

Middle Age 121

Chapter 121: A Score to Settle

Qi Yun waved his hand modestly, responding, "Director Zhang, you're too kind. I just happened to stumble upon the situation; I'm happy to help. Mainly, it was your police colleagues who worked effectively to capture the fugitive smoothly."

Zhang Dayong laughed heartily, "You really know how to talk."

"Did you come to see me for something specific today?"

Qi Yun quickly shook his head, "No, not really, I just wanted to meet you and get to know you."

Hearing this, Zhang Dayong felt relieved.

He looked at his watch, "It's almost meal time. Give me the chance to express my gratitude by treating you to a meal?"

"I have something to do later. How about we just grab something at the cafeteria?"

Qi Yun brightened at the suggestion and nodded instantly, "That sounds great, I happen to be a bit hungry."

"Haha, let's go then. Though the food in the police canteen can't compare with big restaurants outside, at least it's clean and hygienic, and the taste isn't bad."

"..."

During the meal, the two chatted about personal life, getting to know each other better.

After a simple dinner, Qi Yun had achieved his goal and took his leave.

To his surprise, the last incident not only earned him a fifty-thousand-yuan bounty but also introduced him to a deputy director of the police bureau.

Upon returning home, because school was starting tomorrow, the little girl had gone to bed early, and Zhao Qing was alone on the couch watching TV.

Thanks to his hard work last night, Zhao Qing was very welcoming today, quickly greeting him and taking his coat as he walked in.

"You're back."

Qi Yun gave her a peck on the cheek and asked with a smile, "Did you have dinner?"

"We ate ages ago," Zhao Qing replied as she hung up the coat.

Then Qi Yun sat down on the sofa with her, and Zhao Qing handed him a slice of apple from a fruit plate on the coffee table.

"What have you been busy with these days, leaving early and coming back late?"

Qi Yun took a bite of the apple, chewed it carefully, and said, "Busy making money. I want to tell you something and hear what you think."

Zhao Qing's eyes sparkled as she snuggled up to him, "Hmm, go ahead."

"It's like this, I have a meteorite..." Qi Yun began narrating, "So one option is a house worth two million, while the other is donating it to the country. Which would you choose?"

As she listened, Zhao Qing's expression kept changing.

After Qi Yun finished, she gently bit her lip, was silent for a moment, then said, "It depends on what you think. If you feel the future financial situation is secure, then you can consider donating it to the country."

"But if you're not in that position yet, then you should think about our home first."

Qi Yun heard this, his face full of smiles, and he kissed Zhao Qing again, "Your thinking aligns perfectly with mine."

"Stop it," Zhao Qing said playfully, pushing him away, "You smell like smoke, go take a shower."

Qi Yun chuckled, got up, and went to the bathroom.

Another round of passion later, he held his waist, went to the balcony, and lit a cigarette.

As he lowered his head to flick the ash, he noticed that the mineral water bottle that used to hold cigarette butts was gone, replaced by a uniquely styled ashtray.

Qi Yun smiled knowingly, his gaze turning towards the screen in front of him.

[Today's Intel 1 (Red): Yu Qixuan has conveyed your intentions to the higher-ups, and they are discussing a new plan]

[Today's Intel 2 (Red): Xia Jie has closed the massage parlor and is living with Old Wang, a decision that left many people in Xia Ping Village feeling regretful]

[Today's Intel 3 (Red): Boss Liao from Yingfeng Building is secretly in contact with overseas buyers, planning to smuggle a batch of implicated bronze artifacts disguised among regular antiques out of the country, with key evidence hidden in a secret compartment under the store's floor]

The content of the first two pieces of intel was expected, but the third was interesting; that Boss Liao had previously set up Shi Feng, who had been looking for a chance to get back at him, and now the opportunity had finally arrived.

The next day, Qi Yun prepared breakfast early, and after Zhao Qing and their daughter ate, they went to kindergarten, saving him the trouble of dropping her off.

Qi Yun leisurely finished his breakfast and then drove to Antique Street to Qiuyue Pavilion.

Shi Feng was in the shop, cleaning his treasures, and when he saw Qi Yun come in, he smiled, "You've been frequenting my place lately, did you bring me something nice again?"

Qi Yun sat down on a chair, lit a cigarette, and replied, "Nothing nice, but I have some news you might want."

Shi Feng's eyes lit up immediately, he quickly put down the cloth, and moved closer to Qi Yun, "What news? Tell me quickly."

Qi Yun flicked the ash off his cigarette, pointed to the overturned teacup on the table, "No rush, sit down first."

Shi Feng chuckled knowingly and started boiling water for tea.

A little while later, with the tea ready, Qi Yun took a sip and said slowly, "I heard something: the Boss Liao from Yingfeng Building who set you up last time is planning something big recently."

Shi Feng's face turned serious instantly, "Hmph, that jerk, I haven't settled the score with him from last time yet."

"What's he planning now?"

Qi Yun put down his teacup, his expression turning serious, "He's secretly contacted overseas buyers, planning to smuggle a batch of implicated bronze artifacts disguised among regular antiques out of the country."

Shi Feng's eyes narrowed, and he slapped the table hard, "That bastard dares to be a traitor!"

"Where did you get this information? Is it accurate?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Don't ask where it's from, it's definitely reliable."

Shi Feng stood up, anger written all over his face, pacing the store back and forth.

After a moment, he stopped, looked at Qi Yun, "When do they plan to make the deal? What's the route? I'll report him to the police directly."

Qi Yun sighed with a wry smile, "I don't know those details."

Shi Feng frowned immediately, "That's tricky. Without evidence, reporting it might not do much."

Qi Yun gestured for him to sit down, and then whispered, "I have a plan; we could do it this way... "

After listening, Shi Feng was momentarily stunned, "Would that work? Couldn't he turn it back on us if he catches wind?"

Qi Yun lit another cigarette and exhaled slowly, "That's why you need to find someone reliable, and I have connections at the police bureau, leave the rest to me."

Shi Feng thought for a moment, then gritted his teeth and slapped his thigh, "Alright, let's do it, I'll find someone."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile, "Okay then, you handle that. I'll come back to see you tonight."

The plan he discussed with Shi Feng had been carefully thought out the night before, partly to help Shi Feng get back at Boss Liao, and also to further deepen his relationship with Zhang Dayong by contributing to his achievements.

Leaving Antique Street, Qi Yun went to Xia Ping Village to check on Old Wang.

Under Xia Jie's careful care, the old man looked rejuvenated, regaining his former rebellious boss demeanor.

Seeing that he was fine, Qi Yun didn't stay long, exchanged a few words, and took his leave.

After he left, a young man with yellow hair approached Old Wang, looking hesitant.

Old Wang glanced at him impatiently, "Just say what you want to say, stop beating around the bush."

The young man scratched his head and murmured, "Actually, the medicine Brother Qi brought to the hospital last time was quite valuable. I overheard the doctor saying that the half pill you had left was bought by the hospital for 300,000..."

Old Wang's eyes widened immediately, "What? 300,000?"

His voice echoed in the room, startling a nearby cat into jumping up.

The young man was frightened by Old Wang's reaction and shrank back, nodding, "Yeah, that's what I heard the doctor say, so maybe you should treat Brother Qi more courteously in the future..."

Old Wang slumped back into his chair, muttering, "300,000, and you told me 2,000..."

...

Meanwhile, Qi Yun was driving to the teahouse next to the New University; Yu Qixuan had called earlier, asking him to drop by for another discussion.

Chapter 122: Catching Thieves!

Inside the booth, Wei Xueming and Yu Qixuan were already waiting.

Qi Yun wore an apologetic smile on his face, and smiled at the two old men, "I'm really sorry to keep you both waiting."

Wei Xueming waved his hand and poured him a cup of tea, "We just arrived not long ago."

Qi Yun thanked him, sat down, picked up the teacup, and took a sip, then said nothing more, waiting for the other party to speak first.

Wei Xueming and Yu Qixuan exchanged a glance, and Yu Qixuan was the first to break the silence.

"Qi Yun, we had another communication with the relevant departments yesterday. We brought some new ideas this time, hoping to discuss with you further," Yu Qixuan's tone was sincere.

Qi Yun slightly nodded, indicating for the other person to continue.

"Here's the thing, I mentioned it to you last time; we've just finished the New Year, and the funds of various departments are quite tight. We've managed to scrape together 600,000 after efforts from several departments."

"Additionally, there's a 50-square-meter shop in the family courtyard of the Space Agency that has just expired. They previously rented it out for 120,000 a year, and now the Space Agency is willing to rent it to you for free for ten years."

"This is already the result I've fought for with all my might. What do you think of this condition?"

After Yu Qixuan finished speaking, he stared at Qi Yun closely, fearful of another rejection.

However, Qi Yun frowned slightly after hearing this.

The shop's ten-year rent calculates to 1.2 million, plus 600,000 cash. It seems not that far off from two million.

But what to do with a shop in a courtyard? He doesn't have the energy for business; it's not worth the hassle.

Even if rented out, it would take ten years to break even, truly a lose-lose.

So he rejected this condition from the bottom of his heart as soon as he heard it.

Qi Yun put down the teacup, his expression showing a hint of helplessness, and slowly said, "Director Yu, Mr. Wei, I can feel you've put a lot of thought into this, but this shop is really quite useless for me."

Upon hearing this, a trace of anxiety flashed across Yu Qixuan's face. This was a task directly assigned from above, and it is one that has to be completed.

He was just about to speak up once more, but Qi Yun gave him a smile.

"Director Yu, don't rush, I also have a proposal here, why not listen to it?"

Yu Qixuan and Wei Xueming exchanged a glance, full of anticipation, nodded quickly to signal him to continue.

Qi Yun cleared his throat, his expression serious, and said, "I can accept the price of 600,000, as for the shop, I don't want it."

"However, I have a small request, which is that in the next three years, the tickets sold by the museum and space agency, etc., need to have my hot pot restaurant's advertisement printed on the back. Of course, the design cost of the advertisement will be borne by me."

Upon hearing this, both Wei Xueming and Yu Qixuan were taken aback, not expecting the other party to make such a request.

Yu Qixuan couldn't help but frown and explained with a wry smile, "Qi Yun, your idea is quite unique."

"But just printing ads on the back of tickets involves coordination with multiple departments, concerning ad approvals, venue image, and many other issues. It's likely not that easy to achieve."

Qi Yun wasn't impatient after hearing this, instead sipping his tea slowly before saying, "Director Yu, I know this is difficult, but based on the current situation, this is already my greatest concession."

"Moreover, the ad style for my hot pot restaurant will be designed elegantly and simply, without affecting the venue's overall image. On the contrary, it might even add a sense of liveliness to the venue, giving visitors a unique impression."

"This could be a win-win model for both of us."

Wei Xueming nodded in agreement, "That's right, Qi Yun's condition isn't excessive. Not everything can be taken advantage of by your side."

After a moment of contemplation, Yu Qixuan said, "Alright, Qi Yun, I will report your proposal accurately to the relevant departments, but whether it will be approved or not depends on the results of their discussion."

Qi Yun promptly said, "Thank you both very much."

"Actually, I proposed this plan not only to contribute to national scientific research but also to seek some opportunities for my own business. After all, I also have to consider the future for my family and myself."

What he said was very sincere, without a trace of hypocrisy.

This plan was something he had carefully considered last night and discussed with Lao Feng, who also thought it was a good idea that could bring quite a flow of customers to the hot pot restaurant.

Although for Qi Yun, the profit is still not comparable to a set of property, but who wouldn't have a patriotic heart?

Yu Qixuan nodded in response, "I understand, I will give you a reply as soon as possible."

...

After leaving the teahouse, Qi Yun returned to Vanke Mansion, parked the car, and walked to the kindergarten entrance, ready to pick up his daughter and Zhao Qing to go home.

It's almost time for school dismissal, and many parents were gathered at the entrance of the kindergarten, with the children gradually coming out.

At this moment, Qi Yun noticed a man and a woman not far away. The man was carrying a camera, and the woman had a microphone, both with certain TV station badges hanging on their chests.

They approached a middle-aged woman, saying, "Hey, parent, hello, we are from the xx TV Station children's program group. Your child looks really cute. Is there any interest in appearing on our TV program?"

Qi Yun listening on the side heard it clearly, and thought, hasn't he seen this kind of pitch online before?

Chapter 123: Catching Thieves!

The middle-aged woman was clearly a bit confused and asked suspiciously, "On television?"

"That's right, we're from the children's program team." The young woman said as she showed the work badge hanging around her neck, "Look, this is our work badge."

"Your little one is very adorable, and we currently have a program selecting child actors. I think he's very suitable. Are you interested in having him appear on television?"

"Will... will do." The middle-aged woman hesitated for a moment, then a look of delight appeared on her face.

After all, having their child appear on television is something most parents would be happy about.

However, she quickly became cautious again and asked, "You aren't scammers trying to trick me into paying a registration fee, are you?"

The young woman hastily waved her hand, smiling as she explained, "Rest assured, we are not scammers, and there is no registration fee; it's completely free."

Seeing her say this, the middle-aged woman felt relieved, "Can my child really go on television?"

The young woman nodded enthusiastically, her face full of warmth, "Of course!"

"Your little one is a natural star in front of the camera. Our program team is quite famous in the city and has made many kids stars already. As long as your child passes our preliminary selection, they can participate in the show recording."

The man carrying the camera interjected at just the right moment, "Madam, if you don't believe us, we have videos of our past episodes that you can watch."

Saying this, he set down the camera, took out a tablet from his bag, and skillfully swiped to play a lively video of children singing and dancing on stage.

In the video, the children wore beautiful costumes, exuding confident smiles on their faces, and the applause from the audience below was thunderous.

The middle-aged woman's gaze was drawn to the screen, her eyes full of anticipation, "Alright, let's have our child participate. Where do I sign up?"

The young woman turned around and pointed to a van not far away with the xx TV station logo on it, "You can register over there, and our TV station staff are there."

"After registration, bring your child to the TV station on the weekend for the preliminary selection."

The middle-aged woman looked in the direction she had pointed, nodded, and held her child's hand, walking toward the van.

Qi Yun watched this scene and had already guessed what would happen next.

The TV station was real, and the program team was real too.

Parents take their children to the preliminary selection and will certainly pass easily.

But to participate in later recordings and appear on television, they may have to pay some training fees, costume fees, and makeup fees.

Then after a while, the program would air on a channel that hardly anyone watched.

At this moment, Zhao Qing came out of the kindergarten holding Nuannuan's hand, and those two 'staff members' from the TV station immediately approached them.

"Hello, parent..."

"Make way, my child is not going on television." Zhao Qing didn't wait for them to finish speaking and raised her hand to block them directly.

The young woman wanted to say more, but at that time, Qi Yun walked over quickly, blocking them and speaking unkindly, "I said my child is not going on television, don't you understand?"

"Aren't you ashamed doing such heartless things all day?"

The young woman and the man carrying the camera were intimidated by Qi Yun's aura, wearing embarrassed expressions on their faces.

Qi Yun snorted coldly and took Zhao Qing's hand to leave.

"Doesn't your kindergarten do anything about this?"

Zhao Qing sighed helplessly, "The principal wants to manage it, but some people won't let her. They come here to deceive at the beginning of every semester."

Qi Yun nodded, understanding that such situations were somewhat helpless.

Even if those deceived parents realized it later, there was nowhere to argue, after all, their child did appear on television.

Back home, Qi Yun dove into the kitchen to prepare dinner, and soon a sumptuous meal was laid out on the table.

The three sat around the table, and the little girl picked up her chopsticks, proudly boasting to Qi Yun, "Dad, I made lots of friends at kindergarten today."

"Hmm, you did great, sweetie." Qi Yun patted his daughter's head, looking at Zhao Qing and said, "I was worried she'd struggle to adapt to the new kindergarten, but I guess I was overthinking."

Zhao Qing smiled, "She's a social butterfly in kindergarten now, every teacher knows her."

Qi Yun couldn't help but laugh, "Hahaha, Nuannuan is amazing!"

The three were chatting when Qi Yun's phone rang in his pocket.

He took out his phone and saw a message from Shi Feng, with just four words.

"Ready to go."

Zhao Qing turned her head over, "What's going on?"

Qi Yun smiled and shook his head, "Nothing, finish dinner and then you take the child to bed, I need to go out."

Zhao Qing looked at him suspiciously, "So late, what are you going out for?"

"To catch a thief!" Qi Yun gave her a mysterious smile.

...

Half an hour later, Qi Yun parked the BMW 5 series at the end of Antique Street and then walked to Shi Feng's car nearby.

"What's the situation?"

Shi Feng raised his hand to check the time and replied, "Just went in three minutes ago."

Qi Yun nodded, waiting quietly.

His plan was to wait here with Shi Feng to catch the thief.

When that thief comes out of Boss Liao's shop, they would "happen" to pass by, scare the thief away, and grab a plastic bag containing the key evidence of Boss Liao's smuggling of bronze artifacts.

Then hand this evidence to Zhang Dayong, who would lead a team to crack the smuggling case.

...

Time passed slowly, and Shi Feng smoked a cigarette, his face showing anxiety.

At that moment, his phone received a message. After reading it, he turned and said to Qi Yun, "Couldn't find it!"

"Could there be a secret compartment? Check the floor and such." Qi Yun responded.

Shi Feng nodded and his fingers quickly tapped on the keyboard.

Five more minutes passed, and Shi Feng's phone screen lit up again. After seeing the content, his spirit lifted.

"Got it!"

Qi Yun immediately sat up, fastened his seat belt, "Let's go! Time for you to shine."

The car started, the headlights lit up, heading towards Qiuyue Pavilion.

Just as they reached the entrance, they saw a sneaky silhouette emerge from the opposite Yingfeng Building.

Shi Feng immediately stopped the car, opened the door, and shouted, "What are you doing!"

The person was wearing a hood, their face unclear, but they were clearly startled and immediately sprinted away.

Shi Feng leaped forward, grabbing the person's arm, but as they jerked away, Shi Feng managed to seize the bag in their hand.

Qi Yun reacted a beat late but quickly got out of the car to help.

The person tried to break free again, but seeing Shi Feng's tight grip, after trying a couple of times and seeing Qi Yun lunging forward, they decisively abandoned the bag and ran towards the end of the street.

Qi Yun chased a few steps forward, but unfortunately, he couldn't keep up due to fatigue and had to give up.

This was all recorded by the camera at the shop entrance.

The two returned to Qiuyue Pavilion, panting, and after turning on the light, they quickly checked the contents of the bag.

Inside were several photos of bronze artifacts and a notebook.

"That bastard really is a traitor!" Shi Feng looked at the photos, gritting his teeth.

Qi Yun was not too surprised and took out his phone to dial a number.

"Hello, Director Zhang, I just encountered a situation..."

On the other side of the phone, Zhang Dayong's expression was serious, "Alright, I'll send someone over immediately!"

Before long, two police cars stopped at the entrance of Qiuyue Pavilion.

Six officers got out of the vehicles, and the leader walked up courteously and asked, "Who's Mr. Qi Yun?"

Qi Yun nodded at him, "I'm Qi Yun."

After explaining everything, the leader thanked him, took the evidence, and left first. The remaining officers headed to the opposite Yingfeng Building to conduct inspections.

...

The next day, two large seals were affixed to the door of Yingfeng Building, sparking lively discussions among the other shop owners on Antique Street.

It was said that Boss Liao was taken for a "tea chat" that very night and hadn't been seen since.

Shi Feng also received commendation from the local police station, along with a banner recognizing his bravery.

As for the thief, because of their extremely professional method of operation, leaving no clues at the scene, the chances of catching them were quite slim...

Chapter 124: The One Million Reward!

In the morning, Qi Yun was woken up by the sound of his phone ringing.

"Hello, Qi Yun, several departments have already agreed to your proposal." On the other end of the call, Yu Qixuan sounded much more relaxed than the day before.

"When do you have time today? Let's finalize the procedures, and then you can hand over the meteorite to us. The Space Agency is urging us."

Qi Yun instantly became more alert; he had expected this outcome.

He raised his hand to check the time and replied, "Haha, thank you, Director Yu, for fighting for me; so let's meet at noon, 12 o'clock."

"Alright, meet me at the museum at 12 noon."

After hanging up, Qi Yun dialed the number of Liu Xiaotao from Guanghai Group.

"Hello, Mr. Liu, I apologize, but I can't sell that lunar meteorite to you anymore," Qi Yun said straightforwardly.

"Huh?" Liu Xiaotao was taken aback, then asked in surprise, "Why? If you don't agree to exchange for a house, I can offer two million in cash in a few days."

Qi Yun shook his head with a wry smile, "Sorry, it's not about the money." Then, he explained the museum's situation to Liu Xiaotao.

After hearing this, Liu Xiaotao was silent for a moment, then with some admiration in his voice, he said, "Mr. Qi, I really didn't expect you to make such a decision."

To be honest, I initially thought I could get that meteorite, but since you plan to donate it to the country, I can't say much. This kind of contribution to national research is commendable."

Qi Yun smiled and replied, "Thank you for understanding. I hope we can cooperate again in the future."

After hanging up, Qi Yun quickly got up and went to the bathroom to freshen up.

The breakfast Zhao Qing had prepared was on the table. While eating, he began to read today's reports.

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): Old Wang has learned the value of selling half of the 'Angong Niu Huang Pill' to the hospital from Little Yellow Hair, and plans to transfer the ownership of that three-story self-built house to you.]

"The house for me? Old Wang is quite generous this time."

After reading the content of the intelligence, Qi Yun shook his head and smiled wryly. Back then, he told Old Wang the pill was worth two thousand yuan just to avoid burdening him, but in the end, he still found out.

However, he definitely couldn't accept the house since he wasn't pursuing any benefit initially.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Blue): A pigeon from Kashi was injured near Tobruk Village. The location device on its leg ring has failed due to battery exhaustion.

The owner of the pigeon is offering a reward of one million yuan to find it, Douyin account *****.]

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): A businessman from Chengdu is buying wild watermelons at a high price, contact number 189xxxx.]

Hiss!

"A million!"

Qi Yun took a deep breath. What kind of pigeon is this?

He immediately took out his phone to search for the opponent's account. The two latest videos posted were about the missing pigeon reward.

The video showed a picture of the pigeon, with grey feathers and some patterns on its back. According to the owner's description, this pigeon was from the Gaby pigeon line, meaning its lineage was extraordinary, and it had won awards in international competitions.

Now there's a one million yuan reward for finding this pigeon.

Qi Yun browsed through the other videos of the user, and the owner was a chubby Uighur guy, looking quite wealthy. He drove a Mercedes-Maybach, appearing to be a businessman.

"Offering one million, even if it were a dinosaur, I'd find it for you!"

As for the third piece of intelligence, it didn't catch much of his attention.

Wild watermelon, also known as caper, usually grows on desolate hillsides or in the Gobi Desert, and they are rare and hard to find.

A few years ago, he had seen them a few times, but now they seemed increasingly scarce. As for those sold online at tens of yuan per kilogram, whether they were truly wild was hard to judge.

After quickly eating some breakfast, Qi Yun took the lunar meteorite from the cabinet and put it into his bag, then drove straight to the museum.

It was a working day, and there weren't many people at the museum. Once the staff heard he was looking for Yu Qixuan, they directly led him to an office on the third floor.

The office door was half-closed. Qi Yun politely knocked on the door, and upon hearing Yu Qixuan's invitation to "please enter," he stepped inside.

Yu Qixuan was sitting at his desk, reviewing a stack of documents. Seeing Qi Yun come in, he immediately put down what he was holding and stood up to greet him.

"You're here, have a seat." Yu Qixuan warmly invited, pouring him a cup of tea.

"All the formalities are ready. You'll sign a document, and the meteorite will officially belong to the museum. As for the sixty thousand yuan compensation, it will be given to you within fifteen days by the museum." He took a folder from the desk and handed it to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun took the folder, carefully flipping through the contents, and seeing no issues, he picked up a pen to sign and leave his fingerprint.

After signing, he put away his copy in his bag, then took out the lunar meteorite and placed it on the desk: "Director Yu, do you want to check the meteorite one more time?"

Yu Qixuan smiled apologetically at him, "I have to take a quick look, just a routine check, don't mind it."

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, "I understand, please go ahead."

"Alright, have some tea first." Yu Qixuan said as he took the meteorite from the desk and started inspecting it behind his desk.

After a while, he put down the magnifying glass, a satisfied smile on his face: "The meteorite is perfect; it's very well-preserved. Your donation is of great significance to us. On behalf of the museum, I express our gratitude."

Chapter 125: The One Million Reward!

Qi Yun waved at him: "Director Yu, you're too polite. It's my honor to contribute to the national scientific research."

"Haha, we'll have a brief donation ceremony in a while, which will take a few minutes of your time. I hope you won't refuse."

Qi Yun initially wanted to refuse, but since the other party had already put it this way, refusing would seem rather impolite, so he had to agree: "Sure, I'll definitely cooperate with your work."

Not long after, a museum staff member came in from outside.

"Director Yu, everything is set up."

"Okay, let's head over then." Yu Qixuan nodded to the person and then looked at Qi Yun, saying, "Shall we go?"

"Alright."

The donation ceremony was held in a spacious conference room, decorated with some flowers and banners, looking quite formal.

Besides the museum staff, there were also several people with cameras.

Yu Qixuan stood in front of everyone, cleared his throat, and then said some official words.

Then applause surrounded them, and Qi Yun walked up to the stage.

Yu Qixuan shook hands with Qi Yun and handed him a donation certificate: "Mr. Qi Yun, this is a donation certificate from our museum. Once again, thank you for your generous act."

The cameras focused at this moment, and Qi Yun forced a smile.

...

After leaving the museum, Qi Yun drove to pick up Zhong Rui from the office, and then they headed to the market to buy a few fish nets, before driving towards Tobruk Town.

"We're going to catch a pigeon this trip. If we find it, be gentle and make sure not to injure it." Qi Yun explained while driving.

"Got it, boss." Zhong Rui nodded in acknowledgment and didn't ask any more questions.

Tobruk Town was quite large. The two of them traveled on the bumpy dirt road for over half an hour before arriving near Yinmaili Village.

Qi Yun parked the car next to an abandoned earth-brick house, and each of them took a net to start searching separately.

"The pigeon is gray. If there's any situation, contact me by phone at any time."

"Understood."

Qi Yun walked towards the north of the village, carefully observing the surroundings along the way.

By the roadside were rows of poplar trees covered with fallen leaves, possibly a hiding place for the pigeon.

As he walked, he paid attention to the ground for any feathers or other clues.

After searching for more than forty minutes, he heard a faint "cooing" sound while passing by a large shrubbery.

Feeling a sense of tension, Qi Yun slowly approached the bushes, tightening his grip on the net unconsciously.

He gingerly parted the branches and leaves to look inside.

In the next second, he heard the fluttering sound of wings. A pheasant with a long tail and colorful feathers burst out from the bushes.

Qi Yun's net wavered involuntarily as he was startled by the sudden appearance of the pheasant.

Calming himself, he shook his head disappointedly, thinking he'd found the pigeon, but it turned out to be just a pheasant.

This was something he used to eat often back in his hometown, and now it's suddenly become a second-class protected animal.

"Better not mess with it, better not mess with it."

...

Time quickly slipped into the afternoon, and with the sky getting dark, Qi Yun had already scoured more than half of the village with no success—not a single feather, let alone a pigeon.

Zhong Rui had the same results.

Both of them reluctantly decided to call it a day and plan to come back tomorrow.

They hoped the injured pigeon would hold out for a few more days and not starve to death.

Just after Qi Yun dropped Zhong Rui off, his phone rang in his pocket. Checking the screen, he saw Zhang Dayong's name displayed.

"Hey, Qi Yun, thanks for last night's help." Zhang Dayong's voice came through the phone with a hint of excitement.

"Hehe, nothing to thank for." Qi Yun chuckled and shook his head, "Has the case been solved?"

Zhang Dayong knew he was asking about the smuggling case, not the theft case.

"It's solved! The guy confessed to everything—twelve bronze artifacts involved, worth over fifty million!"

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun couldn't help but gasp, "Fifty million? That's quite gutsy."

"Exactly, even the city leaders were alerted," Zhang Dayong remarked on the other end, "This time, thanks to the crucial information you provided, I owe you one."

Qi Yun understood what was meant. It seems the other party earned quite some credit this time and had started showing goodwill towards him.

The reason he chose to inform them rather than directly report to the police was precisely for this statement.

"Haha, there's no such thing as a favor; it's what we ought to do," Qi Yun responded modestly.

Zhang Dayong laughed heartily: "How about I treat you to a meal later? This time, not in the canteen, but somewhere outside."

"Sure, I was just about to grab a bite myself," Qi Yun replied.

"Then you pick a place, I'm new here and not familiar with the area."

"Alright, I'll send you the location later."

After hanging up, a smile appeared on Qi Yun's lips.

He first sent a message to Zhao Qing, letting her know he wouldn't be home for dinner.

Then, thinking it over, he sent the address of Old Feng's hotpot restaurant to Zhang Dayong.

More than half an hour later, Qi Yun arrived at the hotpot restaurant first.

The newly acquired shop on the right had been renovated, partitioned into small compartments, already packed with people.

Qi Yun walked straight to the counter and said to Old Feng, who was busy with his head down, "Business looks pretty good, huh?"

Old Feng looked up, and upon seeing him, a smile spread across his face, "What brings you here?"

Chapter 126: The One Million Reward!

"Inviting a friend over for a meal, has the table in the corner been booked?"

"No." Old Feng shook his head, "Come on, I'll clean it up for you."

The two went to the corner and sat down. As Old Feng cleaned the table, he said, "We have money in the account now, I'm planning to give you a share at the end of the month. If you need money, just say the word."

Qi Yun took out a cigarette, handed him one, lit it, and after taking a puff, shook his head and said, "I've still got money."

Old Feng accepted the cigarette, lit it, took a deep puff, and slowly blew out smoke rings: "Alright, there's one more thing, I'm planning to discuss with you."

"What thing? Just say it." Qi Yun looked at him and asked.

Old Feng glanced around the shop and said, "Look, business is pretty good now. You've brought in advertising resources. Shouldn't we consider expanding a bit?"

Qi Yun chuckled at this: "You can make the decision on that. If we're short on money, I'll chip in some more."

Old Feng waved his hand: "It's not about money, this shop is a business between the three of us, I need to consult with you two first."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun nodded, his expression becoming more serious: "I agree with the idea of expanding. Business is getting better day by day, and with more advertising, we can expect more customers. The place is really becoming a bit too small."

"As for how to expand, you need to make the decision, as you have more experience."

Old Feng patted his arm upon hearing this: "Okay, Brother Peng has the same thoughts as you. I'll think it over thoroughly tonight."

As they were talking, Zhang Dayong came in through the door.

Qi Yun quickly waved at him, and seeing the gesture, Zhang Dayong walked over.

"Director Zhang, is having hotpot okay?" Qi Yun stood up to greet him.

"Sure." Zhang Dayong smiled, "I like it a lot. This place is nice, the aroma is delicious."

Qi Yun felt relieved, and with a smile, introduced to Old Feng: "Old Feng, this is Director Zhang."

"Director Zhang, this is Old Feng, my friend. He's the owner of this hotpot place."

Upon hearing this, Old Feng enthusiastically extended his hand: "Director Zhang, hello, hello, welcome to our little shop."

Zhang Dayong shook hands with Old Feng, smiling: "Boss Feng, with business this good, the taste must be great. I'll be coming more often."

Old Feng replied eagerly: "Director Zhang, hearing you say that makes me really happy. From now on, when you come to the shop, think of it as coming back home. I'll take good care of you."

"Hahaha, great!"

After a few brief exchanges, Old Feng went to instruct the kitchen to serve food.

Qi Yun picked up the teapot on the table and poured a cup of tea for Zhang Dayong, starting a casual conversation.

"Director Zhang, did you come to Bird City alone?"

Zhang Dayong picked up the cup, sipped lightly, and nodded slightly: "Yes, my wife can't leave work, and the kids have to go to school."

Qi Yun nodded in understanding: "Director Zhang, that's pretty tough on you."

As they were chatting, suddenly someone came over and greeted Zhang Dayong: "Director Zhang, didn't expect to meet you here."

Zhang Dayong turned to look at the newcomer, slightly surprised, quickly recalling inside his mind.

He had just taken up the position for two or three days, so many faces weren't too familiar yet.

"You're Ma Baoguo from Red Star Street Police Station, right."

The person looked pleasantly surprised, nodding repeatedly: "Yes, yes, Director Zhang, I'm Ma Baoguo from Red Star Street Police Station. It's such a coincidence to meet you here." As he spoke, his gaze curiously swept over Qi Yun.

Zhang Dayong noticed the gaze but didn't intend to introduce him, just smiled and responded: "Alright, I'm just having a meal with a friend, we can talk later."

Upon hearing this, Ma Baoguo quickly replied considerately: "Okay, Director Zhang, then I won't disturb your meal with your friend. When you're free, I'll report on work issues to you."

He finished speaking and politely nodded to Qi Yun before turning to leave.

Chapter 127: Flipping the Sheepfold

Before long, a steaming hot pot was brought to the table, followed by an array of fresh meats and seafood covering the entire table.

Considering that Zhang Dayong still had to return to the office to handle some affairs later, neither of them drank alcohol.

Qi Yun picked up a slice of tender beef, placed it into the pot for a light cook, and said, "Director Zhang, try this beef, the ingredients at Lao Feng's are all very fresh."

Zhang Dayong also picked up a slice of beef, dipped it in the sauce after cooking, and chewed it in his mouth, showing a look of satisfaction on his face: "Hmm, it's really good. No wonder his business is so great; he must have real skills."

Qi Yun laughed, "If you like it, you should come often."

"Haha, no wonder you brought me here today, turns out you're trying to get customers for your friend."

"..."

The meal ended harmoniously, and the two chatted like old friends.

After eating, Zhang Dayong excused himself to the restroom, but he actually went to the counter to settle the bill.

Unexpectedly, Lao Feng smiled at him and explained, "This shop is half owned by Lao Qi, so when you two come to eat, there's no need to pay."

Zhang Dayong was stunned for a moment, then joked to Lao Feng: "I'll let it pass this time, but if you don't accept my money next time, I won't dare to come again."

Lao Feng laughed heartily, "Alright, Director Zhang, come often in the future and I'll give you a discount."

...

After the meal, Zhang Dayong drove away, and Qi Yun didn't give him any additional membership cards or anything.

Making friends with different types of people requires different approaches; some value interests, others value relationships.

The former is like Vice President Liu, while Zhang Dayong seems to belong to the latter category according to Qi Yun.

To be friends with such people, it takes a long-term approach without going overboard.

When Qi Yun got home, his daughter was already asleep, and Zhao Qing was applying a face mask while cutting fruit.

"You're back, went for hot pot again?" she asked, looking up.

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, changing his shoes as he explained, "I forgot to tell you, a friend of mine opened a hot pot restaurant and I invested some money in it. I'll take you there next time if you want to eat hot pot; the taste is great."

Zhao Qing's eyes lit up, and she stopped cutting fruit: "Really? Then take me to try it tomorrow; I haven't had hot pot in a while."

Qi Yun sat beside her and said with a smile, "Sure, no problem."

Zhao Qing picked up a piece of banana, fed it to him, and asked nonchalantly, "How much did you invest?"

"About a million," Qi Yun replied.

"A million?" Zhao Qing was a bit surprised, raising her eyebrows slightly.

Qi Yun brushed aside the strand of hair by her ear and asked, "Yeah, why?"

Zhao Qing shook her head, pretending to look him over seriously, "Nothing, just didn't realize you were quite wealthy."

Qi Yun was amused by her words and gently tapped her nose, "The money's not much, but it should be enough to support you."

He currently had about 500,000 in cash in his account, plus the museum's pending payment of 600,000, making a total of 1.1 million.

This doesn't include the money in the stock account, which he checked the day before—selling now would yield 2.4 million.

Including dividends from the hot pot restaurant and two fruit supermarkets, his current income is not much less than before bankruptcy.

"Humph, I can make money myself," Zhao Qing snorted coldly, pushing away his restless hand, "Go take a shower, you stink."

Qi Yun stood up with a grin, "Alright, alright, I'm going."

...

[Today's Info 1 (Red): A wounded pigeon accidentally entered a sheep pen and made a home in the haystack]

"No wonder we couldn't find it."

In the bathroom, Qi Yun supported his waist and looked at the light screen in front of him with a sigh.

So the pigeon hid in the sheep pen. This really narrows the search range.

[Today's Info 2 (Red): A herbal factory on the brink of bankruptcy has a stock of two tons of wild watermelons]

[Today's Info 3 (Red): Zhang Liang, who fled to Chang'an, has been caught by a big boss and brought back to Bird City]

Seeing the content of the second piece of information, Qi Yun's eyes lit up. Wasn't there a businessman from Rongcheng offering a high price for wild watermelons yesterday? Could make a small profit by flipping them.

As for the third piece of information, all he could do was silently mourn for Zhang Liang—this guy doesn't even know to run farther away...

The next day, Qi Yun set off early with Zhong Rui to Tobruk Village in Tobruk Town.

Although the village isn't large, it is home to seventy or eighty families, and most villagers do not understand Chinese, undoubtedly adding difficulty to their search for the pigeon.

Merely inquiring with the first household took them more than ten minutes.

Qi Yun gestured and mimicked a sheep's bleat, managing to convey their purpose to the old Uighur man, who then led them to the sheep pen.

However, after a thorough search, they still found nothing.

"Continuing like this is too time-consuming," Qi Yun thought for a moment and instructed Zhong Rui, "You keep asking the next household, I'll see if I can find someone in the village who speaks Chinese to act as a translator."

Zhong Rui nodded, "Okay, boss, I'll head over then. Let me know if anything comes up."

After speaking, he walked toward the next household.

Qi Yun inquired around the village and, after a while, finally found a small shop in the village center.

Sitting on a dirt kang at the entrance of the shop was a young Uighur man fiddling with his phone.

Qi Yun's eyes lit up, and he quickly approached, "Hello, do you speak Chinese?"

Chapter 128: Searching the Sheepfold (Part 2)

The young man looked up, glanced at Qi Yun, nodded and replied, "Sure, what's up?"

Even though the pronunciation was a bit odd, Qi Yun could at least understand what he was saying.

"Can you help me with something? I'll give you two hundred yuan, how about that?"

Upon hearing two hundred yuan, the young man instantly showed a happy expression on his face:

"Sure, what do you want me to do?"

"I'm looking for an injured pigeon. It might be hiding in the villagers' sheepfold, but I'm having difficulty communicating with them. Could you help translate and take me to the villagers' sheepfold to search?" Qi Yun explained.

Without hesitation, the young man nodded and said, "Alright, no problem, I'll take you there."

Qi Yun immediately pulled out a hundred yuan from his pocket and handed it to the young man: "I'll give you one hundred first, once we find it, I'll give you the remaining hundred."

"Okay, let's go." The young man stood up with a smile, took the money, and tucked it into his pocket.

Qi Yun led him back to the households at the village entrance, where Zhong Rui was still struggling to communicate with an elderly Uighur lady.

The young man stepped forward, exchanged a few words with the lady in Uighur, and she nodded, pointing to a nearby house.

Turning to Qi Yun, the young man said, "She said her sheepfold is behind that house. We can go take a look."

Qi Yun gratefully thanked the elderly lady and then led Zhong Rui over to search the sheepfold.

With this translator, they searched much faster.

After searching through more than ten sheepfolds, Qi Yun finally found the injured pigeon in a corner of a pile of hay.

The pigeon looked almost identical to the one in the video, entirely gray feathers, its wings stained with blood, and it lay weakly curled up in the hay, occasionally letting out faint cooing sounds.

Qi Yun's eyes sharpened, and he immediately instructed Zhong Rui to fetch the cage from the car, while he gently approached and carefully cupped the pigeon in his hands.

The pigeon struggled slightly before calming down again.

Soon, Zhong Rui brought over the cage, and Qi Yun placed the pigeon inside, finally breathing a sigh of relief.

"Thank you for your help, here's the remaining hundred yuan." With that, he pulled out another hundred yuan from his pocket and handed it to the young man.

The young man took the money with a wide grin and ran off.

Qi Yun and Zhong Rui returned to where their car was parked, placed the cage in the passenger seat, and drove away.

Half an hour later, the car entered the city.

"I have some things to take care of, you can take a taxi home, remember to find me for reimbursement later," Qi Yun turned and said to Zhong Rui.

"Okay, boss." Zhong Rui nodded, opened the door, and got out.

"By the way, there's a five hundred yuan allowance for yesterday and today, remind me at the end of the month, and I'll give it to you along with the bonus from the last desert trip." Qi Yun added.

Upon hearing that, Zhong Rui's face lit up with joy, he bowed in thanks: "Thank you, boss, you're so generous!"

"Alright, cut it with the flattery." Qi Yun waved him off and drove away.

After driving some distance, he pulled the car to the side, took out his phone, and dialed the number left in the Douyin video by the pigeon owner.

"Hello, who's this?"

"I saw your video, are you looking for a pigeon? I happen to have found one that looks a bit like the one in your video."

The voice on the other end instantly turned excited: "Really? Can you video call me to show it to me?"

Qi Yun looked at the cage in the back seat and replied, "No problem, but when I found it, it seemed to be already injured."

"Injured? Please start a video so I can confirm if it's my pigeon."

"Alright, I'll add you on WeChat." Qi Yun replied, then hung up the phone.

He then added the owner as a contact and initiated a video call.

Soon, the pigeon owner answered the call, a Uighur middle-aged man with slicked-back hair appeared on the screen.

Qi Yun placed the cage in the passenger seat and pointed the camera at the pigeon inside, slowly moving it so the man could clearly see the pigeon.

"That's it, it's definitely it!" The man exclaimed excitedly on the other side, "How did its wing get injured?"

"When I found it, it was hiding in a pile of hay, I don't know exactly how it got injured." Qi Yun replied, frowning.

The man nodded and asked, "Mind telling me where you are right now?"

"I'm at the bird market."

"The bird market, huh." The man furrowed his brows slightly upon hearing that, thought for a moment, and continued, "Do you mind helping me take it to a vet first?"

Qi Yun nodded: "I can take it for treatment, but about the one million reward you mentioned in the video..."

"Money is not a problem." The middle-aged man immediately replied, "I can transfer you ten thousand yuan first if you help me take it for treatment."

"Regarding the one million reward..."

The man paused, thought for a moment, then continued, "If you trust me, you can airship the pigeon to Kashi first, and I'll send the money as soon as I receive it."

"Of course, if your schedule allows, you can also come personally, and we can make the transaction face to face."

Qi Yun naturally opted for the latter; he didn't even know the man's name, how could he trust him?

"Haha, my schedule is quite flexible, I can personally deliver the pigeon."

The man's expression remained unchanged as he nodded, "That works too, I will send you a photo of the pigeon's vaccination certificate later, it's needed for the air shipment."

"Alright, I'll take it for treatment now, but just to be clear, I'm only helping you find a vet, whatever happens afterward is not my responsibility."

"Of course, I'll transfer the ten thousand yuan to you right now."

"..."

After the call ended, Qi Yun turned off the ongoing screen recording, careful to save the video.

In matters like this, it's better to be prepared for anything.

Soon, he received another message on WeChat, confirming that the man had indeed transferred ten thousand yuan.

This demeanor certainly seemed like someone untroubled by money.

Without hesitation, Qi Yun accepted the money and then navigated to a pet hospital.

After a thorough examination, the vet said to Qi Yun: "It's nothing serious, I'll take it to treat the wound now."

Qi Yun nodded and waited nearby.

After a while, the vet emerged from the treatment room: "It's all done, the wound has been disinfected, medicated, and wrapped up. With proper care, it should recover quickly."

Qi Yun thanked him and took the cage.

"By the way, doctor, is the pigeon in a condition to fly?"

The vet furrowed his brows slightly, thought for a moment, and replied, "Theoretically, since the wound has just been treated, it's best not to fly to avoid high altitude pressure causing the wound to reopen."

Qi Yun paused for a moment, it was good he asked; if flying and trading resulted in the pigeon dying, it would be troublesome.

After leaving the hospital, he immediately called the pigeon owner again to explain the situation.

The owner pondered for a moment and replied, "Would it be possible for you to drive it to Kashi? I can pay you an extra twenty thousand yuan for your trouble."

Drive?

Qi Yun froze slightly, considering the distance to Kashi was nearly two thousand kilometers.

But for the one million reward, it seemed that enduring it wasn't impossible.

So he immediately replied, "Alright, I'll drive it to you."

"Great, thank you very much! Drive safely."

After the call ended, the man indeed transferred another twenty thousand yuan.

Qi Yun returned to the car, lit a cigarette, and took a couple of puffs.

If he drove alone, it would take at least a day and a half to cover two thousand kilometers, it was best to find someone to share the driving.

Plus, having more people gives one confidence, especially when going to another's territory for a transaction.

Upon thinking this, the high and sturdy figure of Liu Meng flashed in his mind.

Liu Meng, a veteran, strong and fit, can drive.

Perfectly fitting his requirements.

Chapter 129: The Shattered Car Window

In the north of the city, inside an old and secluded warehouse, a middle-aged man pointed to the corner of the storage room and said, "Here are two tons of wild watermelons. I bought them from farmers a few years ago for medicinal purposes. Later, the medicine didn't sell well, so they've been left here ever since."

"If you want them, I can give them to you for a cheaper price."

The middle-aged man's hair was disheveled, his face full of fatigue, looking just like Qi Yun did before his company went bankrupt years ago.

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun directed his gaze toward the pile of wild watermelons in the corner of the storage room. He stepped forward a few steps, squatted down, and carefully examined the condition of the wild watermelons, finding that although they'd been stored for years, they were still relatively well-preserved.

He then slowly stood up, took out a cigarette, handed one to the middle-aged man beside him, and said, "Wait for me a few minutes. I need to call my partner for a quick discussion."

The middle-aged man nodded, took the cigarette, and lit it, while Qi Yun took out his phone, walked to the side, and dialed the Chengdu businessman's number.

The call was quickly connected, and from the other end came a fluent Sichuan-accented voice: "Hey, who is it?"

"Hello, boss, I heard from a friend that you're buying wild watermelons, is that right?" Qi Yun got straight to the point.

"Exactly! Do you have any?"

"Yes, I have two tons collected a few years ago, guaranteed wild."

Hearing this, the person on the other end immediately sounded excited: "Two tons, great, I'll take them all."

"What about the price?" Qi Yun squinted his eyes and asked.

"Well..." The businessman pondered for a moment and replied, "To be honest with you, the price I usually pay is 80 yuan per kilogram. Since you have two tons, I'll add 2 yuan more, 82 yuan per kilogram."

"How do you feel about that?"

Qi Yun didn't answer immediately. He waited two seconds before saying, "Let me discuss with my friend. I'll get back to you in a few minutes."

"Alright, alright."

After hanging up, Qi Yun extinguished his cigarette butt and walked back to the pharmaceutical factory owner.

"I'll take all two tons. What price are you offering?"

The pharmacy owner's eyes flashed with a hint of anticipation, but then he hesitated, bit his lip, and said, "Brother, I won't beat around the bush. The cost of these two tons of wild watermelons wasn't cheap when I bought them. Although they've been here for years, it doesn't affect their medicinal properties."

"Here's the real price: 98,000 yuan, I can't go any lower."

Qi Yun rubbed his chin, quickly calculating in his mind.

The Chengdu businessman's price was 82 yuan per kilogram, which is 164,000 yuan for two tons. Subtracting 98,000 yuan, I can still earn 66,000 yuan. This deal is worth it.

He looked at the pharmacy owner's bloodshot eyes and handed him another cigarette, smiling, "Don't bother with 98,000, I see this batch is good. I'll round it up to a whole number, 100,000 yuan, let's be friends."

"I've been through your situation before. Just endure it, and it'll get better. I hope we have more opportunities to cooperate in the future."

With that, he patted the pharmacy owner's arm.

The pharmacy owner's eyes immediately reddened. He stared at Qi Yun for a long while, tremblingly said, "Thank you."

Perhaps what he valued more wasn't the extra 2,000 yuan, but the encouragement given by Qi Yun.

Qi Yun waved his hand with a smile, "Let's sign the contract, and I'll call the truck to pick it up shortly."

"Come on, let's go to my office."

With that, the pharmacy owner led Qi Yun to his office. After the two of them signed the contract, Qi Yun immediately transferred 100,000 yuan to the pharmacy owner's account.

Afterward, he went outside to call the driver who previously hauled frozen shrimp, asking him to come and help with the cargo.

It didn't take long for the truck to arrive at the warehouse. The pharmacy owner even found two workers to help load the goods.

During this break, Qi Yun once again called the Chengdu businessman to confirm the trading location.

After all the goods were loaded, Qi Yun had the truck follow his car and headed toward another warehouse.

Over there, the Chengdu businessman and two Uighur workers were already waiting. As soon as the goods arrived, they quickly started unloading the truck.

Once the scaling was complete, the other side promptly made the payment.

After paying the driver, Qi Yun hurried to Liu Meng's house.

Liu Meng was originally working on a nearby construction site. As soon as he heard someone needed his help, without saying much, he directly left the construction site and came back.

"What's up, Qi? What do you need my help with?" Seeing Qi Yun getting out of the car, Liu Meng, who was squatting at the courtyard gate, immediately came over.

Qi Yun patted his arm and joked with a smile, "What, won't even offer me a drink of water?"

Liu Meng chuckled honestly, "Come on, let's talk inside."

Once they were inside and seated, Qi Yun finally said, "I want you to take a trip with me to Kashi. It'll take about three to four days round trip."

"The profit on this run is not small. I'll give you 5,000 yuan."

Upon hearing this, Liu Meng hurriedly shook his head and refused, "No problem going to help you, but forget the money, I don't want it."

Last time when he was hospitalized, Qi Yun came to the hospital and left 5,000 yuan, and he had always kept it in mind, feeling it improper to take Qi Yun's money again.

Qi Yun smiled, took out a cigarette, handed it over, and teased, "What, your wife and kids don't eat?"

Liu Meng's face instantly turned red, stammering as he tried to say something else.

Qi Yun lit the cigarette, waved his hand to interrupt, "Don't worry, my profit this time is far more than 5,000 yuan. Just take it. Otherwise, I won't feel comfortable asking for your help next time."

Hearing this, Liu Meng hesitated for a moment, then said with a wry smile, "Alright, I'll listen to you. I'll accept the money, but just this once, okay? You've helped me enough, and discussing money between brothers hurts feelings."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile, "Alright, then hurry up and pack, and we'll head out directly later. We'll take turns driving to try to reach Kashi by tomorrow morning."

Chapter 130: Shattered Car Window (Part 2)

Liu Meng responded, quickly changed his clothes, and came out carrying a canvas bag not long after.

"Old Qi, I'm ready. We can set off now."

The two got into the car, and Qi Yun skillfully started the engine, heading toward the highway entrance.

He previously called Zhao Qing to say he would be going to Kashi for a few days. She only grumbled dissatisfied, "You promised to take me for hotpot today," but didn't complain further and said she'd take good care of their daughter.

Having such a good helper at home during this time made it much easier for Qi Yun.

In the passenger seat, Liu Meng turned to look at the cage in the back seat and asked, "Old Qi, why did you bring a pigeon?"

Qi Yun smiled at him, "This trip is specifically to deliver it. Don't underestimate this pigeon; it's worth more than this car."

After hearing this, Liu Meng took a sharp breath in surprise.

Once on the highway, Qi Yun engaged cruise control, sticking to the speed limit of 120 km/h. The speed slowed down again through the mountain areas, and they barely reached the Kuerle Service Area by midnight.

They still had more than a thousand kilometers to go before reaching his destination.

At the service area, the two had a simple dinner, refueled the car, and then Liu Meng took over driving.

Qi Yun leaned back in the passenger seat, beginning to review the day's intelligence.

[Today's intelligence 1 (Red): Old Feng contacted the owner of the neighboring adult store yesterday, expressing interest in taking over their store. The owner asked for a transfer fee of 380,000, while his actual psychological price is 200,000.]

[Today's intelligence 2 (Red): Zhang Dayong, due to successfully cracking a smuggling case, caught the attention of a big figure and will soon be promoted to Executive Deputy Director of the New District Branch.]

[Today's intelligence 3 (White): Yesterday afternoon, Nuannuan found a Yuan Datou worth 2,000 yuan on the lawn.]

Another three pieces of ordinary intelligence. Qi Yun was surprised that his daughter had such good luck to find a Yuan Datou.

He smiled knowingly and dialed Old Feng's phone number.

"Hello, Old Qi."

"What are you up to?" Qi Yun asked.

Old Feng closed the account book, "Just finished with the store's matters, getting ready to go home."

Qi Yun thought for a moment, tentatively saying, "Just checking, weren't you planning to expand the hotpot restaurant? Got any plans?"

Old Feng sighed, "I asked the neighboring store today, and they want 380,000 for the transfer fee. I feel like it's too expensive."

"How big is that store?"

"About ninety square meters, the size is quite suitable, and the rent is similar to ours."

Qi Yun took a drag of his cigarette, paused, and replied, "With ninety square meters, I think 200,000 is about right. Try negotiating again tomorrow. If they don't agree to that price, we'll look elsewhere."

Old Feng nodded, "Alright, I feel 200,000 is about right too. I'll ask again tomorrow."

"All right, hang up now. Give me a call if you face any issues."

"Did you call just for this?" Old Feng asked, puzzled.

Qi Yun laughed, "Just wanted to remind you to take care of yourself and not exhaust your body. I'm still counting on you to help me earn money."

"..."

Liu Meng drove skillfully and steadily. Qi Yun reclined his seat and soon fell asleep.

When he woke again, it was already morning.

Rubbing his sleepy eyes, he sat up straight and looked out the window.

On either side of the highway lay endless deserts, with occasional sparse poplar trees.

The road sign ahead read, "260 kilometers to Kashi."

Qi Yun turned to look at the tired face of Liu Meng and said, "Why didn't you call me? Let me drive from here, and you can rest."

Liu Meng didn't insist and swapped places with Qi Yun at the next gas station.

After filling up the tank, the car set off again, and by noon, they finally entered the city of Kashi.

Qi Yun found a hotel by the roadside, took a comfortable shower, and then went out with Liu Meng to have lunch.

While waiting for the food, he called the pigeon owner, telling him they had arrived in Kashi.

After a brief silence, the other side said, "I'll send you a location. Bring the pigeon over now."

"Okay, I'll be there shortly," Qi Yun agreed, then hung up the phone.

After lunch, they got back into the car, and Qi Yun followed the location sent to him on the GPS.

The scenery on both sides of the road gradually transitioned from the bustling city to the tranquil suburbs.

The car slowly drove down a somewhat old lane lined with exotic-looking ethnic buildings, along with several towering mosques.

Qi Yun glanced at the GPS, which showed they were a few hundred meters away. He parked the car on the side of the road and turned to Liu Meng, saying, "Brother Meng, if there's any dispute later, call the police immediately and try not to engage physically."

Liu Meng seemed to understand something, furrowing his brow, "How about I go take a look first? You stay here."

Qi Yun shook his head with a smile, "It's fine, I just told you in advance to be cautious. It's a society ruled by law now; they should not dare to cause trouble."

He wasn't worried about their safety; he was mainly concerned the other party might back out and refuse to pay the million. That might lead to disputes.

Although he had evidence, such matters could only be resolved through legal channels, which could be time-consuming and laborious.

The car continued to move and soon arrived at a rather grand-looking courtyard. Tall mulberry trees stood on both sides of the entrance.

After parking, Qi Yun approached and knocked on the door. Footsteps were heard inside, and shortly, a tall middle-aged man dressed in traditional ethnic attire opened the door.

His gaze was sharp, scanning Qi Yun and Liu Meng for a moment before asking, "Are you the ones delivering the pigeon?"