

Middle Age 211

Chapter 211: Catching a Spy

Zhang Dayong shook his head and didn't continue speaking, but Qi Yun could roughly guess what was going on.

To forge bronze artifacts, you'd certainly have to take the items out of the evidence room first, because you need to make molds.

And even if this is done very carefully, it probably won't withstand scrutiny from someone determined.

As for whether the bronze artifacts behind Zhang Dayong are real or fake, probably only he knows.

It's said that the old master has very skilled techniques, and unless one day the evidence room piece appears under the spotlight again, it's really hard to say if it's genuine or fake.

Judging from the two pieces of intelligence from yesterday and today, it seems like another faction has started to make trouble for Zhang Dayong and the people behind him.

Qi Yun now urgently needs to determine who is behind Zhang Dayong, as it will largely decide his future relationship with Zhang Dayong, whether they'll be friends or foes.

It also affects whether some of his plans can be implemented.

But such matters are not something he can directly ask about, and even if he asked, Zhang Dayong wouldn't say.

However, it's not too hard to inquire about such things, as those with some channels in the system would know how he got two promotion opportunities in a short time.

"Talk about your business. You didn't come here just for tea, did you?" Zhang Dayong put down his teacup and said.

Qi Yun lifted his watch to check the time, then smiled and said, "Heh, I did come for something, but the time hasn't arrived yet."

Zhang Dayong raised an eyebrow, a hint of suspicion in his eyes, "Oh? You're keeping me in suspense?"

At that moment, there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" Zhang Dayong responded.

The door slowly opened, and a young officer in uniform poked his head in, "Director Zhang, Director Li asks for you in the meeting room."

"Got it, I'll be right there." With that, Zhang Dayong stood up, adjusted his clothes, and said to Qi Yun, "Have a seat."

Qi Yun nodded, "Mm, you take care of your things."

After Zhang Dayong left, Qi Yun took out his phone from his pocket, pondered for a while, and dialed Vice Secretary Peng's number.

"Hello, Secretary."

Vice Secretary Peng's steady voice came from the other end, "Hey, why did you suddenly think of calling me?"

Qi Yun replied cautiously with a chuckle, "Secretary, I've run into some trouble and wanted to seek your advice."

"Do you know Director Zhang Dayong from the New District Public Security Bureau?"

He spoke directly, feeling that the other side was decisive, so Qi Yun didn't beat around the bush.

Moreover, with his connection to Director Yu, the other side likely wouldn't hide anything they could disclose.

Vice Secretary Peng replied, "I've met him, but never dealt with him, why?"

Qi Yun paused and straightforwardly said, "I want to know who's behind him."

There was a short silence on the other end, then Vice Secretary Peng slowly spoke, "Why are you digging into this? Are you at odds with him?"

Qi Yun hurriedly laughed and explained, "Don't worry, no conflicts, just want to get acquainted."

Vice Secretary Peng was silent again, then said just one word, "2!"

"Alright, I understand, thank you, Secretary. I'll visit you another day."

After hanging up, Qi Yun let out a long sigh of relief. That person wasn't on the USB drive's list, which meant he didn't have to be on opposite sides with Zhang Dayong.

The person was one of his most useful contacts in this city now, and it would be a pity to lose that.

About an hour later, Zhang Dayong returned to the office, his expression a bit grim.

"Sorry for the wait. What did you want to discuss? Can we talk now?" Zhang Dayong asked as he sat down.

Qi Yun nodded and said slowly, "I have a friend who runs a clothing factory. He's been negotiating business with an Indian merchant these days, and I feel like that Indian guy might be a fraud, so I had someone tail him to check him out."

"Turns out, the person I sent overheard him on the phone, saying things like 'drone navigation,' 'meeting,' and sounded very suspicious."

"I feel this guy is quite suspicious. Do you think he could be a spy?"

Upon hearing the word "spy," Zhang Dayong's expression turned serious, and he subconsciously straightened up.

After a long silence, he finally asked, "Any other leads?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "Not for now, but I have someone keeping an eye on him."

Zhang Dayong furrowed his brow, tapping rhythmically on the table.

In the country, once the term "spy" is involved, it's no small issue, so he had to be cautious.

"Does your friend know anything else about this Indian man?"

"He knows nothing," Qi Yun replied seriously, afraid this matter would drag Brother Peng in.

Zhang Dayong nodded slightly and, after a long pause, spoke again, "I'll contact the national security guys now." With that, he pulled out his phone and started dialing.

More than half an hour later, two men dressed in plain clothes walked into Zhang Dayong's office.

These two men had stern faces, sharp eyes, and exuded an air of professionalism in their actions.

Zhang Dayong stood up to greet them, shook hands politely, and then introduced Qi Yun to them.

"These two are comrades from national security, Captain Ge and Xiao Li."

"They are experienced in handling this kind of matter. Qi Yun, please explain what you know to them in detail once more."

Qi Yun nodded, shook hands with each of them, and then sat down on the sofa, where he recounted the situation again.

The middle-aged man called Captain Ge frowned after hearing, and said, "Comrade Qi Yun, please contact your driver and find out where that Indian person is currently located."

"We need to send someone over immediately to 'observe' him."

Qi Yun didn't dare delay and immediately took out his phone to dial Chen Wei's number.

After a few rings, the call was quickly answered on the other end.

"Brother Wei, what's the situation now? Tell me your location."

Chen Wei's voice came from the other side of the phone: "The target just left the Quanji Hotel on Nanning Road, got into a taxi heading towards East City. The license plate number is 'A950WW'. It's currently impossible to determine the destination. I'm following behind with my car."

With Qi Yun's phone on speaker, Captain Ge and the others could clearly hear Chen Wei's report.

Captain Ge's eyes grew sharp, and he swiftly took out his phone and quickly dialed a number.

"Xiao Wang, immediately track the driving route of the taxi with the license plate 'A950WW', locate its real-time position, and inform the second team to take action at once. Keep an eye on the person in the car, including the driver." Captain Ge decisively gave the orders.

After hanging up, he looked up at Qi Yun: "Comrade Qi Yun, thank you for your cooperation!"

Qi Yun quickly waved his hand: "Captain Ge, this is the duty of every citizen, no need to thank me."

Captain Ge nodded slightly: "Once our people arrive on the scene, you can let your driver leave. Our people will handle the follow-up affairs."

"Understood." Qi Yun nodded in agreement.

"Alright then, for now that's all. If we need your assistance later, we will contact you." After saying that, Captain Ge stood up to bid farewell to Zhang Dayong, ready to leave.

"Oh, hold on a second, Captain Ge." Qi Yun stood up as well.

Captain Ge turned his head with an inquisitive look: "Comrade Qi Yun, is there anything else?"

Qi Yun chuckled and replied: "I just wanted to ask, if that Indian is indeed a spy, my friend wouldn't be implicated, would he? He's truly unaware."

Captain Ge glanced at him, understood the underlying meaning, and nodded: "Don't worry, we will investigate thoroughly. If he truly wasn't aware, then it has nothing to do with him."

"Alright." Qi Yun was relieved upon hearing this.

After they left, only Qi Yun and Zhang Dayong were left in the office, making the atmosphere momentarily quiet.

Zhang Dayong sat back on the sofa and handed over a cigarette: "The lead you provided this time is important. If we can indeed catch the spy, it would be a great contribution."

Qi Yun smiled; regardless of the contribution, he wouldn't let that Indian escape for the sake of the fifty thousand reward.

He took the cigarette, lit it, took a deep drag, and then pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket, placing it on the coffee table in front of Zhang Dayong.

The paper had 'Four Seasons Home District 7-2-801' written on it.

Zhang Dayong looked at the paper on the coffee table, frowning slightly, his eyes revealing some puzzlement.

He looked up at Qi Yun and asked, "What is this?"

Qi Yun flicked the ash from his cigarette and slowly said, "While you were in a meeting earlier, a friend told me that they saw an acquaintance from Xialing Village at this address."

He stopped his words at that.

Upon hearing this, Zhang Dayong's pupils instantly enlarged, his eyes squinted slightly, staring at the address on the paper as if contemplating something.

Qi Yun didn't say anything further, stood up, patted the other's shoulder, and then walked out of the office.

...

At ten in the evening, Qi Yun was cuddling Zhao Qing on the sofa while reading a book when he suddenly received a call from an unknown number.

He glanced at Zhao Qing in his arms, gently patted her shoulder, and Zhao Qing nodded slightly, releasing her hold on him.

Qi Yun sat up straight and pressed the answer button: "Hello, who is this?"

A deep male voice came from the other end of the line: "Hello Qi Yun, I am Ge Dabao."

Qi Yun immediately guessed that the late call must be due to some development in the espionage case.

"Hello, Captain Ge, is there new information?"

Ge Dabao replied: "Indeed, the Indian and another individual were apprehended during their meeting. After interrogation, both have truthfully confessed, and they are confirmed to be foreign spies."

"I can't divulge more details about the case, but I'm calling to inform you of this news and to ask if you have time to come to our location tomorrow."

Qi Yun smiled and replied: "No problem, just send me the address."

Chapter 212: Invitation from the Secret Department

[Current Intelligence Points: 4]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): A group of professional fraudsters is swindling 'introduction fees' under the guise of taking on photovoltaic projects. Qiangzi has already paid two million in upfront fees and has 'successfully' won a segment of the project.]

Qiangzi?

Qi Yun was a bit startled, the scene of drinking at Peng's house last time flashed back in his mind.

Since then, the paths of their lives had drifted apart, nearly severing all contact, becoming strangers.

He never expected to hear from the other person again in such a way.....

He silently lit a cigarette, took a few deep puffs, and amid the swirling smoke, his thoughts were countless.

"It's better to pretend I don't know..."

Given their current relationship, even if he advises the other person, it may not be heeded, and might even be perceived as jealousy of his fortunes.

Recently, the news seems to report, Jiang Province indeed has been vigorously developing the photovoltaic industry over the past two years, so many bosses with dreams of quick riches are blindly plunging into scams...

Thinking was never Qiangzi's strong suit.

Qi Yun sighed, and continued to read the next intelligence report.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Blue): Yesterday afternoon, the municipal government meeting passed the renovation plan for the old district along Yingbin Road, incorporating several communities like the Bus Company's family complex and the Geological Survey's family complex into the demolition plan.]

Demolition is not bad.

If I remember correctly, that road seems to lead towards the airport direction, both sides have decades-old communities, and the price of second-hand houses seems to be only five to six thousand per square.

Although demolition compensation isn't as extravagant as in previous years, it's still considerably higher than the house prices.

Qi Yun lit another cigarette, and began calculating silently.

After paying for the auto parts factory, he currently only had 1.8 million left in his account, and the payment from the goose side is estimated to take a few days to arrive. The funds are a bit tight, and he needs to find a way to gather more.

He never considered getting rich all at once from this, but following to have a sip of the soup isn't too much, right?

People with some social experience know that although the news of such demolitions hasn't been announced yet, those qualified to sit at the table and share the cake have known the situation years earlier.

Even before the plan is passed, the cake is already divided.

However, those people still care about their reputation, they won't do things too ruthlessly, and will leave some soup for others.

But only soup to drink, if one gets too greedy, they'll have to spit out whatever they swallowed eventually.

"Hmm, let's gather ten million first, and have some old duck soup!"

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Recently, gold prices have started to fall, and domestic experts predict a rebound next week.]

Qi Yun lifted his butt, farted, then extinguished the cigarette butt and went to the bedroom to sleep.

...

The next day, on a bustling street in the New District.

After getting out of the car, Qi Yun looked up at the building in front without any signage, muttering to himself: "This should be the place. Truly well hidden in plain sight."

He took a deep breath, adjusted his collar, and stepped into the building.

At the entrance sat a stern-looking middle-aged man, who raised his eyes to scrutinize him: "Stop, what's your business?"

"I'm looking for Ge Dabao." Not knowing this person's identity at first, Qi Yun directly mentioned the name without the title.

Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man's attitude slightly softened: "Mr. Qi, right? Please show your ID."

Qi Yun took out his ID card from his wallet and handed it over. The middle-aged man took the ID card and carefully compared it with the information on the tablet in front of him, before returning it a few minutes later, gesturing: "Mr. Qi, please follow me."

They passed through the hall and entered a special elevator at the corner.

The middle-aged man aligned his face with the camera, completing facial recognition, then pressed the floor button.

The elevator ascended slowly, with neither of them speaking, creating a slightly oppressive atmosphere.

When the elevator door opened, Qi Yun followed the middle-aged man down the corridor, stopping at the door of an office at the end.

The middle-aged man gently knocked on the door, and inside came Ge Dabao's steady voice: "Come in."

Opening the door, Ge Dabao was sitting behind the desk handling documents. Seeing Qi Yun enter, he put down his pen, stood up, and smiled as he extended his hand: "Comrade Qi Yun, welcome, welcome, please sit down."

Qi Yun walked up quickly to shake hands with him and sat down on the sofa opposite.

Ge Dabao poured him a cup of tea, and after sitting down, he said: "Yesterday on the phone, it was rushed and I didn't have time to properly thank you. This time, inviting you over, first is because the department leaders want to personally thank and commend you, and second, there's a matter on which they wish to seek your opinion."

Just as he finished speaking, footsteps sounded outside the office, and a person dressed in formal attire, looking like a leader, walked in.

The newcomer appeared to be in his fifties, with some gray hair at the temples, a composed demeanor, and a sharp gaze.

Ge Dabao quickly stood up to introduce, "Comrade Qi Yun, this is Director Duan from our department. Your success in capturing the spy is greatly admired by Director Duan."

With a friendly smile on his face, Director Duan walked briskly up to Qi Yun and shook his hand. "Comrade Qi Yun, the clues you provided were very important, and your way of handling them was very appropriate, helping us capture several spies hidden within the country. Thank you for your contribution to national security."

As he spoke, he patted Qi Yun's hand, his eyes full of appreciation.

Qi Yun also smiled and responded quickly, "Director Duan, you flatter me. This is just what I should do as a citizen. Compared to the hard work of the leaders and comrades, I have only done a trivial little thing."

He appeared very calm, without the slightest bit of awkwardness.

At some point, these situational remarks have become second nature, requiring hardly any thought.

Director Duan laughed heartily, released Qi Yun's hand, and nodded towards Ge Dabao on the side. "See, our Comrade Qi Yun not only has sharp insight but is also so humble in speech!"

Ge Dabao nodded in agreement with a smile. "Indeed, Comrade Qi Yun has many qualities we should learn from."

Qi Yun's old face turned red from the compliments of the two people. "You both overpraise me."

"Sit down and let's talk," Director Duan gestured to the sofa beside him.

Everyone sat down again. Director Duan took a sip from his teacup and waved at Ge Dabao.

Ge Dabao immediately stood, took a box from the table, and handed it over.

"This is an award to recognize the outstanding contribution you made in the spy capture operation, as well as the nation's appreciation and gratitude to you."

Qi Yun accepted the box with both hands and slowly opened it.

Inside lay a medal engraved with golden wheat and shield patterns, along with a gilded certificate of honor underneath.

Looking at these two items before him, he felt a surge of indescribable emotion in his heart.

Regardless of whether the initial intention was for that five hundred thousand yuan reward, at this moment, even without that money, he would still have done it, wouldn't he?

Adjusting his mood, Qi Yun took a deep breath and said, "Thank you for the honor the nation has bestowed upon me. This holds great significance for me. I was merely doing what a citizen should do, never expecting to receive such high praise."

Ge Dabao raised his hand, patting him on the shoulder. "This is what you deserve. Additionally, we will also present you with a fifty thousand yuan reward as encouragement."

"Hehe, thank you to the nation," Qi Yun grinned in thanks, choosing not to make any more polite remarks.

Seeing this, Director Duan laughed heartily as well, pointing at him.

Then he switched to a serious demeanor, picking up the topic, "Alright, we've finished with the commendation. Now I need to talk to you about another matter."

Qi Yun straightened slightly and replied, "Director Duan, you speak, I am all ears."

"Considering your keen investigative skills and excellent adaptability in this event, I would like to recruit you as an external member of our Public Security Department. This time, I also wanted to inquire about your opinion."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun was instantaneously dumbfounded. He never expected that this was what the other party wanted to discuss with him.

Just because he provided a clue, they wanted to recruit him?

Could it be a little too hasty?

Whether from his previous knowledge from television or upon entering through the doorway just now, the Public Security Department left him with an impression of mystery and solemnity.

How come now...

He even began to doubt whether he had heard wrong, staring blankly at Director Duan, eyes filled with curiosity.

Director Duan seemed to see through his doubts, smiling kindly as he explained patiently, "Comrade Qi Yun, you need not feel surprised, this is not a rash decision."

"The nature of our department's work is special, and we need people who, like you, have broad social connections and sharp insight to join us."

"Furthermore, your status as ZX committee member, together with your acts of donating national treasures twice, demonstrates your strong ideological consciousness. This is also what we value the most."

After hearing the other party's words, Qi Yun's facial expression froze again.

So they've thoroughly checked his background, huh?

The identity as ZX committee member and the matter of donating meteorites to museums are all recorded online and can be investigated.

But the donation of Qingnang Book, there's not a single trace online.

Apart from Wei Xueming and Director Yu on that side, only a few people from the TV station knew about it, including the crew who participated in the recording, all silenced and disallowed from external transmission.

He couldn't help but feel in his heart that in front of this department, there truly is no such thing as a secret...

At this moment, Ge Dabao refilled his teacup with a smile and spoke, "Even when recruiting external personnel, we need to undergo very strict background investigations. It's not our intention to pry into your privacy. Hope you don't mind."

Qi Yun chuckled dryly twice, thinking to himself, "Does it matter if I mind?"

Although he hasn't committed any illegal acts and isn't afraid of them investigating, everyone has some secrets they wish to keep hidden from outsiders...

Like his intelligence system...

No matter the thoughts in his heart, Qi Yun said, "Captain Ge, I understand. I know you're just doing your job, and to gain your recognition is an honor for me."

Chapter 213: External Investigator

Director Duan leaned back on the sofa, crossing his arms over his chest: "Comrade Qi Yun, our work concerns national security and there can be no tolerance for carelessness."

"For everyone involved, we have to ensure their reliability and loyalty. I'm glad you can understand."

Qi Yun nodded: "I want to ask, if I become an external member, what would I need to do? Do I have to come here to work every day?"

Ge Dabao took over the conversation, smiling as he replied, "External members don't need to come to work. Your job can be summarized in one sentence: discover those who might be colluding with foreign forces in the shadows and report any leads to us promptly."

"Also, if there are special circumstances, you may be needed to assist us in specific actions."

"Of course, we will try our best to keep you out of danger."

Qi Yun rubbed the teacup in his hand, his Adam's apple moved slightly; in fact, he really wanted to ask, "What do I get?"

But earlier, they had placed him on such a high pedestal, saying that seemed somewhat inconsistent with his character.

Ge Dabao glanced at him, continuing: "Although you are an external member, your benefits and treatment are the same as ours. According to the level set by Director Duan, you will have a monthly salary of eight thousand yuan."

Qi Yun smacked his lips, coughed lightly, and asked somewhat awkwardly: "Well, will I have credentials as well?"

Now, not to mention eight thousand yuan, even eighty thousand yuan a month would mean nothing to him; what he truly cared about was not the money.

Ge Dabao's mouth curved into a smile, taking a black leather cardholder from the drawer and sliding it over: "Director Duan said you would definitely agree, so he prepared it for you in advance."

Opening the cardholder, the dark blue credential cover was stamped with a golden national emblem, and below the photograph inside, neatly printed, was "External Investigator of GJ Security Bureau", followed by Qi Yun's personal information.

"The identity information of every external member is strictly confidential. Unless it's absolutely necessary, you must not disclose your identity to anyone, understood?"

Qi Yun looked at the credentials in his hand, feeling pleased—this gave him yet another layer of identity protection.

He closed the credentials, sat up straight, and replied seriously, "Understood. I am willing to become an external member to contribute to national security protection."

...

After leaving the G Security office, Qi Yun got into a car and went to an office building, where the office of his newly established trading company was located.

The office was on the 12th floor, and due to the instability of the initial business, even President Peng only rented three offices.

Currently, apart from the two of them as bosses, Zhong Rui is responsible for finance, and he also handles administration and human resources, handling all sorts of miscellaneous tasks.

However, this guy had no complaints, diligently managing everything on both sides in an organized manner.

Qi Yun didn't freeload off his labor; not only did he raise Zhong Rui's salary to twenty thousand yuan, but he also promised to hire more people later to relieve him from duties so he could return to the other company as his assistant.

"Boss!"

Zhong Rui, who was cleaning, saw Qi Yun enter and quickly put down the broom, bringing over a chair.

Qi Yun waved him off: "Where's President Peng?"

"President Peng just left, taking Xie Mengmeng to visit someone from the Railway Bureau," Zhong Rui replied.

Qi Yun nodded; Xie Mengmeng had gotten into work quickly.

He walked around a few offices, then asked, "How are things on Yuan Hua's side lately?"

Zhong Rui took out his phone, opened the notepad, and looked: "As of 8 PM last night, the registered users of 'Defense of Azeroth' had reached twenty thousand, now maintaining a daily growth rate of about ten percent."

"Already twenty thousand?" Qi Yun was slightly surprised. Since investing in Yuan Hua, he hadn't paid much attention to it and didn't expect this game to have quite a bit of potential.

If it really takes off, it might mean a big profit.

Zhong Rui nodded and replied: "Yes, Yuan Hua said next week he needs to buy two more servers."

Qi Yun rubbed his chin, abandoning the previous small-scale mentality: "See what other resources he needs and try to meet his requirements. If you're unsure, give me a call."

"Okay, boss."

"Alright, you carry on. I'll head out first."

After leaving the company, Qi Yun went to Lao Feng's hot pot restaurant.

Since the shops on both sides were connected, the hot pot restaurant now covered six or seven hundred square meters. Even so, during peak dining hours, there's still a queue for seats.

Qi Yun didn't know the exact daily turnover, but last month Lao Feng transferred him a dividend of 140,000 yuan.

"What brings you here today?" Lao Feng handed over a cigarette and said.

Qi Yun took the cigarette, lit it, and took a puff, saying slowly: "Just came to have a look, and talk to you about something." His gaze swept over the bustling scene in the store.

Lao Feng looked up at him, then continued examining the accounts in his hand: "Something that couldn't be said over the phone, making you visit in person."

Qi Yun flicked the ash off his cigarette, choosing not to hide it as he spoke plainly: "A friend told me that the old community on Yingbin Road will soon be demolished. I plan to buy a few properties."

"But I don't have enough money at the moment, so I came to see how much you can contribute."

Lao Feng's hand holding the pen paused briefly without asking further, then looked at his phone before saying: "I can gather 530,000 yuan for you here, and moreover, there is 360,000 yuan in the store's account."

Qi Yun blew out a puff of smoke and shook his head, "Just leave the money in the store alone. Transfer 530,000 to me, and I'll split the profits with you 50-50 once we make some."

Old Feng heard this, didn't say much more, and chuckled lightly, "Alright." Then he started transferring the money on his phone.

Qi Yun extinguished the cigarette and patted him on the shoulder, "Let's go."

...

After leaving the hot pot restaurant, Qi Yun noticed that they weren't far from the neighborhoods set for demolition, so he asked Chen Wei to drive over and check things out.

Ten minutes later, the car arrived at one of the neighborhoods.

This neighborhood wasn't big, with only eight or nine low-rise buildings. The weathered outer walls showed that these buildings were at least twenty years old.

Qi Yun saw a few elderly men and women sitting in the sun at the entrance of one of the buildings, so he went over to inquire about the situation.

It wasn't good. After asking, his heart sank halfway.

The apartment layouts in these nearby old neighborhoods were all typically two-bedroom units, less than 70 square meters each. Doing the math, each apartment would be around 500,000.

If he wanted to gather up 10 million to buy properties, he'd have to buy twenty units.

That target would be too big, and when the demolitions truly began, even a fool would sense something fishy. It would easily draw attention.

Plus, the homeowners here were all retirees from various factories. Once news of the eviction gets out, there's no telling if these folks would retract and cause a scene.

These people are in their seventies and eighties and aren't as straightforward as just dealing with the law—they could stubbornly camp at your door.

If you run into a situation like that, it's like having a toad squat on your foot—doesn't bite but surely irks.

Qi Yun immediately gave up the idea of feasting and planned to work with a real estate agent to buy just two or three units and treat it as scraping the bottom of the pot.

He sighed, took out a cigarette intending to light one, but found the box was empty. He crumpled the empty pack into a ball and stuffed it into his pocket, glancing at the crooked sign of the small shop at the neighborhood entrance.

After buying cigarettes from the store and lighting one, the corner of his eye suddenly caught sight of a nearby shop selling bicycles.

Instantly inspired, Qi Yun stepped toward the bicycle shop.

The shop door was locked, but through the glass, he saw the spacious inside, approximately three hundred square meters.

Two pieces of paper were taped to the door: one read "Call 189**** for Bicycle Sales," and the other "Store for Transfer, Contact 189****."

Next to it was a clothing store in a similarly lifeless state.

Qi Yun's mind raced, considering whether to buy these two commercial spaces.

Although commercial property prices are higher than residential, the compensation price during demolition is also higher, and such a move wouldn't attract much notice.

With the decision made, he immediately took out his phone, contacting the bike shop owner and, through him, the landlord.

On the other end came the noisy sounds of mahjong. Once the landlord learned Qi Yun wanted to buy the shop, he stopped playing and quickly said, "Sell! Wait for me, I'll be there right away!"

In less than five minutes, a Yadea electric scooter screeched to a stop at the bike shop door.

The man on the scooter had a scruffy beard and wore a crumpled jacket.

"Are you the one buying the shop?" The man sized up Qi Yun with a shrewd look in his eye, a cigarette stub perched on his lips.

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, "Yes, how big is this commercial space?"

The man removed the cigarette from his mouth and flicked the ash casually, "The built area is 325 square meters."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, skipping needless talk, and directly asked, "What's your asking price?"

The landlord was momentarily stunned, thinking Qi Yun might not be serious about buying.

Who talked business like that, not even stepping inside to look but asking the price outright?

He untied the key from his belt and gestured, "How about taking a look inside first?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "No need, just name your price."

Upon hearing this, the landlord's eyes flickered with hesitation, not answering immediately.

He had wanted to sell this shop for years but found no buyers.

After all that time, business in the area struggled even more, and he couldn't even rent it out despite slashing the rent repeatedly.

That's why he was so excited to hear someone wanted to buy the shop.

The landlord licked his lips, quickly calculating in his head, wanting to recover as much as he could but not scare Qi Yun away.

After all, Qi Yun was the only person who had shown interest in months.

After a brief pause, he gritted his teeth and said, "Boss, I won't beat around the bush. How about this, two and a half million, that's my lowest price."

With that, he kept a close eye on Qi Yun and inched forward, ready to grab him if he turned to leave.

Chapter 214: Mr. Qi, Have You Really Made It This Big Now?

A 325-square-meter shop, 2.5 million, this price is probably only available in this district in the entire city.

Calculated, it's only eight thousand per square meter.

Qi Yun didn't agree immediately but pointed to the clothing store next door and asked, "Do you know the landlord of that place?"

The landlord, a bit puzzled, nodded and replied, "Yes, we're good friends, living in the same community."

"Is his shop for sale?" Qi Yun continued to ask.

"Huh? You want to buy his shop?" The landlord was stunned, thinking Qi Yun didn't want his place, and instantly became anxious, "Boss, let me tell you, my shop's location is better, and let me quietly tell you, his shop's feng shui is not that lucky!"

Qi Yun held back a smile at the corner of his mouth, thinking how these two are indeed good friends.

"No problem with 2.5 million, you sort out the tenants today, and tomorrow we'll complete the transfer, full payment."

The landlord, hearing he agreed to the 2.5 million price and even full payment, was immediately overjoyed and eagerly nodded and bowed, "Okay, boss! Don't worry, I'll definitely sort out the tenant's matter today, and ensure it won't delay the transfer tomorrow."

Qi Yun nodded slightly and continued, "Give me the phone number of the landlord next door; I plan to buy his shop too."

"A-also want?" The landlord was stunned, his face full of shock.

Qi Yun said calmly, "Is there a problem?"

"No, no problem." The landlord recovered and quickly shook his head, his smile even more ingratiating, "Boss, you are truly capable!"

"I'll inform him directly and get him to come over right away!"

Qi Yun glanced at him meaningfully, smacking his lips and said, "Just give me the number, I'll ask by myself, don't bother you."

As the landlord searched for the number on his phone, he nonchalantly waved, "What's the bother, I'll call him over right away."

"Don't worry, I know his shop's situation well, I'll help you negotiate, definitely won't let you overpay."

Once he found and dialed the number, placing the phone to his ear, he continued speaking to Qi Yun, "He'll owe me a foot massage later."

Qi Yun looked at him with a strange expression, then took out a cigarette and lit it.

Silently thinking, "You're the one who insisted on doing this, don't blame me later..."

A few minutes later, the second landlord logged on.

The guy originally asked for 2.45 million, but under the persuasion of the first landlord, finally agreed to sell to Qi Yun for 2.4 million.

After negotiating the deal, they went to a nearby real estate agency, and after signing the contracts, Qi Yun transferred deposits to both of them, entrusting the remaining transfer matters to the agency.

As he left in a car, he happened to see the second landlord with an arm around the first, walking towards a foot massage parlor next door, both faces full of joy, as if saying, 'Thanks to you, we finally sold the unwanted shop.'

The two shops combined were a total of 4.9 million, plus taxes, close to around five million.

Qi Yun currently had 2.33 million in his account, still short by a portion...

"Brother Wei, head to Antique Street."

...

Half an hour later, at Qiuyue Pavilion.

Shi Feng was leisurely sitting in the shop, savoring tea.

Seeing Qi Yun enter, he was slightly taken aback, then smiled and said, "A rare guest, Mr. Qi, what brings you here today?"

Qi Yun pulled out a chair and sat down, picked up the Yixing teapot on the table, and poured himself some tea while saying, "Mr. Qi is here to borrow money from you."

Shi Feng paused the bead he was playing with, his gaze intrigued as it fell on Qi Yun's face, seeing he wasn't joking, so he immediately replied, "How much do you need?"

Qi Yun took a sip of tea, then held up three fingers, "Three hundred."

Shi Feng nodded, said nothing more, and picked up his phone to make the transfer.

After transferring the money to Qi Yun's account in several transactions, he set the phone aside and said, "I've transferred it to you."

Throughout, he said nothing more, nor did he ask when it would be repaid.

Qi Yun acknowledged with a simple "Hmm," without saying thanks.

Over time, their relationship had evolved from an initial collaboration to real friendship.

Just like the last time Qi Yun went to Hong Kong, telling him to buy that 60,000 yuan jade rough stone at Jade Stall, Shi Feng didn't say thanks either—just sent a photo of the finished piece to him, saying his daughter really liked it.

"Here's a tip for you," Qi Yun lowered his voice, rubbing the teacup, "The old neighborhoods by Yingbin Road are soon to be demolished."

Shi Feng, hearing this, showed a hint of surprise, leaned forward, and asked, "When did this happen?"

Qi Yun glanced at him and said plainly, "The proposal just passed yesterday, you should still have time to get in on it."

"Wow~" Shi Feng exaggeratedly gaped, his eyes wide open, "Mr. Qi, are you mixing at such a high level now?"

Qi Yun chuckled, not responding to him.

"Did you buy?" Shi Feng continued to ask.

Qi Yun didn't hide it and answered truthfully, "I just bought two shops, five million."

After hearing that, Shi Feng frowned slightly, thought for a moment, then stood up and said, "I'll go check it out now, hitching a ride on your tip." Speaking, he grabbed his phone and car keys, "Got anything else to do? If not, maybe head back first?"

Qi Yun stared at him: "I just sat down, didn't even finish a cup of tea, and you're kicking me out?"

Shi Feng didn't listen to his complaints, taking two steps forward, picked up a can of tea from the table, shoved it into Qi Yun's hand, then dragged him outside, "Hurry up and go, it's all yours; drink it slowly back home."

...

After being rushed out of Shi Feng's shop, Qi Yun was just planning to head to the pharmaceutical factory to get some medicinal materials—those he had previously asked Cao Yufei to help find, and the other party had located them.

Just then, Brother Peng called in.

"Zhong Rui said you came to the office looking for me earlier? Got any instructions?"

Qi Yun chuckled and replied, "It's not convenient to talk over the phone; I'll tell you when we meet later."

Brother Peng nodded, continued to ask, "By the way, do you know anyone at the railway bureau?"

"Why the sudden question? Having trouble?" Qi Yun asked.

Brother Peng sighed on the other end, his tone carrying some helplessness, "Don't mention it, I went to the freight department this way; it was almost all negotiated, but someone came out of nowhere to spoil it."

"They've got a deputy director, saying our company isn't qualified enough and that container matters need to be pushed back."

"I asked around, and this guy is notoriously difficult to deal with in the circle, and he has quite the hand in power; except those few big senders, other small companies must check with him to get containers."

Qi Yun, hearing that, rubbed his chin.

He'd heard about it before while eating with freight people—during the slack season you're a big shot, order as many containers as you want, but hit the peak season and the roles reverse; some small orders, who knows when you'll get a container.

Chapter 215: Chairman Jiang's Influence

After listening to Brother Peng explain the situation in detail, Qi Yun finally spoke, "Have you arranged it?"

Brother Peng sighed, "I brought it up, but they didn't respond at all. There's no way to start."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun immediately frowned. People like this were often the hardest to deal with.

"Alright, I'll find a way to handle this matter."

After hanging up the phone, he looked at the tea leaves in his hand, thoughts turning in his mind.

He then picked up his phone and dialed a number he had never called before.

"Hello, Chairman Jiang, it's Qi Yun."

"I was wondering if you're free today. I'd like to pay you a visit."

"Haha, alright, I'll come over now."

"..."

Half an hour later, Qi Yun, holding two boxes of exquisitely packaged tea, appeared in front of a villa.

He rang the doorbell, and shortly after, a man who looked like a butler came to open the door.

"Are you Mr. Qi? Chairman Jiang is waiting for you in the living room, please follow me." With that, the butler bowed slightly and led the way.

Qi Yun followed behind, passing through a flower bed to enter the villa.

In the living room, Chairman Jiang was sitting on a carved rosewood chair, holding a cane. Upon seeing Qi Yun enter, he nodded slightly to signal him to sit down.

Qi Yun placed the boxes of tea on the tea table beside him and said with a smile, "Chairman Jiang, I've always wanted to find the opportunity to visit you but was worried about disturbing your peace. Today, a friend sent me some tea, so I brought it over for you to taste."

Chairman Jiang, holding the cane, looked at the tea boxes with a faint smile, "You are thoughtful. My door isn't high. If you want to drink tea with me, you can come anytime."

Qi Yun just listened and didn't take it to heart.

Although both of them had the same position as members of the zx committee, leaving aside the other party's vast business empire, the influence in both political and business circles and various network resources were far beyond what he could compare to.

A provincial chamber of commerce president basically represents the top people in the local business circle.

If it weren't for Vice Secretary Peng helping with the introduction, he wouldn't even be able to get in the door.

At this time, the butler brought a cup of brewed tea. After taking it, Qi Yun thanked him and then, with a smile, looked at Chairman Jiang and replied, "Haha, since you said so, then I will take it seriously. I will definitely come to bother you often in the future."

Chairman Jiang smiled gently, "All guests are welcome, I naturally welcome them." Then, he took a sip of tea, then looked at Qi Yun with deep eyes and continued, "Your visit today is probably not just for tea, right?"

Since both knew the intent, Qi Yun wasn't embarrassed and replied with a smile, "Chairman Jiang, your insight is impressive. Indeed, there is something I want to ask your advice on today."

"Hmm." Chairman Jiang put down his teacup, leaned back on the chair, the Buddha beads in his hand still slowly turning, and opened his mouth slowly, "I have a deep friendship with Secretary General Peng. Since he values you, consider yourself one of us, so feel free to speak up."

Hearing this, Qi Yun no longer hid anything, sat upright, and said seriously, "Then, I must thank you in advance, Chairman Jiang. Here's the situation..."

He briefly explained the difficulties encountered on the freight side.

After listening, Chairman Jiang nodded expressionlessly, then picked up the phone on the table and dialed a number.

After giving a few instructions, he looked at Qi Yun and said, "We have cooperation with the railway bureau. I've already asked my secretary to help you with it."

Hearing this, Qi Yun was delighted, quickly got up to express his gratitude, "Thank you, Chairman Jiang."

The matter that he couldn't solve even with money, the other party settled it effortlessly with a few words. This is the very real difference in class.

Although he is now in the process of climbing up, it still takes some time and opportunity to completely cross that ladder.

Chairman Jiang waved his hand, not minding at all, his expression still calm, "No need to be so polite, it's just a trivial matter."

"We old guys are getting on in years, and the current business world is rather dull. We hope to see more young people like you joining in."

"..."

After chatting for a while longer, Qi Yun saw that it was about time and stopped disturbing Chairman Jiang further. After expressing his thanks once more, he got up to leave.

Not long after leaving the villa, he received a call from an unknown number, with the other party asking if he was available now, wanting him to come to the freight department.

After hanging up, Qi Yun sighed once again at Chairman Jiang's incredible influence.

The purpose of the call was obvious. In such a short time, the matter was already settled.

He immediately informed Brother Peng and then headed towards the railway bureau.

Half an hour later, the two met at the entrance of the freight department, with Brother Peng accompanied by the human tank, Xie Mengmeng.

Qi Yun called the person from earlier, and shortly after, a bespectacled young man came running over to lead them to the director's office.

In the office, two middle-aged men were talking about something. One of them had a noticeably large belly and didn't seem very happy.

When Qi Yun and his group entered, the other man stood up to greet them, with a friendly smile on his face, he proactively extended his hand and said, "Welcome, I'm Kang Guodong from the freight department."

Qi Yun reached out and shook hands, a faint smile on his face as well, "Hello Director Kang, I've heard so much about you. I'm Qi Yun."

Kang Guodong laughed and said, "Oh no, Qi, you're too kind. Please, have a seat."

With that, he invited everyone to sit on the sofa and instructed a young man by the door, "Go make some tea." The young man quickly responded and went out to prepare the tea.

After everyone sat down, President Peng gave Qi Yun a look, hinting that the guy with the beer belly was the deputy director mentioned on the phone before.

Qi Yun discreetly glanced at the person, then turned to Kang Guodong and said, "Director Kang, we're here to trouble you today."

Kang Guodong waved his hand with a smile, "Where's the trouble? You're our customer, and our job is to serve you well. How can it be trouble?"

Both of them laughed heartily, tactfully avoiding the subject of Chairman Jiang and previous incidents.

This level of diplomacy could take the beer belly guy over two and a half years to learn.

"With Director Kang saying that, I'm relieved. If our company falls short in any way, I hope you'll guide us, and we'll make timely improvements."

Kang Guodong nodded with a smile, "Qi, you're too modest. Although your company is newly established, I believe that under your leadership, it'll grow quickly."

Just then, the young man who had gone to make tea returned with several cups.

Kang Guodong personally took a cup and handed it to Qi Yun. "Qi, we have limited resources here, nothing fancy, so please forgive us."

Qi Yun quickly accepted the cup with both hands, smiling as he replied, "You're too polite, Director Kang. I'm not picky; having tea is already wonderful."

"And dealing with someone like Director Kang is more satisfying than any good tea."

The two laughed again, then Qi Yun gave President Peng a look to start the main topic.

President Peng scooted forward, sat up straight, and said, "Director Kang, it's like this, our business with Da'E is just starting, and we are still relatively small in scale for now..."

After President Peng finished speaking, Director Kang agreed without any unnecessary words and signaled the young man standing by the side to prepare the freight contract.

For something this small, it usually wouldn't require his direct involvement; everyone knew what's going on.

When the contract was signed, Kang Guodong looked at the beer belly guy and said, "Yonggang, no matter how tight the capacity is, always prioritize Qi's goods."

The beer belly guy responded indifferently, his expression showing little respect.

Seeing this, Qi Yun was surprised but not unfamiliar with such behavior.

Although the railway bureau had been restructured, it still couldn't operate like a company where superiors have absolute control over subordinates.

Even though he's a deputy director, he still manages specific areas that require his approval.

Moreover, everyone's got their own way of doing things.

In such a large group with complicated internal relations and countless connections...

Once the business was completed, Qi Yun had no intention to stay longer and immediately got up to say goodbye.

Kang Guodong very politely saw them to the bureau's entrance before turning back.

After they left, President Peng took out a cigarette, handed it over, and asked with a smile, "Where did you find such solid connections?"

Qi Yun took the cigarette, lit it, and took a deep drag, shaking his head with a faint smile, "You have to pull some strings."

President Peng nodded slightly, released a smoke ring, and said again, "Do you think we should arrange anything else for the deputy director?"

Being old hands, he could naturally see the intrigue in the office earlier; the beer belly guy seemed to compromise on the surface but evidently wanted to challenge Kang Guodong.

So it's hard to say whether this guy might secretly try something against the rules later.

Qi Yun, however, wasn't too worried. He patted President Peng on the shoulder and said with a smile, "If he dares to cause trouble, Kang Guodong won't let him off easy."

The freight department's biggest customers are the local large enterprises, all of which are chamber members.

Now the chamber president's secretary personally called to address this small issue. If problems still arise, that'd be a slap in their face.

But, while that's the reasoning, the development of the matter was beyond Qi Yun's expectations...

Seeing Qi Yun's confidence, President Peng just nodded without saying more and looked at Xie Mengmeng, "Mengmeng, the path is all set, you have to take care of this business well."

"You've already started hiring salespeople, so once they come in, you can interview them personally."

Upon hearing this, Xie Mengmeng's face turned red with embarrassment, "President Peng, can you call me by my full name?"

President Peng was taken aback for a moment, then laughed heartily, "Alright, alright, do well, and I'll introduce you to someone later."

Chapter 216: Purple-Grade Intel?

After handling the transportation issues, Qi Yun left first.

Before leaving, he quietly told Brother Peng about the demolition news, letting him handle it himself.

Brother Peng naturally believed it without a doubt, given the times he made easy money following Qi Yun before. Now he blindly trusted Qi Yun, no matter what was asked, just follow along.

As his wife, Song Xiaojing, would say, Qi Yun was his benefactor, and he shouldn't be obsessing over how to make a comeback, just cling to him tightly...

Qi Yun was unaware of Brother Peng's inner drama. After leaving the railway bureau, he went straight to Cao Yufei's pharmaceutical factory.

In the office, Cao Yufei pointed at a plastic bag on the table, saying, "The other medicinal herbs have been gathered, but fifty-year-old wild ginseng is rare in Jiang Province. I managed to get only one, and it took quite a bit of effort, getting someone from the Northeast to get it."

Qi Yun nodded slightly and picked up the bag to open it.

Inside, various medicinal herbs wrapped in kraft paper were neatly arranged, along with a red brocade box.

He cautiously lifted the lid of the box, and the fifty-year-old wild ginseng came into view.

The ginseng looked plump, with clear patterns, and emanated a faint fragrance. Counting the ginseng whiskers, it was as long as an adult's forearm.

Qi Yun studied it for a moment, curiosity welling up in him, he asked, "Old Cao, how do you actually tell its age?"

Cao Yufei took the brocade box, pointed at the root of the ginseng, and patiently explained, "The simplest way is to look here."

"After the stalk and leaves wither and fall, circular bowl-shaped scars are left on the stem, which we call stem bowls. One stem bowl represents one year. Count the number of stem bowls to roughly determine the age."

Qi Yun leaned in closer, squinted, and indeed saw over fifty clear circles.

"How much did this ginseng cost?"

Cao Yufei stretched out one finger, "A hundred thousand bucks! This is the price my friend got directly from the Medicine Gatherer. In the market, wild ginseng of this age would cost at least an extra thirty thousand."

A hundred thousand bucks!

Even though Qi Yun considered himself fairly well-off now, he couldn't help but be secretly startled by that price.

No wonder the Inner Canon of Huangdi says that the prescriptions are for royal consumption, as the price of this set of herbs far exceeds several times the weight of gold! How can ordinary people afford it?

No, still have to work harder to make money, otherwise just taking medicine alone would drain the wealth.

Cao Yufei placed the brocade box on the table, continuing to say, "There are also those artificially cultivated ginsengs on the market, around four or five years old, not too bad in efficacy, and cost less than one percent of wild ginseng."

Qi Yun put the brocade box back into the bag, shook his head, "That won't do, it's of no use to me. How much in total for these herbs?"

He wasn't entirely concerned about the efficacy issue, mainly because he didn't understand pharmacology, and if he ended up taking something that caused problems, it was better to follow the prescription completely.

Spending more money is not a big deal, after all, he's not short of money, it's better to be safe.

"Twelve thousand in total," replied Cao Yufei.

Qi Yun nodded, pulled out his phone, and transferred the money to him immediately.

"Please find more of this wild ginseng for me, I don't mind paying more."

"Sure," Cao Yufei nodded in agreement, "My friends from the Northeast are still looking, I'll let you know if there's news."

"Okay, you go on with your work, I'll take my leave now."

...

When he got home, Qi Yun went straight to the kitchen, took out the newly bought clay pot, cleaned it, and then used an electronic scale to weigh each type of herb before placing them in the pot and adding water to simmer over low heat.

As the herbs and water in the pot blended, a rich herbal aroma gradually filled the air.

More than an hour passed, and the liquid in the pot thickened, turning a deep color.

Qi Yun carefully controlled the flame size and patiently waited.

A while later, feeling it was about done, he turned off the gas stove and slowly poured the brewed medicinal soup into a bowl, the steaming soup emitted a unique scent.

He held up the bowl, blew gently, then sipped a small mouthful to taste.

The medicinal soup was bitter with a hint of sweetness, unlike any herbal tea he'd ever had before.

With the entire bowl of soup consumed, he felt a warm current in his body, and his spirits lifted several notches.

"Drink once daily, it'll take ten days to take effect."

Seeing there was some left in the pot, it seemed a waste to discard such expensive soup, so he drank another half bowl ...

"Hmm? What's that smell at home?"

Outside the kitchen, Zhao Qing had unknowingly returned, her nose involuntarily twitching, catching the herbal scent in the air. She walked into the kitchen and saw the medicinal dregs in the pot, exclaiming in surprise, "Are you brewing herbal medicine? Are you feeling unwell?"

Qi Yun smiled, put down the bowl, wiped his mouth, and replied, "No, I'm not unwell. It's just that a friend gave me a folk remedy, said it's good for replenishing qi and blood, so I got some herbs to try."

"I'll drink it for a few days first, and if it works, you and Nuannuan can have some too."

Zhao Qing, hearing this, frowned slightly in distaste, "Ugh, I won't drink it, it's too bitter."

The little girl put down her schoolbag, ran over eagerly like a little mimic, and shook her head, "If Sister Qing doesn't drink, then I won't drink either!"

Qi Yun couldn't help but laugh at his daughter's adorable demeanor, reached out and pinched her cheek lightly, "You both have to drink it!"

The little girl didn't care, pointing at the wild ginseng in the brocade box curiously asking, "Dad, what's this, can you eat it?"

Qi Yun picked her up and explained, "This is ginseng, do you want to eat some?"

The little girl looked up, thought for a moment, and asked again, "Is it sweet?"

"Hmm, it should be sweet."

"Then I want some."

Qi Yun laughed heartily, put his daughter down, then took a knife to slice off two pieces from the ginseng, fed one slice into his daughter's mouth, and handed the other slice to Zhao Qing.

Cao Yufei had previously told him that ginseng was not only usable in medicine, but also could be used to make soup, brew with water, or eaten raw.

Zhao Qing pursed her lips tightly, unwilling to eat, so Qi Yun directly stuffed it into her mouth.

"Ugh~ it's only slightly sweet, not as good as pizza," the little girl chewed a couple of times, then spat it into her hand.

Seeing this, Qi Yun felt a twitch in his heart, thinking that was really wasteful, such a small piece of ginseng could buy a hundred slices of pizza.

However, he didn't scold her, just smiled and ruffled her hair, "If you don't like it, you don't have to eat it, go do your homework, and I'll make cola chicken wings for you."

On hearing there was something delicious, her eyes lit up, she jumped with excitement, and tossed the ginseng piece from her hand into the trash before happily running to the study.

Zhao Qing did the same, frowned while chewing a few times, then spat it out.

Qi Yun's face instantly turned green, thinking he had ended up with two spendthrifts.

Zhao Qing washed her hands under the tap, flicked some water at Qi Yun, and proudly said, "Just cook properly." With that, she turned and walked to the study as well.

Qi Yun shook his head wryly with a bitter smile, quickly storing away the remaining wild ginseng for fear of these two wasting it.

...

In the deep of night, whether it was the effect of the herbal soup or not, after a few rounds, Qi Yun was still full of energy and very excited.

In contrast, Zhao Qing, beside him, was so tired she didn't even have the strength to talk, and fell into a deep sleep in his arms.

Qi Yun sneered disdainfully, "Weak!"

...

[Daily Intelligence System binding has reached sixty days, upgraded to Lv5!]

[Upgrading to Lv6 requires one hundred and twenty days or consuming one billion funds]

[Host: Qi Yun]

[System Level: Five (Three intelligence pushes or one intelligence point can be obtained daily. Consuming intelligence points can enhance the unreceived intelligence message's level of the day.

Consume 3 intelligence points to enhance, ensuring a blue intelligence message;

Consume 30 intelligence points to enhance, ensuring a green intelligence message;

Consume 300 intelligence points to enhance, ensuring a purple intelligence message]

[Current intelligence points: 4]

[Would you like to enhance today's intelligence?]

Qi Yun looked at the familiar panel in front of him with a slightly stunned expression, didn't expect the system to upgrade again?

Daily, one intelligence point can be obtained, which means, every three-day interval, a blue-level intelligence message can be guaranteed.

And what's the deal with that purple-level intelligence?

Today's green intelligence is already exaggerated, the purple level, simply unimaginable...

Chapter 217: Ma Baoguo's Request

The next day, at the Red Star Street Police Station, in the office.

Qi Yun sat down on the sofa, picked up the teacup in front of him and took a few sips, then asked, "Brother Ma, why did you call me over so early in the morning? Your voice was so loud over the phone, my wife thought I'd gotten into trouble."

Ma Baoguo's face was full of joy as he quickly handed over a file folder, with an apologetic expression he said, "I really apologize, Brother Qi, for disrupting your sweet dreams."

"But this is really urgent, I only got the notification from the city bureau this morning." He paused, pointing to the file folder, "This is the application material for the Ten Outstanding Youths of the City selection. You need to fill it out now, I have to rush it to the city bureau, and today is the deadline."

Qi Yun was slightly startled, his gaze falling on the file folder Ma Baoguo handed over, showing a trace of surprise on his face.

He put down the teacup in his hand, took the file folder, and asked suspiciously, "Ten Outstanding Youths?"

"That's right, the director personally gave me this task." Ma Baoguo said as he sat down on the sofa, patting Qi Yun's shoulder, "This time we not only busted a large human trafficking ring, but also successfully rescued several abducted children. You've contributed a lot to this."

"After discussions, the leaders above decided to give you a spot in the Ten Outstanding Youths of the City selection, which is quite an honor."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun couldn't help but blush, scratching his head in embarrassment and saying, "That's all well and good, but I'm already in my thirties, can I still be considered young?"

Ma Baoguo waved his hand, showing a helpless expression on his face, explaining, "Brother Qi, you're only 34 this year. According to the regulations, anyone under 35 is considered young, and in special cases, it can even be relaxed to 40."

"So don't worry about it, just fill out the materials and submit them, everything else has been coordinated above."

After hearing this, Qi Yun didn't ask any more questions. He picked up the pen from the table and quickly filled it out.

Once the materials were completed, Ma Baoguo took them and carefully looked them over, then placed them back into the file and said, "I'll take this to the city bureau later."

Qi Yun nodded, stood up and prepared to leave, "Alright, if there's nothing else, I'll get going. I'll find some time to treat you to a meal another day."

"Hey, don't rush off just yet." Ma Baoguo quickly stood up and pulled his arm, with a somewhat flattering smile, "Now that business is done, there's a personal favor I'd like to ask you, Brother Qi."

Qi Yun raised an eyebrow and looked at him, then sat back down on the sofa with a soft laugh, "Brother Ma, with our friendship, there's no need to talk about favors. If you need anything, just ask. If I can help, I definitely won't refuse."

"Brother Qi, you're really straightforward!" Ma Baoguo gave a thumbs-up in praise, taking out a pack of soft 'Zhonghua' cigarettes from a drawer, he pulled out one and handed it over, lighting one for himself before opening up.

"Brother Qi, you know, I'm over forty now. If nothing unexpected happens, I'll probably retire at this level."

Qi Yun nodded lightly upon hearing this. He understood that in this environment, without background and lacking opportunities, deputy section chief was indeed the career peak for many, and quite a few people spend their whole lives struggling to reach even this level.

"However, thanks to this human trafficking case, I've gained some credit sharing your glory, and now I hope to take another step forward."

At this point, Ma Baoguo paused, took a drag from his cigarette, then looked up at Qi Yun with a solemn expression.

"I've heard that there's an opening for a police squad chief in the New District public security bureau, and I'm hoping to vie for it."

"But you know, Brother Ma, I don't have much of a background, lacking someone to speak on my behalf. So I'd like to ask you to help me speak with Director Zhang at the city bureau on my behalf."

"With the credit from this case, plus Director Zhang speaking up for me, I think the chances of success are quite high!"

Qi Yun heard this and did not immediately respond. He rubbed the teacup in his hands, pondering inwardly.

Although the position of police squad chief is not high, it's usually just a section chief level, but it carries significant authority, far beyond what a station director can manage.

And once at that position, the opportunities for advancement in the future are greater.

However, because of this, competition must be extremely fierce.

He was not sure if Zhang Dayong had already made arrangements, so he dared not agree rashly.

Ma Baoguo seemed to see his difficulty, quickly put out his cigarette, leaned forward, and spoke with more sincerity: "Brother Qi, I know this is difficult for you, but this might be my only chance."

Saying this, he swallowed hard, cast a glance at the door, and continued, "Don't worry, Brother Ma, I am not ungrateful. If you help me this time..."

Qi Yun raised his hand to interrupt him, sighing softly, and said, "Brother Ma, talking like this between us is too formal. I truly treat you as a friend, Ma."

"Yes, yes, I'm well aware of what kind of person you are, Brother Qi." Ma Baoguo nodded repeatedly.

Qi Yun's gaze fell on the file folder on the coffee table. After pondering for a while, he slowly spoke, "How about this, I'll arrange a dinner with Director Zhang tonight, you come too. As for whether it'll work out, I can't give you a guarantee."

Upon hearing this, Ma Baoguo's eyes lit up with hope, and he excitedly shook Qi Yun's right hand vigorously, "Brother Qi! I will remember this favor! If there's anything you need from me, just ask!"

Qi Yun smiled, patting the other's shoulder, "Haha, no need for formalities with me, saying that makes us strangers."

"Alright then, you go on with your work, I'll sort it out and call you tonight."

"Okay, I'll see you out." Ma Baoguo stood up, full of joy, and saw Qi Yun to his car, watching him get in before turning back to the police station.

After getting into the car, Qi Yun lit a cigarette, furrowed his brows in thought for a few minutes, then took out his phone and dialed Zhang Dayong's number.

The call was answered after just two rings.

"Haha, I was just thinking about getting together for lunch, and here you are calling." On the other end, Zhang Dayong's voice sounded full of energy, quite unlike when Qi Yun last saw him at the New District public security bureau.

It seems the address Qi Yun provided earlier helped him out of a tight spot.

Qi Yun laughed heartily, "What a coincidence, I was just thinking of inviting you to dinner tonight."

"Anything important?" Zhang Dayong asked directly.

"Haha, nothing major." Qi Yun paused and continued, "Director Ma from Red Star Street wants to report some work to you, is that convenient?"

"Hmm?" Zhang Dayong wasn't born yesterday, he immediately understood the implication, and laughed, "Okay, invite him along tonight."

"Alright, I'll book the place and send you the location." With that, Qi Yun hung up the phone.

Though he didn't make it explicit, his attitude conveyed enough, and he believed Zhang Dayong would understand.

At dinner tonight, he wouldn't say a word.

If Zhang Dayong had arrangements for the position, then his approach wouldn't cause any trouble. If not, Zhang Dayong would likely do him this favor.

Chapter 218: 6.27 Million

At the entrance of the rented small second floor, Qi Yun just got out of the car when Yuan Hua anxiously rushed over.

"What urgent matter came up?" Qi Yun asked.

After leaving the police station earlier, he was planning to go home to brew and drink some medicine, but this guy called him urgently.

Yuan Hua's forehead was covered in sweat, and he quickly replied, "President Qi, I added two more servers last night. Now the temperature in the room is too high, and the servers have crashed several times. That small air conditioner isn't effective."

Qi Yun patted his shoulder after hearing this: "Don't worry, take me to see it first."

The two walked to the room on the left side of the second floor, opened the door, and a wave of heat with the unique scorched smell of electronic components hit them.

The condition inside was very simple, seven or eight servers were placed separately around, not even in a cabinet.

The chassis emitted a buzzing sound, the cooling vents were blowing hot air outside, and the air outlet of the wall-mounted small air conditioner almost didn't feel any coolness.

Qi Yun squatted down, reached out and touched the shell of one of the servers, it was so hot that it could fry eggs.

He stood up, turned his head and looked at Yuan Hua and asked: "What's your solution?"

Yuan Hua wiped the sweat off his forehead and quickly replied: "My idea is to add two more high-powered air conditioners to lower the temperature in this room."

"Earlier I wanted to ask Brother Zhong for help, but couldn't reach him, so I could only call you, President Qi."

Qi Yun nodded, glanced around the room, frowned and thought for a moment, then ordered: "Turn off all the servers first."

"Turn...turn off?" Yuan Hua was stunned.

"Yes, with the servers being unstable now, it's worse for user experience. It's better to stop them first. Come to the office when you're done, I want to ask you something." With that, Qi Yun turned and walked downstairs.

Yuan Hua watched his back as he left, his throat tightening, he started shutting down the servers one by one with a heavy heart.

In the office, Qi Yun sat in a chair, fiddling with a lighter in his hand, contemplating the development of this network company.

The game is showing promise now, to grow and expand, we can't operate like a ramshackle setup...

A few minutes later, Yuan Hua knocked and came in.

"President Qi, all the servers are shut down."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, pointing to the chair opposite: "Sit down, let's talk."

Yuan Hua carefully sat down, only occupying one-third of the seat, his hands awkwardly clenched together, not knowing what he was thinking.

Qi Yun smiled at him: "Don't be nervous, I just wanted to ask about your thoughts on this game."

Yuan Hua's tense shoulders relaxed a bit, he swallowed and replied: "President Qi, I think our current server configuration...really can't handle the increase in simultaneous online users."

"If we could optimize some algorithms to reduce data computation..." After saying this, he glanced at Qi Yun's expression, fearing the president might stop investing because of today's issues.

Qi Yun nodded after hearing this: "What you said is indeed a problem, but that's not what I was asking."

"Ah?" Yuan Hua was dumbfounded, not knowing how to respond.

Qi Yun sighed, lit a cigarette, and slowly said: "I heard from Zhong Rui earlier that this game is currently maintaining a ten percent daily growth rate. As the number of users increases, server pressure will also increase. The upstairs environment is prone to safety hazards."

"So I've decided to rent some cabinets at a big data center to host all the servers with them."

"Additionally, we'll rent a new office space, hire some assistants for you to speed up development, and this place will be just for accommodation."

"What do you think?"

After hearing this, Yuan Hua's face immediately showed a joyful expression, nodding quickly: "No problem, that's certainly better."

"Right." Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring and continued, "If you have any needs or difficulties, feel free to bring them up, I'll find a way to solve them."

Yuan Hua shook his head: "No, not at the moment."

Qi Yun nodded slightly: "Then keep up the good work, strive to launch the mall's features as soon as possible, we can't just invest without a revenue stream."

Yuan Hua puffed his chest, his eyes firm: "Okay, President Qi, rest assured, I'll do my best."

"Right, when the timing is right, I'll invest more for promotion."

"..."

After leaving here, Qi Yun headed to the trading company.

Just right, there were still many empty rooms on that floor, he decided to rent two more next door as a new office space, making management easier in the future.

Inside the office, Zhong Rui was busy completing the onboarding for a new salesman.

Once the person was finished, Qi Yun walked in and explained everything to him.

Zhong Rui nodded after listening: "Okay boss, I'll take care of it immediately."

"Also, recruit an admin," Qi Yun added.

"Alright." Zhong Rui thought for a moment and then asked, "Boss, do you have requirements for age, body figure, or appearance?"

Qi Yun glanced at him, exasperated: "I asked you to hire an admin, not hold a beauty contest. Hire someone capable to share some work with you, not doing everything by yourself."

Only then did Zhong Rui realize he seemed to have misunderstood, he laughed awkwardly and quickly recorded Qi Yun's instructions in his notebook.

"Where's President Peng?" Qi Yun saw no one in the inner office, turned and asked.

"A KTV is selling second-hand audio equipment, President Peng went to negotiate the acquisition."

Qi Yun nodded: "Alright, if there's nothing else, I'll leave first."

Leaving the office, he had just sat down in the car when his phone screen lit up with a bank transaction reminder, totaling 6.27 million.

The payment for those spark plug components came through, costing five million, with a profit of 1.27 million.

This deal is indeed quite lucrative, and later on, they could steadily earn forty to fifty thousand every month.

Qi Yun immediately paid back Shi Feng's three million.

Then he remembered the matter of transferring ownership for the two shops today, so he called the agency to inquire, learned the transfer procedures were completed, and the new property certificate would be available in a few days.

Only then did Qi Yun feel relieved, he signaled Chen Wei to drive home.

...

At night, in a hotel private room, Ma Baoguo looked somewhat apprehensive.

He placed the two bottles of Maotai that he brought on the table and looked at Qi Yun, asking: "Brother Qi, how does this wine look? Not sure if it suits Director Zhang's taste."

Qi Yun handed him a cigarette, smiling as he said: "Brother Ma, your current demeanor is a bit out of line with the image I have of you."

Ma Baoguo took the cigarette, lit it, inhaled deeply, and sighed: "Brother, this is too important for me, I've waited over ten years, finally gotten such a chance, really scared about missing it."

Qi Yun patted his shoulder: "Brother Ma, take it easy, Director Zhang is a reasonable person, they'll assess things fairly."

This was purely for comfort...

As the two were talking, there was a sudden knock on the private room door, and soon a casually dressed Zhang Dayong entered, led by a waiter.

Ma Baoguo immediately stood up, his face carrying a big smile, quickly greeting him: "Director Zhang, you've arrived, please have a seat!"

Zhang Dayong nodded, his face carrying a light smile.

Meanwhile, in the adjacent private room next door.

A man with slicked-back hair was holding a cigarette with one hand, resting the other on the shoulder of a nearby young woman, instructing the underlings across from him: "That residential area of the bus company is ours, you can start operations tomorrow. I don't care what means you use, you must secure all the property rights before the end of the month."

Chapter 219: First Intelligence Enhancement

Zhang Dayong seemed to be in a good mood today, accepting Ma Baoguo's toast without any reservation.

Although the two usually had some interactions at work, it was merely a simple superior-subordinate relationship. After a few drinks, their relationship grew much closer.

After the third round of drinks, Qi Yun saw that the time was just right, so he found an excuse to leave the private room and went outside to smoke.

There were some things he didn't want to hear and wasn't suitable to get involved in.

Anyway, the opportunity was created for Ma Baoguo; whether the other party could grasp it depended on his own skills.

Qi Yun leaned against the corridor railing, looking at the artificial mountain fountain downstairs, the cigarette in his hand flickering.

Just then, the private room door not far behind him opened. A man with slicked-back hair, slightly drunk, came out with a beautiful young woman to go to the restroom.

Qi Yun heard the noise and instinctively turned his head. Their eyes met, and both faces showed a moment of surprise.

The slicked-back hair man narrowed his eyes, released the hand he had around the beautiful young woman, and staggered closer, with a slightly playful smile on his lips: "Haha, isn't this Mr. Qi? What a coincidence."

Qi Yun took a drag on his cigarette with a blank expression, then turned his head away, ignoring the man.

He still remembered the last time this guy snatched an opportunity from him, waiting for the right moment.

The man with slicked-back hair wasn't offended by Qi Yun's lack of response and instead moved closer, lit a cigarette, and casually said, "Not many people can make me suffer. I appreciate you. Want to come work with me?"

Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring, smirking insincerely, "Not interested, can't afford it."

If it had been a few months ago, as just 'a food delivery man + street vendor Qi Yun,' he would have bowed his head and given in. After all, at his age, dignity meant nothing compared to his family's survival.

But now things were different. His position wouldn't let him bend easily just for a few words.

Although Qi Yun was somewhat wary of the slicked-back hair man's background, it didn't mean he would let the other take advantage of him.

The slicked-back hair man laughed aloud, his laughter echoing in the corridor: "Good, you have character!"

He flicked the ash off his cigarette, then patted Qi Yun's shoulder with a seemingly significant message: "If you change your mind, remember to contact me."

Qi Yun, with some disdain, brushed off the man's hand, staring at him expressionlessly.

The slicked-back hair man sneered, then beckoned the beautiful young woman, wrapped his arm around her slender waist, and left directly.

Qi Yun glanced at the man's departing figure, his brows furrowing slightly.

He had already learned firsthand in Kashi how narrow-minded this man could be.

"Recently, I must do things cautiously, can't give the opponent any openings..."

After extinguishing the cigarette, he checked the time and felt Ma Baoguo and the others should have finished their conversation, so he turned and walked back into the private room.

Sitting back in his seat, Qi Yun subtly glanced at Ma Baoguo. Although he was trying to maintain calmness, Qi Yun still noticed a hint of excitement he couldn't hide in his eyes.

The deal was likely done.

After a few more exchanges, Ma Baoguo used the excuse of going to the restroom to settle the bill. Upon returning, seeing Zhang Dayong seemingly having something to say, he took his leave first.

Once the other left, only Qi Yun and Zhang Dayong remained in the private room, but Qi Yun didn't actively inquire about what had happened earlier, and Zhang Dayong didn't bring it up either.

"Thank you for the thing the other day," Zhang Dayong hiccupped and passed a cigarette over to say.

Qi Yun smiled, accepted the cigarette, pulled out a lighter from his pocket, and lit it: "What thing are you talking about?"

Zhang Dayong squinted and also laughed heartily, having reached this position, who wasn't a clever person; he immediately understood Qi Yun's meaning and didn't continue the topic.

Instead, he said, "The thing about helping to uncover the human trafficker gang this time, I heard from the city bureau leaders today. You had just caught the spy, and now you've achieved another great accomplishment."

"It's a shame you don't work in our field."

Though spoken unintentionally, Qi Yun took it to heart, instantly alert.

He indeed seemed too deeply involved in these cases lately just to add a few protective talismans.

If this continued, he would soon become a criminal investigation expert.

He strategically took a sip of tea, chuckled softly, "It's all luck, just happens to encounter."

Zhang Dayong, however, was unconvinced. These two events might be explained by luck, but the provided address? Was that luck too?

He had always thought Qi Yun was merely a smart, capable businessman. But considering what happened in the past month, he clearly underestimated him.

Now Qi Yun's image in his mind carried a mysterious aura.

The person in Xialing Village getting caught was something even he didn't know, yet the other party not only knew but also had the exact address, his influence was evident.

Not to mention, even city bureau leaders might not find someone that quickly.

He now thought that Qi Yun was exactly the benefactor in his fate.

This time, again, it was because of timely information from Qi Yun that he was able to avert a crisis.

So he's already determined to maintain a good relationship with the other party no matter what.

"Brother Qi, to be honest, even though my trouble has been temporarily resolved this time, I'm still on the edge of a whirlpool. If I'm not careful, I might be pulled in."

"My little body can't withstand the storm, so if you hear any rumors in the future, make sure to inform me beforehand, old brother."

Qi Yun picked up the teapot and poured a cup of tea for him, laughing as he replied, "Director Zhang is joking, I'm just an ordinary citizen, where do I have those abilities."

"But we're friends, if you have any difficulties, I'll certainly try my best to help."

Zhang Dayong waved his hand after hearing this, "There are no outsiders here, don't address me by my title, just call me Old Zhang." Then he sighed and patted Qi Yun on the shoulder, "Having your words is enough."

"To be honest, the higher I go, the more empty I feel inside, and now I can't sleep soundly every day."

"Do you think I can make it to the other side..."

Qi Yun noticed that the other party really drank enough today and wasn't as cautious as usual with his words.

Perhaps he could casually inquire about certain circumstances.

Although he didn't want to get involved in specific matters, understanding the current situation was very necessary, given that he had some potential enemies.

So he took a puff of his cigarette and, seemingly casually, asked, "Didn't you just get transferred here not long ago, how did you get involved?"

Zhang Dayong picked up the teacup and took a sip, his eyes filled with helplessness, "The situation is very complicated, I can only tell you, where there are gains, there are losses. Brother Qi, you're not in this circle, there are some things you won't understand."

At this point, he sighed again, "The power to choose is not in my hands, I don't even have the qualification to remain neutral."

Qi Yun could hear deep helplessness in his tone and believed Zhang Dayong truly didn't want to get involved in these things.

"What's the current situation? Is it convenient for you to tell me?"

Zhang Dayong glanced at him, technically, he's said quite a bit today, but Qi Yun is his benefactor, and some things aren't an absolute secret.

He took another puff of his cigarette and lowered his voice, "The city is about to change its leadership..."

Qi Yun quietly listened to him finish and then asked, "Which side has a better chance of winning?"

"Normally, O2 has a better chance, but... Moreover, Deputy Squad Leader Zhou's attitude is quite intriguing..."

"So, until the very end, nothing is certain about this matter..."

Qi Yun stopped talking after hearing this, furrowing his brows and falling into deep thought.

...

The next day, Qi Yun only got out of bed at eleven o'clock, having drunk quite a bit last night, leaving his head still a bit groggy.

Zhao Qing left him breakfast on the dining table, and he ate buns while summoning the system panel.

[Current Intelligence Points: 5]

[Do you want to enhance today's intelligence?]

"There's nothing urgent today, just perfect to give it a try and test the waters..."

[Consume 3 intelligence points, enhance]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Blue): The overseas Chinese tycoon Zhao Weilin is searching for his long-lost daughter. If you provide precise clues, the other party is willing to pay a reward of five million yuan]

Five million!

"But it's all headless and tailless, where am I supposed to find it for you..."

Qi Yun frowned and sighed, the blue intelligence came, but seemingly didn't, the accumulated 3 intelligence points are wasted.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): This morning, Ma Baoguo spent three hundred thousand yuan at a smoke and liquor specialty store in the New District to buy several bottles of 'aged wine']

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): In the courtyard of 26 Futian Village in the south of the city, there is a thirty-year-old osmanthus tree, and after the homeowner's death, the neighbor wants to buy the tree for five thousand yuan. The homeowner's children are somewhat tempted.

This osmanthus tree is worth over seven hundred thousand yuan, Jingcheng Garden Company has long been purchasing]

"Hmm? This one seems pretty good."

After clearly seeing the intelligence content, Qi Yun immediately searched online for this company's contact information, then called to inquire.

The other party got a bit excited upon hearing about the thirty-year-old osmanthus tree.

"Sir, is it convenient for us to have our staff come to the site to check it out? If it's indeed as you say, our company is willing to pay a high price to purchase it."

Qi Yun paused to ponder for a moment and replied, "No problem, let's add each other on WeChat, and I'll send you the address later."

"When you send your people, it's best to bring a car and directly haul the tree away then."

After hanging up, Qi Yun dressed up to head out. At that moment, Zhao Qing called him, saying the villa at Golden Collar Villa had been renovated and that he should find time to check it out.

Chapter 220: Qi Yun Is Taken Away

Golden Collar Villa, as soon as Qi Yun pushed the door open and got out of the car, he saw a familiar silhouette standing dazedly in the garden at the entrance.

He cleared his throat lightly and walked over to ask, "What are you standing here for?"

The silhouette snapped back to reality upon hearing the voice; it was none other than Wei Yong's young sister-in-law, whom he hadn't seen for a long time.

"Ah?" The sister-in-law, seeing it was Qi Yun, had an unnatural expression on her face as she forced a smile and said, "Brother Qi, you're here."

Qi Yun nodded at her: "Hmm, how have you been lately?"

"Hmm, not bad," the sister-in-law responded softly, her head slightly lowered as her hair covered the complex emotions in her eyes.

Seeing this, Qi Yun was momentarily at a loss for words, so he pointed to the entrance: "My wife told me the house renovation is done and to come take a look."

The sister-in-law's eyes, already dull, dimmed even more upon hearing the word "wife."

She took a deep breath, raised her head, and replied, "Yes, the renovation is finished; let me show you around. If there's anything you're not satisfied with, I'll relay it back to the designer."

Qi Yun nodded slightly and followed her inside.

Although the interior looked simple, no expense had been spared. Initially, the renovation company quoted 1.6 million, and later, an additional over 300,000 was added.

The only downside to a large house is that a renovation alone can nearly cost two million.

The sister-in-law showed Qi Yun around every room, and he had to admit that the money spent was indeed worthwhile—the overall look was quite impressive.

"Whenever I have time, I come by to watch over things, so you can rest assured about the quality and craftsmanship, Brother Qi."

Qi Yun nodded: "Not bad at all. Thank you, I have no other requests."

The sister-in-law forced a faint smile: "It's no trouble; as long as you're satisfied, Brother Qi."

"Hmm." Qi Yun looked at his watch and said, "Alright then, I have something to do later, so I'll be off now."

The sister-in-law's eyes flashed with disappointment, but she quickly regained her composure and nodded gently: "Okay, Brother Qi, take care."

Qi Yun nodded at her again, said nothing more, and stepped out the door.

Sitting in the car, Qi Yun thought for a moment, took out his phone, and transferred 8888 yuan to the sister-in-law, along with a note saying "Thank you for your hard work."

Then he gave Chen Wei an address, asking him to drive there.

The sister-in-law stood at the entrance, staring blankly at the BMW 5 Series until it disappeared from sight, only then did she pick up her phone to check the message.

When she saw the transfer, a bittersweet smile appeared on her lips, her heart filled with mixed emotions.

She bit her lip, then returned the money.

...

The car gradually drove out of the city, the buildings on both sides becoming shorter, and the number of vehicles on the road significantly decreased.

Chen Wei glanced at the rearview mirror a couple of times and said in a low voice, "There's a car following us all the way."

Qi Yun, upon hearing this, turned his head to look through the rear window, but the road dust was too thick and he couldn't clearly see the situation behind.

However, he did not doubt Chen Wei's judgment and frowned slightly, thinking it was highly likely arranged by the guy with the slicked-back hair.

Though unclear of their intentions for now, it certainly wasn't anything good.

"Brother Wei, shake them off and take another route," Qi Yun said in a deep voice.

Upon hearing this, Chen Wei immediately put more pressure on the pedal, and the power of the 3.0T BMW 5 Series surged in an instant, leaving the tailing Camry far behind, not even its tail lights visible anymore.

Over twenty minutes later, the car stopped at the gate of courtyard No. 26 in Futian Village.

Qi Yun peered through the gate's gap into the courtyard but did not see the osmanthus tree mentioned in the intel.

Just as he was puzzled, a man's voice came from behind, "What are you doing?"

Qi Yun turned around slowly upon hearing the voice and saw a bearded middle-aged man standing behind, looking at him with a puzzled expression.

The man's attire was simple, with some dirt on his body.

"Hehe, brother, is this your house?" Qi Yun asked with a smile, taking out a cigarette and handing it over.

The middle-aged man hesitated a bit but accepted the cigarette and asked back, "It's my house, what do you want?"

Qi Yun pointed to the parked BMW and said, "I drove all the way from the city; I heard your place has an osmanthus tree? My courtyard is being renovated right now, and I'd like to buy a tree to plant."

Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man glanced at the black BMW, a hint of joy flashing across his face: "Yes, it's in the courtyard; boss, come in and take a look." With that, he opened the door and led Qi Yun inside.

As soon as Qi Yun stepped into the courtyard, he saw a simple plastic-film greenhouse on the left, and beneath it was the osmanthus tree he was looking for.

"Boss, this osmanthus tree was planted by my old father many years ago. Look how well it's grown; a neighbor offered ten thousand for it, but I couldn't bear to sell it," the middle-aged man said.

No sooner had he spoken than the door of the nearby bungalow creaked open, and a woman with a headscarf came out.

She shouted loudly, asking her husband, "What's going on?"

The middle-aged man, seeing this, smiled sheepishly at Qi Yun and said, "Boss, please have a look first." He then hurriedly ran over to pull the woman back into the house.

After closing the door, he whispered, "A boss from the city is interested in that tree."

The woman, upon hearing this, looked suspicious: "I thought you promised to sell it to Dazhuang next door?"

The middle-aged man rolled his eyes at his wife and said irritably, "Are you stupid? He only offered five thousand, and he hasn't even paid yet. The guy outside drives a BMW; of course, we'll sell to whoever offers more."