

Middle Age 221

Chapter 221: Qi Yun Is Taken Away (Triple Combo) (Part 2)

The woman heard the middle-aged man's words, her eyes suddenly lit up, and a greedy expression appeared on her face: "Yes, yes, quickly ask him how much he can offer, don't let this big boss slip away."

"I'll go to the town to check if your dad can still receive his social security this year. I heard from others that as long as you don't report the news of someone's death, you can still receive it for two or three more years."

"Alright, you go ahead." The middle-aged man nodded and followed the woman out the door, returning to Qi Yun's side with a smile on his face: "Boss, how about it? This osmanthus tree is nice, isn't it?"

Qi Yun didn't really understand these things, he just nodded slightly: "Not bad, how much are you planning to sell it for?"

The middle-aged man's eyes flashed with a hint of joy, he rubbed his hands together and said: "If it weren't for this greenhouse being in the way, I really wouldn't be willing to sell such a good tree. This osmanthus tree has been with our family for some years, and we've been caring for it meticulously. If you plant it in your yard, it will definitely bring you wealth."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun understood the man's intention. He didn't want to drag things out, so he said directly: "I won't beat around the bush with you, I'll offer ten thousand yuan. If that works, I'll call a car over immediately to dig up the tree, how does that sound?"

The middle-aged man was instantly disappointed upon hearing just ten thousand yuan, his smile disappeared from his face.

He instinctively glanced at the BMW parked outside the yard and shook his head repeatedly: "Boss, your offer is too low. I just said earlier, even when the neighbor next door offered ten thousand, I didn't sell it. You're just joking, aren't you?"

"To be honest, this tree is worth at least fifty thousand; I absolutely won't sell it for less."

Qi Yun sneered inwardly but didn't expose it, he responded straightforwardly: "Twenty thousand, if you don't sell it, forget about it then."

"I'll give you three minutes to think it over." With that, he took out a cigarette from his pocket and went outside the yard to light it.

To be honest, twenty or fifty thousand yuan makes no big difference to him. The supplies he asks Wei Yong to send to the welfare center each month exceed this amount.

The main issue was the feeling this person gave him, which he didn't quite like.

Time passed quickly, as the cigarette finished, the middle-aged man came out of the yard with a conflicted expression on his face.

He looked at Qi Yun and said: "Boss, twenty thousand is really too low, could you add a bit more? Thirty thousand, for thirty thousand, you can take the tree."

Qi Yun exhaled a puff of smoke, extinguished the cigarette butt with his foot, shook his head, and firmly stated: "Twenty thousand is my limit, I'm buying this tree purely for the yard's decoration, it's not essential for me."

"If you don't agree, then I'll just have to look elsewhere."

With that, he opened the car door, ready to get in.

The middle-aged man saw this and was still struggling internally. He had intended to rip off the other party, but it seemed impossible.

Nevertheless, twenty thousand yuan was barely acceptable, at least more than the five thousand offered by Dazhuang.

So he gritted his teeth and quickly took a few steps forward to block Qi Yun: "Boss, I give in to you, twenty thousand it is, fate brought us together, so I'll sell the tree to you."

Qi Yun glanced at the man, nodded slightly, and without wasting words, directly took out his phone: "Alright, write me a receipt, and I'll transfer the money to you now."

The middle-aged man hesitated upon hearing that he needed to write a receipt, but considering the impending two thousand yuan, he couldn't refuse, so he nodded: "Okay, boss, I'll write it right away."

He turned and went into the house, soon coming out with a note, simply stating that the osmanthus tree was sold to Qi Yun for twenty thousand, and the transaction was complete, stamped with his fingerprint.

Qi Yun took the note, looked it over carefully, confirmed it was correct, and then transferred twenty thousand yuan to the man using his phone.

Seeing the successful transfer notification, the middle-aged man's face showed a satisfied smile: "Boss, do you need any other trees? My father-in-law's house has an old Chinese scholar tree, which is also many years old."

Qi Yun thought for a moment and said: "Sure, let's go have a look. Take my car, let's go."

"I'll call someone right away to dig up the tree, alright?"

The middle-aged man became even happier upon hearing that Qi Yun might buy another tree, nodding quickly: "Okay, no problem, no problem."

After the man got in the car, Qi Yun walked a few steps further away, took out his phone, and called Jingcheng Garden Company.

"You guys come over now, I'll send you the location later."

"..."

More than half an hour later, Qi Yun had already circled around an old Chinese scholar tree a dozen times but hadn't received a message from the garden company.

The nearby middle-aged man followed closely behind, eagerly watching him: "Boss, how do you find it?"

"This Chinese scholar tree is over twenty years old. I'm telling you, since we planted this tree, my father-in-law hasn't gotten sick..."

Qi Yun smacked his lips, looked at his watch, and then said: "This tree is nice, but it's not suitable for me, sorry for making you come here for nothing."

"Let's do this. It's lunchtime anyway, I'll treat you to a meal, as a gesture of thanks, how about it?"

The middle-aged man felt a bit disappointed upon hearing this, but quickly put on a smile: "Haha, how could I accept that?"

Qi Yun shrugged and smiled: "What's there to feel awkward about? I'm hungry too, let's go."

"..."

Another half an hour passed, and finally, the garden company called.

"Sir, is there no one at home?"

Qi Yun glanced at the middle-aged man who was gulping down beer next to him and replied: "I'll call someone over now, just go ahead and look."

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"Yes, sir," replied the voice on the phone.

After hanging up, Qi Yun gave Chen Wei a knowing look and whispered a few words in his ear.

Chen Wei nodded, put down his chopsticks, and got up to leave.

The middle-aged man saw this but didn't ask much, just grabbed a beer next to him and opened another bottle.

Qi Yun handed him a cigarette and said, "The car I called has arrived. Since no one was at your home, I let them dig up the tree directly."

The middle-aged man took the cigarette and answered with a smile, "No problem, the tree is yours now, boss."

Qi Yun smiled, said no more, and picked up his chopsticks to continue eating.

Once the meal was almost finished, Chen Wei returned and nodded at Qi Yun, indicating the task was completed.

Qi Yun nodded slightly, turned to the middle-aged man, and asked, "Finished eating? If so, let's head back."

The middle-aged man burped, his face slightly flushed, "I'm full, let's go."

The three of them left the restaurant and drove back to the yard.

When they arrived, they saw a truck hauling away the osmanthus tree.

Qi Yun walked into the yard, pointed at the damaged greenhouse, and said, "Sorry for the damage to the greenhouse; I'll compensate you with five hundred yuan."

"Oh, this few pieces of flimsy plastic film isn't worth much, how could I ask the boss to pay?" The middle-aged man said, grinning sheepishly, but still honestly took out his phone to show the payment code.

Qi Yun chuckled and transferred five hundred yuan to him, then said, "Then our deal is done, if there's nothing else, I'll be leaving."

The middle-aged man happily put away his phone, "Alright, boss, if you need anything in the future, just let me know."

Qi Yun said no more and turned to leave.

Back in the car, he checked his mobile banking and saw a 680,000 yuan transfer from Jingcheng Garden Company.

As Chen Wei started the car, he turned to ask, "Go home?"

Qi Yun was about to respond when his phone rang, displaying Zhong Rui's name on the screen.

"What happened?"

"Boss, something happened at the company!" Zhong Rui's voice was urgent on the other end.

Qi Yun's brow furrowed, "What happened?"

"A few police officers came to the company; they said our company is suspected of spreading obscure information online and want the person in charge to come back to cooperate with the investigation." Zhong Rui quickly replied.

Qi Yun was taken aback, "Spreading obscure information?"

His company only had one game; how could it be related to such things?

Zhong Rui confirmed, "That's what they said, and although I told them I'm the person in charge and I'm willing to go with them for the investigation, they insisted on finding you specifically."

Damn that slick-haired bastard!

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun immediately understood the situation - it must be that guy causing trouble from behind again.

He thought for a moment before asking, "Where are these police from?"

"They said they're from the city bureau," Zhong Rui replied.

"Alright, I got it, tell them I'll head over now."

After hanging up, Qi Yun immediately called Zhang Dayong, but couldn't get an answer.

He frowned, thought for a moment, and then sent a text message to him.

...

Half an hour later, as Qi Yun stepped into the company, he saw several people gathered at the door of an office, pointing and discussing something.

Inside, several police officers were inspecting the computers in the office while Zhong Rui stood anxiously beside them.

Qi Yun glanced at Brother Peng's office; it was empty.

He then waved to those new business managers gathered at the door, saying, "Stop watching, just get on with your own work."

Though they didn't recognize him, seeing his confident demeanor and Chen Wei's sharp gaze, they dispersed quickly.

Qi Yun walked into the office, glanced at the police officers, and addressed the lead officer, "I'm the person in charge of the company, what do you need?"

Zhong Rui, seeing him arrive, quickly jogged over to stand behind him.

The lead officer sized Qi Yun up and said expressionlessly, "Qi Yun, right? Someone reported your company for spreading obscure information online; please come back with us for the investigation."

Qi Yun knew they were targeting him directly, so he didn't bother to claim innocence or talk about being framed, simply responding, "Officer, would you show me the summons documents, please?"

The lead officer frowned and replied in a deep voice, "We aren't summoning you right now, but asking you to cooperate with us to clarify matters."

Qi Yun glanced at him, pulled up a chair, and sat down, speaking calmly, "Sorry, but if there's no summons, I'll cooperate with you right here in this office. Feel free to ask any questions."

The lead officer's expression hardened, a trace of displeasure flickering in his eyes, "Qi Yun, we're following procedures; the evidence we've gathered shows there are issues with your company. As the person in charge, you are obligated to cooperate by coming back to the police station for investigation."

"Your attitude isn't helping resolve the issue."

"Oh?" Qi Yun pretended to be surprised, "Then show me the evidence; I'm curious how a game development company is linked to spreading obscure information."

The officer snorted coldly, pulled some printed sheets from a folder, and tossed them on the table in front of Qi Yun, "This is the evidence we have so far; take a look yourself."

Qi Yun picked up the paper and examined it carefully.

The sheets contained screenshots from the game's official forum, some comments indeed showing obscure images.

"Officer." Qi Yun put down the paper and said to the lead officer, "These are just screenshots of comments from the official forum, not content actively published by our company."

"So this so-called evidence at most shows a gap in our technology and oversight, not direct proof of us spreading obscure content."

Qi Yun paused and continued, "Moreover, as far as I know, these issues should fall under the jurisdiction of the Cyber Administration, right? Aren't you overstepping by getting involved?"

The lead officer's face darkened, his sharp gaze locking on Qi Yun, "So you're refusing to cooperate by coming back with us?"

Qi Yun responded slowly, crossing his arms, "Sorry, firstly you don't have a lawful summons, and secondly you don't have direct evidence that my company is spreading obscure content, so the most I can do is cooperate with you in this office."

He sat up, looked directly at the officer, and asked, "Lastly, did the city administration approve your attempt to take me away?"

Upon hearing this, a look of surprise appeared on the officer's face. He frowned and was silent for several seconds before stepping outside with his phone.

Standing behind him, Zhong Rui was thrilled to see his boss's calm demeanor and how he rendered the officer speechless, especially noticing the key information about city administration approval.

It turned out his boss had another layer of identity!

A few minutes later, the lead officer returned to the office, his expression grim as he stared at Qi Yun, "I'll ask you one last time, are you refusing to cooperate by coming back with us?"

Qi Yun's heart sank upon hearing this.

Clearly, they knew his identity and still wanted to take him away, which means someone influential must be behind this.

However, he remained calm on the surface, smiled slightly, and asked, "If I don't cooperate, will you use force against me?"

The lead officer waved at the others and replied sternly, "If you insist on not cooperating, we'll have to take compulsory measures."

Two officers stepped forward, ready to grab Qi Yun's arm.

At this moment, Chen Wei, who had been standing quietly behind, suddenly moved; he stepped in front of Qi Yun and said coldly, "You're enforcing the law improperly."

The lead officer looked at him, "If you obstruct us, I won't hesitate to take you in as well."

Chen Wei remained rooted in place, showing no intention of stepping aside.

Then Qi Yun stood up, patted Chen Wei's shoulder, "Brother Wei, I'll go with them."

After speaking, he looked at the lead officer, "Can I make a call before we leave?"

The lead officer shook his head expressionlessly, "No."

Qi Yun laughed slightly, "Alright, let's go."

He stepped toward the door but turned back at the entrance to say to Chen Wei, "Brother Wei, cancel the reservation I made at the Carrefour restaurant tonight."

Chen Wei nodded without expression, immediately understanding his meaning.

Chapter 223: The Qingnang Book Wasn't Donated in Vain

Inside the police car, Qi Yun looked at the street outside the window with furrowed brows, realizing the direction the vehicle was heading didn't seem to be towards the city police bureau.

"Aren't you guys from the city bureau?"

The car was silent, no one answered him.

Qi Yun chuckled lightly, knowing it was useless to say more in this situation, so he simply leaned his head back and closed his eyes to rest.

He hadn't done anything illegal, although the other party could forcibly take him back now, once Zhang Dayong received the news, he would definitely take action.

After who knows how long, the police car turned into a street and finally drove into the courtyard of a police station.

Qi Yun slowly opened his eyes, his gaze sweeping over the blue and white walls and the tall iron gate, secretly becoming vigilant.

The people claimed to be from the city bureau yet brought him to a police station, this illogical arrangement seemed fishy no matter how you looked at it.

"Get out!" a policeman shouted stiffly.

Qi Yun unhurriedly tidied his collar, stepped out of the car, and followed them into the hall, entering an interrogation room.

"Sit."

Qi Yun pulled out a chair and sat down, finding the overhead fluorescent light quite dazzling and uncomfortable.

The leading cop sat opposite him, placed a few pieces of so-called evidence on the table, and pulled out a cigarette, offering it to Qi Yun: "Want a smoke?"

"I have my own." Qi Yun smiled at him, took out his own cigarette pack, and lit one.

The leading cop, seeing this, withdrew his hand and put the cigarette in his own mouth, the lighter "snap" casting a glow on the calculative look in his eyes.

"Actually, this matter can be big or small. As long as you cooperate and clarify everything, you can leave soon."

Qi Yun glanced at him, holding the cigarette between his fingers, exhaling a long plume of smoke before saying, "Sorry, Officer, I need to correct you, I am here to assist in understanding the situation, not to be investigated."

Upon hearing this, the leading cop's expression shifted unpredictably. After a moment, he stubbed out his cigarette, stood up, and said, "Think it over properly."

With that said, he led another person out of the room.

Hearing the door close, Qi Yun looked at his watch, quietly awaiting the result.

...

A few hours earlier.

The man with slicked-back hair, not yet fully awake, received a report from his subordinate that the two largest shops in the bus company district had been purchased in advance, just yesterday, by a buyer named Qi Yun.

Upon hearing this, the man's drowsiness disappeared instantly, he threw off the long slender legs wrapped around him, and said sternly, "Say that again, what's the buyer's name?"

"The landlord said the buyer is called Qi Yun," the subordinate repeated.

The man's expression instantly turned grim enough to drip water, after hanging up the phone, he immediately dialed another number.

"Secretary Xia, do you have time at noon? Let's meet."

...

In the office of the New District Branch, Zhang Dayong had just returned from a meeting and noticed a message from Qi Yun on his phone, frowning slightly.

He tried to call back, but it prompted that the phone was turned off.

After thinking for a while, he found another number on his phone and dialed it.

"Captain Lu, this is Zhang Dayong."

"I want to ask if the city bureau sent someone to investigate a company called Yunqing Technology?"

"Haven't heard of it? All right, okay..."

"..."

After making several calls, Zhang Dayong finally gathered some information and immediately grabbed his coat and left the office.

...

In the police station interrogation room, there were two young officers sitting opposite Qi Yun, repeatedly asking the same questions.

"Why weren't the suggestive images on your company's official website forum discovered and removed in time?"

"According to some game players, certain character images in your company's game also carry suggestive implications. How do you explain that?"

"..."

Qi Yun was not annoyed, he answered every question they asked, providing answers that were watertight.

From the moment he stepped into this place, he already knew what the other side was planning, naturally not falling into their trap.

But after a long time, he still felt a bit tired, especially with that fluorescent light overhead making his eyes quite uncomfortable.

Coupled with the stuffiness in the room, he felt a bit dizzy, but he gritted his teeth, mustering the strength to stay alert.

Just then, the door of the interrogation room suddenly opened, and the figure he had been waiting for appeared at the door.

The newcomer was Zhang Dayong, followed by the leading cop from earlier and another middle-aged man.

Zhang Dayong's expression was stern, his gaze sharp as it swept around the room, finally landing on Qi Yun, giving him a slight nod.

Then, he turned his attention to the two young officers, his voice deep: "You two, step outside."

The two officers exchanged glances, hesitant, but seeing Zhang Dayong's sharp eyes, they stood up and silently left the interrogation room.

The leading cop stood at the door, looking a bit displeased, his gaze shifting between Zhang Dayong and Qi Yun, seemingly weighing something.

Zhang Dayong stepped up to Qi Yun and asked, "Are you alright?"

Qi Yun smiled at him: "I'm fine."

Seeing this, Zhang Dayong felt relieved, turning to look at the leading cop and the middle-aged man behind him, speaking with a stern face: "Deputy Captain Shen, Director Mao, it seems your actions do not comply with the procedure."

The middle-aged man known as Director Mao's face stiffened, his eyes flickering, stepping back with an embarrassed smile, clearly indicating 'he did it, talk to him.'

Chapter 224: The Qingnang Book Was Not Donated in Vain

Deputy Captain Shen's face turned even more sullen, the veins on his forehead slightly throbbing: "Director Zhang, these are instructions from above, we're just following orders."

Zhang Dayong, having arrived here, was certainly aware of what was going on.

After a moment of silence, he didn't continue the previous topic and instead said, "Since we're here to cooperate with your work, it's been quite some time, and I assume the necessary cooperation should be done by now, right?"

Having said this, he turned around, looked at Qi Yun, and said: "Let's go."

Qi Yun nodded, stood up, straightened his clothes, and prepared to leave following Zhang Dayong.

Seeing the two about to leave, Deputy Captain Shen suddenly became a bit anxious. He instinctively raised his hand to block their path.

Zhang Dayong, noticing this, narrowed his eyes and said in a stern voice: "Deputy Captain Shen, what do you mean by this?"

Deputy Captain Shen was taken aback by Zhang Dayong's authoritative gaze, a wave of unease rising in his heart as the situation had already escalated beyond his expectations...

Although he wanted to just let the two leave, doing so would surely displease Secretary Xia.

Moreover, having already offended Zhang Dayong, he would end up suffering on both ends...

After weighing his options for a long time, he mustered the courage, stiffened his neck and said through gritted teeth, "Sorry Director Zhang, we still need Mr. Qi to cooperate with us for some further clarity, he can't leave yet."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Dayong's eyes turned icy cold. He stepped forward, approached Deputy Captain Shen, and said in a low voice, "Do you think that since I'm not at the Municipal Bureau, I can't deal with you?"

Upon hearing this, Deputy Captain Shen's body slightly trembled, and his hand hidden in his pocket clenched uncontrollably.

He knew what was said was true, he indeed was at fault, and the background of the opposite party wasn't something he could afford to provoke.

Yet the pressure from above made him reluctant to let them pass easily...

Director Mao, nearby, shrank back even more, hiding and avoiding eye contact, fearing Zhang Dayong might turn his ire on him...

At this moment, footsteps could be heard from the corridor outside, and soon, a young man in a dark suit jacket appeared at the doorway.

His appearance instantly relieved Deputy Captain Shen, who had been sweating profusely.

Director Mao's feet also discreetly inched forward to align with Deputy Captain Shen, in a posture of united advance and retreat.

The person turned out to be none other than Secretary Xia.

His gaze swept over the faces of the people present, finally landing on Zhang Dayong, as he chuckled, "Heh, Director Zhang, what's brought you here? Last I checked, Ice River Road isn't within the jurisdiction of the New District Branch, is it?"

Zhang Dayong's face darkened, inwardly sighing, 'This is going to be tricky.'

Although the other's rank was lower, they all understood the role of a secretary.

He steadied himself, restored a stern look on his face, and without haste, met Secretary Xia's eyes and said, "Mr. Qi's enterprise is within our jurisdiction. Even if there's anything, he should be at our New District J Bureau for questioning, not brought to the Ice River Police Station, right?"

Secretary Xia's expression faltered slightly, realizing that Zhang's words opposed him directly.

He initially thought, based on Deputy Captain Shen's report, that Zhang Dayong was simply doing someone a favor, trying to intervene.

He hadn't expected his assumptions to be incorrect, and now, despite his own involvement, the other party refused to back down, signaling a complex relationship between the two.

However, he was not entirely unprepared...

He slightly squinted his eyes, maintaining that enigmatic smile.

The next moment, he took a paper from his briefcase and handed it to Zhang Dayong, smiling as he said, "Heh, Director Zhang is right, this indeed doesn't follow procedure. Here is a cooperation letter issued by the Municipal Bureau, now we kindly ask Mr. Qi Yun to assist the police officers at the Municipal Bureau in understanding the case."

Zhang Dayong's eyes narrowed, focusing on the cooperation letter handed by Secretary Xia, taking it in hand for careful scrutiny.

After a while, he looked up, his expression somewhat grim.

"Is everything fine now, Director Zhang?" Secretary Xia asked with a smile.

Zhang Dayong didn't immediately respond, and after pondering with a furrowed brow for a long time, he turned to Qi Yun, casting a reassuring glance.

Then he looked back at Secretary Xia and said, "Alright, but please wait two minutes; I need to make a call."

Upon hearing this, Secretary Xia's face instantly turned grim.

He could naturally guess who the call was intended for, yet he hadn't expected Zhang Dayong to go to such lengths for Qi Yun.

While he contemplated his next move, Qi Yun, who had been silent, suddenly spoke up.

"Heh, Director Zhang, there's no need to call; it's merely about cooperating with the questioning. I'll just go with them."

Secretary Xia was visibly surprised for a moment, turning his gaze to Qi Yun: "Mr. Qi is quite right; it's just cooperation for questioning. As long as you cooperate well, it will soon be over, and won't take much of your time."

Zhang Dayong was similarly taken aback, looking at Qi Yun, somewhat perplexed.

Qi Yun, noticing his concern, smiled at him: "It's no trouble; as a citizen, it's my duty to cooperate. Besides, as a committee member, I'm even more obliged to assist the police in their work."

At this, Zhang Dayong understood, realizing that Qi Yun didn't want to drag the people behind him deeper into this, and might have other arrangements.

After a few moments of silence, he nodded and said no more.

"This way, Mr. Qi," Deputy Captain Shen said with a blank expression.

Qi Yun casually smiled and walked out.

Chapter 225: The Qingnang Book Wasn't Donated in Vain

Just as he was about to walk out the door, a sudden phone ringing sounded from inside the room.

Everyone followed the sound and turned to look at Secretary Xia.

Secretary Xia took out his phone, and upon seeing the number on the screen, his expression froze slightly.

Then he raised his head and glanced at everyone before heading to the end of the hallway to answer the call.

Deputy Captain Shen and Director Mao exchanged looks, seemingly sensing something.

Two minutes later, Secretary Xia returned, still wearing a bright smile.

He looked at Qi Yun and said, "Mr. Qi, I'm sorry. The city bureau just sent word that things have been investigated and cleared up. It's all a misunderstanding, and you don't need to go over for further cooperation."

Upon hearing this, Deputy Captain Shen and Director Mao's faces were filled with astonishment as they gazed at Secretary Xia, yet unable to voice their questions.

Especially Deputy Captain Shen, even though Secretary Xia had a smiling countenance, he could feel a well-hidden anger emanating from him.

Qi Yun, hearing this, let out a long breath of relief inwardly, yet outwardly remained calm as water.

He didn't utter any sarcastic remarks, instead he smiled faintly and said, "That's good. Since it's a misunderstanding, if there's nothing else, I'll take my leave first."

Secretary Xia nodded, "Alright, take care."

Zhang Dayong observed and left a comment half-heartedly, "Make sure to get it clear next time, don't create misunderstandings again." After that, he also walked towards the outside.

From the beginning they weren't on the same boat, and this time it had turned into enmity, so there was no need for him to give the other party a good face.

Standing in place, Secretary Xia's face lost its smile completely, turning frighteningly somber.

Deputy Captain Shen, on the other hand, felt uneasy, looking as if he wanted to say something but held back.

Director Mao, not knowing when, had also taken half a step back, lowering his head to look at his newly bought leather shoes.

After exiting the precinct, Qi Yun smiled and patted Zhang Dayong's shoulder: "Thanks."

Zhang Dayong shook his head, took out a cigarette and handed it over: "Thanks for what? I didn't really help much."

Qi Yun accepted the cigarette, lit it, took a deep puff, and replied, "It's enough that the gesture is there."

"Ring ring ring~"

The phone that just powered on rang immediately, displaying 'Vice Secretary Peng' on the screen.

Qi Yun raised his head to glance at Zhang Dayong, then answered the call.

"Has the person come out?" Vice Secretary Peng straightforwardly asked from the other side.

Qi Yun chuckled, replying, "Yes, out. Thank you, Secretary, for the trouble."

Vice Secretary Peng gave a light laugh: "I heard the whole thing. It's not your problem; the violating person will be held accountable by the city bureau."

Qi Yun understood that the subsequent matters were beyond his involvement, so he didn't ask more, only expressing his gratitude again.

The fact that the other party could exert influence to get him out, and calling first thing to check on him, made him really grateful.

He had only one thought at the moment: donating the Qingnang Book was definitely worth it.

"Alright then, I have a meeting later, so let's leave it at that." Vice Secretary Peng gave a few more instructions, then hung up.

Qi Yun was just about to put his phone away when it rang again, showing the note "Ge Dabao".

Zhang Dayong also looked down, and upon clearly seeing the words, a hint of surprise flashed on his face, suspiciously looking at Qi Yun.

Qi Yun didn't explain to him, just smiled before answering the phone.

"Everything okay?" Ge Dabao asked with concern.

"Yeah." Qi Yun replied in a relaxed tone, "Thanks for the concern, Captain Ge."

Ge Dabao laughed heartily, saying, "Alright, as long as you're fine. Director Duan told us, even though you're an external member of our team, as long as you haven't broken the law, we have the duty to ensure your safety."

Seeing Zhang Dayong nearby, Qi Yun mindfully expressed his gratitude again, then hung up the call.

"Dinner tonight?" Qi Yun put his phone away and asked.

Zhang Dayong shook his head, "There's a mission at the bureau tonight, another day."

Saying this, he looked at Qi Yun with a meaningful glance, extinguished his cigarette, and left first.

Qi Yun also let out a long breath; he knew the other party had likely figured something out, but fortunately didn't probe further, otherwise, it would have been hard to explain.

After all, he had promised the Public Security Department that unless necessary, he wouldn't lightly reveal his identity as an external investigator to anyone.

After finishing one cigarette, he also extinguished the butt, then got into the nearby waiting BMW 5 Series.

"Thanks for your hard work, Brother Wei."

Chen Wei turned his head with a guilty face: "Sorry, in that kind of situation, I..."

It was the first time Qi Yun had seen such an emotion on this man's face, he waved his hand, interrupting what Chen Wei was about to say.

"Don't blame yourself, it's not your problem. I got out thanks to you finding someone."

"By the way, how did you know I was here?"

Chen Wei, upon hearing this, slightly relaxed his tense expression, explaining: "After you left with them, I drove behind. I saw you enter into the precinct, so I went to the office building next to Carrefour..."

...

Half an hour later, Zhong Rui saw Qi Yun returning to the company and hurriedly approached excitedly.

"Boss, are you alright?"

Qi Yun patted his shoulder, deliberately raising his voice a bit, "I'm fine, the police station said it was a misunderstanding, it's already taken care of."

He came back to the company with no real purpose, mainly to reassure the employees.

After all, they had just come, and suddenly experiencing such a hectic morning, it's inevitable they'd feel unsettled.

"Gather everyone and explain it to them."

Zhong Rui nodded upon hearing this and quickly went to carry out instructions.

After the other party left, Qi Yun stepped into the office, lit a cigarette, and began summarizing today's events.

Although the slicked-back hair man never showed up, he guessed that it was most likely that guy causing trouble behind the scenes.

However, what surprised him was that just making the other lose face could provoke such a strong reaction, even stronger than last time?

How does such a narrow-minded person come to possess that wealth...

Even a single pigeon worth over a million, typical wealthy individuals couldn't afford that.

"Since you want to mess with me, I have no reason to stand and take a beating. Even with your deep background, I have my ways..."

...

On another side, inside a high-end private club.

The slicked-back hair man and Secretary Xia were sitting cross-legged at the tea table, both with unpleasant expressions.

The slicked-back hair man fiddled with the ring in his hand, speaking sinisterly, "Didn't expect that kid to have some influence."

Secretary Xia put down his teacup, pondering and then asking, "What feud do you have with Qi Yun?"

"The leader said that those people from that department have all reached him. You're advised to try not to mess with him again to avoid causing trouble."

Chapter 226: Intelligence Query Failed (Double-Length)

Not long after leaving the company, Qi Yun received a call from Brother Peng.

The other party had been out all day on business and only just returned to the company to hear from Zhong Rui about what had happened today.

"How's it going? Everyone's okay?"

Qi Yun didn't want the other party to worry too much, so he smiled lightly and said, "It's all good, everything's been handled, no need to worry."

"That's good to hear." Brother Peng sighed in relief and continued, "Today I talked with two KTVs on the brink of closing, total goods worth 900,000, shipping out tonight."

Qi Yun nodded, "Alright, you take care of this lot. If funds run short, talk to Zhong Rui. If you need me to step in, just give me a call."

"Okay."

"..."

After getting home, Qi Yun acted as if nothing had happened that day.

After dinner, Zhao Qing snuggled into her arms and asked about the new house renovations.

"It's all done, we can move in anytime," Qi Yun replied while stroking her hair.

Zhao Qing's eyes lit up, full of eagerness, "Let's move tomorrow then, it's the weekend."

"Sure thing." Qi Yun nodded with a smile, then thought for a moment and added, "The property's title deed is done too. When you have time, we can add your name to it."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Qing looked up at him, then her gaze shifted away, blushing slightly, "I don't need it. Who am I to you to have your property?"

Qi Yun laughed heartily, cupped her face in his hands, and looked into her eyes, speaking sincerely, "You're the one I want to spend my life with, the lady of the house. It's only right we have your name there."

Zhao Qing's cheeks flushed with a pink hue, her ears a little warm upon hearing these cheesy words.

She lowered her eyes, fingers unconsciously tugging at Qi Yun's clothes, her voice softer than a whisper, "Who... Who wants to spend their life with you..." Despite the words, a smile broke through on her face.

...

Early morning.

After a round of passion, Qi Yun was surprised to find that he wasn't even sweating or out of breath.

Since drinking some herbal concoction for a few days, he felt more energetic, like a waist king.

Gently covering Zhao Qing with a blanket, Qi Yun got up and lit a cigarette on the balcony.

[Current intelligence points: 2]

With only two points, he could only check white intel, which generally wasn't worth much...

Better to wait another day, save up three points, then investigate the big-headed guy's secrets...

Qi Yun exhaled a puff of smoke and picked up his phone, idly browsing the news.

"Conflict between Big Mao and Second Mao intensifies..."

"Tokyo Electric Company completed the 12th round of contaminated water discharge yesterday, releasing about 9,800 tons..."

"Mr. Zhao Weilin, overseas Chinese, donates 30 million yuan to Jiang Province's numerous children's welfare homes..."

When Qi Yun saw the last piece of news, his expression momentarily froze.

"Zhao Weilin?"

Wasn't he the one mentioned in the intel the other day?

He brought the phone closer, staring at the photo on the screen.

It was a middle-aged man with gold-rimmed glasses, looking to be in his fifties and kindly-faced, handing books to children at the welfare home.

The red banner behind him read "Connected to the frontier, love knows no bounds" in prominent display.

Qi Yun stared at the photo, and although it was a bit blurry, he could still make out the man's general appearance.

After a few seconds, he lifted his head, murmuring to himself, "But why does he look so familiar?"

Yet, he couldn't recall where he'd seen him before...

...

The next day, Qi Yun was awakened by the sound of a text message.

He picked up his phone and saw a bank message indicating a deposit of 4,986,500 yuan, transferred from an international auction house.

He remembered Mendeleyev telling him a couple of days ago that the Eastern Orthodox Golden Holy Image had been auctioned off, likely accounting for this sum.

Waking up to nearly five million made him delightfully content.

His account balance was soon to hit ten million again...

Glancing at the still-sleeping Zhao Qing, Qi Yun quietly got out of bed and dressed.

He had to move today, so after preparing breakfast, he headed to the supermarket at the community entrance to buy some packing boxes.

Not waiting for Zhao Qing to wake up, he ate a few dumplings and got to work.

The house had quite a lot of clutter, and after working half the day, he'd only managed to pack the little girl's clothes.

Taking a sip of water, he was about to continue when his phone suddenly rang in his pocket.

Pulling it out, he saw it was that Spanish history professor calling.

Somewhat surprised, Qi Yun still answered, "Hello, Mr. Ignacio."

"Hi Qi Yun, I hope I'm not disturbing you?" Ignacio asked politely.

"Not at all," Qi Yun chuckled, having a good impression of this Spaniard. Although Ignacio saw through his little scheme last time, he was still willing to help decipher the coordinates without any reward.

"Mr. Ignacio, is there something I can help you with?"

Ignacio paused and replied, "I wanted to ask if you have any clues about the other half of those coordinates?"

"To be honest, ever since deciphering those numbers, I've been waiting for your news."

Qi Yun was slightly taken aback, not expecting the call to be about this.

After contemplating briefly, he replied, "Mr. Ignacio, honestly, I've made some discoveries regarding the other half of those coordinates, and I might have them in the next two days. I'll inform you as soon as I get them."

"Really? That's wonderful!" Ignacio's voice brimmed with undisguised excitement, "I've also been researching various records here, hoping to find some clues related to these coordinates in historical accounts, but haven't made significant progress yet."

Chapter 227: Intelligence Query Failed (Double-Length)

"Since you've made a discovery over there, I'll be waiting for your good news."

Qi Yun smiled and replied, "Alright, I'll contact you when there's news."

"Okay, then I won't disturb you any further. Goodbye."

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun furrowed his brows slightly.

He's somewhat unsure right now if the other party is simply interested in cracking those numbers...

From the previous interactions, this Spaniard doesn't seem to give off the vibe of a greedy person.

But the human heart is unpredictable, and one can never be too sure about human nature.

...

At 2 PM, the moving company had moved all the things into the new house, and Zhao Qing along with the little girl were extremely excited to see the new home.

Especially Nuannuan, her eyes sparkled instantly when she saw the pink princess bed in her bedroom, and she leapt onto it, rolling around the bed, exclaiming excitedly, "Wow, this is my bed! So beautiful, I love it so much!"

Zhao Qing caressed the little girl's head and said with a smile, "This bed was specially chosen for you by Daddy."

"Thank you, Daddy!" The little girl shouted crisply towards Qi Yun.

Qi Yun looked at his daughter's happy appearance, and couldn't help but smile affectionately, his gaze filled with doting.

The purpose of earning money is to make sure those he cares about can live a carefree life.

According to Chinese customs, moving into a new house definitely calls for inviting friends over to celebrate.

So Peng Ge and the others who received the news came over with gifts that evening.

Wei Yong stood at the door, looking at the two-story house in front of him, and let out a "tsk-tsk" sound.

He had witnessed firsthand the transformation of the delivery man Qi Yun into the current President Qi in just a few months.

Old Feng, Peng Ge, Liu Meng, and others were also somewhat surprised looking at the house worth millions.

Everyone knew Qi Yun had made money recently, but didn't expect it to be this extravagant.

However, they were all genuinely happy for their brother.

Only Xiao Huangmao showed no reaction, pouted, and stood by the BMW 5 Series at the door, letting Zhong Rui take a few photos of him posing as a boss, then went inside to play with Nuannuan.

At the dinner table, everyone sat together, and Peng Ge raised his glass, with a hearty smile on his face, "Come, brothers, let's toast to President Qi and congratulate him on his success!"

"Yes, yes, Old Qi had such a tough time the past two years, and finally things are looking up." Wei Yong echoed.

Qi Yun laughed heartily, Peng Ge's words were spot on, he certainly had come through tough times and is doing well now.

"Let's hope everyone gets better!"

This was his heartfelt wish, he hoped to help those he cared about within his capabilities make their lives better.

The atmosphere at the dinner table was lively, as everyone chatted casually, and the dinner lasted until eleven before it ended.

After everyone left, Qi Yun called Liu Meng aside.

"Something's up?" Liu Meng asked while burping.

Qi Yun handed him a cigarette and said, "I opened a company, come work for me."

Liu Meng was stunned for a moment and scratched his head after taking the cigarette, "What am I gonna do there?"

Qi Yun helped him light the cigarette and smiled, "You don't have to do anything specific, just oversee things for me. I'm not usually at the company, so I'll feel assured with you there."

He had mentioned before going to Japan about finding Liu Meng a job, he had been too busy since returning but took the opportunity today to tell him.

Although the company didn't actually need someone to watch over it, Liu Meng wouldn't accept any money from him, so he could only compensate him through other means.

Liu Meng nodded silently upon hearing this, took a deep puff of smoke, and then replied seriously, "Whatever you need me to do, just say so."

Qi Yun knew what he meant, smiling as he patted his shoulder, "Don't overthink it, just help me keep an eye on things."

"Yeah, but I'm serious about what I said."

"..."

In the early hours, Qi Yun lay on a comfortable recliner smoking a cigarette, with the dim moonlight outside the window.

This study was specially designed by Zhao Qing as a smoking place for him, with beige walls and dark brown bookshelves making it appear quite tasteful.

Qi Yun's thoughts stirred, and a familiar panel appeared before him.

[Current Intelligence Points: 3]

"Query Target: Re Lijiang"

[Available Intelligence Type: Red (consumes 3 points), Blue (consumes 6 points)]

"Query Red!"

[Querying...]

[Query Failed: It has been over 24 hours since the host last saw the target in reality, unable to query]

Hmm?

There's a time limit for this?

Qi Yun was a bit dumbfounded, so he has to meet him first?

"Forget it, let's check today's received information first..."

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): The boss of Hengfeng Used Car Shop in New District brought in a batch of stolen S cars, which were just transported back from Jin City Port, currently all parked in the suburban warehouse, address is **]

This intelligence isn't worth much...

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Blue): Dawn Technology Co., Ltd.'s capital chain is about to break, boss Tao Ziming is looking for investors everywhere, but nobody is optimistic about their battery development project]

What does this intelligence mean? Should I invest?

Qi Yun immediately picked up his phone and began to search for information on this company online.

From online records, this company specializes in electric vehicle batteries, but as of now, they don't have any mature products.

Boss Tao Ziming seems quite capable, aged 35, a top student from studying in America, having published several technical papers on battery technology in international academic journals.

Prior to returning to the country, he was the core research and development member of a major firm in Silicon Valley, considered a technical talent.

A year ago, he returned to China and established Dawn Technology Co., Ltd., embarking on independent research and development.

Qi Yun swiped through the phone screen, fingers tapping unconsciously on the armrest of the sofa.

This Tao Ziming seems to have potential to become a corporate giant... gotta find a chance to meet him.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Shi Feng just received a porcelain bowl from the Ming Dynasty today, which was unearthed the night before, the group has dug out a total of 9 precious artifacts, all hidden in the yard of No.28 Xinhe Village]

"Hiss~"

Some expert work.

...

The next day, after breakfast, Qi Yun dialed the number of the guy with slicked-back hair.

The other party seemed somewhat surprised upon receiving his call.

"What do you want with me?"

Qi Yun chuckled, "Do you have time to meet up?"

His tone was very casual, as if completely unaware that the other party was involved in the incident yesterday.

The slicked-back haired guy remained silent for a moment on the phone, unable to discern why Qi Yun would suddenly arrange a meeting.

"Why meet? Isn't it something that can be discussed over the phone?"

Qi Yun replied, "Some things are better discussed face-to-face."

"Alright, I'll send you an address, meet in an hour." With that, the guy hung up the phone.

Soon after, Qi Yun received the address on his phone, a private club.

He immediately picked up his coat and shared the address with Chen Wei, directing him to drive there.

"Brother Wei, let's go faster."

Qi Yun wasn't actually looking to meet the other party, he just wanted to fulfill the conditions for intelligence query.

Half an hour later, Qi Yun arrived at the parking lot of the private club ahead of time, he didn't rush out of the car, observing through the window as he awaited the arrival of the guy with slicked-back hair.

After about ten minutes, a black BMW 7 Series also arrived at the parking lot, the guy with slicked-back hair stepped out at the club entrance and proceeded inside.

Upon seeing him, Qi Yun immediately stirred his thoughts and called out the system panel.

"Query Target: Re Lijiang"

[Available Intelligence Type: Red (consumes 3 points), Blue (consumes 6 points)]

"Query Red!"

[Query Successful]

...

Chapter 228: Eight Hundred Thousand for a Hot Potato

[Red alert: There's a safe in Re Lijiang's villa at Marriott Manor in Kashi, containing a ledger that records every payment given to Deputy Squad Leader Zhou.]

Upon seeing this intelligence, a plan quietly brewed in Qi Yun's mind...

"Let's go, Brother Wei, to Antique Street."

Chen Wei nodded silently after hearing this, asked no more, and directly started the car and left.

Just over twenty minutes later, Qi Yun's phone rang. He picked it up and glanced at it, revealing a trace of a smile on his lips.

"I don't like waiting for people." The voice on the other end was very cold.

Qi Yun laughed and said apologetically, "Sorry, something came up unexpectedly, and I'm afraid I can't make it now. How about we schedule another day?"

The person with the slicked-back hair on the other end of the phone was silent for a moment, and the air seemed to freeze.

Soon after, a cold laugh came through the receiver, mixed with the crisp sound of a lighter igniting a cigarette: "Messing with me? Do you know what the consequences might be?"

Qi Yun maintained a gentle tone: "Hehe, why would I mess with you? Something urgent really came up and I temporarily can't get away. Once I handle things here, I'll definitely be the first to pay you a visit."

The person with the slicked-back hair didn't say any more, snorted coldly, and then hung up the phone.

Qi Yun's expression returned to calmness as he rubbed his phone, his gaze deep.

First show weakness to the enemy, let this dog thing jump around for a couple more days.

...

Antique Street, Qiuyue Pavilion.

At this hour, Shi Feng had just opened for business, and the water on the tea table hadn't even boiled yet.

Seeing Qi Yun walk in empty-handed, he plopped back onto his chair and said indifferently, "What wind blows President Qi over here today?"

Qi Yun didn't mind, opened a chair and sat down himself, glancing sideways at Shi Feng: "What? Not welcome?"

Shi Feng smacked his lips without saying anything.

Qi Yun was a bit stunned, thinking he hadn't provoked this fellow, so why the gloom so early in the morning.

"Your wife eloped?" Qi Yun asked tentatively.

This time, Shi Feng was a bit surprised. He stared for a moment and then asked alertly, "Who did you hear that from?"

Seeing his reaction, Qi Yun was startled and blurted out, "She really ran away?"

This sentence seemed to hit Shi Feng's sore spot. He irritably waved his hand: "Go, go, go, quickly leave if you have nothing better to do."

"Tsk tsks." Qi Yun picked up the kettle and poured himself a cup of water, then smiled and said, "If something's bothering you, tell it to cheer your brother up?"

Shi Feng's face turned green after hearing this, turned away and ignored him, his hand unconsciously speeding up the rotation of the Buddha Beads.

Seeing that Shi Feng didn't want to discuss it, Qi Yun stopped teasing and said instead, "I'm here for serious business. You accepted a Ming Dynasty porcelain bowl yesterday, right?"

Shi Feng turned his head in surprise: "How do you know that?"

Qi Yun didn't answer his question, put away the joking attitude and said solemnly, "Those things aren't clean."

Shi Feng was a bit stunned: "Stolen?"

Qi Yun nodded: "You could say that, but not stolen from the living."

Shi Feng's hands that were turning the Buddha Beads suddenly stopped, he stared at Qi Yun, his Adam's apple moving up and down: "You mean..."

"Dug up from underground just last night." Qi Yun took a sip from his tea cup and continued, "Including the porcelain bowl sold to you, there are a total of nine pieces."

After hearing this, Shi Feng gasped: "These bastards, no rules at all."

Qi Yun glanced at him and asked: "Didn't you notice when you bought them?"

"No." Shi Feng shook his head, dumbfounded, "They must have asked experts to handle them, and they came through an intermediary. I didn't think in that direction, after all, it's been a long time since anything fresh hit Antique Street."

"These bastards dare to pull this stunt, clearly planning to fill their pockets and move elsewhere."

Qi Yun nodded and asked, "How much did you pay for them?"

Upon hearing this, Shi Feng slowly recovered from his shock, with an ugly expression, extending his index finger and thumb, gritting his teeth so hard they almost cracked.

Qi Yun sighed after hearing this, not knowing what to say.

Eighty grand for a hot potato, who could have seen that coming.

After some time, Shi Feng finally adjusted his mood and asked with a sullen face, "Since you know about this, can you help me find out where they are?"

Qi Yun took out a cigarette and handed one over: "What's your plan?"

Shi Feng accepted the cigarette, his expression fierce, "I'll damn well get my eighty grand back with interest!" He took a heavy drag, exhaling smoke through gritted teeth, "Dare to con me with dead people's stuff, they really think Northwest Zheng Yijian is a pushover?"

Qi Yun picked up a pen and paper, wrote the address down, and handed it over while advising, "At your age, don't be impulsive."

Shi Feng glanced at the note and then looked up with a cold smile: "Don't worry, we definitely won't do anything illegal."

Qi Yun nodded, said no more, and then asked, "Is the guy who went across the street looking for things still local?"

Shi Feng looked through the smoke, "I haven't contacted him recently, something up?"

Qi Yun flicked ash off his cigarette and said directly, "Ran into some trouble, want him to help retrieve something for me."

Upon hearing this, Shi Feng picked up his phone, found a number, and dialed it.

"Where are you?"

"Can you come over now?"

"Got a job, come discuss in person."

After hanging up, he said to Qi Yun, "He's coming over now."

Qi Yun nodded, took a couple more drags, and asked, "This task might be tricky, can he be trusted?"

"Rest assured," Shi Feng replied without hesitation, "Old Ghost is different from other petty thieves. He comes from a lineage, most professional, just get the price right, he won't utter a word even if jailed."

Qi Yun was slightly stunned after hearing this, thinking that even now there's such an expert?

"You'll talk to him directly, I've got other arrangements." With that, Shi Feng stood up and headed outside.

About ten minutes later, a man wearing an army coat, hands tucked in his sleeves, walked in.

After surveying the room, he directly sat down beside Qi Yun.

"Speak."

Qi Yun turned his head and gave the man a thorough look.

That night was very dark, and the man had covered his face, so Qi Yun hadn't seen Old Ghost's appearance, but judging from what he said just now, he should be the person Qi Yun was looking for.

"I'd like you to go to Kashi and retrieve something for me. At present, I only know the item is in a safe in a villa, the rest is all unknown," Qi Yun said concisely.

Old Ghost narrowed his eyes slightly, asking, "What's the background?"

"Businessman, complicated background, very influential locally," Qi Yun answered truthfully.

Old Ghost was silent for a moment, then extended two fingers from his worn sleeve, "Twenty, pay half upfront, refund if the attempt fails."

Chapter 229: Do You Know Accountant Jia?

Half an hour later, Qi Yun placed a brown paper bag containing one hundred thousand yuan on the table.

Old Ghost just squeezed the thickness of the paper bag without even looking at it and stuffed it directly into his heavy army coat.

"I'll contact you once the job is done." After leaving this message, he stood up and left.

Qi Yun wasn't bothered by this; in fact, he quite liked dealing with people like this.

About a quarter-hour later, Shi Feng hurriedly returned from outside.

Seeing him with a troubled expression, Qi Yun poured a cup of tea and handed it over, saying, "Is everything arranged?"

Shi Feng took the cup and drank it down in one gulp.

Mimicking a famous coach's manner, he blew on the few strands of hair he had left in front of his forehead: "Pfft~ I've got it sorted. Once everyone gathers, we'll go. This time, I must let those bastards see how powerful I am."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun couldn't help but frown.

It's not an exaggeration to say that daring to take on such a task is akin to having one's head on the chopping block; he was a bit worried that Shi Feng, in his anger, might escalate things.

So he pulled out a cigarette and handed it over, advising gently, "How about I find someone from the authorities to help you out? No need to get involved with those people, especially since you have a family."

Shi Feng took the cigarette, lit it, and took two deep puffs before slowly saying with a frown, "I understand what you mean, don't worry, I won't act rashly."

"But this time I have to go personally. If I don't recover from this, I won't be able to sleep soundly at night."

"That bastard dared to join forces with outsiders to mess with me. Clearly, they think I'm insignificant. If he gets caught, how can I hold him accountable?"

Seeing that Shi Feng had made up his mind, Qi Yun didn't persuade further: "Alright, as long as you know what you're doing. I have something to attend to, so I'll be heading off." With that, he stood up and left.

...

"Brother Wei, head to Construction Road..."

After getting into the car, Qi Yun checked the information about Dawn Technology Co., Ltd. on his phone, while instructing Chen Wei in the front.

He planned to first visit someone named Tao Ziming to see what the investment was about and also to get acquainted and understand the character of the person.

After all, when it comes to investments, while the project is important, the people involved are equally important. Ideally, there should be mutual recognition, if not complete alignment of values.

As the car drove further, Qi Yun turned to look at the window, finding that the road was becoming more deserted, with the highway visible nearby.

After driving for another ten minutes, they finally stopped in front of a somewhat dilapidated factory.

Qi Yun frowned at the two factory buildings, pondering how long they have been standing there, with a surprised look on his face.

If it weren't for the words "Dawn Technology" written at the entrance, he'd have doubted if he had come to the wrong place.

In his impression, domestic companies involved in the internet or high-tech materials were either in upscale office buildings or had their own office buildings.

It's quite rare to see companies like this working and researching in such rundown factories.

According to the information, Tao Ziming's company hasn't even produced a mature product, and now it's located in such a remote place. It seems investors would want to leave as soon as they arrived.

He now could somewhat understand why the company hadn't been able to secure funding all this while...

Qi Yun approached the guardroom's entrance, handed the old man a cigarette and said, "Sir, I'm looking for your boss, Tao Ziming."

The old man expertly accepted the cigarette, sniffed it under his nose, lit it and took two puffs, before smilingly asking, "What did you say?"

The smile deepened the wrinkles on his face until they almost clumped together.

Qi Yun thought the old man was a bit hard of hearing, so he leaned in closer and repeated, "I'm looking for your boss, Tao Ziming!"

The old man still seemed not to catch it, turned his ear, adjusted his dentures, and asked again, "What Ming?"

Qi Yun chuckled, patted the old man's shoulder, too lazy to repeat himself.

He walked through the door, looked around, and finally headed towards the two-story building on the right that appeared to be the office area.

Just as he reached the staircase, he heard fierce arguments coming from upstairs.

"Tao Ziming, stop being stubborn! The company is almost going under, and you're investing all the money into that project that's unlikely to succeed, isn't that pushing everyone into the fire pit?"

"Why don't we just re-brand Slater's battery? Isn't that what everyone does? Yet you insist on doing some damn research..." An angry voice yelled from upstairs.

"If I wanted to make that kind of money, I could've done it in the United States, there's no need to come back home." A deep voice responded.

"Fine, fine, you're so impressive! You have ideals! Play by yourself then, I'm not playing anymore, I'm pulling out my shares!"

"..."

This was followed by the sounds of furniture being moved, and then a man with a flushed face and messy hair stormed downstairs, filled with rage.

He glared fiercely at Qi Yun as he passed.

Qi Yun ignored him and walked upstairs.

In the office adjacent to the staircase, a glasses-wearing, weary-looking man sat at a desk, holding his forehead, appearing fatigued.

Upon hearing footsteps at the door, the man looked up, adjusted his glasses, and asked Qi Yun, "Do you need something?"

Qi Yun scanned the simple office, moved closer, pulled out a chair and sat down, glanced at the ashtray on the table, then took out a cigarette and lit it, offering one to the man.

"My name is Qi Yun. I've heard you're looking for financing?"

Tao Ziming looked at the cigarette offered by Qi Yun, slightly stunned, then his expression became somewhat excited, like finding a lifeline: "Yes! Yes! Mr. Qi, are you looking to invest in our company?"

Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring, smiled noncommittally, "Don't rush to conclusions. I'm here just to understand the situation."

Upon hearing this, Tao Ziming quickly sat up straight, adjusted his glasses, "Mr. Qi, let me introduce the situation of our company. We mainly focus on high-tech material research and development. Currently, our primary project is developing a new type of battery material."

"Once successful, the battery's life will be several times longer, faster to charge, and at lower cost..."

Qi Yun didn't interrupt, listening quietly.

If what the other party claims is true, once this new battery material is successfully developed, even if it doesn't achieve mass production, merely with this breakthrough in technology, a unicorn company will be born immediately...

If that's the case, the intelligence level shouldn't just be blue, right?

He silently observed the man, flicked the cigarette ash, then tentatively asked, "Did you know Accountant Jia in the United States?"

Chapter 230: My Name Is Qi Yun, Not Jack Ma (5,000 Words)

Before seeing the R&D workshop, Qi Yun always thought Tao Ziming had a bit of a tendency to brag and bluff.

But when he actually stepped into those two old factories, he realized he might have been wrong.

The factory was comprised of workspaces divided by transparent glass, bright and tidy, with over a dozen staff in sterile suits busy at work. There was a lot of equipment Qi Yun had never even seen before; in short, it all looked very professional.

"This factory mainly focuses on materials research and development. We have another factory next door mainly for production and experimentation..." Tao Ziming introduced as he walked.

These modern workshops formed a stark contrast to the rundown factory and office building from the outside.

After taking a tour of both workshops, Qi Yun followed him back to the office.

"Can I ask how much you've invested in this company so far?"

Tao Ziming handed over a 2 yuan Wahaha mineral water bottle and replied with a bitter smile, "When I returned from the United States, I brought with me 8 million US Dollars. Later, I mortgaged my house, took out loans, plus contributions from two other partners of about 20 million—we've invested almost 100 million in total."

Qi Yun nodded after hearing this, musing to himself that this person was different from Accountant Jia. The similarity was that they were both extremely confident in what they were doing, filled with visions.

The difference was that Tao Ziming was truly spending money on making things happen, and every penny was well spent.

"Investing 100 million with no returns yet is indeed not easy." Qi Yun twisted open the bottle cap, took a sip, and looked directly at Tao Ziming, "However, judging by your workshop's situation, it's not just money spent in vain."

"But I still want to know, how long do you think it will take before you can develop a mature product to bring to market?"

Tao Ziming pushed his glasses up, a hint of resolve in his eyes, "Mr. Qi, to be honest with you, the development of new materials is a very lengthy process. Companies like Panasonic and Denning Era took several years to succeed in their research."

"I had already outlined the general direction while abroad. What's left is countless experiments and exploration. According to my calculations, within at most one more year, we should achieve a breakthrough..."

After listening to his answer, Qi Yun lit a cigarette, took a deep drag, and slowly said, "Can I understand this as you're stating an ideal scenario, and there's also a chance that even after burning money for another year, nothing could be produced?"

Tao Ziming's face slightly changed, a hint of hesitation flashed in his eyes.

"Mr. Qi, there are indeed uncertainties in research and development, although we are very confident we will achieve a breakthrough within a year and launch a mature product."

"But in scientific research, no one can guarantee everything; unexpected difficulties might arise, causing delays or even research failures."

Saying this, determination returned to Tao Ziming's face, continuing, "However, with each experiment, we accumulate data and experience, bringing us closer to success."

"What we lack now is funding. With it, we could accelerate progress and potentially shorten the R&D cycle."

Qi Yun nodded silently after listening, now understanding why this intel was classified as blue.

Because while it's indeed valuable, it's also filled with uncertainties, not like Qingnang Book, which is already an established fact.

This was something that could potentially yield high returns, or the invested money could end up wasted.

After a while, Qi Yun spoke again, "Haven't you raised a single cent yet?"

Upon hearing this, Tao Ziming sighed and replied bitterly, "Domestic capital isn't keen on companies like ours focused on R&D. I've visited many bosses, all of whom turned me down."

Qi Yun nodded, acknowledging the other's honesty.

He took a few more drags on his cigarette, thought for a moment, and came to a decision internally.

"How much money do you currently need?"

Hearing this, Tao Ziming's eyes lit up, as if sensing Qi Yun's willingness to invest.

He sat up straight, a hint of excitement on his face, "Mr. Qi, after our current calculations, there's a funding gap of about 40 million, mainly for experimental material costs and the salaries of the R&D team..."

After the other party finished speaking, Qi Yun extinguished the cigarette butt in the ashtray:
"Finished?"

Tao Ziming nodded, his eyes full of anticipation, "Finished."

Qi Yun stood up, patted the ashes off his sleeve, and said blandly, "Well, if you're finished, goodbye."
After speaking, he turned and walked towards the outside.

Tao Ziming's face of expectation instantly froze, a look of astonishment flashed in his eyes.

He hurriedly stood up, took a step forward, grabbed Qi Yun's arm, "Mr. Qi, don't rush off, is the amount too much for you? We can discuss it further."

"The current situation of the company does indeed make funds tight, which is why there's such a large gap, but this money is truly necessary..."

Stopped by him, Qi Yun turned to look at him, reluctantly saying, "Buddy, my name is Qi Yun, not Jack Ma."

Wow, asking for forty or fifty million at once, that's out of his league, at least for now.

Embarrassment appeared on Tao Ziming's face, he opened his mouth, but didn't know what to say for a moment.

Seeing him in this state, Qi Yun felt some pity, but he understood his capabilities and limits; currently, he couldn't bear such a significant investment risk.

"I understand your predicament, and I can see that you and your team are genuinely trying to make things happen." Qi Yun sighed, his tone softening, "But forty million is no small sum for me, with my current ability, I can't afford to invest that much."