all. He quickly searched his notebook, and thankfully, he had all the records. This meant that these stones weren't waste. Moreover, Zhuang Rui vaguely remembered the stone numbered 788; it contained some golden thread jadeite, and the finished product could be worth 12 to 3 million RMB. With all three stones combined, Qin's Jewelry shouldn't lose money.

At this moment, Fang Yi also knew that Zhuang Rui had won bid number 129, but she didn't remember it. The two sat in Hall 1, waiting to complete the bidding procedures. The order of completing the procedures was arranged according to the winning bid price of each person. The rough stones with higher winning bids were processed first, and then the procedures were processed in descending order of the winning bid price.

Zhuang Rui's 300,000 euros should be placed after several hundred, but many people have won several euros. In addition, the organizing committee has opened more than a dozen windows for processing, so it should take about half an hour before it is Zhuang Rui's turn.

"Huh? Aunt Fang, what's going on?"

Zhuang Rui was puzzled to find that the people who were originally queuing at one window to complete their procedures had all rushed into Hall 1 where he was sitting.

"Perhaps the winning bids are the same? Then a second auction will be needed..."

Upon hearing that there was something interesting to watch, Zhuang Rui quickly stood up and followed Fang Yi, since it would be a while before it was his turn to complete the formalities anyway.

Sure enough, the two bidders offered the exact same price for the same piece of raw jade. What was amusing was that they had the same idea and set a price of 81,000 euros for it, hoping to win by using that extra 1,000 euros. However, they ended up having to go through a second auction.

According to the rules of the conference, if there are identical bids and neither party is willing to back down, the conference supervisor will conduct a second auction. At the same time, the two or more winning bidders can continue to raise their bids on the winning price, and the highest bidder will win.

"Is it true that neither of you wants to give up this bid?"

Hu Rong, who is in charge of supervising the auction, has begun asking the two parties involved if either of them is willing to give up their share.