

Enchanted 42

It was nine o'clock at night, but the conference room was ablaze with light, and the streetlights were beginning to light up the streets below.

Joseph sat upright in the chair, behind him was the glowing skyline of New York City. The light poured into the window, illuminating his grand figure.

The senior executives, sitting on both sides of the conference room, were reporting work to him carefully and cautiously. All the staff in the Runestone Group knew how harsh and serious Joseph could be when it came to working. A minor mistake would cost an executive his bonus, while a bigger one would cost him his job entirely.

Compared to their cautious attitudes, Joseph felt comfortable and confident. The well-tailored silver-gray shirt he wore softened his grim expression, but he just sat unstopable when he frowned.

When the executives of the marketing and financial departments finished their reports, Joseph finally gave his response, with his slender fingers propping up his chin which was covered with a newly grown beard as if he was absorbed in his thoughts. "You've done a good job, especially with this 27% growth in the first quarter in America, when many foreign luxury brands are crowding into the market."

The executives of the two departments wiped the sweat from their foreheads and were relieved. Hearing they did a "good job" from Joseph was the highest praise for them.

"In the next three years, the Runestone Group is going to open 25-30 flagship stores in America and will expand our investment in second and third-tier cities, so you have to notify the related department to write comprehensive proposals to me."

This caused whispers among the senior executives, and one of them demurred directly, "Mr. Dover, I think it's better to expand into e-commerce channels at the next step. Now that many brands are trying to transform their marketing model, I think e-commerce is a good choice for us."

Some showed agreement to this proposal, while others objected.

Joseph listened to him quietly while picking up the teacup to taste his tea leisurely until he finished his suggestion. Putting down the cup, he said, "Tom, I'm really pleased that you've paid great attention to the latest financial news. But have you considered the feasibility of this approach before you speak?"

His words embarrassed Tom. Tom stood there awkwardly.

"The rapid development did bring hopes to many manufacturers of some famous brands, and the non-inventory mode of operation could indeed lead to lower operating costs; for example, our channel costs reached between 35%-40%, while the channel costs of e-commerce brands only reached 15%, but the benefits have blinded their eyes." His eyes were harsh and undaunted. "In America, the overall environment for online shopping has matured, but it still takes a long time to get used to this model for diamonds. The habit of online shopping for American consumers is gradually forming, but their sense of thrust to online sales is still low during this process. Therefore without offline experience and the support of perfect customer service, customers' satisfaction rate would be lowered. If we want to dominate in the market, there is still a long road to strengthen our entities' stores. And that's what we

are doing now. It's unrealistic for us to cancel the entire entities' stores and jump into a new venture channel at this period."

Tom's cold sweat slipped down along his forehead. Fortunately, Joseph didn't call attention to it; instead, he turned to the manager of the marketing department and said, "I heard that Leo has taken some steps recently."

"Yes." The manager looked shrewd. "We have got the most reliable information that it is Leo who organized a strike at the Blue Light Company, which just entered the American market and led to a decline in their sales performance. Mr. Dover, now I suspect that Leo is intending to meddle with Runestone. In addition, Leo's high-end jewelry club also participated in the International Jewelry Show this time and is competing with our newly listed jewelry."

The Blue Light Company was a foreign jewelry company in England that had a strike as soon as entering the American market, causing controversy. Only Joseph remained calm and never suspected the precision of the information from their Runestone Group.

"What's more, Mr. Dover, the Key Group also wants to keep a close watch on the diamond mine we are preparing to bid on. He must be crazy, and he wants to use diamonds to cut diamonds." said the manager in righteous indignation.

Joseph just kept leisurely drinking his tea. "As the old saying goes: human beings die in pursuit of wealth, and birds die in pursuit of food. We need to watch out." The sharpness in the depth of his eyes was concealed in his thick eyelashes. He then looked up at his assistant, "Make contact with the companies in South Africa, and I'll negotiate with them personally."

"Okay, Mr. Dover."

When the meeting was almost finished, the secretary of the administrative department came in and whispered to Joseph. His face suddenly grew quiet and somber.

It was almost eleven o'clock at night when he drove back to his villa in the Hamptons. It was decorated well and was accompanied by a beautiful yard, where the shadows of trees were dancing in the breeze. He ordered people to expand the underground area that was filled with many modern elements. A modern parking lot, gymnasium, swimming pool, and cinema were all on the property, underground. He drove directly to the parking lot. His eyebrows wrinkled when he saw the light on in the master bedroom window.

Seeing Joseph return, Brenda let out a long sigh of relief, "Mr. Dover, you're finally back."

"Where is Ruby?"

"She is drunk."

This villa was the matrimonial home of Joseph and Ruby, but Ruby rarely came back to it. Somehow her temperament was greatly changed, and when she was drunk, she would come back unexpectedly. That's why Brenda had to call him back, again and again.

Lifting his hands, he rubbed his sore forehead and closed his eyes. He looked exhausted.

"Mr. Dover, Ruby looks very upset." Brenda was a little bit anxious, but she dared not urge him.

After a long while, Joseph opened his eyes, stood up, and walked to the bedroom.

He always slept in this royal bed in the bedroom, but at the moment, Ruby was lying across it, with her hair unkempt and her eyes full of tears. When Ruby saw him, she rushed out of bed and collapsed into his arms.

A strong smell of wine swept over him, and his forehead knotted in a frown. Stretching his hands, he pushed her away and stared at her, his eyes filled with harshness, "Ruby, haven't you done enough?"