

Middle Age 201

Chapter 201: 5.4 Million

"Around thirty thousand yuan a month, depending on the target to be protected."

Qi Yun nodded, thought for a moment, and said, "Why don't you stay with me instead of going back to Rongcheng? I'll give you fifty thousand yuan a month, how about it?"

He genuinely "liked" the character of this person, someone who handled things appropriately, was steady, calm, and professional.

The most important point was what Liu Meng mentioned; this person was trustworthy.

If they later need to locate the shipwreck, they would definitely need a few reliable people of their own.

Chen Wei thought for a moment after hearing this, didn't refuse, and just replied with one word: "Okay."

Qi Yun couldn't help but feel delighted; perhaps a salary of fifty thousand yuan could find someone with better skills than Chen Wei, but you never know if someone might stab you in the back for profit.

So trustworthiness was the most crucial prerequisite for hiring a bodyguard.

At night, the plane landed slowly.

As soon as Qi Yun walked out of the airport, he saw Zhao Qing waving at him with their daughter at the exit.

"Daddy!" The little girl shouted, jumping up and down.

Qi Yun's face showed a gentle smile, as if all the fatigue had suddenly dissipated.

He quickly walked towards the two of them, squatted down, and opened his arms to scoop his daughter into his embrace.

"Nuannuan, did you miss Daddy?"

The little girl hugged Qi Yun's neck, snuggled closely, and answered crisply, "Daddy, I missed you a lot, and Sister Qing also missed you."

Qi Yun laughed heartily, stood up with his daughter in his arms and gave Zhao Qing a kiss on her face, making her blushing.

"There are people watching!" Zhao Qing gently complained, but her eyes were full of happiness.

Brother Peng pretended to turn his head, rubbed his chin, and muttered to himself, "I didn't see anything."

Chen Wei maintained his serious appearance, but there was a hint of a smile in his eyes.

"This is Brother Wei, who will be working with me in the future."

"Brother Wei, this is my wife Zhao Qing, and our daughter Nuannuan," Qi Yun introduced them to each other.

Zhao Qing smiled and greeted Chen Wei and Brother Peng.

Chen Wei nodded slightly in response.

"Let's go, let's head out first."

In the parking lot, Chen Wei took the initiative to sit in the driver's seat and start the car.

"Let's drop Peng Ge off first," Qi Yun said while reporting the address.

Chen Wei nodded, took out his phone, and navigated the route.

Brother Peng sat in the front passenger seat, turned around, and asked, "I'll go handle the registration for the trading company tomorrow. Still going halves with just us two brothers?"

"Sure," Qi Yun did not refuse, "But you need to mentally prepare yourself; I might not always have time to oversee things later, you'll have to take on more responsibility."

Brother Peng nodded, "Yeah, I'll reach out when I need you. If this works out, I won't run the factory anymore. I'll focus on this."

The current clothing industry was fiercely competitive, even with orders, his factory barely survived. Not losing money was already considered good.

Qi Yun agreed, "It's time to find a new path; you can't hang yourself on one tree."

...

Returning home, it was already past ten at night.

Qi Yun gently carried his sleeping daughter into the bedroom, covered her with a blanket, and quietly exited.

"I made rib and lotus root soup especially for you, give it a try," Zhao Qing brought a bowl of steaming soup from the kitchen and placed it on the dining table.

Qi Yun smiled as he hugged her from behind and whispered softly in her ear, "Did you miss me?"

Zhao Qing, feeling a bit shy, patted his hand and responded playfully, "You smell awful, quickly drink the soup and take a shower."

Qi Yun chuckled, let go, then casually sat at the table, picked up the bowl, and drank a big sip.

At the same time, he pulled out his phone to send a message to Mendeleyev.

Shortly after sending the message, Mendeleyev called back.

"Old Qi, was the trip smooth?"

Qi Yun swallowed the lotus root in his mouth, picked up the phone, and said, "Yeah, just got home."

"That's good, I called to let you know that fertilizer in Tuva really increased by ten points this morning! I've already arranged for a friend to help manage your batch of goods."

"A total of five million four hundred thousand, all deposited into your account."

Qi Yun wasn't too surprised by this news and replied with a smile, "Good, thank your friend for me."

"Yes, also about that item of yours, I contacted an auction house today; they've authenticated it. The auction house said it has at least twelve hundred years of history, more precious than anything previously found, and will be auctioned next week," Mendeleyev continued excitedly.

"How much can it be worth?" Qi Yun asked with curiosity.

Mendeleyev hesitated for a moment and answered, "It's hard to say exactly how much it can sell for, but I think it won't be less than fifty or sixty thousand USD."

Qi Yun was secretly shocked by this, not expecting that thing to be worth so much.

He had no religious beliefs and couldn't comprehend the significance of the painting...

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun turned his head and saw Zhao Qing squinting at him, her expression a bit strange.

"What's up? Do I have flowers on my face?"

Zhao Qing shook her head and returned to her normal expression, "Nothing, I visited the new house today. It should be ready to move in by the end of the month."

"Really," Qi Yun took another sip of the soup and replied, "Once it's ready, we'll move in."

"Alright."

...

After several bouts of intimacy, Qi Yun held the already deeply asleep Zhao Qing and checked the latest intelligence.

[Current Intelligence Points: 3]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): A fierce power struggle is currently unfolding upstairs at the Bird Market, and Zhang Dayong, who is on the periphery of the vortex, is feeling somewhat anxious.]

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): Qiu Jiahao's home was burglarized last night, and he was unfortunately injured during the fight with the thief, currently receiving treatment at the Second People's Hospital.]

Qi Yun looked at this intelligence content carefully, his gaze sharpening.

Previously, it was Qiu Yuanshan's house that was burglarized, and now it's Qiu Jiahao's turn. Could it be that the other party is really targeting that item?

However, from the current situation, it seems the other party's clues are not yet sufficient.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Recently, there have been multiple cases of missing children across various regions. These are the work of a gang of human traffickers, and the gang is currently hiding in Xia Ping Village at the Bird Market, planning to lay low until the heat dies down before continuing their criminal activities.]

Human traffickers? Still in Xia Ping Village?

...

The next day, after breakfast, Qi Yun drove to a nearby pharmacy, pulling out a paper listing more than a dozen medicinal herbs.

"Could you please check if your store has these herbs?"

The pharmacy staff took the paper, examined the content closely, then adjusted the glasses on the bridge of his nose and said, "Sir, most of these herbs are available here, but there are two or three kinds that are quite rare; I'll need to check the back warehouse. Please wait a moment."

Qi Yun nodded, "Alright, please check for me. I'm not in a hurry, take your time."

The staff turned and entered the warehouse.

Qi Yun's paper listed herbs from an Inner Canon of Huangdi prescription he obtained in Japan previously.

He had five more sheets in his car, each with different herbs written on it.

To be cautious, he didn't buy all the herbs from one pharmacy. Considering the importance of the matter, who knew if there might be some hidden dragon drawing attention?

After waiting for a few minutes, the staff emerged from the warehouse, holding a small plastic bag and apologetically said, "Sir, sorry, even our warehouse doesn't have two kinds of herbs. Could you consider substituting them?"

Qi Yun frowned slightly; he wasn't sure if substituting herbs would have any effect and dared not take risks.

"No problem, if you don't have them, that's okay. Please get the rest of the herbs for me."

The staff nodded, quickly bundled up the other herbs, and handed them over: "Sir, these herbs total nine thousand three hundred yuan."

Qi Yun pulled out his phone to pay, took the herbs, and left the pharmacy, driving off to the next one.

"Sir, sorry, we don't have the fifty-year wild ginseng you requested. Such items are difficult to find in a pharmacy."

Chapter 202: The Secret of the USB Drive and the Cause of Qiu Yuanshan's Death

Qi Yun ran to seven or eight relatively large pharmacies in a row but still couldn't find some medicinal materials. In desperation, he could only call Cao Yufei and ask him for help.

Considering the other party runs a pharmaceutical factory, he has more connections than Qi Yun.

Cao Yufei agreed very readily, saying he would get it done as soon as possible.

After dealing with the prescription issue, Qi Yun drove to the Second People's Hospital, intending to ask Qiu Jiahao about the situation.

Last time when he met with the other party, he had instructed him that if anyone inquired about his father's relics or if anything unusual was discovered at home, he must notify him, as a return favor for helping him rescue the other party from Myanmar.

As a result, this guy didn't say a word even after being beaten by a thief.

In the hospital room, Qiu Jiahao's calf and head were wrapped in bandages, looking like a mummy.

Qi Yun looked at his miserable appearance, first stunned, thinking to himself, did the other party hit him so hard?

Then he asked in surprise: "What's the situation?"

Qiu Jiahao didn't seem to expect Qi Yun to come either, and his expression under the gauze was equally startled.

He opened his mouth with difficulty and asked: "How did you know I was here?"

Qi Yun waved at him: "First, don't worry about how I knew, is your condition serious?"

Qiu Jiahao shook his head slightly, replying calmly: "Just some external injuries, a few days of rest and it'll be fine."

"Alright then." Qi Yun pulled a chair over and sat down, then asked, "Tell me in detail, what's going on?"

Qiu Jiahao gently moved his body, leaned on the pillow, and slowly said: "After you talked to me last time, I deliberately bought surveillance to put at home, and it alerts as long as there's movement at night."

"Last night I was lying asleep on the sofa but was suddenly awakened by the surveillance alarm sound. When I opened my eyes, there was actually a thief in the house."

"I rushed up to grab him, but the other party seemed to be trained. I was no match, and ended up like this."

Qi Yun secretly sighed after hearing this, thinking this guy's personality might have changed, but his mind still seems as bad as before.

"Did anything go missing in the house?"

Qiu Jiahao shook his head: "Shouldn't be."

Qi Yun paused for a moment, then frowned and said: "Didn't I tell you to notify me immediately, why didn't you tell me?"

Qiu Jiahao looked aggrieved: "My phone broke while smashing the thief last night, and I don't remember your number."

Qi Yun was stunned for a moment and was left speechless.

So he smacked his lips and said: "Alright, take care and rest in the hospital." With that, he got up and prepared to leave.

A few days ago, Qiu Yuanshan's house was visited by a thief, and the thief didn't take anything valuable. Today was Qiu Jiahao...

He couldn't help but suspect the thief was targeting that USB drive.

But there's one thing he can't figure out, why now after Qiu Yuanshan has been gone for so long, the thief started looking for that USB drive...

Where did they get the clues, knowing about the existence of that USB drive?

"Hey, wait a minute." Qiu Jiahao called out to him.

Qi Yun stopped in his tracks, turned around to look at him, and raised his eyebrows slightly: "Is there anything else?"

Qiu Jiahao licked his dry lips, a hint of hesitation in his eyes, seemingly in intense inner struggle.

After a while, he slowly spoke: "Actually, my dad never had a heart condition before, but suddenly died of a heart attack that night."

"I know that thief must be looking for something, and you must also know something... right?"

"Can you tell me?"

Upon hearing Qiu Jiahao's words, Qi Yun's heart surged with immense waves!

He originally thought Qiu Yuanshan's death was just an accident, but now it seems things are far from simple.

He sat back on the chair again, gazing intensely at Qiu Jiahao and asked seriously: "Are you sure your dad didn't have a heart condition?"

Qiu Jiahao nodded without hesitation, meeting Qi Yun's gaze with determination: "I'm very sure, my dad was always in good health, their unit organized yearly medical check-ups, and never found a heart condition."

"Plus, he went on business trips at least twice a month, how could he suddenly die of a heart attack?"

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun fell into deep thought.

He noticed that Qiu Yuanshan's death seemed to have intricate connections with that USB drive.

The whole thing originated from the night Qiu Jiahao had dinner with his ex-wife Shen Wanting at Old Feng's hotpot restaurant, coincidentally encountering Qi Yun who was helping there, and then the guy deliberately picked a fight.

As a result, the arrogant video was exposed online by enthusiastic onlookers, especially the line "Do you know who my dad is?"

Not only did it bring him countless scorns from netizens, but even his father Qiu Yuanshan was implicated and had to stop work and be investigated...

Now thinking back, if Qiu Yuanshan's death wasn't an accident, then it's very likely someone knew he was up to no good and feared he would talk, so they chose to silence him forever...

To dare do something like that, the person must not be ordinary.

Qi Yun sighed, stood up and said: "I see you've matured quite a bit compared to before, so let me give you a piece of advice, forget about these things and pretend you never knew."

"Can you understand what I mean?"

Qiu Jiahao was slightly stunned upon hearing this, his pupils instantly contracted as he realized the implication in Qi Yun's words.

After remaining silent for a long time, he finally nodded helplessly.

Seeing this, Qi Yun turned and walked toward the hospital room door. Halfway there, he turned his head again and instructed: "Also, don't mention the favor I asked you to anyone. I came to see you because you have an antique you want to sell me."

Chapter 203: The Secret of the USB Drive and the Cause of Qiu Yuanshan's Death (Part 2)

"Got it," Qiu Jiahao responded.

After leaving the hospital, Qi Yun felt deeply unsettled, like the protagonist in The Matrix constantly being pursued.

He drove straight home, quickly found the black USB drive under his mattress, then took out the second-hand laptop he bought last time, disconnected from the network, and inserted the USB drive.

But when he clicked on the USB drive icon, the computer suddenly prompted a password interface...

Qi Yun frowned deeply, his fingers tapping unconsciously on the table.

After thinking for a long time, he took the laptop and USB drive and left again.

...

In the rented small two-story building, Zhong Rui was directing workers to move the new bed upstairs.

This was Qi Yun's task for him last night, asking him to tidy up a room for Chen Wei to stay in when he returns from Rongcheng in a couple of days.

"Boss." Upon seeing Qi Yun, Zhong Rui immediately went up to greet him.

Qi Yun nodded at him and asked, "Where's Yuan Hua?"

Zhong Rui pointed to the window on the right side of the second floor and said, "Probably writing code, he lives in that room."

Qi Yun glanced over, then took out his phone and said, "Oh right, I have a number for you. Just call him Brother Peng. I'm planning to partner with him to set up a trade company. Contact him and see if he needs your help with anything."

"Okay, boss." Zhong Rui took the phone and memorized the number.

"Alright, no other matters. I'll go find Yuan Hua." Qi Yun patted his shoulder and headed upstairs.

Inside the room, Yuan Hua, with dark circles under his eyes, was incessantly typing on the keyboard. Hearing the knock on the door outside, he called out "Come in" without turning his head.

Qi Yun pushed the door open and asked, "Busy?"

Upon realizing it wasn't Zhong Rui's voice, Yuan Hua quickly turned around. Seeing it was Qi Yun, he showed a hint of surprise, then hurriedly stood up and greeted, "Mr. Qi."

Since their last meeting, he hadn't seen his boss for a long time, but even though the person wasn't around, whatever support he needed was completely fulfilled.

Qi Yun stepped forward, patted his shoulder, signaling him to sit down. Then he glanced around the room, not finding a chair, so he simply sat on the bed beside him.

"I need to ask you about something."

Yuan Hua sat back on the chair, his gaze turning to Qi Yun, and replied, "Mr. Qi, go ahead."

Qi Yun quickly organized his thoughts and asked, "I have a USB drive but don't know the password. Can you help me crack it?"

"Sure, boss." Yuan Hua replied swiftly.

Qi Yun nodded, pulled the USB drive from the laptop, and handed it over.

Yuan Hua instinctively reached out to take it, pulled twice but found it wouldn't budge, and so looked at Qi Yun with puzzlement.

Qi Yun, with a serious expression, continued, "The content inside this USB drive is very important. I need you to crack it under the condition that nobody finds out."

"You cannot view the contents, nor leave any backups."

"Can you do that?"

Yuan Hua was taken aback initially, but his relaxed demeanor gradually became serious.

He glanced at the inconspicuous black USB drive, realizing the importance of this matter. After taking a deep breath, he nodded seriously.

"Mr. Qi, I understand. Rest assured, I will strictly adhere to your requirements, ensure not to view the contents inside, and will not leave any backups."

"During the cracking process, I will ensure the entire process is safe and no one will know."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun nodded in satisfaction, finally releasing his grip and handing over the USB drive.

"About how long will it take?"

Yuan Hua didn't answer immediately. He first opened the command window on the computer, entered a series of commands, then inserted the USB drive into the host, checked it, and replied, "Ten minutes."

"Alright, do your thing. I'll wait here."

Yuan Hua nodded and began swiftly typing on the keyboard.

Time passed minute by minute, and Qi Yun kept his eyes fixed on the screen.

After a while, Yuan Hua unplugged the USB drive, handed it back to Qi Yun, and said, "Mr. Qi, it's done."

Qi Yun took the USB drive, and to be sure, asked again, "No risks left behind, right?"

It's not that he didn't trust Yuan Hua, but he worried that young people might be too curious and not understand the seriousness.

But for this sort of thing, he couldn't exactly ask someone else to do it; that would just make him even less at ease.

Yuan Hua shook his head solemnly, his gaze firm as he responded, "Mr. Qi, rest assured, there's absolutely no hidden risk."

"Alright, then carry on." With that, Qi Yun picked up the laptop and left the room.

He went to his office on the first floor, shut the door, sat at his desk, took a deep breath, then inserted the USB drive into the laptop and began browsing the contents.

...

Twenty minutes later, Qi Yun packed up his things, returned to his car, and dialed Chen Wei's number.

"Brother Wei, when are you coming back?"

Over the phone, Chen Wei sensed something odd in his voice, paused for a moment, then asked, "What's happened?"

"Not sure, just feeling a bit uneasy," Qi Yun replied.

Chen Wei thought for a moment and said, "I'll try to handle things by the afternoon and take the evening flight over."

"Alright." Qi Yun nodded and continued, "Do you know any female bodyguards? Help me find one."

Silence fell over the line again, with Chen Wei perceiving the underlying meaning in the request: "I'll reach out."

"Good."

After hanging up, Qi Yun lit a cigarette, took a deep drag, and sighed deeply.

He had initially found the black USB drive under that second-hand washing machine, along with those two gold bars. If he could do it over again, he definitely wouldn't take such a big risk for just a couple of gold bars.

With his current strength, he was wholly incapable of contending with those people, and even if he handed over the USB drive to the proper authorities, it would likely just inexplicably "disappear" en route.

Qi Yun wasn't sure if the other side would one day become aware of his existence, so he could only prepare in advance.

Fortunately, he now had a heavyweight representative identity, so even if the other side found out, they wouldn't act recklessly out in the open to maintain face and influence. Plus, with Chen Wei protecting him in secret...

"Still not strong enough..."

After finishing the cigarette, Qi Yun let out a long sigh.

He stubbed out the cigarette butt, picked up his phone again, and dialed Director Yu from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"Director Yu, how's your health been lately?" Qi Yun greeted with a chuckle.

On the other end, Director Yu snorted, "You brat, suddenly calling me must mean trouble."

Qi Yun wasn't offended, continuing to smile and say, "Director Yu, look at what you say. Can't I just have simple greetings for you?"

"You being this kind? Spill it, what favor do you need?" Director Yu urged.

"I really don't need any favors from you. Didn't you mention last time about setting up an exclusive interview with me? I am free these days and wanted to let you know," Qi Yun explained.

Director Yu paused upon hearing this: "Last time, Miss Dong contacted you, you weren't willing and refused her. Why the change of heart now?"

Qi Yun remembered that a few days ago, while he was at the Big Goose, a young woman named Dong contacted him, asking if he had time to visit the TV station the next day.

He was busy rescuing Private Mendelejev in Nokovic's office at the time, so before she could finish, he replied, "No time," and hung up the call.

"Heh, misunderstanding, misunderstanding."

"I truly had no time while abroad, and now that I'm free, I'm reaching out to you. This kind of activity promoting patriotism and spreading positive energy, I'll definitely participate unconditionally," Qi Yun said, embarrassedly smiling.

Director Yu was silent for a moment before slowly speaking again: "You brat, acting so keen out of the blue must mean you have other intentions."

"But since you're willing to cooperate, it's naturally a good thing. I'll inform Miss Dong, you contact her directly."

Qi Yun thought, seems like nothing can be hidden from this old fellow.

But he quickly expressed his gratitude, "Thank you. By the way, where will this program be aired once recorded?"

"Can it be on CCTV1?"

A severe coughing sound came from the other end, seemingly Director Yu choked while drinking water.

After a while, his voice came through again: "Should I arrange for it to be on the news segment for you?"

Qi Yun laughed, unfazed, replying, "Not a bad idea."

The old man left with the remark "Don't call me again!" and then hung up the call.

Chapter 204: Capturing Human Traffickers Alive

Xia Ping Village.

The shop had no sign of Old Wang, only Little Huangmao squatting at the door with a troubled expression. When he saw Qi Yun coming down from a BMW 5 series, he was stunned for a moment and then quickly stood up to greet him.

"Tsk tsk, trading in your old tools for a cannon, Qi Bro!"

Qi Yun patted Little Huangmao's buzz cut, glanced inside, and suspiciously asked, "Where's Uncle Wang?"

Little Huangmao smacked his lips and replied, "He went with Sister Xia to take wedding photos."

"Weddi..." Qi Yun smacked his lips too but didn't continue the topic, instead asking, "Didn't I hear you were going to open a barbershop? Is it up and running?"

"How did you know?" At the mention of this, Little Huangmao looked even more helpless, "My dad won't give me money, says I'm not cut out for business, and tells me to let things sink in a bit..."

As he spoke, Little Huangmao's eyes darted to the BMW next to him, and then back to Qi Yun. He immediately put on a flattering expression, licked his lips and said, "Qi Bro, have you ever considered investing in the hairdressing industry?"

Qi Yun smiled and flicked Little Huangmao's forehead with his hand, "Your abacus beads are about to hit my face."

Little Huangmao covered his forehead, but still kept smiling. He shamelessly nudged closer, "Qi Bro, this time I really want to make something of myself. I've found out that there is an empty shop on the next street, and the rent is very cheap."

"With the skills I honed at Lanxiang for two and a half years, as long as I open the shop, I'm sure I can make money!" Saying this, he snatched the lighter from Qi Yun's hand and lit a cigarette for him voluntarily.

Qi Yun took a drag and squinted at Little Huangmao, calmly asking, "How much do you want me to invest?"

Upon hearing this, Little Huangmao's eyes lit up immediately. He quickly held up three fingers in front of Qi Yun's face, "Qi Bro, not much! Just eighty thousand! I'll rent the shop, renovate it, and buy some hairdressing equipment..."

He was on a roll, spitting saliva that almost splattered onto Qi Yun's face.

Before he could finish, Qi Yun chuckled, flicked the ashes from the cigarette, "Eighty thousand? You think my money comes from the wind? That run-down street next door barely sees any shadows, how do you plan to make money from chicken feathers?"

Little Huangmao rubbed his hands anxiously, "Qi Bro, trust me, once the shop is open, with my connections..."

"Fifty thousand." Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring, calmly saying, "I'll invest fifty thousand. If it makes money, we split it fifty-fifty."

Considering his current pace of making money, he really didn't care for this small return. The reason he was willing to pay was entirely because of the help Little Huangmao provided in the past, including taking care of his daughter.

On hearing this, Little Huangmao's eyes widened suddenly, his Adam's apple bobbed up and down, and it took him quite a while to react: "Rea...really, Qi Bro?!" He grabbed Qi Yun's arm excitedly and said, "I knew Qi Bro was the most righteous! Don't worry, you won't regret today's decision in the future!"

Qi Yun glanced at him, pulled his arm away, "Alright, I'll transfer the money to you later. I want to ask you something."

Little Huangmao nodded hastily, unable to suppress his silly smile, rubbing his hands, "Qi Bro, go ahead."

Qi Yun looked around, lowered his voice and asked, "Have there been any new strangers moving here recently?"

Even though the population in this urban village was highly mobile, there were only about two or three shops, so Little Huangmao knew most of the people living here. If that group of traffickers lived around here, Little Huangmao might have seen them.

Little Huangmao scratched his head, not quite understanding why Qi Yun was interested in this.

He thought for a moment, then suddenly slapped his thigh, "There really are! A few people with Gansu Province accents came a few days ago, they rented the house that Sister Xia used to have."

Qi Yun's expression sharpened, and he lowered his voice to inquire, "How many people? Any unusual behavior?"

Little Huangmao swallowed, his expression becoming tense, "It seems... it seems like three men and two women. Unusual behavior would be..."

"They usually come to the shop at night, and... they seem a bit sneaky. At first, I thought they were thieves."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun understood that these must be the traffickers.

After pondering for a moment, he continued, "I'll watch the shop for you, you pretend to walk around there, see if anyone is inside."

The group hadn't seen him before, so there was a concern that if he appeared, they might get suspicious of an unfamiliar face. It was safer for someone familiar, like Little Huangmao, to go.

Although Little Huangmao didn't quite understand, he still complied obediently, "Got it, Boss Qi."

Qi Yun stubbed out his cigarette and sat by the shop entrance, waiting patiently.

After about five or six minutes, Little Huangmao returned sneakily.

"They're in there, seems like they're playing cards."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun nodded and immediately stood up, walked to the back of the shop, and took out his phone to call Ma Baoguo.

"Hey, Brother Ma."

On the other end, Ma Baoguo chuckled heartily, "Brother Qi, what brings you to call me?"

Qi Yun exchanged pleasantries briefly and then continued, "Brother Ma, I'm here to meet a friend today, coincidentally discovered some suspicious people nearby. They don't seem like good folks."

Ma Baoguo's laughter ceased, his tone turning serious, "Oh? Where are you, Brother Qi? Want me to bring some people to have a look?"

Regardless of whether they were good people or not, he was willing to make the trip, hopefully making Qi Yun owe him a favor. That way, when he needed help in the future, Qi Yun would feel compelled to reciprocate.

"Brother Ma, if you have time, it would be best if you could bring some people to check it out. I'm in Xia Ping Village. There seem to be four or five of them," Qi Yun replied.

"Alright," Ma Baoguo responded, "I'll bring some people right away."

After hanging up, Qi Yun took a chair and sat at the street corner, his gaze occasionally drifting towards the house in the distance.

About twenty minutes later, several police cars stopped by the roadside. Ma Baoguo opened the car door, dressed in a police uniform, and walked over with seven or eight people.

Qi Yun also stood up and went to meet them.

"Brother Qi, what's the situation?" Ma Baoguo asked.

Qi Yun pointed to the house not far away and replied, "It's in that house, doesn't seem like they're good people, you'd better check it out."

Ma Baoguo nodded, glanced that way, and then waved his hand, signaling the officers behind him to go and check it out.

The officers quickly moved, silently approaching the house.

Two people went to knock on the door while the rest ambushed on both sides.

Once the door opened, a group of people quickly rushed into the room.

Seeing the situation under control, Ma Baoguo nodded at Qi Yun and then walked over.

Qi Yun didn't continue watching, pulling the little blond kid who had been watching the commotion back into the store.

"Brother Qi, were those people bad guys?" the little blond kid asked curiously.

Qi Yun just nodded, without much explanation, took out his phone and transferred fifty thousand yuan to the kid, then patted his shoulder, "Do a good job, I have faith in you!"

The little blond kid's eyes widened at the notification on his phone, then he stood at attention with a face full of joy and saluted.

"Rest assured, Mr. Qi, I will do a good job and not let you down!"

Qi Yun laughed heartily, looking outside, where he saw several police officers escorting three men and two women into the police car.

Ma Baoguo poked his head out, then walked in, his expression just as joyful as the little blond kid's.

"Brother Qi, you sure have an eye for people. These guys really aren't good; they all have criminal records, probably part of a human trafficking ring."

"Thanks to you this time!" Ma Baoguo said as he walked over to Qi Yun and gave him a heavy pat on the shoulder, "If you hadn't discovered them in time, who knows how many more people they would have harmed."

Qi Yun humbly smiled, "You're too kind, Brother Ma. It was your team's effort, I just happened to notice by chance."

Ma Baoguo waved his hand and said seriously, "This is likely a big case. I need to take them back for interrogation and report to the city bureau as soon as possible. I'll thank you properly later."

He meant it sincerely, wanting to thank Qi Yun properly.

On his way here, he thought Qi Yun might have run into some trouble and needed him to lend a hand, but he hadn't expected Qi Yun to hand him such a significant accomplishment...

Qi Yun chuckled and nodded, "Go ahead and get busy. If there's any commendation later, like on TV and such, don't forget about me."

Ma Baoguo thought he was joking, "Haha, don't worry, I definitely won't forget!" With that, he turned and walked out of the store, got into the police car, and left.

After he left, Qi Yun didn't stay long, said goodbye to the little blond kid, and drove off.

Half an hour later, he arrived at the auto parts factory he had visited last time.

In the office, Boss Jia saw him and immediately approached with a cheerful expression.

"Mr. Qi, please have a seat, have a seat."

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, sat down on the sofa beside him, glanced at him, and said, "Have you been waiting anxiously these past few days?"

Boss Jia didn't hide it and replied awkwardly, "Quite anxious, mainly because if the factory doesn't resume operation, all the workers would leave."

"Please have some water, have some water." He handed over a bottle of mineral water as he spoke.

Qi Yun took it and placed it to the side, speaking earnestly, "I've discussed with our foreign partners, not only can we take the batch in your warehouse, but we can also purchase two million worth from you every month in the future."

"Re... really?" Boss Jia's eyes widened, face showing ecstatic joy as he excitedly grabbed Qi Yun's hand, saying, "Thank you! Thank you, Mr. Qi! You're my savior!"

Qi Yun smiled at him, "No need to thank me, it's business, we all benefit."

"I only have one requirement: the quality of the goods must be strictly guaranteed; otherwise, it will affect our reputation in the overseas market."

Boss Jia immediately nodded, with an extremely solemn expression replying, "Mr. Qi, rest assured, we'll definitely ensure the quality of the products. If there's a problem, you can hold me accountable!"

Qi Yun nodded in satisfaction, "Good, as long as you've said that. The price will be as we discussed before, you can prepare the contract, and I'll have the finance wire the deposit to you later."

Boss Jia wore a huge smile, repeatedly acknowledging, "Sure, Mr. Qi, please wait a moment, I'll prepare the contract right away."

The stock was worth about five million in total. According to the price negotiated with Mendeleyev's factory in Tuva, Qi Yun could make about a million in profit.

More importantly, if this batch satisfies the client, he could establish a long-term cooperation, earning an easy four to five hundred thousand per month.

After signing the contract, Qi Yun immediately notified Zhong Rui to wire a deposit to the other party and then contacted Mendeleyev to handle the shipment.

Since he had no experience or channels for shipping abroad, he planned to hire someone to specialize in this after his trading company is established, to avoid troubling Mendeleyev constantly.

Finished with these matters, seeing it was getting late, Qi Yun declined the offer for a meal from the other party and drove to the airport.

He was going to personally pick up Chen Wei.

Chapter 205: Young Master Zhou's Identity

A black Audi was parked quietly beside the street, with a man looking like a driver standing outside, occasionally glancing around.

In the back seat of the car, a middle-aged man with a commanding presence said in a deep voice, "How's the matter going?"

Another slightly older, balding man hurriedly replied respectfully, "I've already arranged for someone to look into it, but nothing has been found yet."

His expression was somewhat nervous, answering while secretly observing the other's expression, as if afraid the other would be dissatisfied with what he heard.

"Why are those things in his hands?" the middle-aged man frowned.

The balding man licked his dry lips and cautiously said, "He and that person are from the same hometown and seem to have a close relationship in private. The people below speculate that it might have been handed over to him before the incident..."

The middle-aged man's eyes instantly turned sharp upon hearing this, and he snorted coldly, "Fool! You achieve nothing yet manage to ruin everything!"

The balding man was so frightened that his body trembled, his head hanging so low it almost touched his knees, and he said with a trembling voice, "It's my oversight in work, not discovering this matter earlier. I'll arrange for more people to investigate secretly, and we will definitely find the things..."

The middle-aged man rubbed his temples, a trace of fatigue crossing his eyes, "This is the most critical time for me, and no problems are allowed to occur. If you can't handle this matter well, you might as well retire at the cultural center."

The balding man's face instantly turned pale, cold sweat breaking out on his forehead, his legs trembled slightly, and he nodded repeatedly, guaranteeing, "Yes, yes, rest assured, I will handle it properly."

"Go and do your work."

"Yes, yes."

The balding man gently pushed the door open and got out of the car. Only when the black Audi with the license plate 'A00003' disappeared around the corner of the street did he wipe the cold sweat from his forehead and turn to get into a nearby Volkswagen Passat.

...

Elsewhere, outside the airport.

Qi Yun waved at Chen Wei, who was coming out of the passage. Chen Wei saw him and quickly walked over, followed by a woman.

The woman looked about thirty years old, with short hair, no makeup, no accessories, and dressed very neutrally.

Once they were in front of Qi Yun, Chen Wei introduced, "This is Gao Min, someone I used to work with."

Qi Yun smiled and proactively extended his hand towards her, "Hello."

Gao Min, with a calm gaze, reached out and shook Qi Yun's hand, responding briefly, "Mr. Qi, hello." Her voice was steady, exuding a capable air.

"Let's talk in the car."

Saying so, the three of them walked towards the parking lot.

Once in the car, Qi Yun roughly explained to them the trouble he might be facing.

Then he turned to Gao Min, speaking in a serious tone, "I have only one requirement: ensure that nothing happens to my wife and daughter."

"You can make any requests you need."

Gao Min nodded slightly, her expression stern, looking exactly like Chen Wei.

"Just arrange a car for me, and I'll protect them in the shadows."

Qi Yun nodded, then took out his phone and dialed Zhong Rui's number, passing on some instructions.

After hanging up, he sent the number to Gao Min, "If you need anything in the future, contact him directly, and he'll sort it out for you."

"Okay, you guys talk." Gao Min acknowledged, then opened the door and got out of the car, lighting a cigarette outside.

Qi Yun looked at her back and asked Chen Wei, "Do we need to prepare anything else?"

Chen Wei shook his head and replied calmly, "According to what you said, the other party shouldn't have tracked you down yet, so don't be too nervous."

"Even if they do, I can protect your safety. This is not overseas; they wouldn't dare make too much of a fuss."

Qi Yun, after hearing this, also took out a cigarette and lit it, taking a deep drag.

He originally just wanted to make some small money and live an ordinary life, but he didn't expect to be forced into such a situation...

...

In the living room, Zhao Qing sat on the sofa, staring blankly at the hospital examination report in her hand.

Hearing the door open, she instinctively hid the report under the coffee table, then forced a smile on her face and stood up to greet him.

"You're back, did you have dinner?" She asked while sympathetically helping Qi Yun take off his coat.

Qi Yun smiled, touching her hair and replied, "Yes, I ate with a friend outside."

"Oh." Zhao Qing responded, then pressed her face against Qi Yun's chest, hugging him tightly.

Qi Yun keenly sensed something was off with her mood, so he looked down at her and asked, "What's wrong, not happy?"

Zhao Qing shook her head slightly but didn't let go of Qi Yun: "No, I just wanted to hold you."

"Really, let me see." Qi Yun said while cupping her face, examining it closely.

Zhao Qing quickly forced a smile, pretending nothing had happened.

Qi Yun looked at her with deep affection and said softly, "No matter what happens, you can tell me, and I'll face it with you, okay?"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Qing's eyes instantly reddened, and tears welled up in her eyes: "Yes, I will."

Seeing this, Qi Yun hugged her even tighter, resting his chin on her head and gently patting her back.

The next day, Qi Yun got up early to prepare breakfast. After Zhao Qing and their daughter had eaten, he sent them to the kindergarten entrance.

After watching them go inside, he took out a cigarette, walked over to the nearby woman, and offered her one, "Do you smoke?"

The woman shook her head, "I don't smoke other people's cigarettes."

Qi Yun didn't insist, lighting a cigarette for himself, taking a deep drag, "I'll leave them to you, okay?"

The woman was Gao Min, who had been quietly following Qi Yun and his family since they had left their home.

Chapter 206: Young Master Zhou's Identity (Part 2)

Gao Min nodded earnestly without saying much more.

Qi Yun didn't mind and walked straight towards the parking lot.

"Brother Wei, to the TV station." After getting in the car, he said to Chen Wei in the driver's seat.

Chen Wei nodded, first opened the map to check the route, then started the car.

To ensure Qi Yun's safety, he would be following him closely during this period.

The atmosphere inside the car was somewhat somber on the way.

Qi Yun gazed at the street scenes rapidly sliding past outside the car window, his mind full of thoughts.

The car soon arrived at the TV station, and he pulled out his phone from his pocket to call the host.

The two had already agreed yesterday to come over this morning for the interview recording.

Before long, a slender figure jogged out from the office building. Seeing Qi Yun by the car, she waved at him.

"Brother Wei, you can wait for me in the car." With that, Qi Yun quickly walked towards her.

As he got closer, Dong Shanshan proactively extended her hand in greeting: "Hello, Mr. Qi, I'm Dong Shanshan."

This woman had a lot of charisma, with outstanding looks and figure, and a pleasant voice when she spoke.

Qi Yun smiled, politely extended his hand to shake hers: "Hello, Miss Dong, it's a pleasure to have the opportunity to be interviewed by you."

Dong Shanshan had a sweet smile and said after releasing her hand: "Mr. Qi, you're too kind. I've heard about your achievements from Elder Yu and admired them greatly. Let's go inside; the recording equipment is all set up."

Qi Yun nodded slightly and walked alongside Dong Shanshan towards the office building.

After arriving at the recording room, the staff began putting makeup on Qi Yun, while Dong Shanshan reminded him of some precautions on the side.

Actually, most of the questions didn't require him to think about how to answer them, because the script provided to him already had the answers written out, and he just needed to memorize them...

He could understand such an arrangement, after all, the purpose of the program broadcasting was to spread the spirit of dedication and promote positive energy, so the official rhetoric would definitely be more professional.

Half an hour later, Qi Yun had memorized most of the answers and nodded towards Dong Shanshan: "Miss Dong, I'm ready."

Dong Shanshan smiled in response and then signaled the staff to make preparations.

"Mr. Qi, don't be nervous. Let's just treat it as a normal conversation."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, took a deep breath, and tried to relax himself.

Having lived for over thirty years, he never expected to someday be on TV.

The lights focused on them, the camera lenses aimed at the two, and the recording officially began.

Dong Shanshan appeared with a professional smile, her voice melodious: "Mr. Qi, I know you've once donated an extremely rare lunar meteorite to Jiang Province's aerospace bureau, and this time, you've donated the treasure Qingnang Book to the Chinese Academy of Sciences."

"I would like to ask you, what was your state of mind when you made those decisions?"

Qi Yun paused slightly, quickly recalling the script's content in his mind, and answered methodically:

"Actually, in my view, Qingnang Book is an extremely precious cultural heritage, bearing the wisdom and medical essence of the ancients, and I think it shouldn't be monopolized by me alone."

"The knowledge it contains can bring blessings to more people, promote the development of medicine, and save more lives..."

"As a descendant of China, I believe we should promote..."

The entire recording process lasted for over three hours, and as for how many minutes would be broadcast on TV, Qi Yun didn't know.

"Miss Dong, on which channel will this interview be broadcast?"

Dong Shanshan shook her head and replied: "I'm sorry, Mr. Qi, I'm not sure either. But the local station will definitely broadcast it, as for Central Y TV, it depends on the arrangements of the leaders."

Qi Yun nodded in understanding, it seemed he still needed to ask Old Yu for a favor, otherwise he didn't have that much influence.

Although it's a good deed, the traffic it might attract could be less than those little fresh meats shooting a short video.

"Alright, Miss Dong, please let me know once it's broadcast, I'd also like to see the final presentation."

Dong Shanshan smiled and responded: "No problem, Mr. Qi, you performed very well in this interview, I believe it will receive a good response when broadcast, allowing more people to learn about your spirit of dedication."

Qi Yun humbly smiled: "Miss Dong, you're too kind, and thanks to your hard work."

"If there's nothing else, I'll take my leave first."

Dong Shanshan smiled and nodded: "Alright, Mr. Qi, take care, we'll get in touch if there are any follow-up questions."

...

After dealing with the TV station, Qi Yun hurried to another location.

Yesterday, President Bi called to tell him that the other two shareholders had returned from abroad and wanted him to meet them, a great opportunity to get acquainted.

He wouldn't want to miss such networking resources.

Soon, the car stopped in front of a private club called Shuiyun Gui.

After getting out of the car, Qi Yun straightened his clothes and then said to Chen Wei: "Brother Wei, I might be here for a while, no need to wait for me, I'll call you when I'm done."

Chen Wei glanced around the area, then nodded.

Upon entering the club, a female attendant in a cheongsam came up with a smile and asked: "Sir, do you have an appointment?"

"I'm looking for President Bi." Qi Yun replied.

Upon hearing this, the attendant's smile grew warmer, and she slightly bowed: "Alright, please follow me." With that, she led the way.

The interior decoration of the club was luxurious, with the walls adorned with calligraphy and paintings that were evidently not simple.

After passing through a corridor, they arrived at a private room entrance.

The female attendant gently knocked on the door, and only after hearing President Bi's voice from inside did she open the door and say: "President Bi, your guest has arrived."

President Bi stood up and quickly came over to greet him: "Brother Qi, you're finally here, please have a seat."

Qi Yun smiled and exchanged a few pleasantries with him, then glanced at the other two people in the room.

President Bi patted his shoulder and introduced: "Brother Qi, these are the other two shareholders of our company, Young Master Zhou and President Li."

The one referred to as Young Master Zhou was a young man, seemingly in his early twenties.

As for President Li, he was about the same age as President Bi and appeared very amiable.

During the introduction, President Bi still introduced Young Master Zhou first, so Qi Yun could fathom the subtleties involved with just a bit of thought.

Qi Yun smiled, bowing slightly to both: "Young Master Zhou, President Li, very nice to meet you."

Young Master Zhou was dressed in an expensive casual outfit, sporting a limited-edition Patek Philippe watch on his wrist, slightly nodded, marking the greeting.

Though there wasn't a visible haughtiness often associated with scions of wealthy families, Qi Yun sensed a hint of pride in his eyes.

President Li stood up, wearing a full smile, warmly welcoming Qi Yun: "Brother Qi, please have a seat, I've heard from Old Bi that you're someone capable of great things, and meeting you today, you indeed look distinguished."

Qi Yun humbly smiled: "President Li, you're too kind, I really need to learn more from all of you."

After everyone sat down, President Bi called for the waiter outside to start serving the dishes.

Soon, a series of exquisite dishes were served, with tempting colors and enticing fragrance.

President Bi picked up the wine pot, pouring wine for Young Master Zhou, President Li, and Qi Yun, then lifted his own glass, smilingly saying: "Come, it's a rarity for us to gather together, let's first toast to welcome Brother Qi's joining."

Everyone raised their glasses, clinking them together before gulping down the drink.

Young Master Zhou put down his wine glass, dabbed the corner of his mouth with a handkerchief, and then looked towards President Bi, saying: "President Bi, when will Leilei arrive?"

Upon hearing this, a trace of subtle embarrassment flickered through President Bi's eyes, but he soon responded with a smile: "Don't worry, Young Master Zhou, Leilei said she's stuck in traffic and should be here soon."

Young Master Zhou nodded, stood up, and said: "You all continue drinking; I'll step out to make a call."

After he left, President Li smiled and handed a cigarette to Qi Yun: "Don't take it to heart, Brother Qi, Young Master Zhou has had things go his way since youth, he's straightforward, but he's a good person."

Qi Yun smiled and shook his head: "President Li, you're speaking too seriously."

He took the cigarette, just as he was about to pull out his lighter, President Bi tossed a lighter over and whispered: "His father is Vice Mayor Zhou."

"Young Master Zhou studied in the United States, and rarely comes back, he generally doesn't get involved with the company's affairs, and his shares don't appear in any official documents."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun was further convinced of his suspicions and understood exactly what was going on.

Chapter 207: Enemy or Friend?

Qi Yun's main focus wasn't this young Zhou, but his father, Vice Mayor Zhou.

Among the city's several vice mayors, only one is surnamed Zhou, the second-in-command of city Z government, Executive Vice Mayor—Zhou Wenbin.

And he clearly remembered, yesterday that USB drive contained this name...

Qi Yun maintained a normal expression, but inside he was already quietly alert.

Based on his inference, the current search for the USB drive is most likely being led by Zhou Wenbin's group, and he himself is destined to stand on the opposite side.

The only uncertainty is how deeply Manager Bi is entangled with them. If the situation is exposed in the future, will he stand by my side or their side?

Even though I once helped him recover 80 million yuan, avoiding the company's peril...

But can these withstand the test when faced with interests??

"Haha, didn't expect this young Zhou to have quite a background." Qi Yun said with a smile.

Manager Li heard, took a puff of his cigarette, and then sighed deeply: "Brother Qi, in the business world, sometimes you have to go with the flow, otherwise survival is tough."

Qi Yun naturally understood these principles, nodded in agreement: "Manager Li is right."

Manager Bi noticed the slightly tense atmosphere and quickly raised his glass to mediate: "Come, come, let's drink! Let's not discuss these matters today."

"Brother Qi joining the company, we're family now; we all earn together!" With that, he raised his head and drank down the wine.

At that moment, the door of the box was pushed open, and a very beautiful young woman walked in.

She was dressed in a black dress, her steps graceful.

"Leilei is here." Manager Bi turned around to greet.

The girl named Leilei glanced around the room, then pouted and complained: "Manager Bi, I'm off today. Why did you insist on calling me here?"

Manager Bi helplessly sighed, took out 20,000 yuan in cash from the bag on the table, and handed it over.

"I know you're off, this is your overtime pay. Young Zhou specifically asked to see you, just treat it as a favor for me, alright?"

Leilei looked at the cash, then stuffed it into her handbag, still not very pleased, she pouted: "Alright, who asked you to be my boss."

Just then, Young Zhou, who had stepped out to make a phone call earlier, returned. Upon seeing Leilei in the box, his eyes brightened and he quickly walked over.

"Leilei, long time no see."

Leilei heard the voice, and her initial emotions vanished instantly. She swiftly changed to a cool expression, turned and slightly nodded to Young Zhou: "Hmm."

In the blink of an eye, this woman's image transformed from a very pretty, forlorn girl into a cold and ethereal fairy, as if above earthly matters.

Young Zhou, seeing this, wasn't annoyed at all, squeezed out a smile and approached.

"Leilei, I specially brought you the latest Cartier bracelet from the United States." Saying this, he took a brocade box from his jacket pocket, opened it, and handed it to her.

Leilei glanced at the dazzling diamond bracelet in the brocade box, a hint of light flashed in her eyes but quickly returned to her cool demeanor.

She didn't reach out to take it, just replied indifferently: "Young Zhou, it's unbecoming to accept such a precious gift for no reason, you better take it back, I can't accept it."

Young Zhou's expression froze, but he quickly put on a smile again: "Leilei, what are you saying, aren't we friends?"

"If you like it, just accept it as my gift to you."

Leilei gently shook her head, shifted her gaze from the bracelet to Young Zhou: "Let's talk about why you wanted to see me first, I still have shopping to do later."

"..."

Qi Yun quietly watched from the sidelines, inwardly marveling at how deftly this woman had hooked Young Zhou.

The mastery of such tactics, to entice first and then hold back, takes at least two and a half years to perfect.

However, the two didn't stay in the box for long; Leilei just nibbled on a few dishes before departing.

"Uncle, I'm heading off now."

Manager Bi stood up and replied with a smile: "Alright, take care on your way."

Young Zhou, the eager pursuer, quickly chased after: "Leilei, wait for me!"

"Manager Bi, I'll be off now, let's gather again next time."

Manager Bi nodded to him: "Alright, as you wish, Young Zhou."

After they left, Manager Bi closed the box door and then took out a cigarette to hand to Qi Yun and Manager Li.

Qi Yun accepted the cigarette, lit it, and asked: "Is she really your niece?"

Manager Bi laughed heartily, casually replied: "It's just for appearances, some women are like commodities, expensive goods naturally need packaging that matches their price."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun immediately understood, then asked: "Is this club also owned by Manager Bi?"

Manager Bi nodded: "Indeed, this place isn't open to the public. I'll instruct the manager later, if you have friends to entertain in the future, you can bring them here."

"Haha, sure." Qi Yun replied with a smile, though he didn't want that, secretly wondering how many entanglements such a place might have.

After Young Zhou left, the three's conversation became less restrained.

Through the chat, Qi Yun found out that Manager Li not only held 25% shares in Blue Sky Jewelry but also owned a large real estate company and two bath centers, running quite a sizable business.

"Brother Qi, we're all family now, if you encounter anything needing help, don't hesitate to ask." Manager Li said as he put down his wine glass.

Manager Bi echoed beside him: "Brother Qi, quickly toast Manager Li again, his connections are even stronger than you might think."

"Young Zhou was introduced by him."

Qi Yun was slightly surprised, he had thought Vice Mayor Zhou was Manager Bi's connection, but it seems he was mistaken.

People are not always as they seem.

Manager Li, I'll start by toasting you. I'll depend on your guidance in the future." With that, he raised his head and drained his glass of wine.

Manager Li nodded with a smile: "We're all family, no need to be so polite, we'll support each other going forward," then he also raised his glass and drank it dry.

Manager Bi saw this and continued: "Manager Li, don't look down on Brother Qi's youth, he is already a member of the ZX committee, even Chairman Jiang and Secretary General Peng favor him."

Upon hearing this, Manager Li raised his brows slightly, a hint of surprise flashing through his eyes.

He examined Qi Yun with interest, a meaningful smile appeared on his face: "Oh? Didn't expect Brother Qi to keep such a low profile, it's no ordinary treatment to earn Chairman Jiang's favor."

Qi Yun smiled humbly, waved his hand: "You two are too kind, I can't compare to you, there's still much to learn."

He understood in his heart that Manager Bi mentioned these things to showcase his value to Manager Li on one hand, and strengthen their relationship on the other.

No matter if they end up on opposing sides in the future, at least now, he's truly helping him.

Chapter 208: Thirty Million Yuan in Cash

The dinner gathering continued until the afternoon, until Qi Yun received a call from Ma Baoguo and left first.

At the police station, inside Ma Baoguo's office.

Seeing Ma Baoguo's joyful expression, Qi Yun teased, "Calling me over in such a hurry, there must be some good news."

Ma Baoguo laughed heartily, his joy unmistakable. He pulled Qi Yun to the sofa, poured him a cup of tea, and finally said, "Brother Qi, this time I really must thank you."

"After we caught those guys yesterday, we immediately interrogated them and unearthed their superior. Coordinating with the police in Gansu Province, we successfully captured multiple criminals, completely dismantling this human trafficking organization in one fell swoop."

"You've not only helped me but also done a great deed for society!"

Qi Yun heard this, waved his hand, "You're too kind, Brother Ma, I was just doing what I should do."

Ma Baoguo patted Qi Yun's shoulder, his eyes full of gratitude, "Brother Qi, your sense of responsibility and justice is admirable. It's thanks to you that we could crack this major human trafficking case. You deserve a lot of credit."

"I've already reported your situation to the city bureau leaders, and they're discussing a reward for you. They specifically asked me to find out your thoughts on this."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun took a sip of tea and then said with a smile, "Brother Ma, the reward is really not important. Truth be told, I don't lack money right now. I'm not doing this for any return. I'm content just to see the human traffickers brought to justice."

Ma Baoguo laughed heartily, understanding the implication in Qi Yun's words.

Living in this world is nothing more than for fame and fortune. If money isn't an issue, then it must be about reputation.

"Brother Qi, your awareness is high. I have to learn from you in the future."

"I understand your thoughts, and I'll report them to the city bureau leaders later."

Qi Yun didn't continue with this topic and instead asked, "Brother Ma, you must have other good news you haven't shared, right?"

Ma Baoguo chuckled, his mouth almost grinning to his ears.

He leaned closer to Qi Yun, lowered his voice, and said, "Brother Qi, thanks to you, after so many years, I finally have a chance to make a move in this position."

Qi Yun wasn't too surprised by this and replied with a smile, "Then let me congratulate you in advance, Brother Ma. I'll be depending on you to look out for me in the future."

The latter half of the sentence, Ma Baoguo naturally didn't take seriously. Given Qi Yun's relationship with Zhang Dayong, there was no need for him to look out for Qi Yun.

"Brother Qi, it's all thanks to your help this time that I have this opportunity. If you ever need anything from me in the future, just say the word, and I'll spare no effort."

Saying that, he patted Qi Yun's shoulder again, his face full of gratitude.

Qi Yun smiled and nodded in agreement, but in his heart, he was fully aware that such pleasantries are just words to be heard. Taking them seriously would be naïve.

After several interactions, he understood Ma Baoguo's character. When dealing with people like Ma Baoguo, value always comes first.

If one day he asked for a favor beyond what he could offer in return, he was sure that Ma Baoguo wouldn't be as close-hearted as he was today.

...

After leaving Ma Baoguo, Qi Yun paid a visit to Brother Peng to discuss matters concerning the trade company, and then headed straight home.

After getting out of the car, Qi Yun said through the car window, "Brother Wei, why not bring Gao Min over to the house for dinner?"

Chen Wei shook his head, "Don't worry about us."

Seeing this, Qi Yun didn't insist and nodded before turning away.

At home, Zhao Qing had already prepared dinner. Seeing Qi Yun return, she quickly went up to take his coat.

"Hey, why do you have foundation on your face?" Zhao Qing hung up the coat and looked at him, surprised, "You never wore makeup before."

Qi Yun raised a hand to touch his face and explained with a smile, "I went to record a program at the TV station today. The makeup artist did a little touch-up."

"TV station?" Zhao Qing's eyes widened in surprise as she grabbed his hand in delight, "You were on TV? What program?"

Qi Yun playfully flicked her nose and then briefly explained the situation to her.

After listening, Zhao Qing's lips parted slightly, and it took her a while before she said, "So you donated an invaluable treasure to the country?"

Saying this, she threw herself into Qi Yun's arms, hugging his neck excitedly, "Why didn't you tell me at all before? When will the program air? I want to watch it!"

Qi Yun took a step back from her embrace but steadily held her waist, his eyes filled with amusement, "The broadcast time isn't set yet. I initially didn't plan to appear on TV, wanting to keep a low profile."

"Then why did you change your mind later?" Zhao Qing looked at him and asked.

Qi Yun thought for a moment but didn't reveal the true reason to her. Zhao Qing was completely unaware of the things involving the USB drive, and even if he told her, she couldn't help much but would just worry unnecessarily.

"Later on... the old fellow from the Chinese Academy of Sciences came to me. I couldn't refuse, given his old age. I had to give him some face."

Zhao Qing chuckled upon hearing this, releasing Qi Yun and quickly running to the study to share the news with the little girl, "Nuannuan, Daddy's going to be on TV!"

The little girl heard this, dropped her pencil, and ran over, throwing herself into Qi Yun's arms and looking up, "Wow, can I see Daddy on TV?"

"I want to tell the kids in kindergarten that my daddy is super amazing!"

Qi Yun laughed and pinched his daughter's chubby cheek, "Haha, of course you can! But I suggest not to do that, or other kids might get jealous that you have such a great dad."

The little girl folded her arms proudly, "I'm not afraid of them being jealous! I want to say it!"

With that, she hopped back to the study, dug out her small backpack, and pulled out a crumpled piece of colored paper, "I want to draw a picture for Daddy. When Daddy's on TV, I'll stick it on the classroom wall!"

Zhao Qing and Qi Yun exchanged glances and couldn't help but chuckle; this little girl was quite the bold personality.

...

The next day, Qi Yun, somewhat tired from the previous night, woke up a bit late.

Zhao Qing and the daughter had already gone to kindergarten, but breakfast was left for him on the dining table.

After a brief wash-up, Qi Yun drank porridge while checking today's intelligence content.

[Current Intelligence Points: 4]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): The master craftsman who was reproducing bronze artifacts in Xialing Village was taken away by a group of mysterious people last night, currently held at Four Seasons Home District, 7-2-801]

"Why was that person suddenly taken away?" Qi Yun was at a loss.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Green): Young Master Zhou, to win Leilei's favor, plans to host a party at an estate outside the city. The estate is registered under a distant relative of his, and in a secret compartment in the study on the second floor of the estate, there is 30 million yuan in cash hidden]

Chapter 209: The Walking Half Million

Thirty million in cash!

Qi Yun gasped upon seeing this piece of intelligence.

Who the real owner of this estate is, he could guess with his eyes closed...

Only that person could have such an appetite to swallow thirty million.

Such a large sum would be hard for anyone to resist...

But Qi Yun knew very well that he couldn't covet this money, otherwise he'd bring disaster upon himself.

However, although he couldn't think about the money, this information was still very valuable to him. If used properly, it might become the fuse to blow the enemy's cover...

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Yesterday, Peng Fei had contact with a clothing merchant from India, who is also a spy for the Indian government.

The true purpose of this trip is to meet with another local operative, who was involved in the military's development of drone navigation technology. Their meeting is set for tonight, location TBD]

"A spy?"

Walking gold mine?

Qi Yun widened his eyes in disbelief.

He had only seen this kind of scenario in movies; he never thought it would happen in real life.

"But how does this involve Brother Peng..." Qi Yun mumbled as he put down his chopsticks.

He was certain Brother Peng was unaware, but once the word "spy" was involved, the authorities would take it very seriously, and a thorough investigation would be inevitable.

After thinking it over, he decided to meet Brother Peng first to get to the bottom of this.

...

In the garment factory office, Brother Peng was on a call. Seeing Qi Yun enter, his face showed surprise. He pointed to the sofa next to him, indicating for Qi Yun to take a seat.

Qi Yun nodded and sat on the sofa, pulling out a cigarette and waiting quietly.

A few minutes later, Brother Peng hung up the phone, stood up, and sat next to Qi Yun, raising an eyebrow, "Why are you here? Usually, I don't see you more than twice a month."

Qi Yun grinned and handed him a cigarette, "Didn't you say someone was coming in for an interview for the trade company manager position yesterday? I happened to be free today, so I came to check it out."

Brother Peng lit the cigarette and glanced at him, "Why don't you handle that for me? I have to go out for a bit." He stood up as he spoke.

"Where are you going?" Qi Yun was slightly surprised, thinking that it would be difficult to get any information after he left.

Brother Peng put on his jacket and replied, "A foreign wholesaler we worked with before is here. There's some inventory left at the factory; I'm going to negotiate a price to clear it all out and then sell the equipment."

Qi Yun felt a stir in his heart, just as he was thinking about how to find the right pretext to inquire, here it was served on a platter.

He stood up with a smile, casually placing a hand on Brother Peng's shoulder, "Which country's wholesaler? Can I go with you?"

"What would you do there?" Brother Peng turned his head in surprise, "You shouldn't go. The person coming for the interview is quite skilled; make sure you handle that properly."

Qi Yun, hearing this, couldn't insist and just nodded, "Alright, when will you be back?"

"At most an hour or two. If you have something to do, just leave after the interview; no need to wait for me." Brother Peng said, taking his briefcase and heading out.

Qi Yun watched him disappear, sat back on the sofa, furrowed his brow and lit another cigarette. After taking a deep puff, he took out his phone and called Chen Wei.

"Brother Wei, Brother Peng just left, can you tail him without letting him notice?"

On the other end of the call, Chen Wei's cold face showed a hint of surprise. He looked up just in time to see Peng Fei coming out of the office building, quickly reclined his seat, and hid himself.

Qi Yun continued over the call, "He's going to meet an Indian; see if you can find out what they're talking about."

"Also, keep an eye on that Indian, see where he goes and who he meets, and hopefully capture it all."

Though confused, Chen Wei didn't ask many questions and said, "If I leave, I can't guarantee your safety."

"It's fine, you go ahead." Qi Yun replied.

Not to mention, they probably didn't know about his existence, and even if they did, they wouldn't dare act recklessly in broad daylight.

Even Qiu Yuanshan's "sudden heart attack" happened in the dead of night.

With the instruction given, Chen Wei didn't hesitate. Watching Brother Peng's car pull out of the factory, he started his own car and followed at a distance.

Qi Yun leaned back on the sofa, puffing smoke as he deliberated on the subsequent plan.

After a while, he heard knocking at the office door, then a chubby face peeked in.

"Hello, my name is Xie Mengmeng, here for the interview."

Qi Yun's thoughts were interrupted. He turned his head, his eyes lingering on the round face for a moment, then snuffed out his cigarette, saying, "Come in, have a seat."

Xie Mengmeng stepped into the office, the thud of his footsteps resonating in the room.

He came to sit across from Qi Yun, cautiously lowering himself slowly.

Even with care, the sofa creaked under his weight.

Wiping the sweat off his forehead with a handkerchief, Xie Mengmeng chuckled, "Sorry, there was some traffic on the way, keeping you waiting."

In fact, he wasn't late; he arrived five minutes early.

Qi Yun snapped out of his surprise, realizing his earlier behavior might have been a bit impolite. He quickly smiled and waved it off as no issue, confirming again, "Your name is Xie Mengmeng?"

Chapter 210: The Walking Half Million

It's not that his hearing is bad, but it's genuinely challenging to associate the person in front of him, who weighs at least 300 pounds and is about to burst out of his suit, with the name "Xie Mengmeng."

"Yes." Xie Mengmeng smiled awkwardly and took a resume out of his bag, handing it over. "Here's my resume."

Qi Yun forced a slight smile on his face, trying to appear kinder: "Alright, let me have a look."

Xie Mengmeng.

Gender: Male.

Age: 28 years old.

Graduated from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich.

Work experience: Sanstone Koala...

After reading the information on the resume, Qi Yun was taken aback.

Zurich Polytechnic University, that's a bona fide top ten global university, far beyond those overseas unknown colleges.

And looking at this work experience, Sanstone Koala is one of the largest e-commerce platforms in the country. Ever since it was acquired by that person, it has taken off directly.

No wonder Peng Fei said the other party is quite capable. Now it seems that in terms of both external and internal attributes, indeed they are very competent...

Qi Yun raised his head, looking back at the other party, and cleared his throat, saying: "I have a question, from your resume, it seems you don't need to worry about work, right?"

"Why did you choose to interview at our newly established small company?"

Upon mentioning this, Xie Mengmeng smiled awkwardly again: "There are two reasons, I'm from Jiang Province, my parents are old and don't want me to go too far."

"And then there's my high salary demand, plus my appearance, leading several companies who interviewed me to be unwilling to hire me."

Qi Yun nodded, expressing understanding. He could feel the sincerity in the other's words. Watching the person continuously wipe sweat, he held back his laughter and said, "Why don't you take off your suit, you look quite uncomfortable."

"We don't care about those external things here, just ability."

Xie Mengmeng showed a trace of delight on his face, smiled gratefully at Qi Yun, then stood up, struggling to take off the tight suit, revealing the white shirt soaked with sweat beneath.

After sitting down again, he appeared significantly more relaxed.

"Let me tell you about our company..." After a brief introduction, Qi Yun continued, "So in the coming period, we're mainly working with friends from Da'e, though we might explore other markets in the future."

"Do you speak Russian?"

Liu Mingming quickly replied: "Yes, besides English and Russian, I'm also proficient in German, Spanish..."

Qi Yun nodded silently, is this the difference between ordinary people and geniuses? No wonder someone like him can get into Zurich Polytechnic University.

He then asked several questions related to the business, to which Xie Mengmeng provided some unique insights, making Qi Yun very pleased.

"What are your thoughts on the salary?"

Upon hearing this, Liu Mengmeng straightened up slightly and earnestly said, "I expect a monthly salary of no less than forty thousand yuan."

Qi Yun pondered briefly. A forty thousand yuan salary, factoring in social insurance and housing funds, would cost nearly fifty thousand. In Jiang Province, there aren't many companies that can afford such high salaries.

But as long as the person truly has the ability, the value they could create would be far beyond fifty thousand, so he's willing to pay this amount.

"No problem, we'll set it at forty thousand for now. If you perform well, I'll give you a raise!"

Xie Mengmeng was all smiles at Qi Yun's straightforwardness: "Thank you... uh, I forgot to ask your name?"

"I'm Qi Yun."

"Thank you, President Qi! I'll work hard so you won't be disappointed!"

Qi Yun stood up and patted his shoulder: "Alright, you can go back for now. When the new office location is ready tomorrow, I'll have someone inform you to complete the onboarding process."

"Okay." Xie Mengmeng quickly stood up, bowed slightly in gratitude to Qi Yun, then carefully packed his things and turned to leave.

His rotund body even slightly turned to pass through the door frame smoothly...

Shortly after the other party left, Qi Yun received a call from Chen Wei.

"Peng Fei just left earlier. I listened from a distance and he seems to want to sell a batch of clothes to that foreigner," Chen Wei said on the phone.

Qi Yun paused and replied, "Okay, I got it. Keep following that foreigner."

After hanging up, he let out a long sigh.

About half an hour later, Peng Fei returned.

"Did the interviewee arrive? How was it?"

Qi Yun looked up at Peng Fei and nodded slightly: "He came, a very capable person. We've already negotiated with him, a monthly salary of forty thousand, and tomorrow when the new office location is settled, he'll complete the onboarding process."

Peng Fei raised his eyebrows, looking a bit surprised: "Forty thousand? Wow, I guessed his salary demand wouldn't be low, but I didn't expect it to be so high."

Qi Yun chuckled, patting his shoulder: "Whether he's worth that much, you'll find out after some time."

Saying that, he walked to the sofa, sat down, picked up the cup of water on the table, and continued: "How's it going on your side? Did you reach an agreement?"

Peng Fei showed a hint of helplessness, too, as he sat on the sofa with a sigh: "Ay, that Indian is tough on the pricing. I almost wore out my tongue and only settled part of it."

"But being able to handle part of it is better than having it all go to waste in my hands."

Qi Yun nodded, handing him a cigarette, casually asking: "Do you have any details about that Indian person?"

Peng Fei took the cigarette, lit it, exhaled smoke rings slowly, and frowned: "We've worked together a few times before. As for details, besides knowing he's in garment import and export, I don't know much else."

"Why the sudden interest?"

Qi Yun sat up straight, flicked the ash of his cigarette, and smiled: "Nothing much, just random curiosity."

"I saw a video online last night, saying some foreigners disguise themselves as businessmen to do business here, with their real identity being spies, here to develop local contacts."

With that, he closely observed Peng Fei, monitoring any change in his expression.

Peng Fei rolled his eyes at him: "Like hell a near-bankrupt clothing factory would attract a spy organization, have me make uniforms for them?"

Qi Yun laughed heartily: "Alright, carry on, I'll be off." With that, he extinguished his cigarette butt and left.

From his observations just now, and his years of understanding of Peng Fei, he's certain the other wasn't lying, and genuinely didn't know the identity of the Indian person.

In this case, he had no more concerns.

After leaving the clothing factory, Qi Yun called Zhang Dayong to find out he was in his office. He stopped a taxi heading straight to the New District's Public Security Bureau.

In the office, Zhang Dayong poured a cup of tea and handed it over, asking: "What brought you here today? Do you need something from me?"

Qi Yun took the cup and, seeing the bloodshot eyes of the other, asked instead of answering: "Didn't sleep these past few days? What happened?"

Zhang Dayong rubbed his temples, looking weary. He instinctively glanced towards the door and then sighed: "I've been in a tough situation lately. The incident at the teahouse last time put me under surveillance."

Qi Yun's smile vanished upon hearing this.

They had met at the teahouse together twice - once asking him to find Shi Feng to introduce a master in bronze artifact replicas, and the other time discussing the New District's Public Security Bureau's project bidding.

It was clearly the former he was referring to.

If it was merely about disclosing bidding information, it wouldn't count as something serious, and he wasn't the one who won the bid for that project either.

With this in mind, Qi Yun leaned forward slightly, showing a hint of concern, and quietly asked: "What's the situation?"