

## Middle Age 181

### Chapter 181: The Power of Connections

"Where are you? Let me see the materials first, we can make the transaction face to face."

"I'm currently trapped near the Myanmar border and can't return. There's a group of people looking for me everywhere." Qiu Jiahao's tone carried a hint of pleading, "Can you give me a hand? As long as you help me return safely, I'll sell this batch of jade to you at a low price; I'm begging you."

Qi Yun roughly guessed who those people were, feeling a sense of revelation, not expecting the situation to be so complicated.

Personally going to the border to pick someone up was out of the question.

The news broadcasts it eight hundred times a day; the situation over there is chaotic and mixed. He wouldn't put himself in danger for the other party.

Moreover, even if Qiu Jiahao's batch of jade was really gifted by someone else, it lacks the necessary documentation, and it's almost impossible to bring it back to the country legitimately without special connections.

After pondering for a moment, he said into the phone, "Let me think about it." Then he directly hung up the phone.

...

Half an hour later, Qi Yun drove to Boss Bi's company.

The two had already arranged it when they landed from the plane yesterday; he was here today to handle the stock transfer procedures.

Under a more-than-ten-story office building, Qi Yun looked up at the shimmering "Blue Sky Jewelry" sign in the sunlight, then stepped into the lobby.

In the office, Boss Bi saw him and immediately showed a warm smile, getting up to greet him, "Brother Qi, you're finally here, I've been waiting for you for quite a while."

"Come, please, sit down."

Qi Yun responded with a smile, following him to sit on the sofa.

Boss Bi casually picked up the teapot on the table and said, "Have a cup of tea first, the stock transfer agreement has already been prepared."

"Alright," Qi Yun nodded, picking up the teacup and taking a sip, "Hmm, this tea is nice; even someone like me who doesn't understand tea can taste it."

Boss Bi waved his hand with a certain pride in his eyes, "This is authentic Mingqian Longjing, specially left to me by friends from the place of origin, very few in number. I can hardly bear to drink it myself, but since you rarely come, you must have a taste."

With that, he put down the teapot and took out the prepared stock transfer agreement from the file box beside him, handing it to Qi Yun.

"Brother Qi, take a thorough look at this agreement, and if there's any doubt, we can discuss it anytime."

Qi Yun took the agreement and carefully read through the key contents. After ensuring there were no problems, he picked up the pen and signed his name.

After handing the agreement back to Boss Bi, he raised his head and said with a smile, "Boss Bi, I'll be counting on you from now on."

Boss Bi put down the teacup and patted his shoulder, "Brother Qi, there's no need to say that. We're on the same boat now; supporting each other is only natural."

After signing the agreement, Qi Yun immediately asked Zhong Rui to transfer five million into Blue Sky Jewelry's account, making him officially a shareholder of the company.

"I was planning to introduce you to a few other shareholders tonight, but two of them have gone to Paris and won't be back for a few days; we'll get together then," Boss Bi said.

Qi Yun nodded, "No problem, there'll be plenty of chances in the future."

After the formalities were done, Boss Bi briefed him on the current status of the company and asked if he was interested in participating in company management.

Qi Yun hurriedly waved his hand to decline, not to mention his complete lack of knowledge about the industry; he might not even have time to come to the office every day.

Seeing this, Boss Bi didn't insist, "Brother Qi, I understand your thinking, especially since you have your own business to focus on, but rest assured, the company is currently operating smoothly, and I'll definitely communicate with you over any major decisions first."

Qi Yun nodded in gratitude, "Boss Bi, thank you for understanding; I'll rely on you and the other shareholders in the future. If the company needs my help, please let me know."

Boss Bi laughed heartily, "Don't worry; we are all brothers now. If I really need you, I won't stand on ceremony."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile, taking out a cigarette from his pocket and handing it to him, changing the subject, "By the way, I've encountered something and would like your opinion, Boss Bi."

Boss Bi took the cigarette, lit it, and took a drag before slowly blowing out the smoke, "Brother Qi, if there's something, just say it straight, no need to be polite."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun recounted the whole affair of Qiu Jiahao having a batch of jade and being hunted in the compound.

"I've heard that the situation over there is pretty chaotic; I can't go personally to rescue him, and he doesn't have documentation for the jade, so it's difficult to bring them back to the country."

After listening, Boss Bi furrowed his brow slightly, remaining silent for a while before asking, "How is your relationship with that person?"

Qi Yun pondered briefly, exhaling a puff of smoke, "Not really friends, just acquaintances at best."

Logically, this guy had crossed him before, but Qi Yun was over the matter long ago, especially having drawn a clear line with Shen Wanting. Therefore, he wasn't too bothered by this issue.

Although the guy had a questionable character and his conduct was quite annoying, he seemed to care for his daughter reasonably well. Witnessing the recent series of tragedies he faced, Qi Yun felt somewhat sympathetic.

Boss Bi nodded slightly, flicking the ash, "Brother Qi, I'm quite familiar with Myanmar, especially the border area. It's chaotic, not very peaceful. If your relationship isn't deep, then indeed it's unnecessary to take risks."

Qi Yun nodded in agreement.

President Bi paused for a moment and then continued, "Our company has partners in Myanmar. They have connections with some local powers, so getting people safely back home shouldn't be a problem."

"As for that batch of jade, my suggestion is to have someone from Myanmar handle the negotiations. If the deal goes through, you can share part of the profit, thus avoiding any risk."

Hearing this, Qi Yun pondered silently, feeling that President Bi's proposal was indeed quite good.

Not only could he avoid putting himself in danger, but he could also potentially gain some profit and help Qiu Jiahao out of his predicament.

This is the power of personal connections.

He nodded and said, "Alright, let's do it your way, President Bi. I'll send you the contact details."

At the same time, he sent Qiu Jiahao a message, informing him that someone would contact him about the jade transaction and that he would be safely escorted back to the country.

...

Having handled matters there, as Qi Yun just walked out of the office building, he received a call from Liu Meng, saying that his comrade Chen Wei had already been picked up.

With nothing else pending, Qi Yun decided to meet this person and see if he could meet his expectations.

Upon driving to Liu Meng's home, just as he got out of the car, Liu Meng greeted him from the yard along with another man in his forties.

Qi Yun scrutinized the middle-aged man before him. The man had a tall posture, and piercing eyes, and though he wasn't as tall as Liu Meng, his stern demeanor was not to be overlooked.

He resembled those professional bodyguards in movies, with an air of decisiveness.

Liu Meng introduced, "Old Qi, this is my comrade Chen Wei. Old Chen, this is my good brother, Qi Yun."

Qi Yun stepped forward, extended his hand, and smiled, "Hello, Brother Wei."

Chen Wei appeared to be a man of few words. He stiffly extended his hand for a quick handshake with Qi Yun, managing a taut smile, and greeted plainly, "Mr. Qi."

Qi Yun didn't mind his aloof manner; after all, he needed someone who could ensure his safety, not someone skilled in flattery.

The three of them sat down in the yard, and Qi Yun took out a cigarette, offering one as he asked, "Brother Wei, what did you do before?"

Chen Wei shook his head, not taking the cigarette, and simply responded with two words, "Security Services."

Liu Meng, noticing this, smiled honestly and took the cigarette from Qi Yun, lighting it up as he explained, "Old Qi, don't mind him. Old Chen's always been like this, not very talkative, but his skill is top-notch. I wouldn't last ten seconds under him."

Hearing this, Qi Yun showed an intrigued expression.

He had seen Liu Meng's skills firsthand when, that night in the tent, Ai Shan and Beck were taken down in one swift move, so quick that Qi Yun didn't see it clearly.

"Old Chen previously worked at a security company in Chengdu and came at once when I called. You can absolutely trust him," Liu Meng added.

Qi Yun nodded, having faith in Liu Meng's words. Their close relationship assured him that Liu Meng would not set him up.

"Meng, have you mentioned that I'm planning to travel abroad in a few days—going to Japan and the Big Goose—that's not determined yet. Brother Wei, how do you calculate your fees?"

Chen Wei frowned slightly, seemingly indifferent about payment. He stared intently at Qi Yun and said, "Mr. Qi, Liu Meng and I are brothers through thick and thin. I'm not here for the money just because he asked me to help."

Qi Yun shook his head upon hearing this, "It's important to distinguish issues separately. You're helping out on Meng's account, but appropriate compensation is a matter of respect for your effort."

After a brief silence, Chen Wei replied, "Let's discuss it after it's all done."

Qi Yun nodded and didn't dwell on the topic, and the three chit-chatted, mostly listening to Liu Meng extol Chen Wei's feats in the military.

It turned out that not only was he incredibly skilled, but he was also proficient in firearms and marksmanship, having won first place in some competitions.

Qi Yun listened in silent admiration, while Chen Wei remained cold and composed, as if those words had nothing to do with him.

Just then, Qi Yun's phone rang, and he saw it was a call from Zhang Dayong, so he quickly answered.

"Hello, Director Zhang."

On the other end, Zhang Dayong sighed and came straight to the point, "Old Qi, I apologize about the bidding situation. Someone from above personally intervened, and I'm powerless."

This outcome was something Qi Yun had long anticipated. He replied calmly, "Hehe, no need to say that, Director Zhang. I understand your predicament."

Zhang Dayong nodded, "I'm glad you understand. I know you did a lot of prep work for this project, but we'll have other chances in the future."

"Yes, there's always a next time," Qi Yun smiled and continued, "Could you perhaps hint at who pulled the strings?"

Inquiring this wasn't out of mere curiosity, but knowing it was Re Lijiang targeting him, it was crucial to understand their hand to prevent future unwarranted surprises.

There was a moment of silence from Zhang Dayong on the phone, likely weighing the pros and cons. Ultimately, he lowered his voice and said, "Old Qi, I know you want to clear things up, but it's a sensitive matter..."

"I can only tell you it was someone from city hall..."

#### Chapter 182: Da Beitou's Connections

Qi Yun initially thought that the slicked-back hair person's connections were in the New District; little did he know they were actually in the city government, which left him somewhat stunned.

After a long silence, he thanked Zhang Dayong and then ended the call.

Liu Meng noticed his serious expression, handed him a cigarette and asked, "Is everything okay?"

Qi Yun took the cigarette, smiled and shook his head, "Nothing, just a little trouble."

"By the way, Brother Wei, let's exchange contact information. I'll arrange a hotel for you later, so you can relax for a couple of days, and I'll contact you when it's time to leave."

Chen Wei nodded, pulled out his phone from his pocket, and said, "No need to bother, Qi. I'll just stay at Liu Meng's place."

Liu Meng chuckled agreeably from the side, "Yeah, Old Qi. Let Old Chen stay at my place, it's convenient, and we haven't seen each other for a while, so we can catch up."

Upon hearing that, Qi Yun didn't insist further and nodded, "Alright, you two have a chat then, I have some things to attend to, so I'll head out first."

...

Meanwhile, in a private club in the Sha District, Re Lijiang was having tea with a man who looked rather imposing and was in his fifties.

"Brother Zhou, sorry for troubling you this time."

The man referred to as Brother Zhou nodded slightly, took a sip of tea, and said indifferently, "Why aren't you staying in Kashi properly, and what made you think of taking on a project here?"

Re Lijiang wore a light smile on his face and explained, "Haha, it was rather incidental. I initially came to visit some elders for my father and happened to discover that this project has a good profit, so I wanted to give it a try."

"Hmm." Brother Zhou muttered softly, then asked, "How is the old man's health?"

Discussing this issue, Re Lijiang frowned and sighed gently, "It seems like it will be this year."

Upon hearing this, Brother Zhou showed a trace of regret on his face, put down the teacup, and sighed as well, "Time waits for no man."

"Let's not talk about this." Re Lijiang waved his hand, took out a wristband from his pocket, and slid it across the table.

The wristband had numbers on it, much like those used for opening lockers.

"I heard Xiao Yu's expenses for studying abroad in the United States are quite high, so I've prepared two million for him as pocket money."

Brother Zhou glanced without any visible reaction but didn't say a word.

...

When Qi Yun drove back to Vanke Mansion, Zhao Qing was already waiting for him at the pergola in the residential area. Seeing Qi Yun's car, she quickly ran over and got into the passenger seat.

She didn't have classes in the afternoon, so she took half a day's leave, intending to go with Qi Yun to the renovation company to finalize the design for the small villa.

Qi Yun turned his head to look at her, a gentle smile on his face, "Traffic was a bit heavy, have you been waiting long?"

Zhao Qing shook her head lightly, "Not for long, I just came out."

Though she was trying hard to act happier, Qi Yun could still sense a hint of sadness between her brows, clearly still affected by Dean Luo's passing.

Qi Yun didn't say much, merely raised his hand to stroke her hair.

A half-hour later, the car stopped in front of a renovation company.

Qi Yun took Zhao Qing's hand and led her into the store.

Just as they pushed open the door, a woman in professional attire with a graceful figure quickly approached.

"Hello, welcome... Qi... Brother Qi?"

Qi Yun looked up; the woman in front of him was his long-time no-see sister-in-law, Meng Sisi.

He was slightly taken aback, a hint of surprise on his face, then smiled and said, "Ah, what a coincidence! Working here now?"

The sister-in-law glanced at the hands Qi Yun and Zhao Qing were holding, her smile faltered but quickly adjusted, lowered her head, smoothed her hair, and replied, "Yes, the 4S shop I worked at before closed down."

After speaking, she sized up Zhao Qing, turned her gaze to Qi Yun, squeezed out a smile and asked, "This lady is?"

Qi Yun gently held Zhao Qing's hand and introduced, "This is my fiancée Zhao Qing. Xiao Qing, this is Meng Sisi, Wei Yong's sister-in-law who came to our home last time."

"Brother Qi, are you married?" The sister-in-law's expression tightened reflexively as she questioned.

Before Qi Yun could answer, Zhao Qing voluntarily extended her hand, smiled, and said, "Hello Meng, we're getting married soon, remember to come and enjoy some wedding drinks when you have time."

Upon hearing this, the sister-in-law's expression was somewhat complicated, but she quickly showed a smile and extended her hand to shake Zhao Qing's, saying, "Alright, congratulations, Miss Zhao is indeed beautiful and matches Brother Qi well."

"Thanks for the compliment, Meng is also very pretty." After releasing her hand, Zhao Qing naturally linked arms with Qi Yun.

Seeing this, the sister-in-law's eyes flashed with a hint of imperceptible loss; then she looked at Qi Yun and asked, "Brother Qi, you came here today for house renovation?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Yes, there's a house for renovation. We came today to look at the design and finalize the specific renovation plan."

"Okay, please follow me over here and sit. I'll call our company's best designer." The sister-in-law said that and led the way in her high heels.

Taking advantage of this gap, Zhao Qing looked up at Qi Yun with eyes seemingly full of meaning.

Qi Yun pretended not to notice, looking elsewhere.

Just after they sat down, a middle-aged man with long hair approached, slightly bowed and said, "Hello, I'm Jason, the designer."

"Hello." Qi Yun nodded in greeting.

Jason sat down and began discussing house renovation matters with them, appearing very professional.

Qi Yun didn't have many demands; everything was up to Zhao Qing's preferences.

Not far away, her sister-in-law occasionally glanced over, her mood visibly low.

After more than half an hour of discussion, Zhao Qing finally settled on the renovation style: "Jason, I really like this simple yet cozy style, let's go with this plan."

Jason nodded with a smile, replying, "Alright, Miss Zhao, rest assured, the final renovation effect will definitely satisfy you. We'll have someone come over to measure the dimensions later..."

"How long will the construction period take?" Zhao Qing asked.

Jason adjusted his glasses and seriously replied, "Miss Zhao, considering the size of your house and the complexity of the renovation, normally it would take about three months."

"If you'd like to speed up the process, we can add more manpower, which might shorten the construction period to within two months, but the cost will increase accordingly, mainly due to higher labor expenses."

Hearing that it would take so long, Zhao Qing couldn't help but frown slightly.

Seeing this, Qi Yun said generously, "Money is not an issue, just make it as quick as possible."

Upon hearing this, a hint of delight flashed in Jason's eyes, and his smile grew bigger: "Alright, rest assured, both of you, we'll aim to complete the job quickly while ensuring quality."

"Okay, we'll take our leave then. If any issues come up, we'll discuss them over the phone." With that, Qi Yun stood up, nodded at the sister-in-law not far away, and then led Zhao Qing out the door.

Zhao Qing also waved politely at the sister-in-law.

After seeing them into the car, Jason returned to the store, noticing the sister-in-law's low spirits, and suspiciously asked, "What's wrong?"

The sister-in-law forced a slight smile and shook her head: "Nothing much, everything's fine."

Jason gave her a puzzled look but didn't ask further, instead saying, "Your friend is quite decisive. A renovation close to two million, and he didn't even bat an eye."

Upon hearing this, the sister-in-law's eyes involuntarily widened, and she exclaimed, "Two million? How big is their house?"

"Isn't he your friend? You don't know? It's a villa at Golden Collar Villa, over 200 square meters, and at its most expensive, a unit cost nearly five million."

The sister-in-law was momentarily stunned, instinctively clenching her hands.

Initially, when Wei Yong mentioned Qi Yun, he only said that Qi Yun used to do big business, was very capable, had a good character, would definitely achieve great things in the future, and wasn't bad looking either.

She wasn't young anymore, so she thought she'd meet him, and used the opportunity to help out to meet in the warehouse. Unexpectedly, they hit it off at first sight. She liked his seasoned, confident, and mature demeanor.

Unfortunately, though, it was unrequited—he didn't seem to have much feeling for her, even though her brother-in-law was always trying to set them up...

She didn't expect that when they met again, he was already about to get married.

Now, she somewhat regretted not being bolder the last time they were alone...

...

On the way home, Zhao Qing rested her chin on her hands, staring closely at Qi Yun, asking, "That Meng Sisi was looking at you quite differently just now. Is there something you haven't told me?"

Qi Yun's heart skipped a beat, not expecting her intuition to be so sharp that she even noticed this.

However, he maintained his composure and smiled: "How could that be? She and I are just ordinary friends, I assure you there's nothing I'm hiding from you."

Zhao Qing narrowed her eyes slightly, scrutinizing Qi Yun's expression, trying to find a flaw.

She still felt uneasy, her feminine intuition telling her that Meng Sisi's gaze at Qi Yun was anything but simple.

Plus, there were the high heels she found in the car last time, making her even more suspicious.

Yet she didn't see a hint of panic in Qi Yun's eyes, so she bit her lip and decided to trust him for now.

"You better not lie to me, or I'll be very hurt."

Qi Yun's heart tightened; he raised his hand to stroke her hair, reassuring, "Don't overthink it. She and I are just ordinary friends, and that's only because of Wei Yong's involvement. I haven't done anything to betray you!"

After he spoke, he couldn't help but think to himself, thankfully he resisted Wang Fei's advances that night, or he couldn't say this with such conviction today.

Just then, the phone rang suddenly, and Qi Yun glanced over, seeing the name of the Spanish historian—Ignacio on the screen.

He guessed it was likely that there had been progress in deciphering those coordinates, so he quickly pressed the answer button.

"Hello, Ignacio."

Ignacio's slightly excited voice came from the other end of the line: "Qi Yun, the numbers you gave me last time really are coordinates. I've reviewed many documents about Jose Echegaray and have successfully deciphered them!"

Although he had anticipated the result, Qi Yun was still somewhat excited to get confirmation from the other person.

If the other person could decipher this set, they could certainly handle the other set too. Once he got the accurate coordinates, he would virtually own the treasures aboard the San Jose ship.

However, Qi Yun was unsure about one issue: if he gave Ignacio the second set of coordinates, would Ignacio figure out that it was the site of a shipwreck once he deciphered them...

After thinking it over several times, Qi Yun replied, "Is that so? Mister Ignacio, thank you very much."

"You're welcome, Qi Yun. I've really enjoyed this process. I hope you can quickly find the other half of the coordinates and give them to me to decipher." Ignacio said.

"Alright, I'm continually looking for clues, and I'll let you know the minute I have the other half of the coordinates."

"Alright then, I'll send you the deciphered coordinates shortly."

"..."

Chapter 183: If My Husband Finds Out, I'm Done For!

At night, after Zhao Qing fell into a deep sleep in his arms, Qi Yun finally gently got up and went to the balcony, lighting a cigarette to check the new intelligence reports.

[Current intelligence points: 1]

[Today's intelligence 1 (Red): Qiu Yuanshan's house was burglarized yesterday. There are traces of rummaging all over the house, but no valuable property is missing]

Qi Yun stared at the intelligence content in front of him, his brows furrowed involuntarily.

Burgled, but no valuable items were taken. Clearly, the perpetrator was after something specific.

He took a deep drag of the cigarette, a vague ominous feeling creeping into his heart.

[Today's intelligence 2 (Blue): Due to the latest tariff policy from the United States, a car parts factory in Changhe District had a large number of orders canceled, resulting in severe inventory pile-up. The factory owner is frantic and looking everywhere for new sales channels. Contact phone 189xxxx]

A very valuable piece of intelligence... Since the United States doesn't want them, maybe I can ask Mendeleyev if the Russian side has any demand.

Regarding the United States' tariff issue, Qi Yun also saw it on the news during the day. It's said that many manufacturing bosses almost fainted, and the stock market was full of wails.

[Today's intelligence 3 (Red): Re Lijiang is currently fooling around with the married lady he met just yesterday, at the Sheraton Hotel in New District, room 801]

"The guy with the slicked-back hair really knows how to play..."

Qi Yun took a puff of the cigarette, thought for a moment, then pulled out his cell phone to call Zhong Rui.

"Hey, are you asleep?"

"Go find a payphone and report that the Sheraton Hotel..."

"Yeah, look for an isolated payphone, wear a mask."

"..."

After hanging up the phone, a cold smile crept up on Qi Yun's lips. Although these minor tricks couldn't do much to the other party, adding to his frustrations is quite alright.

...

Elsewhere, the guy with the slicked-back hair lay comfortably on the bed, cigarette in hand, his eyes occasionally drifting towards the attractive beauty in the bathroom.

As soon as she came out, he pulled her onto the bed, and an intense battle was about to erupt.

Two minutes later, panting heavily, the guy with the slicked-back hair was reaching the critical moment when a series of urgent knocks came from the door.

His heart tightened, the feeling that was rushing to his head instantly dissipated. He showed a displeased expression on his face and angrily shouted towards the door: "Damn it, who is it!"

"Police, room inspection! Please open the door and cooperate with the investigation!" a man's serious voice came from outside.

Hearing the word "police", his face turned incredibly ugly, a hint of panic flickered in his eyes.

He hurriedly pushed the woman beside him away, started dressing in a fluster, muttering curses: "Damn it, which son of a bitch reported us!"

The married woman was also terrified, her face pale with fear as she looked at him, her voice trembling: "What should we do? If my husband finds out, I'm finished!"

He glared at her, said fiercely: "What's there to panic about! Put your clothes on first, and don't say anything later!"

Then another round of urgent knocking sounded from outside, accompanied by the police's stern voice: "Open the door immediately, don't obstruct our duties!"

He quickly dressed, ignoring the calls from outside, picked up the phone from the table, and dialed a number.

"I've run into a situation over here at the Sheraton Hotel..."

"Yes, they're already outside the door, deal with it quickly."

"..."

After hanging up the phone, seeing the woman had dressed, he adjusted his hairstyle, took a deep breath, and walked to the door, opening it.

As soon as the door opened, several policemen immediately focused their attention on him and the woman.

"We received a report of illegal activities here. You two, show your ID and cooperate with the inspection." One policeman reached out, eyes sharp, tone tough.

Having adjusted his emotions, he put on a faint smile and said: "Officer, it's the middle of the night, we're just chatting as friends, not doing anything illegal."

"Cut the crap, hand over your IDs first." The policeman didn't fall for it, repeating more forcefully.

The commotion drew attention from nearby rooms quickly, many people opened their doors out of curiosity, some even sneakily taking photos with their phones.

Seeing this, his face turned green instantly, saying to the police: "Come inside and close the door."

"Stop wasting time, IDs, hurry up." The police ignored his request, urging again.

He didn't want to escalate the situation, reluctantly handed over his ID, the woman hesitantly followed suit.

The police took their IDs, carefully checking the information, scanning them up and down.

"What's your relationship? A man and a woman in a room late at night, just chatting?" The policeman's eyes like a hawk, tightly locked onto the two, filled with skepticism.

At this moment, the lead policeman's phone suddenly rang. He took it out to glance at the caller ID, his brows furrowed slightly, then answered.

From the other end came a deep voice, hard to make out actual words, but judging from the policeman's glance at him, it seemed related to the current incident.

"Okay, I understand." The policeman briefly replied, then hung up.

After pocketing the phone, his gaze swept across him and the woman, then said: "We'll leave it here for now, but this doesn't mean you're off the hook. We'll continue investigating, and if any illegal activities are found, we'll handle them according to the law."

He breathed a silent sigh of relief, maintaining composure on his face: "Thank you, officer. We really didn't do anything illegal, feel free to investigate at any time."

He wasn't worried about getting caught or anything, but the news spreading wouldn't be something to brag about.

After they left, the woman recovers from her panic, disrobed again ready to cling on.

He, annoyed, pushed her away, pulled out a wad of cash from his wallet, threw it at her: "Get going."

...

The next morning, Qi Yun received a call from someone claiming to be a municipal office staff, inviting him over.

Qi Yun naturally knew why they were contacting him, he immediately replied he'd hurry over.

After hanging up, he quickly tidied up himself, intentionally wore something more formal, then rushed to the municipal office building.

Over half an hour later, Qi Yun looked at the solemn office building in front of him, took a deep breath, and stepped up the stairs.

Entering the lobby, a young man approached: "Are you Mr. Qi Yun?"

Qi Yun nodded slightly: "That's me."

"Alright, follow me, the Deputy Secretary-General is waiting for you in the office." The young man said, then led the way.

Qi Yun followed him across the lobby, upstairs to the third floor, along several corridors, finally stopping at a door labeled "Municipal Office Deputy Secretary-General".

The young man knocked gently, after receiving permission, stepped aside, gesturing Qi Yun to enter.

Qi Yun nodded towards him and stepped into the office.

Behind the desk, a man in his forties raised his head, glanced Qi Yun over, with a smile said: "Are you the slippery one mentioned by old Yu?"

Qi Yun was slightly taken aback, not expecting this kind of greeting.

"Have a seat." The Deputy Secretary-General pointed at the chair, gesturing.

Qi Yun politely nodded in response, sat down, and said: "Hello, Deputy Secretary-General, I am Qi Yun."

The Deputy Secretary-General nodded slightly, eyes curiously observing him: "Today I invited you over, firstly for some procedures, and secondly because old Yu asked me to look after you, so you don't need to be too formal."

Qi Yun smiled and replied: "Thank you, Deputy Secretary-General. I hope for your guidance in the future."

The Deputy Secretary-General waved a hand: "Actually, there isn't much to guide. I'll give you just seven words: Speak less, listen less, participate less."

"As a businessman, municipal office rarely requires your involvement in tasks, just attending meetings regularly is enough."

Qi Yun nodded, the concise words already showing him how to proceed.

He originally had no intention of getting involved in politics, joining the municipal office only to gain more protection for his identity.

As Qi Yun contemplated, the Deputy Secretary-General spoke again: "Tomorrow there's an election meeting happening, some local business association members will attend. If interested, I can introduce you."

Chapter 184: Digging a Pit

In Qi Yun's impression, people from such units were often accustomed to speaking in officialese, always being ambiguous and letting you interpret on your own.

However, the deputy secretary-general in front of him was completely different. Without a word of nonsense, he straightforwardly extended goodwill to Qi Yun.

Although Qi Yun didn't have any political aspirations, getting acquainted with the local business association's big shots might be beneficial for his future development.

So he immediately cupped his hands in thanks and said, "That's really great, thank you for your care, Secretary-General."

The deputy secretary-general waved his hand and continued, "Those business association members are usually very busy, and it's not easy to get them together. If you want to meet them, you have to seize the opportunity well."

"But don't be too hasty. After all, you're new to this circle, you have to let them get to know you first, take it slow."

Qi Yun nodded quickly and replied sincerely, "Yes, I will be mindful of my approach."

The deputy secretary-general nodded slightly, "Alright, that's all the advice I can give you. Go handle the formalities now."

"Okay." Qi Yun stood up, expressed his gratitude once more, then left the office.

An hour later, he walked out of the office building and let out a long sigh of relief. After tomorrow's election meeting process is completed, he will become an official Municipal Committee member.

Although still an ordinary citizen, at least others can't push him around so easily anymore.

"Ding ding!"

At this moment, the phone in his pocket suddenly rang. Qi Yun took out his phone and saw a bank message of a deposit of 1.2 million, the transferor being Blue Sky Jewelry Company.

As he was perplexed, Chief Bi's call came in.

"Brother Qi, you received the money, right?"

Qi Yun was stunned for a moment and replied, "I just received 1.2 million. What is this money for?"

"Our partner in Myanmar has picked up the person, and the jadeite transaction has been completed." The caller paused and continued, "This money was transferred over by them, it's your share."

Qi Yun suddenly realized, "Alright, thanks a lot, Chief Bi."

Chief Bi chuckled, "We're like brothers, no need to be so polite. No other matters for now, I'll hang up."

After ending the call, Qi Yun walked out of the municipal government courtyard, headed to the parking lot outside, got in his car, and drove straight to Changhe District, planning to check out the factory mentioned in the intel.

He had already contacted the other party in the morning, and he could tell from the phone call that they were indeed very anxious.

It didn't take long before the car stopped at the factory entrance. Qi Yun got out of the car, glanced backward, and then walked inside the factory.

The factory wasn't very large. Normally it would be work time, but the factory was unusually quiet, not a sound of machinery running.

He arrived at a three-story office building and finally saw an old man in a security uniform. He hurriedly stepped forward and asked, "Sir, I'm looking for your boss, Mr. Jia. Which office is he in?"

The old man pointed upward and answered, "First room on the right on the second floor."

Qi Yun thanked him and quickly headed to the second floor.

At the office door, he raised his hand and gently knocked.

"Come in," a slightly weary voice came from inside.

Qi Yun pushed the door open and saw the office in disarray, papers scattered everywhere, and the desk piled with documents.

A middle-aged man with somewhat messy hair was sitting behind the desk, looking at the documents in front of him with a worried expression.

Seeing Qi Yun enter, he forced a smile and stood up.

"You must be Mr. Qi? Please have a seat, my apologies, the office is a bit messy." As Mr. Jia spoke, he came forward to welcome him.

Qi Yun waved his hand indifferently, "No problem."

After the two sat down on the sofa, Mr. Jia took a bottle of water from under the coffee table and handed it over, "Mr. Qi, have some water."

Qi Yun thanked him, took the water, put it aside, and asked, "I noticed the machinery in the factory has all stopped?"

Mr. Jia's face was full of helplessness, and he sighed, "That's correct. Originally, we were supplying several factories in the United States. A few days ago, the foreigners suddenly canceled all the orders, and the parts we had produced are all piled up in the warehouse now."

"Until we find a sales channel, I have to stop production, or else the losses will only grow."

Qi Yun nodded, realizing this was an unexpected misfortune.

The main advantage of Chinese products in those developed countries is usually the price. Now the United States increased tariffs, so they will surely choose different partners.

"Haven't you found a sales channel domestically?" Qi Yun asked.

Mr. Jia wiped his face with both hands and sighed, "Domestic market is possible to sell, but they won't pay in cash. It gets delayed for months. With our scale, we can't absorb that."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, as he had once experienced something similar. In the business world, a stable cash flow is indeed crucial to an enterprise's survival.

"Tell me about your products first."

He had already searched online before coming, and this factory mainly produced spark plug wiring nuts and studs.

However, these parts may not be compatible across different countries' vehicles, so he needed to understand the parameters and prices clearly before discussing them with Mendeleyev.

Boss Jia nodded, stood up, and took a flyer from his desk, placing it on the coffee table in front of Qi Yun, and began his introduction.

"Our factory produces spark plug screws mainly in 12mm and 14mm sizes, priced at 18..."

Qi Yun listened attentively until the other party finished speaking before he started, "I roughly understand the situation, but I need to first communicate with my friends abroad before I can give you a reply."

"No problem, but please, President Qi, get back to me soon. If this drags on, over time, all the workers in the factory will leave." Boss Jia sounded a bit anxious.

"Haha, rest assured, I will be quick." Qi Yun patted his shoulder and continued, "If feasible, you can sell all your goods to me in the future."

Boss Jia's eyes lit up after hearing this, his previously furrowed brows relaxed as he tightly gripped Qi Yun's hand, excitedly saying, "President Qi, if you really can keep ordering from us, I will definitely offer you a satisfying price!"

Qi Yun smiled and replied, "Let's discuss that after I'm sure first, for now, let's talk about another deal."

Boss Jia, upon hearing this, was momentarily stunned and looked at him in surprise.

Thinking, wasn't it all discussed just now? What other business is there to discuss?

Qi Yun took out a cigarette and handed one over to the other, lighting up and taking a deep puff, before continuing to speak, "How much stock do you currently have in the warehouse? What's the total value?"

Boss Jia accepted the cigarette and answered truthfully, "Currently, we have about more than ten thousand nuts and tens of thousands of screws, approximately valued at four million."

"Is this calculated according to the prices you just quoted me?" Qi Yun inquired.

"That's right." Boss Jia said sincerely, "The prices I gave you are already ten percent below the current market price."

Qi Yun nodded, pondered for a while in his mind, then said, "After I leave later, if anyone comes asking you, just say all the goods have been sold to me."

"If the person wants to buy, raise the price by twenty percent and sell it to them, and if it's sold, just give me ten percent of the earnings."

"Huh?" Boss Jia was immediately dumbfounded upon hearing this.

Can't sell by lowering ten percent, but raise it by twenty percent, can anyone buy it?

Qi Yun didn't explain much, smilingly patted his shoulder, "Relax, just follow the instructions I gave you, if the other party intends to buy, they will buy even with a twenty percent increase."

Although Boss Jia still didn't quite understand, hearing Qi Yun say so, he nodded in agreement, "Okay, if someone really comes asking later, I'll do as you said."

"Alright, then I'll take my leave first, once confirmed I'll let you know at the first moment." Having said that, Qi Yun stood up to say goodbye.

Boss Jia politely sent him off out of the factory.

Once he got into the car, he glanced at the rearview mirror; that car which had been following for a long time was indeed still parked there.

Qi Yun could practically guess with his feet, probably it was the heavy-back guy, since he hadn't offended anyone else recently.

From the bid being hijacked yesterday, it could be seen that this guy has been closely monitoring his movements all along.

Except that this guy's vendetta seems a bit too excessive, wasn't it just making him lose face last time?

Looks like it's not enough that the other party snatched his project, but intends to continue causing trouble.

"Anyway, the pit is already dug, jump in or not is up to you."

Qi Yun paid no more heed, started the car, and headed towards Liu Meng's place.

On the way he called Mendeleyev, telling him about the factory situation.

Mendeleyev expressed great interest upon hearing it.

Industrial technology in Russia is now quite outdated; machines are old, production efficiency is low, and many things rely on imports.

If he can find a manufacturer that needs this model, it would become a stable source of income in the future.

...

After parking the car, as he approached the courtyard gate, he saw Liu Meng breathlessly lying on the ground, while Chen Wei stood beside him with hands on hips.

"What are you guys doing?" Qi Yun asked, puzzled.

Liu Meng raised his head, hurriedly scrambled up from the ground, dusted off his clothes, and replied foolishly, "Haven't practiced for a while, letting Old Chen train me a bit."

Looking at his sorry state, Qi Yun smiled and shook his head.

The three of them sat down to the side, Liu Meng handed over a cigarette, and inquired, "Why did you come here?"

"I'm planning to leave the day after tomorrow, came by to let Brother Wei know." Qi Yun accepted the cigarette and replied.

Upon hearing this, Liu Meng's face immediately fell, "What do you mean? What about me?"

Qi Yun was contemplating how to dissuade him when Chen Wei calmly said from the side, "Going abroad requires a passport, do you have a passport?"

Upon hearing this, Liu Meng was immediately stunned, opened his mouth blankly, before stammering for a long time: "I... I don't have a passport, but I can go get one!"

"Then there's not enough time, I have to leave the day after tomorrow, by the time your passport is ready chrysanthemums would have cooled." Qi Yun echoed.

Liu Meng scratched his head, full of unwillingness.

Qi Yun patted his shoulder, advising him, "Alright, just stay put, when I get back I'll find you another job, don't go to the construction site anymore either."

Chapter 185: Committee Member Qi

On the way back, Qi Yun received a call from Boss Jia. The other party said that not long after he left, someone did indeed come to the factory to inquire, but they didn't directly sign a contract and said they needed to consider it. Then there was no activity.

Qi Yun secretly sneered in his heart. The slicked-back guy is actually quite shrewd and a bit tricky.

But it doesn't matter to him whether the other party gets involved or not. Once the communication with Mendeleyev is done, he can still buy that batch of goods and make money.

...

At night, Zhao Qing saw Qi Yun looking for formal wear in the wardrobe and curiously leaned over to ask, "Should I help you find it? What occasion are you dressing for?"

Qi Yun smiled at her: "I'm attending a city council meeting tomorrow."

"Huh?" Zhao Qing was slightly startled upon hearing this, her eyes wide with surprise, "Attending a city council meeting? Have you joined the city council? How come you never mentioned it to me?"

Saying that, she looked Qi Yun up and down, as if meeting him for the first time.

Qi Yun lifted his hand to touch her fair cheek and replied, "Things have been too busy lately, and I haven't had a chance to tell you. Also, my status will formally take effect once the procedures are completed tomorrow."

"Oh." Zhao Qing's beautiful eyes sparkled as she glanced at the few outdated suits in the closet, softly saying, "The mall should still be open now. Let me take you to buy a new suit."

Qi Yun shook his head: "No need to go through that trouble. These suits fit well and are still decent. There's no need to buy new ones since tomorrow's meeting is mainly procedural."

Zhao Qing pouted slightly: "But for such an important occasion, I just want you to be dressed a bit better. You work so hard all the time, you should pamper yourself a little."

Her words amused Qi Yun: "What is there for a guy like me to dress up for? Besides, at such occasions, no one really cares about what you wear."

"Alright then." Zhao Qing gently poked Qi Yun's chest and then turned to pick out a suit and coat for him from the wardrobe.

...

The next morning, in a conference room at the city office.

After sitting down, Qi Yun sneaked a glance around and suddenly noticed a familiar figure sitting not far away, currently looking at him with surprise.

It was none other than Boss Bi, whom he had just talked to over the phone yesterday.

Qi Yun was also taken aback, but soon realized that given the other's capabilities, having a city council position seemed quite reasonable.

At that moment, the door of the conference room opened, and a few more people walked in, heading straight for the podium at the front.

The conference room instantly quieted down.

Qi Yun's gaze landed on the nameplates on the podium as he secretly memorized their faces and identities.

...

An hour later, as the meeting progressed, the election process concluded, and Qi Yun was officially confirmed as a member of the 15th Committee of Bird City.

A burst of applause rang out around him, with many people looking over with curiosity or scrutiny. Qi Yun slightly bowed, nodded in greeting to those around, and maintained a polite smile on his face.

The meeting continued, and next was the speaking session for the new committee members.

Qi Yun stood up, cleared his throat, and started his speech.

"It is an honor to become a member of the 15th Committee of Bird City. To me, this is not just an honor but also a responsibility..."

The speech was very positive; this was what he had spent two hours memorizing the night before...

After the meeting ended, people didn't disperse immediately. Many came over to greet Qi Yun.

The deputy secretary-general also came over at this time with a smile, saying, "Welcome aboard."

"Thank you for the care, Secretary-General. I look forward to your guidance in the future." Qi Yun replied.

The deputy secretary-general nodded: "Come on, let me introduce a few people to you."

Qi Yun was delighted at heart and quickly followed the other's footsteps.

The two of them walked to a corner of the meeting room, where a few people with exceptional demeanor were engaged in a conversation. An elder in the middle, surrounded by the others, seemed quite prestigious.

"Chairman Jiang, long time no see. How's your health?" The deputy secretary-general spoke first.

The elder, referred to as Chairman Jiang, turned around, showing a gentle smile, and responded, "Ha ha, still the same, still quite robust."

The deputy secretary-general turned to Qi Yun, smiling and introduced: "This is Chairman Jiang of the Bird City Chamber of Commerce, who has made great contributions to the development of Bird City. Qi Yun, you ought to learn a lot from Elder Jiang in the future."

Upon hearing this, everyone present immediately understood his intention. They all looked with some surprise at this new, seemingly unremarkable committee member, guessing that this person certainly had an unusual connection.

Qi Yun took a couple of steps forward, reached out his hand proactively, with a sincere smile on his face: "Chairman Jiang, I've long admired your name. It's my honor to meet you today. I look forward to your guidance in the future."

Chairman Jiang smiled, shook Qi Yun's hand, looked him up and down, and nodded saying: "Young man, not bad. You can come to the Chamber of Commerce to have tea with me when you have time."

Though his words were not spelled out, the attitude was quite clear.

Qi Yun was delighted at heart and quickly said: "Chairman Jiang, then I will shamelessly come to bother you. I happen to have many questions I want to ask a senior like you."

Chairman Jiang smiled and waved his hand, saying: "No need to call it advice, just exchange thoughts with each other."

"..."

After a round of polite exchanges, the deputy secretary-general had other matters to attend to and left first.

Qi Yun did not disturb the others any further. He politely bid farewell to Chairman Jiang and the others before finding Boss Bi not far away.

The two left the meeting room and came to the flower bed outside.

President Bi handed over a cigarette, jokingly saying, "Wow, you've quietly become a political committee member without even letting me know in advance. You've kept it well hidden."

He had always regarded Qi Yun as a friend whose temperament matched his own and was quite capable. Only today did he realize that Qi Yun's influence was far from ordinary.

Back when he entered politics, he relied on years of networking and influence accumulated in the business world. Yet, Qi Yun was able to suddenly get elected without much fanfare, with even a deputy secretary-general present to back him, showing his remarkable capabilities.

Qi Yun took the cigarette and smiled, "I didn't expect to meet you here today either."

President Bi laughed heartily and patted his shoulder, "How about we gather tonight? I'll arrange it so we can celebrate properly."

Qi Yun waved his hand with a smile, apologizing, "I appreciate the thought, but tonight might not work. I need to go to Japan early tomorrow morning, and tonight I want to spend time with my family."

Hearing this, President Bi didn't insist, "Then let's celebrate when you return."

"Going to look at that property in Japan from last time?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Something like that."

"Okay, our company also has partners in Japan. If you run into any trouble, feel free to call me." President Bi advised.

Qi Yun smiled, "Don't worry, if I really encounter any trouble, I won't hesitate to reach out to you."

...

After leaving the municipal building, Qi Yun was about to head home when he suddenly received a call from Qiu Jiahao, who said he had returned from Myanmar and wanted to meet him.

Since Qi Yun had nothing urgent, he agreed to meet at a café near his neighborhood.

Half an hour later, a thin, scarred figure pushed open the café door.

"What happened to you?" Qi Yun asked in surprise, looking at Qiu Jiahao across the table.

The person sitting across from him felt completely different from before, having lost the rebellious and arrogant aura he once had.

Instead, he exuded a cautious demeanor that comes after experiencing hardships.

Qiu Jiahao shook his head with a bitter smile, without much explanation. He sincerely said, "The main reason I asked to see you was to thank you in person. Without your help this time, I might really not have made it back."

"Here's three hundred thousand yuan, a token of my gratitude. I hope you accept it." With that, he placed a brown paper bag on the table and pushed it towards Qi Yun.

Qi Yun glanced at the bulging paper bag, slightly stunned.

It seemed the young man had indeed changed. In the past, such words would never have come from him.

Getting tricked into going to Myanmar must have been quite a harrowing experience.

Qi Yun waved his hand, refusing, "No need to thank me. Take your money back. I didn't help you for free anyway; I've already gotten my due share."

"It's good you're back alive. Take care of yourself in the future."

Hearing this, Qiu Jiahao shook his head slightly, "Regardless of your motives, the fact remains you saved me, so please accept the money. I don't want to owe you a debt of gratitude."

Qi Yun looked into his eyes while stirring his coffee.

After a long while, he finally spoke, "If you want to repay the favor, keep your money. But you can help me with something."

"What is it? Just tell me, as long as it's within my capability." Qiu Jiahao nodded in agreement.

Qi Yun glanced around before whispering instructions to him...

...

In the afternoon, Qi Yun arrived early at the kindergarten to pick up his daughter from school.

As Nuannuan came out hand in hand with Zhao Qing, she immediately spotted her father waiting outside and ran towards him, jumping into his arms.

The little girl hugged his neck tightly and asked in a clear voice, "Daddy, why did you come to pick me up from school today?"

Qi Yun lifted his daughter up with a smile and kissed her cheek, "Because Daddy wants to take you out for a treat."

The little girl's eyes lit up instantly, and she clapped her hands excitedly, "Wow, really? Daddy, I want ice cream!"

At this moment, Zhao Qing also came over and playfully tapped Nuannuan's nose, "Nuannuan can't have ice cream today, you're a bit under the weather. If you eat ice cream, you won't get better. Let Daddy take you for pizza instead."

Nuannuan tilted her head, thought for a moment, and then nodded obediently, "Okay, I'll listen to Sister Qing."

"That's my good girl." Qi Yun kissed his daughter's cheek again and then held Zhao Qing's hand as they walked towards the parking lot.

...

That evening, after the little girl was asleep, Qi Yun hugged Zhao Qing and said, "I have to go to Japan tomorrow. This trip might take a little longer, maybe about ten days."

Zhao Qing, though feeling reluctant, seemed to have gradually gotten used to his frequent business travels. She pouted playfully, "Why so long?"

Qi Yun stroked her hair, comforting her, "There's an issue with a business partner overseas. I need to go and take a look."

"Don't worry. I'll be careful and let you know I'm safe every day."

Zhao Qing leaned against him, nodding gently, "Alright, come back soon. I'll take good care of Nuannuan."

Chapter 186: Looted

The next afternoon, Qi Yun and Chen Wei arrived at Tokyo Haneda Airport.

Lawyer Yamamoto Ichiro, who was handling the property transfer, was waiting at the exit with a reception card.

Seeing him, Qi Yun approached and asked, "Are you Lawyer Yamamoto? I'm Qi Yun."

"Yes, Mr. Qi, hello." Yamamoto Ichiro bowed slightly, a professional smile on his face, "I hope the journey wasn't too tiring. The car is ready outside."

"You're too kind, Mr. Yamamoto. Let's head out then," Qi Yun said with a smile.

"Alright, please follow me." With that, Yamamoto Ichiro led the way, taking the two to the parking lot.

Once inside a business car, Yamamoto Ichiro took out a file folder from his bag and handed it over: "Mr. Qi, the house transfer documents are all here. The house now belongs entirely to you."

Qi Yun took the folder, skimmed the papers inside. Despite Japanese and Chinese having many similarities, he only understood parts, mostly confirming the land and house owner's name was his own.

The lawyer was recommended by Brother Hui from Hong Kong Island, reputed to be quite trustworthy there, so Qi Yun felt relatively secure with him.

He packed the documents back and returned them, saying, "Keep the documents for now; I'll probably have other matters to entrust to you later."

Yamamoto Ichiro was a bit surprised but discerningly didn't ask more, bowed slightly, and silently placed the folder back in his bag.

"Take me to the house first," Qi Yun said.

"Certainly, Mr. Qi," Yamamoto Ichiro replied, then instructed the driver.

The car gradually started, leaving the airport parking lot, merging into the bustling streets of Tokyo.

On the way, Yamamoto Ichiro turned from the passenger seat and said to Qi Yun, "Mr. Qi, the property you purchased is located in Anping Village in Chiba Prefecture. It's very quiet there, and the environment is good."

"It'll take us about an hour and a half to get there from here."

Qi Yun didn't focus on this, instead asking, "Was everything smooth when processing the transfer documents?"

Yamamoto Ichiro maintained his polite smile, bowed slightly, and responded, "Yes, Mr. Qi, the transfer went very smoothly."

From the first moment he saw the lawyer, Qi Yun lost count of how many times the man had bowed. Whether this Japanese man was genuinely polite or merely putting on an act, at least he appeared very courteous...

Qi Yun nodded slightly, not saying more, gazing out the car window at Tokyo's street scene.

Chen Wei sat quietly beside him, almost as if he wasn't there.

An hour later, the car gradually exited Tokyo's city bounds.

The road broadened, the buildings on either side became sparse, replaced by fields and scattered rural houses.

Finally, the car turned onto a narrow village path, stopping before a courtyard gate.

"Mr. Qi, we've arrived," Yamamoto Ichiro turned and said politely.

Qi Yun nodded, opened the car door and got out.

He was greeted by a two-story wooden building; its paint had peeled in large patches, revealing somewhat decayed wooden panels beneath, some parts even showed obvious holes, looking quite dilapidated overall.

Yamamoto Ichiro reached the courtyard's wooden gate, took out a key from his bag, ready to unlock it, only to find the door wasn't locked at all.

His raised hand froze in mid-air, his expression somewhat bewildered.

Noticing his odd demeanor, Qi Yun asked suspiciously, "What's the matter?"

Yamamoto Ichiro snapped out of it, a slight embarrassment on his face, hurriedly explained, "Mr. Qi, when I came the day before yesterday, I distinctly recall locking the door, but now it's unlocked." With that, he gently pushed the door open, the hinge let out a dry creak.

Chen Wei frowned upon hearing, shielding Qi Yun behind him, stepped inside first.

Entering the yard, it was overgrown with weeds, almost ankle-high, scattered with newspapers and debris.

"Something's off, someone has been here," Yamamoto Ichiro looked at the scene before him, surprised, "When I came the day before yesterday, these things weren't here!"

Qi Yun frowned, quickly walked to the house door, pushed it open.

Chen Wei closely followed, wielding a folding short stick in his hand without knowing when.

The interior was in a worse state, more chaotic than when some little fairies vacate a premise, as if it had been looted.

Besides the mess everywhere, things had been essentially emptied out.

Qi Yun frowned deeper, turned to Yamamoto Ichiro and asked, "Which room is the study, take me there."

Yamamoto Ichiro appeared a bit panicked, hastily stuttered in response, "Alright, Mr... Mr. Qi, please follow me."

With that, he led the way, taking Qi Yun to a room on the second floor.

This room was similarly chaotic, not to mention books, even the outdated bookshelves had collapsed, only a few wrinkled papers scattered on the floor.

"Were there books in this study when you came the day before yesterday?" Qi Yun asked.

Yamamoto Ichiro was somewhat clueless, puzzled why his employer focused so much on the study.

He nodded in a daze, answered, "Yes, there were lots of books."

"Mr. Qi, I don't know why it's become like this either..."

Qi Yun's face turned even darker, damn it, even the books were moved away completely, it was like locusts had swarmed.

He walked to the window, looked out at the dimming sky, spoke, "Is there surveillance around here?"

Yamamoto Ichiro shook his head: "This place has been abandoned for too long, and there's only this household nearby, so there aren't any cameras."

"The nearest camera should be at that junction of the rural path we just passed."

Qi Yun listened, pulled out a cigarette, lit it, took a deep draw, then instructed Chen Wei, "Brother Wei, go take a look."

Chen Wei nodded, quickly walked downstairs.

"Mr. Qi, should we call the police?" Yamamoto Ichiro came closer, with a face full of guilt.

Though this matter wasn't directly his fault, aside from handling the transfer, his task also included handing the house to Qi Yun intact, which was why he had the key.

Qi Yun slowly exhaled a smoke ring, frowned, pondered a moment then said, "We should report to the police, but wait for my assistant to return first."

Yamamoto Ichiro heard this, said no more, silently stepped aside to wait.

After a while, Chen Wei returned, came to Qi Yun's side and spoke gravely, "There's no surveillance around, judging from the tracks on the ground, it probably happened within the last one or two days."

Qi Yun nodded, at least now he could confirm it wasn't a trick played by Yamamoto Ichiro.

He walked to the window, took out his phone, dialed a number.

Chapter 187: The Biggest Case in Recent Years

"Brother Hui, is that Japanese guy still in Hong Kong Island?"

"Yes, the people I sent are keeping an eye on him, no chance of escaping." Brother Hui's loud voice came from the phone.

Qi Yun nodded slightly, then said, "Well, Brother Hui, could you have someone invite him to a bar? I have some questions to ask him."

"No problem, I'll have him brought over now." Brother Hui agreed without hesitation, then his tone carried a hint of suspicion, "What's the matter, Little Brother Qi?"

Qi Yun chuckled softly and explained, "It's nothing major, just that there's been some trouble with his property in Japan, and I want to ask him about it, worried he might not tell the truth."

"I see, leave it to me. I'll make sure he tells everything he knows honestly." Brother Hui responded.

"Alright, I'll rely on you, Brother Hui."

"..."

After hanging up, Qi Yun turned to Yamamoto Ichiro beside him and said, "Lawyer Yamamoto, does this kind of situation often occur in Japan?"

Yamamoto Ichiro quickly shook his head, "No, Japan has very good public security, and theft is quite rare, especially in rural areas."

Qi Yun listened, frowned slightly, and nodded thoughtfully.

More than half an hour later, Brother Hui called back.

"Little Brother Qi, the person has been brought in, and he's quite obedient now. Ask whatever you need."

"Thanks a lot, Brother Hui," Qi Yun expressed his gratitude.

A few seconds passed, then the voice of Fukui Sakaeda, slightly trembling with fear, came over the line, "Hello... hello?"

"Mr. Fukui, I'm currently at your ancestral home, but there's been some trouble here; everything in the house has vanished without a trace. Do you know what's going on?" Qi Yun asked directly, his tone calm.

Fukui Sakaeda paused noticeably before replying with a shiver, "What... what? I don't know, it wasn't me. I've been in Hong Kong Island and haven't left."

"Heh, Mr. Fukui, you've misunderstood. I don't think it was you." Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring and continued, "Logically, your ancestral home has been empty for many years. If there was anything valuable, it would probably have been stolen long ago."

"But why did everything disappear right after I bought the house? Can you help me think about it?"

Fukui Sakaeda remained silent for a long while, trying hard to think, then hesitantly replied, "Mr. Qi, if the things in the house weren't stolen, it's possible my aunt took them."

"Your aunt?" Qi Yun's eyes sharpened, "Explain clearly."

"Alright... I had gambling debts in Japan before and planned to sell the ancestral home, but my aunt disagreed, saying the house and its contents were our family's heritage and wouldn't let me sell it."

"We had a big argument over it, and then I left Japan for Hong Kong Island. I haven't contacted her for more than a year."

"So I suspect she might have moved everything when she found out I sold the house."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun frowned, pondered for a moment, and spoke again, "Contact your aunt now to confirm. If she took the items, I want them returned because our transaction included all the items inside."

"Although those things aren't valuable, I don't like others touching my belongings. Do you understand?"

His tone was somewhat low, causing Fukui Sakaeda on the other end to shiver.

"Yes... yes, I'll contact her now!"

After hanging up, Qi Yun turned to Yamamoto Ichiro and asked again, "Does anyone else know about my purchase of this house?"

Yamamoto Ichiro seemed puzzled but quickly nodded and replied, "Mr. Qi, transactions of old village houses like this need to be registered with the local village chief, and there are usually no secrets in such small places."

Qi Yun heard this, and knew it was likely as Fukui Sakaeda said, the items might indeed have been taken by his aunt.

After waiting another ten minutes, Fukui Sakaeda called back.

"Mr... Mr. Qi, the items were indeed taken by my aunt, but... but she refuses to return them to you..." Fukui Sakaeda's tone was extremely cautious, afraid of being blamed.

Qi Yun's face instantly turned dark upon hearing this. He took a deep breath, slowly saying, "Mr. Fukui, it's best to let your aunt understand that the house now belongs to me, and all the items are mine according to our agreement."

Fukui Sakaeda agreed repeatedly on the other end, his voice clearly trembling, "Mr. Qi, I've told her, but she won't listen and says it's our family's belongings and can't end up with outsiders."

"She's old and stubborn; there's really nothing I can do."

After listening, Qi Yun silently frowned, thought for a moment, and then said, "Give me your aunt's detailed address."

Fukui Sakaeda hesitated but provided the address, adding, "Mr. Qi, my aunt's son is quite aggressive and is in a gang. Please... please be careful..."

He didn't really care much about Qi Yun's safety, purely worried that if anything went wrong, Brother Hui would surely throw him into the sea to feed the fish.

"Thank you for the reminder, Mr. Fukui. You should try to persuade your aunt again."

"..."

After the call, Qi Yun sighed and explained the situation to Yamamoto Ichiro.

"Lawyer Yamamoto, I hope you can go and negotiate with them tomorrow, asking her to return all the items."

Yamamoto Ichiro nodded slightly and quickly agreed, "Alright, Mr. Qi. Her actions constitute illegal possession, and you have the right to pursue legal action."

Qi Yun lit a cigarette and said calmly, "I don't have much time to waste here, so it's best solved peacefully. If she agrees to return everything, I can pretend nothing happened."

Yamamoto Ichiro bowed and replied, "Mr. Qi, I understand your intentions."

"I'll do my best to communicate with them, trying to make her voluntarily return the items. If it really fails, we'll consider legal measures."

Qi Yun nodded, continuing his instructions, "Report to the police first, but don't disclose the previous matter."

"Understood, I'll take care of it." Yamamoto Ichiro turned and went outside to make a phone call.

Before long, two police officers arrived on bicycles.

Yamamoto Ichiro greeted them and briefly explained the situation.

Meanwhile, Qi Yun and Chen Wei remained in the business car, not showing themselves.

After recording, the officers went inside to look around and then bid farewell.

Before leaving, they said this was the largest case Anping Village's police station had encountered in recent years and promised to treat it seriously and help recover the stolen items as quickly as possible.

After they left, Yamamoto Ichiro returned to the business car and reported the police investigation details to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun nodded slightly, "Let's go back to the city first."

#### Chapter 188: Setting the Stage

The night in Tokyo was vibrant with neon lights, the bustling streets filled with noise.

Yamamoto Ichiro led Qi Yun and another person to an izakaya with a traditional Japanese style, with two red lanterns hanging at the entrance, giving it a unique atmosphere.

The three of them walked inside, the wooden floor creaking slightly, and the waitstaff all dressed in movie-style kimonos, with their chests half-exposed.

"Mr. Qi, this place is quite famous locally. Their specialty grilled eel and sake are both great," Yamamoto Ichiro warmly introduced.

Qi Yun nodded slightly. He wasn't too picky about food; as long as it was cooked, it was fine.

After entering the private room, the three sat cross-legged, while the waitstaff quickly brought in the food and drink.

Qi Yun picked up the sake and took a sip. The taste was very mild, probably not as strong as Honghu beer.

After setting down the cup, he shifted his gaze to Yamamoto Ichiro and asked, "Lawyer Yamamoto, if we proceed legally, how long will it take at the fastest to retrieve my belongings?"

Upon hearing this, Yamamoto Ichiro furrowed his brows, thought for a moment, and replied, "Although you say the other party has admitted that the items in the house were stolen by her, there is currently a lack of related evidence."

"If the police can find evidence, it could take as little as a month to get your belongings back."

"Of course, when I meet with the other party tomorrow, I will also try to collect some evidence."

Upon hearing it would take a month, Qi Yun felt a bit overwhelmed. He didn't have that much time to spend.

"I need you to put as much pressure on the other party as possible to get my things back."

"Yes," Yamamoto Ichiro quickly bent forward and promised, "Mr. Qi, rest assured, I will do my best to make the other party return them voluntarily."

...

The next day, Qi Yun woke up early.

He got out of bed and walked to the floor-to-ceiling window, observing the morning outside.

[Current intelligence points: 3]

"According to last time's experience, querying red intelligence just needs 3 intelligence points..."

If Yamamoto Ichiro couldn't handle the other party today, he would have to try out the intelligence search function.

After going out for breakfast, Qi Yun wasn't in the mood to wander, so he returned to the hotel to continue waiting.

It wasn't until after eleven in the morning that Yamamoto Ichiro hurriedly arrived at the hotel.

Seeing Yamamoto Ichiro's slightly disheveled appearance, Qi Yun asked in surprise, "What's the matter?"

Yamamoto Ichiro showed a slight bitter smile, took out glasses with broken lenses from his pocket, and said, "That family is impossible to communicate with. The old lady not only flatly denied the theft but also had her son kick me out."

After hearing this, Qi Yun's expression darkened. He took a deep breath, then went to the window to call Fukui Sakaeda.

After explaining the situation to the other party, he said in a deep voice, "Mr. Fukui, your aunt is not being very cooperative."

On the other end of the line, Fukui Sakaeda shuddered at Qi Yun's questioning, instinctively glancing at Brother Hui's underling beside him, filled with fear, worrying that an angered Qi Yun might have him dumped in the sea to feed the fish.

"Mr. Qi, I didn't expect things to turn out this way. It has nothing to do with me. I have already advised her, but she doesn't listen and doesn't care about my well-being..." Fukui Sakaeda hurriedly responded.

Qi Yun held the phone tight, his tone cold, "Mr. Fukui, this isn't what I want to hear."

In a panic, Fukui Sakaeda's voice trembled even more, "Mr. Qi, I'll try again. I'll go and find her now and persuade her to relent this time..."

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun sighed. From Fukui Sakaeda's tone, he had already realized that this lead was completely blocked, and to get that book back, he had to find a way himself.

"Any progress from the police?" He turned to look at Yamamoto Ichiro and asked.

Yamamoto Ichiro looked helpless and shook his head, "Mr. Qi, I contacted the police earlier. They said there's currently no substantial progress."

"There is a lack of surveillance around the house, making it difficult to investigate, but they promised to increase manpower for the investigation, though it's hard to say when results will come."

On hearing this, Qi Yun furrowed his brows, pacing back and forth in the room, thinking for a while before stopping and saying, "I'll go meet them in person, and you come with me."

Although Yamamoto Ichiro thought it wouldn't matter even if Qi Yun went in person, he still bowed and agreed, "Alright."

With that, Qi Yun called Chen Wei and together the three of them drove to Fukui Sakaeda's aunt's house.

Soon, the car entered a luxurious neighborhood and stopped in front of a villa.

Qi Yun was a bit surprised upon seeing the impressive decoration of the villa.

Yamamoto Ichiro stepped forward to ring the doorbell, and a face with an unfriendly expression appeared: "What do you want?"

"Please inform them that my client has come to visit personally to discuss matters with Ms. Fukui," Yamamoto Ichiro slightly bowed and replied.

The person glanced at Qi Yun and Chen Wei behind, then turned and left.

"Is this family quite influential?" Qi Yun asked.

Yamamoto Ichiro glanced at the door and replied in a low voice, "I did some investigating. Her son is a small leader in the Yamaguchi Group, not easy to offend."

"Therefore, please be sure to control your emotions later, to avoid any conflict."

Qi Yun did not respond but turned to look at Chen Wei beside him.

Chen Wei maintained his stern demeanor and gave him a slight nod.

Qi Yun felt reassured. He wasn't there to cause trouble, and with Chen Wei, a strong bodyguard, by his side, he wasn't too worried.

#### Chapter 189: Setting the Trap (Part 2)

Before long, the main gate slowly opened. The round-faced man from earlier stood at the door, saying in a harsh tone, "Follow me."

"The other party agrees to see you; let us go in," Yamamoto Ichiro translated beside him.

Qi Yun nodded, following the man into the villa.

Inside the living room, a middle-aged man with a small stature and a long scar under his eye looked at them coldly. Behind him stood two towering, unfriendly-looking men.

"My mother doesn't want to see you anymore. Whatever it is, just tell me directly. You have two minutes," the man said impatiently, his arms crossed.

Yamamoto Ichiro quietly translated for Qi Yun, adding, "This person is her son."

Qi Yun nodded slightly. Since he couldn't see the principal, he had to try and find some useful information from the son.

[Search Target: Muraoka Kono]

[Available Intelligence Types: White (consumes 1 intelligence point), Red (consumes 3 intelligence points)]

Search.

[Intelligence Information (Red): Muraoka Kono received a gang task and will conduct an illegal goods transaction with the Manchurians at 11 PM tonight at Warehouse No.14, Shinagawa]

Upon understanding the content of the intelligence, Qi Yun thought to himself, 11 PM tonight... how to use this information...

The scarred man, noticing his silence, grew more impatient and said fiercely, "Speak quickly; don't waste my time!"

Qi Yun snapped back from his thoughts. Although he had a plan in mind, he maintained a calm demeanor.

He looked directly into the eyes of the scarred man, speaking unhurriedly, "Mr. Muraoka, I think there's some misunderstanding between us. I came this time hoping to resolve the issue peacefully and retrieve what belongs to me."

The scarred man let out a cold snort, "Those things don't belong to that useless Fukui Sakaeda. If you're only here to say that, then you can leave."

"Don't come back again, or you won't be able to leave next time."

With that, he waved his hand, and the two burly men behind him approached Qi Yun, raising their hands to grab his shoulders.

Unexpectedly, a shadow suddenly darted out from behind. Before Qi Yun could see what happened, the two large men were retreating while clutching their chests.

The one who intervened was Chen Wei, standing in front of Qi Yun, his gaze coldly fixed on the opposition.

Seeing this, the scarred man sprang to his feet and shouted angrily, "Baka!"

"You bastard, how dare you make trouble in my house!"

Yamamoto Ichiro, who was nearby, was immediately terrified and hurriedly said, "Misunderstanding, misunderstanding, Mr. Muraoka, please don't be angry."

Though he was a lawyer, he feared people who didn't play by legal rules.

Qi Yun wasn't worried and smiled lightly, patting Chen Wei on the shoulder, "Brother Wei, let's go."

Chen Wei nodded slightly, his eyes still locked on the opponents, retreating slowly to remain alert for any sudden attack.

Qi Yun turned and, with a leisurely pace, led Yamamoto Ichiro towards the villa's exit.

The scarred man did not signal his men to act again, instead coldly watching the three leave.

After all, this was his home, and he didn't want to disturb his mother.

Once back in the car, Yamamoto Ichiro finally let out a long breath. He most dreaded dealing with these gang people.

"Mr. Qi, what now?"

"Please take us back to the hotel. I'll contact you if needed," Qi Yun replied.

"Alright," Yamamoto Ichiro said, feeling a sense of relief.

Back at the hotel, Qi Yun closed the door and said to Chen Wei, "Brother Wei, I need your help with a plan."

Chen Wei nodded, "You tell."

Qi Yun took out a cigarette, lit it, and said slowly, "The item they stole is very important to me. The reason I bought that old house was for that item."

"I received news that tonight at 11, that guy Muraoka will conduct a transaction involving illegal goods. By that time..."

Chen Wei silently nodded after hearing Qi Yun's plan.

...

Late at night, at a dimly lit street corner, a disguised Qi Yun went to a convenience store, buying a phone card at five times its market price and purchasing a phone before disappearing into the night.

Half an hour later, he reappeared at Shinagawa, holding a bottle of beer and leaning on a roadside railing, occasionally glancing towards a distant warehouse.

Time slowly passed until 10:50, when two black vans parked in front of the warehouse. A small man, leading several hefty men, entered the warehouse, with one of the men carrying a black box.

About five minutes later, an old model Nissan pulled up in front of the warehouse. Three men got out, looked around, and also carried a box into the warehouse.

Seeing that the time was right, Qi Yun took out the newly bought phone from his pocket and called the local police headquarters.

Once the call connected, he also took out his own phone, putting it close to the receiver, and played a Japanese message.

The gist of it was "Near Shinagawa No. 12, someone intends to commit suicide."

After playing the message, Qi Yun quickly hung up, removed the phone card, and waited to see what would happen next.

Perhaps because Tokyo is the capital, police response was swift. Within three minutes, the shrill sound of sirens echoed through the streets.

Two police cars raced towards the direction of the warehouse, police lights flashing and cutting through the nighttime darkness.

At this moment, inside the warehouse, the scarred man and his subordinates were nervously proceeding with a transaction of illegal goods with the Manchurians.

The sudden sound of sirens outside startled everyone.

"What's going on? Why are there police?" the scarred man shouted in panic, glaring angrily at the three Manchurians across from them.

The faces of the three Manchurians turned deathly white. One of them quickly waved his hands and said, trembling, "It's not related to us!"

"Boss! Let's go!" one of the scarred man's underlings tugged on his arm and said.

The scarred man knew it wasn't the time to probe further, quickly opening the warehouse doors and running towards their car.

The three Manchurians behind them responded promptly, ready to leave quickly.

At that time, the police cars were only about ten meters away from them.

One of the Manchurians, thinking the police were there for them, panicked and immediately pulled out a handgun, shooting at the police car's tires with several "biubiu" shots before running into the car without looking back and fleeing swiftly.

The scarred man, having barely gone far ahead, heard the sound behind and his face darkened even more.

With an angry roar, "Baka! Drive faster!"

The police car that was shot quickly stopped. The two officers inside were stupefied.

They were expecting a suicide case, but it was an attempted murder!

The two officers huddled in the car, too scared to expose themselves. One of them quickly took out the radio to report the situation.

...

From afar, witnessing everything, Qi Yun smirked coldly and walked towards another direction, his silhouette disappearing into the darkness.

After the transaction failed, the scarred man wouldn't go home directly. Most likely, he'd go explain the situation to his gang, buying time for Chen Wei...

When calling the police, Qi Yun tactically chose not to mention the illegal goods transaction after much deliberation.

He didn't want to become a direct opponent of the gang behind the scarred man unless absolutely necessary.

Given that gang's power, they are one of the top existences in Japan. It's likely they have connections within the police. If they knew someone deliberately reported the illegal trade, they'd thoroughly investigate. Who knows if they would suspect him?

But under the current situation, after a police investigation, it's likely they'd attribute it to an accident.

Thus, the gang's wrath would fall on the ineffective scarred man...

Though Japan doesn't completely ban firearms, shooting at police on the streets of Tokyo is undoubtedly a major case, possibly hitting the news headlines tomorrow. The scarred man is in for it.

Qi Yun walked two more blocks, then smashed the phone and threw it into a garbage bin. He broke the phone card and tossed it into a sewer.

After doing all this, he caught a cab back to the hotel, took out his phone, and booked an early flight to Russia for the next morning.

## Chapter 190: A Priceless Prescription

In the quiet room in the early morning hours, there came two knocks on the door.

Qi Yun stood up with a start, quickly walked to the door, leaned slightly, and pressed his ear against it, listening carefully for any noises outside.

After confirming that nothing was amiss, he slowly opened the door.

Standing outside was Chen Wei, still wearing that stern expression.

Qi Yun stepped aside to let him into the room, then poked his head out to take a look before quickly shutting the door.

"How did it go?"

Chen Wei shook his head, took off the satchel from his shoulder and handed it over, "I wasn't detected. Check if it's what you wanted."

Qi Yun took the satchel, unzipped it, and pulled out a thick book from inside.

The cover was old and yellowed, with slight wear and tear at the corners, clearly indicating its age.

It was exactly the "Chiyun Country's Records of Land and People" he was looking for.

He quickly opened the cover, and sure enough, a paper was tucked between the flyleaves. The color and texture of this paper were completely different from the book, somewhat brittle.

On the paper, written in traditional characters, were the words "Main ingredients: Astragalus, ginseng each three qian, assisted by Angelica, Chuanxiong, White Peony each two qian, complemented by Poria, Atractylodes, Licorice... in all several dozen medicinal ingredients."

"Take one dose daily, and in ten days, miraculous effects will be apparent."

After reading every word, Qi Yun's eyes were filled with delight. This was the long-lost recipe for strengthening the body from the "Inner Canon of Huangdi," a treasure countless people dreamt of.

He quickly took out his phone, snapped a picture to record it, and then cautiously flipped the page over, confirming no content on the back before closing the book again.

"This is indeed the book, thanks, Brother Wei."

Only upon hearing this did Chen Wei turn his head.

When Qi Yun had opened the book, Chen Wei had already walked to the window, looking out at the street without glancing back even once.

...

Elsewhere, the scar-faced man who had retreated to the hideout was in a rage, smashing everything within reach into tatters.

After a good bout of venting, he yelled at a few subordinates, "Send people out immediately to find and bring back those stupid Southmen pigs!"

The underlings didn't dare utter a word, responding with a bowed head before leaving in a hurry.

Tonight's events nearly drove the scar-faced man insane. It was bad enough for the deal to fail, but running away was one thing. Shooting at police just brought trouble on themselves.

Earlier, he reported the matter to the boss, who chewed him out, demanding those people be found within 24 hours and preparing for severe punishment.

In their strictly regulated gang, cutting off a finger was considered lenient, the word 'severe' made him shudder...

At 9 a.m., outside the airport, Qi Yun patted Yamamoto Ichiro on the arm, thanking him.

"No need for thanks, Mr. Qi." Yamamoto Ichiro gave a slight bow, with a professional smile on his face. "Should I courier the house documents back to your country?"

"Keep the house documents with you for now; help me sell it in half a year," Qi Yun instructed.

Yamamoto Ichiro was momentarily confused—having just bought the house, took a brief tour, and now wanted to sell it?

But he asked no further, quickly nodding in agreement, "Okay, Mr. Qi, I will handle it as you said."

"Additionally, I'll pay you an extra fee to keep tabs on the police department's progress. I want to pursue legal accountability for the theft." Qi Yun added.

"Understood, rest assured, I'll follow up on this matter continuously."

...

The Tuva Republic where Mendeleyev was located was part of the Da E Federation. In reality, it was similar to a province back home, and there were no direct flights to it from Tokyo, so Qi Yun and his companion had to transfer in Moscow.

When they arrived at the capital of the Tuva Republic, it was already afternoon.

As they stepped out of the airport, Qi Yun was hit by a gust of cold wind, instinctively tightening his newly donned down jacket.

Just then, a loud voice called out from the front, "Qi Yun, my good friend, you've finally arrived!"

Following the voice, Qi Yun saw Mendeleyev's tall figure walking towards them, accompanied by Brother Peng, who had arrived a day earlier.

Days before Qi Yun set off, he had discussed the situation with Mendeleyev on the phone with Brother Peng.

Brother Peng also decided to come and take a look. If the conditions were favorable, the two of them planned to return and set up a trading company to specifically develop the market here.

"Haha, was your journey smooth?" Mendeleyev asked with a broad smile, stepping forward to give Qi Yun a bear hug, heartily patting him on the back.

Qi Yun returned the smile, "Fairly smooth, long time no see."

Brother Peng nodded at him too, reaching out to take the suitcase; the bond between brothers needed no words.

After releasing his hold, Mendeleyev glanced at Chen Wei beside Qi Yun, asking, "And this is?"

Qi Yun introduced, "This is my friend Chen Wei, I specifically asked him to come along for security reasons."

Mendeleyev nodded in understanding, looking curiously at the shorter Chen Wei, and extended his hand, "Hello, my friend, welcome to Da E."

Chen Wei shook hands with Mendeleyev, expressionless, nodding in response.

Mendeleyev felt the calluses on the palm and immediately put away any underestimation, realizing this person was not ordinary.

"Are you hungry? Why not have some food before heading to Tashtagol?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "Let's head out now, we ate on the plane."

"Alright, just park the car over there."

Saying that, Mendeleyev led the group to the parking lot.

The vehicle he brought was a modified off-road vehicle, which Qi Yun couldn't recognize, likely a Da E domestic brand.

The tires were wide, equipped with snow chains, and the chassis was higher than typical off-road vehicles. Only such a car could travel freely in the icy snow-filled expanse of Da E.

"By the way, regarding the automotive parts you mentioned last time, I've contacted a manufacturer here. We're currently negotiating the price, and I expect we can sign the contract in the next couple of days," Mendeleyev said to Qi Yun while driving.

Qi Yun nodded, "Alright, as long as you've sorted out the contacts here. We can supply anytime from home, but we still need help with the transportation."

"No problem, I'll handle the transportation," Mendeleyev replied.

Qi Yun glanced out at the swirling snow and continued, "Is there only one factory here that can use that specification of parts? Can we find a few more factories?"

"I wish," Mendeleyev sighed and replied, "There aren't many factories producing spark plugs in Tuva, and not many cars currently use that specification of parts."

"Currently, they need at most about two million units a month."

Hearing this, Qi Yun couldn't help but sigh. He had hoped that if the demand here were high, they could contact a few more factories to supply together...

But two million is still quite a lot. According to Boss Jia's factory production in the past few months, they can produce about two million units a month. Even if Qi Yun only earns a 20% profit margin, the profit is still nearly fifty thousand USD.

That's five million USD a year, without needing to invest too much effort, as long as the market remains stable.

But then again, the Da E market seems to lack stability the most...

The car rocked back and forth, and by nightfall, they finally arrived at their destination, Tashtagol.

Tashtagol is a small city in the Tuva Republic, similar to a county town back home, with a sparse population and hardly any pedestrians on the streets.

Mendeleyev originally wanted to invite the group to stay at his home, but Qi Yun felt it was inconvenient, not wanting to disturb since there were three of them. He politely declined.

So Mendeleyev took the group to the most luxurious hotel in the area, twelve stories high, comparable to a Han Court hotel back home.

The hotel's interior decor was similar to some hotels in Jiang Province, with vibrant carpets covering the floors.

After completing the check-in, the group placed their luggage in the rooms and then followed Mendeleyev for dinner.

People in Da E love eating meat, and the restaurant's menu mostly consisted of meat dishes like lamb, horse, and beef... Qi Yun almost felt like he was back in Jiang Province.

As various dishes were continuously served, the group, already famished, started to devour the food ravenously.

During the meal, Mendeleyev specifically ordered a bottle of vodka for everyone to try.

After just one drink, Qi Yun felt a bit tipsy and waved his hand in refusal.

After the feast, Qi Yun handed each person a cigarette and began to discuss business.

"Tell us about your current situation. Why did you specifically call us over and want our help?"

Mendeleyev took the cigarette, lit it, took a deep drag, and said slowly, "To be honest, my situation here is a bit complicated. Although there's considerable market potential in Tuva, there's also significant competition."

"My biggest business in Tashtagol is a supermarket. Thanks to the goods I previously brought in from your country, my supermarket business has been doing very well."

"But last month, the owners of several other supermarkets formed an alliance and started a price war against me, trying to push me out. Now the supermarket's business has plummeted, losing money every day..."

Qi Yun listened quietly, and when the other party finished speaking, he realized that this guy was quite the business operator.

Besides the supermarket, he also had internet cafes, KTVs, hair salons, all equipped with second-hand goods purchased cheaply from back home, showing considerable business acumen.

Even second-hand goods from home, as long as they're in decent condition, offer better quality than those produced locally in Da E, and they're cheaper.

"So you want us to conduct market research and provide you with supplies when we return home?" Brother Peng asked.

Hearing this, Mendeleyev nodded, "That's right, I hope our future collaboration can become even more closely-knit."

"I have businesses not only in Tashtagol but also at the capital, but without quality products, it's difficult to penetrate the market and expand."

"Moreover, I'm being targeted brutally by those few, and it's time to respond. You guys help me figure something out."

Qi Yun and Brother Peng listened, frowning and deep in thought, remaining silent for a long time.

Seeing this, Mendeleyev awkwardly chuckled, "I guess I'm too impatient. How about everyone goes back to rest tonight, and tomorrow I'll take you around to understand the situation, and then we'll discuss further."

...

Back at the hotel, Qi Yun took a shower, then lay comfortably on the bed and opened the intelligence system panel.

[Current Intelligence Points: 1]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (White): The painting hanging on the restaurant wall where you dined last night is something the owner picked up from a flea market, worth a thousand USD]

"A thousand... not worth the effort."

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): At the East City warehouse leasing center, a batch of overdue, unpaid warehouses will hold a blind auction this afternoon. Warehouse No. 68 contains a Harley FLH Electra-Glide motorcycle from the 1970s]

A Harley motorcycle?

Although Qi Yun didn't understand much about motorcycles, he had heard of the Harley brand and immediately looked up the value of this model online.

After researching, he was genuinely shocked; this model had once sold for 250,000 USD...

However, prices in the second-hand market vary, depending on the condition. If it's in good shape, it's still quite valuable.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Blue): Underneath the ruins located 100 kilometers west of Tashtagol, a batch of Soviet-era weapons and equipment is buried. The specific coordinates are N\*\*\*\*]