

Middle Age 241

Chapter 241: Eight Million Really Is Its Bottom Line

"But there are always people looking for me now, I don't dare to show my face, so I wanted to ask Mr. Qi for help."

Qi Yun frowned, pondered for a moment, but still shook his head in refusal, "Even if it's jewelry, I can't casually help you sell it. If there's any issue with the source of these items, I'd also bear the risk, and I'm not sure if you're telling the truth."

Xu Qian bit her lip, pleading, "I have purchase receipts and appraisal certificates to guarantee that there's no problem. Mr. Qi, I'm really not lying to you, these items are all genuine."

"Just take it as a favor for me, I'm really at my wit's end. As long as you can help me sell them, I'm willing to give you a hefty reward."

Qi Yun listened but still shook his head, resolutely, "I'm sorry, Miss Xu, I can't help you with this. I suggest you go to the police." With that, he turned and left.

This matter was a bit too risky. The issue of the source of these items was secondary; mainly, he didn't want to get embroiled in trouble for no good reason.

Zhang Liang had already fled to Chang'an to hide, and was still captured by that big shot's people, showing the extent of his power.

Getting involved for such a small profit didn't align with Qi Yun's principles.

Seeing Qi Yun turn to leave, despair showed on Xu Qian's face, and she almost cried with urgency.

She hurriedly chased after him, grabbing Qi Yun's sleeve, "Mr. Qi, please, help me. Everything I said just now is true. The person looking for me is very powerful. If I go to the police, not only will it not solve the problem, but it will also put me in danger."

On the side, Liu Meng stepped forward swiftly to block in front of Qi Yun, saying coldly, "Miss, Mr. Qi has made it very clear, don't pester him any further."

Xu Qian was startled by Liu Meng's actions but couldn't afford to be scared right now, still begging, "Mr. Qi, I know this might cause trouble for you, but I really have no other way."

"Please help me, if you help me sell the items, I can give you half of the money."

Qi Yun looked at her pitiful demeanor, sighed, "Miss Xu, it's not that I don't want to help you, but the risk is too high. You should find someone else, sorry."

After finishing, he didn't hesitate and turned to leave.

Xu Qian looked at Qi Yun's departing back, tears streaming uncontrollably down her face as she slumped to the ground in despair.

As they walked a distance, Shi Feng looked back and teasingly said, "Old Qi, you're so heartless to refuse such a beautiful woman?"

Qi Yun rolled his eyes at him, "You're feeling amorous just after your divorce?"

"The person behind her is not to be trifled with, we're here on serious business, let's not complicate matters."

Shi Feng clicked his tongue after hearing this and chuckled.

Qi Yun could tell that this guy didn't really love his ex-wife; otherwise, he wouldn't be so eager upon seeing a pretty woman.

Most likely, his anger that day was only due to his ex-wife's betrayal of their marriage.

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The next morning.

After breakfast, Qi Yun and the other two drove to Gunas Village, which was another two hours' drive from the city.

The car traveled along the bumpy country road, with the scenery outside constantly changing.

By noon, the three arrived at the entrance of Gunas Village.

"Here we are, change into these clothes,"

Qi Yun called out, opened the car door, and took out a few somewhat shabby work clothes and some safety gloves from the trunk.

These clothes were brought intentionally by Liu Meng; today, their identity is construction workers.

Shi Feng took a work uniform and looked at it, puzzled, "Why are we wearing this?"

Qi Yun didn't explain much, just replied, "You'll speak less, and I'll let you know when it's your turn to be useful."

Shi Feng pouted, disgruntledly putting on the clothes.

After changing, the three began walking towards the village.

In this remote village, things were relatively outdated, and many houses on both sides were those mud brick bungalows.

Qi Yun initially planned to find someone and ask where Abula's house was according to the intel, but he couldn't find anyone who spoke Mandarin.

Helplessly, they resorted to the dumbest method, wandering around the village.

After wandering for about half an hour, Qi Yun finally saw a courtyard with a pile of red bricks and some sand and cement in front of it.

He thought to himself this must be the place.

He stepped up to the courtyard gate and peered inside.

In the courtyard, he heard the sound of clattering as a man in a Uighur skullcap was holding a piece of wood, repairing a sheep pen.

Qi Yun cleared his throat and shouted, "Hey there!"

The man heard the shout, turned his head with a perplexed look, and sized up Qi Yun.

He put down the tools, patted the wood shavings off his body, and walked towards the courtyard gate.

"*****" The man said a few words that Qi Yun didn't understand.

Qi Yun scratched his head, a bit embarrassed, pointed at the red bricks at the doorway, and said, "I, fix the house, thump thump thump..."

The man was initially stunned, then seemed to understand Qi Yun's meaning, responding quickly.

Unfortunately, Qi Yun couldn't understand a word.

The man noticed this, opened the wooden gate, gestured for him to come in, and then walked towards the bungalow ahead.

Qi Yun followed behind him, stepping into the room.

The room was very simple, with a clay bed, a very old large TV, and nothing else significant.

The walls, which should have been clay yellow, had been discolored to gray-black over time, with a few brightly red certificates pasted on them.

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There are many cobwebs hanging on the beams, with sunlight faintly streaming through the gaps.

"Rehman!"

"Rehman!"

With the man's two calls, an eight or nine-year-old boy ran out from the inner room.

The boy had big eyes, his eyelashes fluttering, and he stared curiously at Qi Yun.

The man pointed at Qi Yun, and then said a few words in Uighur to the boy, who nodded and timidly looked at Qi Yun, and in somewhat awkward Chinese asked, "Uncle, my dad asks if you repair houses?"

Qi Yun flashed a kind smile, nodded, and replied, "Yes, we're from the neighboring village, repairing houses for people. We saw bricks and sand at your door and wondered if your house needs repairs."

He was worried they wouldn't understand, so he deliberately slowed down his speech.

After listening, the boy blinked and then turned to translate for his father.

After hearing the boy's translation, the man nodded and said a few words in Uighur.

The boy turned back to Qi Yun and said, "Uncle, my dad says he wants to find someone to repair the house and asks how much you charge."

Instead of answering immediately, Qi Yun asked, "What's your dad's name, little friend?"

The boy's eyes sparkled, and he crisply replied, "My dad's name is Abula."

After speaking, he tilted his head, his face showing an expectant expression, seeming to wait for Qi Yun's answer regarding the house repair price.

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun felt a surge of joy but maintained a gentle smile outwardly, "Little friend, we need to know how many rooms your house wants to repair and the size of the area to estimate the cost. Do you understand what I mean?"

The boy seemed to partly understand, nodding, and turned to speak a few words to Abula in Uighur.

After listening, Abula pointed around the house with his finger, speaking a string of Uighur, seemingly detailing the areas needing repair.

The boy turned to Qi Yun and said, "Uncle, my house has three rooms, all needing repair, and my dad also wants to build a new kitchen."

Qi Yun listened, nodding while pretending to think for a moment, then said, "There are two workers outside the yard with me, can I let them come in?"

The boy translated Qi Yun's words to Abula, who patted the boy's head, and the little guy quickly ran outside and called Shi Feng and Liu Meng inside.

"My dad says to take you to see the house that needs repairing," the boy said, pointing to some houses opposite.

"Okay." Qi Yun nodded in response and then walked while whispering to Shi Feng, "There's a chair in these rooms worth over eight million, your task is to find it."

Shi Feng was taken aback, then pouted, "Are you kidding me?"

Qi Yun cast an annoyed glance at him, "I'm serious."

Shi Feng stared at Qi Yun, seeing his serious expression, immediately realizing he wasn't joking.

His face instantly filled with shock, his eyes wide open, mouth opening without words.

Qi Yun patted his shoulder, continued, "I'm here for that chair, so whether this trip is worthwhile depends on your performance."

After speaking, he quickened his pace and went to Liu Meng's side, "Meng, later calculate how much it will cost him to repair these houses. I see materials piled at his door, so just calculate the labor costs."

"Quote him the lowest price."

Liu Meng nodded, accustomed to working on construction sites, repairing houses was second nature.

The three followed the boy to the opposite house, Abula opened the door, and a mix of musty and dusty air hit them.

The room was dimly lit, with only a small wooden window letting in some light, barely revealing the piled-up clutter in the corner.

"My dad says to turn this room into a kitchen," Abula gabbled a bit, and the boy translated.

Liu Meng nodded, replied, "No problem."

Behind them, Shi Feng scanned the surroundings, searching for that eight-million-dollar chair.

After Abula stated a few requirements, they moved to the next room.

This room was tidier, with blankets spread on the floor and many sun-dried raisins on them.

Entering, Shi Feng's gaze was instantly drawn to a corner where several chairs held dustpans.

He naturally walked over, eyes on one chair, unobtrusively examining it.

Qi Yun noticed his subtle actions, and once Abula finished explaining the room's requirements, he quickly asked the boy to lead them to the next room.

After the others left, Shi Feng hurriedly squatted down, removed his gloves, and his fingers explored the ancient-styled chair.

He repeatedly made clicking sounds.

Minutes later, he returned to Qi Yun's side, whispering so only the two could hear, "Golden silk nanmu! At least a hundred years old! Maybe even older!"

Despite trying to stay calm, he couldn't hide the excitement in his voice.

Qi Yun, while internally thrilled, kept a composed exterior, merely nodding silently.

After Liu Meng learned all Abula's requirements, he turned to Qi Yun and said, "For skilled labor, it's 480 a day, and unskilled labor is 260. This job would cost at least twenty thousand at regular rates."

Qi Yun nodded, noting the family's modest means, reliant on homegrown grapes and selling chickens and sheep for income, likely earning less than twenty thousand a year.

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After pondering for a moment, he waved at the little boy not far away and said with a smile, "Tell your dad that we just happen to be free these days, only charging him five thousand yuan. He can pay us after the house is fixed."

The little boy's eyes lit up, and he quickly translated Qi Yun's words to his father.

Abula, upon hearing this, showed a surprised expression on his initially tense face and said "Thank you" to Qi Yun.

This might be the only sentence in Chinese he knows.

Afterward, he warmly pulled the three of them to the grape trellis in the courtyard, indicating for them to sit down, and had the little boy bring tea and naan.

Qi Yun didn't refuse, smiling as he took the naan and took a few bites.

After eating and drinking his fill, he put down the tea bowl and said to the little boy, "Rehman, there's a pretty nice chair in the room where your family dries grapes. I like it a lot. Please ask your dad if he would sell it to me."

The little boy, with his big, bright eyes, tilted his head and translated Qi Yun's words to Abula.

Abula nonchalantly waved his hand and said a few words to his son.

The little boy turned back, saying crisply, "My dad says if you like it, uncle, it's yours for free."

Qi Yun laughed heartily and nodded, "Alright, then please thank your dad for me."

As he spoke, he took out a cigarette from his pocket and handed it over.

Abula quickly waved his hand, indicating he doesn't smoke.

Qi Yun didn't insist. When Shi Feng came out holding the chair, he turned to the little boy and said, "Then we'll go get our tools and come back to start working in the afternoon."

Abula nodded repeatedly, seeing them off to the courtyard gate.

After leaving the courtyard, with Shi Feng carrying the Golden Rattan Chair, he pretended to be nonchalant, but his steps unconsciously quickened.

Only back at the car did he finally breathe a long sigh of relief.

Fortunately, they came in a business car this time, with seats that could be stowed away, just fitting the chair. Otherwise, with this eight-million-yuan item, they wouldn't dare just toss it in the trunk.

Shi Feng carefully set the chair down, as if he were holding an offering, fearing he'd bump or scratch it.

Qi Yun lit a cigarette, staring at the rather oddly shaped chair, and asked, "Are you sure you're not mistaken? This chair doesn't look like it's made of golden nanmu."

"You can't tell now because it's so old, dust has formed a patina on the surface." With that, Shi Feng took out a high-powered flashlight from his pocket, squatted down, and shone the beam on the inner side of the chair leg.

The originally dark wood grain revealed a faint sheen under the strong light.

"Old Qi, golden nanmu is known for 'lasting a thousand years without rotting, and ten thousand years without worm holes,' appearing ordinary on the outside yet having hidden substance within. Look at this grain."

He lightly caressed the carvings on the chair back with his fingertip and continued, "The landscape and cloud patterns are distinct, and the grooves are as fine as hair strands. This couldn't be made without decades of practice. Perhaps this chair has quite a history."

Qi Yun smiled at him, "Haha, turns out you're right, this chair used to be in the Kuche Royal Mansion."

Hearing this, Shi Feng's eyes widened, and after confirming with Qi Yun's face, he turned his gaze back to the chair, murmuring, "That explains it..."

"So, what do you think, is it worth eight million?" Qi Yun asked.

Shi Feng smacked his lips, lit a cigarette to calm his nerves, and then replied, "Let me put it this way, for such a piece, it could be eight million, it could be eighty million. It all depends on how much a buyer is willing to pay."

"But eight million is definitely its baseline."

Chapter 244: Wuyi Mountain Dahongpao

"You really lucked out with this, how did you know it belonged to his family?" Shi Feng spoke with a hint of jealousy.

Qi Yun gave him a mysterious smile: "Abula's grandfather once served as a servant in the Prince Mansion, and during a tumultuous time, he took this chair home."

"There's no need for you to inquire about the rest."

Shi Feng pouted but didn't press further, continuing to focus his gaze on that chair.

Qi Yun handed a cigarette over to Liu Meng and said, "Brother Meng, when we get back to the city, go to the labor market and find a few workers. In the next couple of days, please lead them to help Abula build his house."

"Also, I'll have Zhong Rui transfer fifty thousand yuan to you. Once the house is finished, take this money out and give it to Abula, just tell him it's financial aid for Xiao Balang's schooling."

Liu Meng took the cigarette, nodded silently.

He always did as Qi Yun instructed, never asking too many questions, as was his usual manner.

"Alright, let's head back."

With that, the three of them got into the car and returned to the city.

Upon returning to the city, they went to the labor market, where a large number of workers had gathered.

It wasn't long before Liu Meng picked out four or five skilled masons and then found a van. After preparing the tools, he set off back to the Gunas Village.

Meanwhile, Qi Yun and Shi Feng drove the business car back to Bird City.

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By the time they left the highway, it was already evening. The two, hungry from the day, first placed the precious chair in Shi Feng's store and then found a nearby diner.

"What do you plan to do with that chair?" Shi Feng asked, mouth full of dumplings, his words a bit muffled.

Qi Yun's chopsticks paused: "After restoring it, I'll hand it over to the auction house. What else could I do with it?"

Shi Feng nodded at that: "If you're going to auction it, I suggest you don't do it here in Jiang Province. Go to Shanghai or Hong Kong Island. Only the major auction houses there can truly reflect its value."

Qi Yun thought Shi Feng made sense; those who could afford such a Golden Rattan Chair wouldn't necessarily attend this kind of regional auction.

In comparison, international auction companies like Sotheby's and Christie's certainly have more resources to promote this Golden Rattan Chair.

"Do you have any connections to contact them?"

Shi Feng shook his head: "I don't, but Old Chen does. And if you can't find anyone to help with the restoration, you can ask Old Chen for an introduction. He has a wide network in this area."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun found this approach feasible. If he handed such a valuable item to someone else rashly, he'd feel uneasy, but with Old Chen, there's no issue.

Firstly, from previous interactions, he trusts Old Chen's character.

Secondly, even a random treasure from Old Chen's yard would cost several hundred thousand.

Eighty thousand may be no small amount in his eyes, but to Old Chen, it might just be that.

"Alright, tomorrow you come with me to visit Old Chen." Qi Yun said.

Shi Feng nodded in agreement: "Hmm, come by the store tomorrow, and bring that chair over."

"..."

After dinner, it was already past eleven when Qi Yun got home.

As soon as Zhao Qing saw him, she rushed over, wrapping her arms around his neck and whined, "Why are you back so late?"

Qi Yun gently patted her back, soothing, "Hmm, there was traffic on the road. I came back as soon as I finished my business."

Zhao Qing released her hold, tilted her head and studied Qi Yun's face for a few seconds before asking, "Okay, have you eaten yet?"

Qi Yun chuckled and touched her cheek, "I just grabbed a bite with a friend outside. Where's Nuannuan?"

"Nuannuan waited for you for a long time and has already gone to sleep," Zhao Qing pouted and continued, "The medicine I brewed for you has gone cold. Let me heat it up for you."

"Okay, thanks for the trouble." Qi Yun leaned closer to give her a peck on the cheek, "I'll take a shower first."

"Hmm, go ahead."

After showering, Qi Yun felt refreshed as he went to the kitchen, picked up the warm herbal concoction, and drank it all in one go.

He hadn't realized he'd been drinking this prescription for almost ten days. The prescription stated, "One dose daily, miraculous effects visible after ten days." He could now clearly feel changes in his body.

Not only had his energy improved, but his physique too.

Comparing his current state to ten days prior, Qi Yun felt like he had become two to three years younger, and it seemed his strength had increased quite a bit.

"Maybe I should train with Chen Wei?" he mused to himself.

Not to mention becoming a master like him, learning just a few moves would provide some means of self-defense if ever faced with danger.

After all, relying on oneself is more dependable than relying on others.

Setting down the bowl, Qi Yun glanced at the box of medicinal ingredients. There was still plenty of the other herbs left, except the wild ginseng, which was down to a small half, probably enough for a few more days.

He checked his watch—it wasn't even midnight yet. People in Jiang Province didn't sleep so early.

So he took out his phone and dialed Cao Yufei's number.

"Old Cao, any news on the ginseng you were looking for?"

On the phone, Cao Yufei replied with a hint of apology: "Not yet, my friend hasn't gone up the mountain lately."

Qi Yun frowned slightly upon hearing this: "No other options?"

"I've contacted everyone I can." Cao Yufei sighed helplessly, "If you're in a hurry, I can personally make a trip to Changbai Mountain to find those herbal farmers; they might have some good stuff."

Qi Yun thought for a moment; it seemed a bit inappropriate to let the other person go alone, considering they were friends, not employees.

"How about this, if you're free lately, accompany me on a trip, the two of us can go together and see if we can collect some more."

Cao Yufei agreed immediately: "No problem, there's nothing much going on at the factory anyway."

"Alright, thanks." Qi Yun laughed.

"No need to thank me, let me know when you decide to leave."

"Okay."

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The next day, Qi Yun personally drove Zhao Qing and his daughter to the kindergarten, then thought about where to buy some good tea leaves to gift to Old Chen later.

The other party had helped him several times before, and never asked for any reward.

But he can't feel at ease about it every time, he has to show some gesture of appreciation.

But to get good tea leaves, it's really not easy without some connections. Those upscale tea shops by the road, everyone knows what's going on, and he doesn't want to be the sucker.

After contemplating, he suddenly remembered the teahouse that Wang Fei always went to; he didn't know if the tea there was good, but at least it was expensive enough and not one of those places where you get ripped off.

So he immediately started the car and drove towards that teahouse...

Twenty minutes later, Qi Yun parked the car and stepped into the teahouse.

The reception staff greeted him with a smile, speaking enthusiastically: "Mr. Qi, welcome."

Qi Yun was slightly stunned, puzzled: "You know me?"

The receptionist's smile remained unchanged, replying respectfully: "Yes, Mr. Qi, you've been here a few times with Ms. Wang, I remember you. Also, Ms. Wang has opened a membership for you which is tied to her account."

Qi Yun realized, not thinking much, and straightforwardly said: "Alright, do you sell tea leaves here? Recommend me some good tea suitable for gifting, the price isn't an issue."

The receptionist nodded and gestured invitingly: "Alright, Mr. Qi, please follow me, I'll take you to choose."

Qi Yun responded and followed the staff.

The two walked through a corridor to a room decorated in an antique style.

On both sides stood rows of long glass display cabinets, inside which small wooden boxes were displayed, each containing a small amount of tea leaves.

Above were soft spotlights, with labels below indicating the tea's origin, year, and other information.

The receptionist pointed to the central box and introduced: "Mr. Qi, take a look at this Wuyi Mountain Dahongpao, a descendant of the mother tree, meticulously cultivated and roasted, with a rich aroma and full flavor."

"The production is very limited, extremely precious, making it completely suitable for gifts."

Although Qi Yun didn't understand tea well, the name "Wuyi Mountain Dahongpao" was certainly very famous.

Especially the mother tree, it was said that just 20 grams of its tea leaves were once sold for over 200,000, equivalent to over a million per kilogram.

"How much is this tea per pound?" Qi Yun asked tentatively.

If the price was several million, he really couldn't afford it.

The receptionist apologized with a smile: "I'm sorry, Mr. Qi, we currently have less than a pound left of this Wuyi Mountain Dahongpao, around six liang (300 grams)."

"Ms. Wang is a platinum member of our shop, so if you need this tea, you can enjoy a 30% discount, totaling 180,000."

Qi Yun thought for a moment and nodded: "Alright, I'll take it."

Eighteen thousand wasn't cheap, but it was still within an affordable range.

The receptionist smiled and took out a tablet, while operating it said: "Alright, Mr. Qi, our tea leaves are stored in a special warehouse. I'll have someone prepare it and send it over for you."

"Moreover, I'll deduct the 180,000 directly from your and Ms. Wang's account, is that okay?"

Qi Yun frowned slightly: "Forget it, I'll pay separately."

Whether or not to accept help was another matter, but the thing was he hadn't contacted Wang Fei for a while; if she found out, she might go crazy and trouble him again.

That woman was quite a seductress; it's best to keep some distance when there's nothing going on, the last time he almost let his impulses control his rationality.

The receptionist smiled politely: "Alright, Mr. Qi, please take a seat in the lounge next door, I'll have the tea leaves sent over. You can settle the payment when you leave later."

A few minutes later, another attendant entered the lounge with a delicate box in hand.

The receptionist placed the box on the table, retrieved a rustic wooden box from it, opened the lid, and gestured: "Mr. Qi, please inspect."

Qi Yun didn't really understand these things; for him, any tea leaf over three figures tasted the same.

He decided not to pretend and immediately waved: "No need to inspect, pack it up."

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Chapter 245: Save Us, and We'll Work for You

In front of a quiet courtyard, Qi Yun was holding some freshly bought tea leaves, following Shi Feng into the courtyard.

The weather was nice today, the sun was warm, and Old Chen was leisurely lying on a chair listening to some opera.

The two passed through the moon gate and came closer.

Shi Feng had a smile on his face and greeted, "Haha, Old Chen enjoying the sun?"

Old Chen slightly opened his eyes, saw Qi Yun and Shi Feng, and sneered, "What are you two guys up to again?"

Qi Yun placed the tea leaves on the stone table and said with a smile, "Old Chen, I just got some good tea leaves and thought of bringing it to you first for your appraisal."

Old Chen glanced at the wooden box on the table, then at Qi Yun, still in that indifferent manner, "If you have something to say, say it quickly, don't disturb my nap."

Qi Yun was not offended, half-squatted down, forcing a smile on his face, "Then I'll just say it directly. We got a chair yesterday, and we would like your help to find someone to restore it."

"Where is it?" Old Chen narrowed his eyes slightly and said flatly.

"It's in the car outside, I'll go get it now." With that, Qi Yun gave Shi Feng a look and then got up and walked outside.

Shi Feng also laughed and moved closer: "Old Chen, after Old Qi wants to have this chair restored, he plans to take it to the auction house over on Hong Kong Island, could you arrange it by then?"

Old Chen listened, his tone carrying a hint of suspicion, "What chair is this that needs to go to an auction house over on Hong Kong Island?"

Shi Feng chuckled, "Something from the old Prince Mansion, made of Golden Rattan."

Just as he was speaking, Qi Yun came over holding the chair, placing it carefully in front of Old Chen.

Old Chen's originally narrowed eyes suddenly widened, he sat up straight, and examined the Golden Rattan Chair with great interest.

He stretched out his hand, gently stroking the carvings on the chair back, his fingers moving slowly along the grain, a hint of surprise in his eyes.

"Wow, this is really quite something," Old Chen murmured to himself, "This craftsmanship, you can't achieve this without decades of practice."

Qi Yun beside him smiled apologetically, "Old Chen, Shi Feng mentioned that to restore this chair to its original appearance, we need to find a craftsman with exceptional skills. I guess only someone like you who is well-connected can help with this, so please lend us a hand."

Old Chen nodded slightly, his gaze still on the chair, "Hmm, indeed there are very few who can handle this job. I do know an old guy; if you have him do it, it should be fine."

"But that old guy is not mobile, if you want him to do it, you have to deliver the chair to him yourself."

Qi Yun hurriedly nodded, "Of course, may I know where that master lives?"

"In Beijing," Old Chen replied flatly.

Qi Yun was slightly taken aback, thinking he was local; he didn't expect it to be Beijing.

Old Chen continued, "As for the auction house, Golden Rattan itself is precious, along with this exquisite craftsmanship and the backstory of the Prince Mansion, it certainly has auction value."

"You don't necessarily have to go to Hong Kong Island to auction it; Beijing is even more suitable. I have some connections with a couple of auction houses there and can help link you up."

Qi Yun smiled joyfully upon hearing this and quickly replied, "That would be fantastic, thank you so much, Old Chen."

Shi Feng also chimed in, "Haha, didn't I tell you, coming to Old Chen with this for sure would work."

"Alright." Old Chen said, sitting back on his reclining chair, waving them off with a dismissive gesture, "If there's nothing else, you two should hurry and leave, don't disturb my nap."

The two weren't offended and took their leave, carrying the chair with them.

Back in the car, Qi Yun took out his phone and called Zhong Rui, instructing him to contact a professional logistics company to air-transport the chair to Beijing.

After all, it's nearly five thousand kilometers from here to Beijing; driving it there personally would be even more unsafe.

It's more prudent to find a logistics company that specializes in transporting valuable items, buy some insurance, in case anything gets damaged, you can still receive compensation.

After hanging up the phone, he was about to start the car when the phone rang again.

The screen showed a local number he didn't recognize.

Qi Yun answered the call with a hint of curiosity, "Who is this?"

"We met the day before yesterday at West Mountain." A woman's voice came through the phone, somewhat familiar.

Qi Yun was slightly taken aback, then knew who it was.

It was the woman from that group of bandits, seemed to be called Ah Jiao.

"Haha, what can I do for you?" Qi Yun chuckled softly, asking.

"Yes," Ah Jiao paused, then frankly said, "We've run into some trouble and hope you can help."

Qi Yun didn't respond immediately, lighting a cigarette and taking a deep puff before replying, "Why should I help you?"

Ah Jiao retorted, "Didn't you leave contact info so that we could reach out when we needed help?"

"We're blocked by someone now, they could find us anytime." She paused for a moment on the other end, "Help us out, and we'll work for you in the future."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's lips curled up slightly, blowing out a smoke ring, "Send me the address."

Ah Jiao said no more, hung up, and sent over an address right away.

Qi Yun forwarded the address to Chen Wei, while also dialing his number.

"Brother Wei, the group we met a couple of days ago is in trouble, can you see if you can get them out of it?"

"Your own safety comes first, if it can't be done, then abandon it."

Chen Wei, hearing this, didn't ask further, simply said, "Got it," and hung up.

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On the other side, there's a large area of abandoned caves in the outskirts of West Mountain.

At this moment, Ah Jiao, Black, and Glasses Man Ajie are hiding inside one of these caves.

"What did he say?" Ajie asked impatiently, looking at Ah Jiao.

Ah Jiao wasn't too flustered. She put away her phone and said calmly, "He should come."

Ajie frowned, his face full of worry: "I hope he really can come, or else we're in big trouble this time."

"I heard that Luo Yang is ruthless. If we fall into his hands..." He trailed off without finishing his sentence.

At this moment, Black, who was leaning against the dirt wall with a pale face, spoke up, "Later... if they do come, don't worry about me, just... just leave, I'll hold them off."

He spoke intermittently, his tone very weak, with a patch of dark red blood on the fabric covering his abdomen.

Ah Jiao's eyes sharpened, despite being a frail woman, her aura was sharp at this moment.

She glared at Black: "Don't talk nonsense! We leave together, no one gets left behind."

Ajie also chimed in from the side: "Exactly, Black, don't think about unnecessary things, I don't believe Luo Yang really dares to kill us."

Black shook his head with a bitter smile and didn't speak again.

In previous years, when he drove big trucks, he had hauled sand for those gravel plants and heard some rumors, knowing how ruthless those people could be.

So he had already made up his mind that even if he died here today, he wouldn't let his two companions be caught...

At that moment, a rustling sound suddenly came from outside the cave, as if someone was approaching.

The three of them became instantly alert, with Black pulling out a telescopic baton from his waist and gripping it tightly.

Ah Jiao and Ajie grabbed a few rocks from beside them, their eyes fixed on the cave entrance.

The footsteps grew closer, and soon, a shadow appeared at the entrance of the cave.

"Who is it?" Ajie whispered fiercely, his trembling voice betraying his inner fear.

The shadow did not respond but slowly walked into the cave. In the dim light, the three saw who it was—Chen Wei.

"Come with me," Chen Wei said softly, his eyes scanning cautiously around.

Ajie and the others felt a thrill in their hearts, quickly getting up to follow him out.

Just then, a sudden commotion came from outside the cave: "There are footprints here!"

Upon hearing this, Ah Jiao and the others felt a jolt in their hearts, their faces turning somewhat pale.

Chen Wei's face remained cold and unflustered. His eyes sharpened as he quickly said while turning: "I'll deal with them. You three go first. There's a car on the road to the north."

The three had seen Chen Wei's skills before and knew that bravado now would only be a burden to him, so they didn't say much, just nodded to show they understood.

Ah Jiao and Ajie quickly helped Black up and followed Chen Wei to the cave entrance, ready to run out at any moment.

Chen Wei stuck close to the cave entrance, waiting silently for the right moment. As the chaotic footsteps approached, he made a swift move.

With a strong punch landing squarely on the lead man's face, his left leg quickly lifted, delivering a fierce side kick forward.

"Wham!"

A muffled grunt accompanied the sound as the man in front fell to the ground.

The sudden turn of events caused the ten or so men behind him to freeze for a moment, but in the next second, they were charging forward, brandishing clubs and knives.

"Damn it, get him!"

"Finish him off!"

Chen Wei's mouth curved into a cold smile as he shouted, "Go!"

Then he charged forward, heading straight into the crowd.

Hearing the signal, the three didn't have time to think. They dashed out of the cave and ran quickly north.

Black's abdominal injury tore with every step he took, but he kept his teeth clenched, focused solely on moving forward while his blood dripped continuously onto the ground.

After running a few steps, Ah Jiao glanced back but could no longer see Chen Wei's figure...

Ten minutes later, the three of them climbed over a small dirt mound and indeed saw a black BMW parked on the dirt road below.

"Quick, get in the car!" Ajie said as he helped Black pick up his pace.

The three of them stumbled to the car, and Ah Jiao quickly opened the door. Ajie helped Black into the back seat, making him lie back, and then got in himself.

Ah Jiao got into the driver's seat and quickly started the car.

Just as she was about to shift into gear and start driving, Ajie suddenly leaned over, grabbing her arm with a struggling expression.

"Shouldn't we wait for him?"

Ah Jiao decisively shook off his hand, shaking her head and saying, "He must have confidence to act this way. We can't wait for Black's injury. We must go to the hospital immediately."

Ajie opened his mouth, looked at the pallid-faced Black, and finally sighed, saying no more.

Ah Jiao pressed the accelerator, and the car shot forward like an arrow, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Chapter 246: Laying All the Cards on the Table (5,000 Words)

On the other side, Qi Yun, who was brewing medicine at home, received a call from Ah Jiao.

"We've come out, someone is injured and we're rushing to the hospital."

"The person you sent over told us to leave first, he stayed behind to hold them off, now we don't know what's going on."

Hearing this, Qi Yun frowned slightly, thought for a moment, and asked, "Which hospital are you going to?"

"West Mountain Hospital," Ah Jiao replied.

"Okay," Qi Yun answered briefly and then hung up the phone.

He quickly dialed Chen Wei's number, and after about half a minute, the call finally connected.

"Brother Wei, are you okay?"

"No problem," Chen Wei's voice remained calm on the other end.

Relieved by this, Qi Yun continued, "They went to West Mountain Hospital, go over and keep an eye on them, I'll head over later."

"Okay."

After ending the call, Qi Yun drank the cooled herbal medicine in one go, grabbed his coat, and left the house.

West Mountain Hospital, outside the operating room.

Ah Jie was pacing back and forth, looking very anxious.

Ah Jiao was sitting on a long bench, her eyes full of concern.

Upon hearing footsteps from afar, they both turned quickly like startled birds, and only when they recognized the person approaching did they relax.

Qi Yun came near, scanned the two of them, and asked, "How's the situation?"

Ah Jiao, looking a bit haggard, shook her head: "Old Hei was stabbed in the abdomen, he's in surgery right now."

Qi Yun sighed, sat down beside them with his arms crossed, tapping his elbow with his fingers: "How did you get blocked?"

Ah Jiao bit her lip: "We bought our identities on the black market. After you found us that day, I guessed the fake identities we used had been exposed, so I sent Old Hei to get some new ones. But he was tailed."

Qi Yun frowned slightly upon hearing this, a hint of seriousness in his eyes.

He had found Ah Jiao and the others through intelligence information.

The fact that the other side found them must have been through sheer strength, indicating Luo Yang's forces were indeed considerable.

Just then, the door to the operating room opened, and a doctor came out.

Ah Jiao and Ah Jie immediately went up to him, anxiously asking, "Doctor, how's our friend?"

The doctor removed his mask and wiped the sweat off his forehead: "The surgery was very successful; the patient is now out of life-threatening danger but sustained serious injuries and will need a long recovery period."

The two exhaled a deep sigh of relief upon hearing this.

Once Old Hei was moved to a ward, Qi Yun said to Ah Jiao, "I'll arrange for you two to go into hiding out of town for a few days, and come back when things settle down."

Given the current situation, let alone Luo Yang's brother-in-law being swindled out of five million, just today Chen Wei fought off their people, that alone couldn't be easily resolved.

But Qi Yun did not want a direct confrontation with the other side right now, so the best approach was to let them lay low for a few days.

Ah Jiao glanced at Old Hei on the hospital bed, looking somewhat hesitant.

Understanding her concerns, Qi Yun added, "Don't worry, I know a hospital director who can quietly transfer him there without anyone knowing."

Ah Jiao nodded slightly upon hearing this: "You're the boss now; I'll follow your arrangement."

Qi Yun smiled, took out his phone, and called Yu Baoshan, the director of the city hospital.

After briefly explaining the situation, Yu Baoshan immediately agreed to handle it properly.

He then called Zhong Rui, checked that the logistics arrangements were complete, and instructed him to book tickets to Peng City for Ah Jiao and the others for that evening.

After hanging up, Qi Yun pulled up Hong Kong Island's Brother Hui's number and told Ah Jiao, "Memorize this number, contact him after you get to Hong Kong Island, and he'll take care of you."

"Stay there peacefully for now, when there's something I need you to do, I'll call you back."

Ah Jiao nodded and softly said "Thank you," with a hint of gratitude in her eyes as she looked at Qi Yun.

...

In the evening, a truck resembling an armored vehicle stopped in front of the villa at Golden Collar Villa.

Several staff members carefully placed the Golden Rattan Chair into a specially-made wooden crate, filling it with a lot of soft material to prevent the chair from being damaged.

After the crate was loaded onto the truck, a staff member respectfully handed over a receipt, and Qi Yun signed it after confirming there were no issues.

This transport wasn't cheap; the shipping fee alone was over thirty thousand, and the insurance was a hundred thousand, but the coverage amounted to ten million.

Once the truck drove off, Zhao Qing emerged from the garden, holding Qi Yun's arm and curiously asking, "Is that chair really valuable? They seemed very careful with it."

Qi Yun smiled and touched her cheek, replying, "It could buy several houses like ours."

Zhao Qing's eyes widened in surprise: "Really? That valuable!"

"When I saw it covered in dust, I even wiped it with a cloth. Did I damage it?"

Qi Yun laughed heartily, playfully tapped her nose, his eyes full of affection: "It's not made of tofu. Before I took it back, someone else used it to dry grapes."

Only then did Zhao Qing pat her chest, exhaling deeply: "Alright then, you scared me. I won't dare enter your study casually again."

"It's not that serious," Qi Yun said helplessly, "Alright, let's go inside."

After dinner, Qi Yun got in touch with Cao Yufei.

They had planned to collect ginseng from Changbai Mountain soon, and since he was heading to Beijing, they agreed to leave for Beijing together the next day.

...

The next day, at Beijing Airport.

Qi Yun exited the terminal building, frowning slightly at the gray, smoggy weather outside.

Chapter 247: Time to Lay the Cards on the Table (5,000 Words)_2

This is his first visit to Beijing. The sky overhead is a stark contrast to the Northwest, making him feel a bit oppressed, hard to breathe.

Behind him, Cao Yufei and Chen Wei looked accustomed, having evidently experienced smog before.

The three hailed a cab from the airport and later found a hotel in the city center to settle in.

After dining in the hotel restaurant, Qi Yun instructed Chen Wei to rent a business vehicle first, otherwise, it would be inconvenient to transport that chair when it arrives tomorrow.

He himself was in the hotel room reviewing today's intelligence information.

[Current Intelligence Points: 5]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (red): A high-end restaurant on South West Street, Maizidian, is seeking to purchase high-quality tuna. Jinxiu Land Wholesale Market received a delivery of a bluefin tuna worth over 120,000 an hour ago. Contact number ****]

"Seems like there's money to be made, but not much... too lazy to fuss with it."

[Today's Intelligence 2 (red): North gate of Pan Garden Antiques Market, at the eighth stall to the right, an old man is selling imitation ancient coins for four thousand yuan per piece; the vendor at the first stall by the south gate is buying these types of ancient coins, purchasing price six thousand yuan apiece]

What does that mean?

Sell on one side, buy on the other?

Qi Yun was a bit confused.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (red): North gate of Pan Garden Antiques Market, seventh stall to the right, there's a piece of calligraphy by Master Qian Yuqing (unsigned), asking price three thousand yuan, real value over two hundred thousand yuan]

"Oh, here again?"

Qi Yun was worried about what to bring when visiting Chen Lao's friend; this piece of calligraphy seemed quite suitable, its value of two hundred thousand yuan was neither too much nor too little.

After all, he had no substantial ties with the other party and couldn't expect them to fix the chair for free.

However, the name of this Master Qian sounded somewhat unfamiliar?

Half an hour later, Chen Wei returned with the rented car, and Qi Yun promptly took him to Pan Garden...

Pan Garden, deserving its reputation as the most famous antiques market, could be described as bustling, filled with various antiquities and knick-knacks.

Without exaggeration, the foot traffic on Shi Feng's Antique Street was not even comparable to the number of foreigners here.

As soon as they entered the south gate, they noticed a booth with a poster depicting an ancient coin, with big letters below reading "Recycle such ancient coins, six thousand yuan a piece!"

The vendor was a middle-aged man with long hair, sparse short eyebrows, and small eyes - a pair of triangular eyes, looking very shrewd.

Qi Yun discreetly eyed the person, thinking that he was likely the one mentioned in the intelligence.

Before he could think more, the crowd behind had already pushed him forward.

However, he wasn't particularly interested in the wares displayed at the booths on either side, unwilling to pay for a lesson, so he directly headed towards the north gate.

Approaching the north gate's entrance, he raised his eyes and indeed saw an old man at the eighth booth to the right, the man wore a large cotton hat and had a scraggly beard.

This pair of triangular eyes bore some resemblance to the earlier middle-aged man.

Qi Yun mused briefly and understood what was going on.

He pulled a slight smirk at the corner of his mouth and headed towards the next booth.

"Brother, interested in a look at the calligraphy?" the vendor greeted enthusiastically upon seeing a customer.

Qi Yun nodded, squatted down, and glanced over each of the dozens of paintings and calligraphies on the ground, until his sight caught a faint glimmer, he then stopped searching.

"Let me take a look at that piece."

"Okay." The vendor responded, bending down and picking up a scroll, placing it on the blanket before Qi Yun.

Qi Yun picked it up and carefully examined it, pretending to be knowledgeable.

Even though he knew little about calligraphy, he felt this piece before him exuded a flavor where the pen's edge was sharp, and the atmosphere vivacious.

In fact, many contemporary calligraphers' works aren't famous not because their writing isn't good, but often because they are still alive...

"How much for this scroll?" Qi Yun looked up and asked the vendor.

The vendor bared his teeth, holding up three fingers: "Three thousand is fine if you're interested."

Qi Yun nodded, thinking the person was quite honest, and immediately packed the scroll, took out his phone, and scanned three thousand yuan to him.

The vendor, pleased after receiving the money, gave Qi Yun an extra box for mounting as a gift.

Qi Yun did not refuse, acknowledged it, then stood up and approached the next stall.

As he walked, he casually glanced at the goods on display.

The old man noticed and hurriedly shouted, "Boss, interested in the coins? Just bought them from an old landlord's house; genuine Ming Dynasty ancient coins."

With that, he squatted down and picked a piece from the most prominent pile of brown coins on the stall, handing it to Qi Yun: "Boss, take a look, these are all quality goods."

Qi Yun stopped, his gaze falling onto the coins on the old man's stall, numbering around ten to fifteen pieces. The coins appeared aged, surface rusted, emitting a primitive aura.

Anyway, he, an outsider, could not discern their authenticity.

"How much are you selling these copper coins for?" Qi Yun asked, smiling.

The old man showed a sincere smile: "Boss, to be honest, I bought them for three thousand eight; if you want, four thousand each is fine. Let an old man earn some hard-earned money."

Qi Yun put down the copper coin, stood up, clapped his hands, and happily replied: "Alright, I'll take everything on your stall."

"All, take all?" The old man was somewhat shocked, mouth agape looking at Qi Yun.

Chapter 248: Laying All the Cards on the Table (5,000 Words)_3

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, "Yeah, aren't you selling?"

The old man quickly reacted, his face once again filled with a smile, "Selling, of course selling! Boss, you have an eye for quality, these are all good goods."

As he spoke, he took out a bag and packed all the dozen or so Copper Coins on the stall.

"A total of 15 coins, sixty thousand yuan, please take it, boss."

Qi Yun took the bag and pulled out his phone to scan the code for payment.

Just then, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed that the stall owner selling paintings next to him was frantically winking at him, but he pretended not to notice and still transferred the sixty thousand yuan.

After receiving the money, the old man cheerfully said, "Boss, I have dozens more of these coins at home, didn't bring them all. If you want more, remember to find me."

Qi Yun smiled and nodded, "Sure."

With that, he carried the bag and left.

More than twenty minutes later, after wandering around, Qi Yun returned to the south gate entrance.

He went straight to the stall that was buying coins, took out a coin from the bag, and held it in his hand, then carefully compared it with the poster that the stall owner had.

The sharp-eyed middle-aged man saw the whole scene.

The middle-aged man's eyes darted around, and he put on a smiling face, "Boss, are you selling coins?"

Qi Yun nodded slightly, with an almost uncontrollable joy on his face, "Yeah, this one looks like the one on your poster."

"Oh really, mind if I take a look? If it's the type I'm looking for, I'll buy it at a high price," the middle-aged man replied.

Qi Yun handed the Copper Coin over and said, "Take a look, I don't really know much, just thought it looked like the one on your poster."

The middle-aged man took the Copper Coin, seemingly examining it, but in reality, his eyes were furtively observing Qi Yun.

After about half a minute, the middle-aged man smiled even more broadly, "Boss, this type of coin is exactly what I want, I'll buy it for six thousand yuan each, how about it?"

Qi Yun immediately nodded with joy, "No problem."

Upon hearing this, the middle-aged man pocketed the Copper Coin at once, took out his phone and said, "Alright, I'll transfer the money to you now."

Qi Yun also took out his phone and showed the payment code, and received a notification of the six thousand yuan transaction in the next second.

After paying, the middle-aged man looked at Qi Yun and continued, "Boss, do you have more of these coins? I'll buy them all at six thousand yuan each."

Qi Yun smiled at him and handed over the bag, "Yes, there are 14 more in here!"

"Ten, fourteen?" The middle-aged man's smile froze on hearing this.

Qi Yun pretended to be puzzled and asked, "What's wrong? Didn't you say you'd buy as many as I have?"

"Yes, yes!" The middle-aged man came to his senses and hurriedly replied.

After taking the bag, he poured out the coins and gave them a cursory glance.

Qi Yun nervously asked beside him, "No mistake, right? These are all from the same batch."

"No, no mistake." The middle-aged man forced a smile and nodded, "Fourteen coins, a total of eighty-four thousand, I'll transfer to you."

"Okay." Qi Yun nodded, revealing the payment code again.

The middle-aged man's eyes shifted, as if making some kind of decision, gritted his teeth, and transferred the money.

Then he looked at Qi Yun earnestly, "Boss, do you have more of these Copper Coins? If you do, bring them all over, I'll buy them at the same price, no matter how many!"

Qi Yun put away his phone with a smile, happily nodded and replied, "I do! Wait for me!"

The middle-aged man relaxed his tense expression immediately upon hearing this and hurriedly said, "Alright, then go get them, I'll wait right here."

"Okay!" Qi Yun responded, clapped the dust off his hands, and turned around to leave.

The middle-aged man's gaze followed him, and upon seeing Qi Yun not heading north but leaving the market directly, his face suddenly changed.

He hurriedly signaled two accomplices squatting nearby with his eyes, and the three quickly chased after him.

"Boss, boss, wait a moment!"

Qi Yun heard the shout, stopped, and looked back suspiciously at the approaching middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man rushed up and asked, "Boss, weren't you going to get the coins?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Yeah, I'm going home to get them."

"Go home to get them?" The middle-aged man stared at Qi Yun's innocent face for a long time, finally understanding the situation.

"Haha, boss, I decided not to buy those coins just now, give them back to you, why don't you refund my money?"

Qi Yun grinned, showing his white teeth, "What, you think you can just refund whenever you want? I abide by a seven-day no-reason return policy?"

Hearing this, the middle-aged man's expression turned cold, he waved his hand to the two behind him, and they surrounded Qi Yun in an instant.

"Boss, I found out those coins have issues, if you don't return them, you might not be able to leave today."

Qi Yun showed no sign of panic, took out a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, and took a deep drag, then laid everything out.

He pointed at Chen Wei not far away and calmly said, "Whether I can leave or not, you'll have to ask him."

The middle-aged man followed Qi Yun's direction and saw Chen Wei standing there, looking stern, exuding a strong aura, glaring coldly at them, clearly not someone easy to mess with.

The middle-aged man felt a chill in his heart, he had an instinct that the other could punch him to death!

Still, he pretended to be calm and stubbornly said, "If you don't return them, I'll call the police."

Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring and nodded, "Fine, I'll give you a cigarette's time, go ahead and call the police."

The middle-aged man's face turned even uglier, his molars nearly grinding to pieces.

Doing such shady business, there's no way they could actually call the police, usually they're hitting and running, not even enough time to hide, at this point, he's stuck in a dilemma.

The stern man nearby made it hard for him to even think about making a move.

Yet, just letting the other party go felt too unwilling, leaving him stuck in place.

Qi Yun, seeing their state, smirked at the corner of his mouth, blew a smoke ring at them, and calmly said, "Better not get involved in such shady things in the future, or you'll get what's coming to you."

With that, he turned and left.

Chen Wei followed closely behind, giving the three a cold glance.

Chapter 249: Entering the Mountains

On the next day, Cao Yufei set out first to Fusong County to find his friend, while Qi Yun and Chen Wei went to the transportation company office to pick up the goods.

Originally, they could deliver the goods to the door, but Qi Yun thought that the hotel had too many people and too many hands, so he refused, deciding to pick it up himself.

In a large warehouse on the outskirts of the city, a few staff members opened the shipping box and then carefully carried out the Golden Rattan Chair.

Qi Yun stepped forward and carefully inspected the chair, finding no damage or bumps. He then signed and took the goods away.

Back in the car, he called Mr. Tong, who was Chen Lao's friend. The other party already knew his intentions and asked him to bring the chair directly to his home.

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun immediately instructed Chen Wei to drive towards the city center.

More than an hour later, the car stopped next to a courtyard.

Qi Yun got out of the car, surveying the ancient yard in front of him, secretly amazed.

With red gates, blue walls, and two stone lions at the entrance, this residence was clearly extraordinary.

More importantly, the location of this courtyard was only separated by a moat from the most important place in Beijing.

Qi Yun couldn't help but be curious about Mr. Tong's identity.

You must know that living in such a place meant more than just having wealth.

He and Chen Wei lifted the chair and went to the door, knocking on the copper ring.

After a while, the door creaked open, and a young man in a long robe poked his head out.

He looked Qi Yun and Chen Wei up and down, then glanced at the chair, asking, "You must be Mr. Qi?"

Qi Yun politely nodded to the other party: "That's right."

"Please come in, Mr. Tong is waiting for you inside." The young man opened the door and gestured for them to enter.

Qi Yun and Chen Wei carried the chair and followed the young man into the courtyard, where flowers and plants were planted on the paved blue bricks, appearing simple and elegant.

In the center of the yard was a stone table and a few stone stools, and an elderly man with white hair was sitting on a stone stool, teasing a sparrow in a cage.

The young man stepped forward, saying, "Mr. Tong, Mr. Qi has arrived."

The elderly man turned his head, a gentle smile on his face, his gaze falling on Qi Yun, nodding slightly.

Qi Yun took two steps forward and bowed slightly, greeting, "Hello, Mr. Tong."

Mr. Tong waved his hand and said, "How is that old fellow Chen Yuanhai doing physically?"

"Mr. Chen is still quite hale and hearty," Qi Yun responded with a smile.

Mr. Tong nodded, a hint of reminiscing in his eyes, sighing, "It's been over twenty years since I've seen that old guy, I wonder if I'll have the chance to see him again in this life."

Qi Yun chuckled, "Both of you seniors are so healthy, surely you'll meet again."

Mr. Tong nodded slightly, did not continue the topic, and reached out to the young man beside him, who quickly assisted him to sit in the wheelchair next to him.

"Chen Yuanhai spoke to me about your matter over the phone, so this is the chair?" Mr. Tong asked, pointing to the chair beside Chen Wei after sitting in the wheelchair.

Qi Yun quickly nodded in response, "That's right, it's this one. Mr. Chen said that perhaps only you in this world can restore it."

Upon hearing this, Mr. Tong showed a hint of pride on his face, humming lightly, and said, "He's not wrong."

Qi Yun found it amusing internally.

It turns out the old man loves this kind of flattery, so it's settled; flattering is his forte.

The young man pushed Mr. Tong to the Gold Rattan Chair, and while observing, he said, "Hmm, I know this chair. Back then, the craftsmen made two, and the other one has always been with the Fu family."

Qi Yun heard this, feeling a slight movement in his heart.

He must know this chair was once in the Prince Mansion.

And that Fu family, having had the Golden Rattan Chair for so many years, must have an extraordinary background.

If this chair is restored and sold to the Fu family, wouldn't it be more lucrative than an auction?

After all, paired items are always more valuable.

Though that's what he thought, he didn't hurry to inquire just yet, waiting until after the item was restored to talk about it.

"I haven't done such work for several years, the last time was repairing the plaque in the Forbidden City."

"If you trust me, leave the chair here, and I'll notify you in a few days when it's repaired." Mr. Tong said, touching the carvings on the chair without lifting his head.

Qi Yun promptly replied with a smile, "Where are you going with this? Of course, I trust you. If you can't restore it, then others surely can't."

All praise goes a long way with him.

The old man clearly enjoyed Qi Yun's high regard, nodding with a smile, "Hehe, alright then, if there's nothing else, you can leave, I will start working now."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, taking the piece of calligraphy from Chen Wei beside him and handing it to Mr. Tong.

"Mr. Chen, I came in a hurry and didn't prepare a gift for you. This is a calligraphy I acquired earlier, although unsigned, I find the strokes strong and vigorous, with extraordinary charm, so I boldly bring it to you, hoping you don't mind."

Mr. Tong raised his brows slightly, a curious look in his eyes, and took the calligraphy, unfolding it to look carefully.

After a moment, he nodded slightly, showing a hint of appreciation on his face: "This writing indeed has some skill, judging by the strokes and the ink, it truly has the style of a master."

Qi Yun laughed along, "As long as you like it, Mr. Tong, I was just afraid it wouldn't catch your eye."

Chapter 250: Entering the Mountains

Old Man Tong waved his hand: "Normally, I don't accept gifts. But since Chen Yuanhai says you're his junior, I'll treat you as one too. I'll accept it."

Qi Yun heard this and felt a bit joyful inside, thinking that the tea worth tens of thousands wasn't given in vain.

Old Man Chen must feel pleased after drinking it, and Qi Yun's standing in his mind has stepped up a notch, arranging connections for him right away.

Old Man Tong's words were not just about accepting a gift, but acknowledging his identity, making it easier to ask for help in the future.

"It's my honor to receive Old Man Tong's recognition, I won't disturb you any further." After saying that, Qi Yun slightly bowed and left the courtyard with Chen Wei.

Once back in the car, the always silent Chen Wei spoke up: "That young man is not ordinary, I feel a kindred spirit in him."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun was slightly taken aback, becoming increasingly curious about Old Man Tong's identity.

...

After dealing with matters here, Qi Yun took Chen Wei to meet up with Cao Yufei.

By the time they left Fusong County's train station, the sky was completely dark.

Cao Yufei and his friend Hu Zi came to the station to pick them up and then headed to a restaurant in the town.

They each took their seats, Qi Yun picked up the hot tea and took a sip, finally feeling a bit of warmth in his cold body.

Once slightly relaxed, he looked up at Cao Yufei and asked, "Old Cao, how's the situation?"

Cao Yufei blew into his hand, shook his head, and said, "This afternoon, Hu Zi and I walked around, didn't find much, we still need to go to those medicine gatherers in the mountains."

"Hu Zi knows a few medicine gatherers, he'll take us there tomorrow."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, smiled at the middle-aged man named Hu Zi: "Brother Hu Zi, sorry to trouble you."

Hu Zi waved his hand and responded heartily: "You're Old Cao's friend, so you're my friend too, we're all buddies, no need for talk like that."

"Alright then, I won't be polite with you." Qi Yun smiled and nodded.

"Ah, that's the spirit." Hu Zi said while raising the teapot, filling everyone's cup, and continued, "Actually, when Old Cao called me last time, I went to the foot of the mountain once, but the quality you want is too high, it's generally hard to find."

"This stuff could save lives at critical moments, so even if people have it, they may not be willing to sell."

Qi Yun nodded again, knowing what he said was true.

Just like those two Bezoar pills he had, even if given millions, he wouldn't sell them.

It was only because Old Wang had been kind to him that he took one out last time.

While talking, the waiter served the dishes.

Chicken stewed with mushrooms, iron pot stewed goose are Northeast specialties, very generous portions.

No one drank alcohol, they enjoyed a hearty meal before returning to the hotel to rest.

Early the next morning, Hu Zi drove a Tank 300 taking them to the village at the foot of Changbai Mountain.

Even though spring has arrived, it's still icy and snowy in the Northeast, the car fitted with snow chains still slipped on some sections, so had to drive slowly.

After driving four to five hours, the car slowly stopped at a village entrance.

The village was surrounded by snow, several low houses were scattered neatly, curling smoke added a touch of life to the cold village.

Hu Zi pointed at a front house and said: "I've collected herbs from that house before, let's go ask him first."

Qi Yun nodded, and they got out of the car, following Hu Zi to the house.

Once at the door, Hu Zi knocked on it.

Soon, a dark-skinned middle-aged man opened the door, slightly surprised to see Hu Zi, said: "Why are you here now? Didn't you always come in May before?"

Hu Zi smiled at him: "Just here to inquire about something."

The middle-aged man stepped aside, welcoming them into the house.

The stove inside was burning warmly, dispelling the cold in the air.

The middle-aged man picked up a nearby thermos, poured boiling water into a tea mug, and handed it to them: "Conditions are limited, hope you don't mind."

Hu Zi took the mug, blew on it, sipped a bit, and then said: "I want to collect some wild ginseng from the village up there, do you know who might have it?"

The middle-aged man placed down the thermos, pulled over a chair and sat down, puzzled: "Can't find it in the county? Why come to the mountains?"

Hu Zi took out cigarettes and distributed them, explaining: "I'm looking for high quality ones, over fifty years old."

"Over fifty years old?" The middle-aged man paused, took the cigarette, lit it, and smoked two puffs.

After a while, he replied: "You know, the villages at the foot of the mountain have started running homestays over the years, many are reluctant to go up the mountains."

"You might find ones twenty years old, but to find over fifty years old, you'll have to go further up to those few families on the mountainside, they might have it."

Hu Zi nodded and said: "Okay, are you free in the next few days? Accompany us for a trip, the roads further in I haven't driven."

The middle-aged man looked troubled: "Brother, I really can't make it these days, my wife's due date is near, planning to return to the county tomorrow."

"How about I draw a map for you, follow it, and you should find those houses."

Hu Zi looked back at Qi Yun and the others, seeking their opinion.

Qi Yun thought for a moment, nodded, expressing agreement.

Hu Zi saw this, turned back and said: "Alright, draw me a map."

The middle-aged man fetched pen and paper, marked the route, drawing while speaking: "Start from here, after reaching Bailong Village, follow this small path, when you see a fork, take the right path... go further, and you should see those households."

"But this road is not easy to travel, with thick snow in places, drive carefully, if you get stuck, it'll be hard to find help."

Hu Zi nodded in agreement: "Alright, I got it."

The middle-aged man handed the finished map to Hu Zi: "If you face difficulties in the mountains, call me, I can't accompany you, but I know people in Bailong Village, can help you connect."

"However, the further in you go, the worse the signal..."

After saying goodbye to the middle-aged man, Hu Zi took out a gas can from the trunk, filled up the car, and set off again.

The car drove slowly on the rugged rural road, surrounded by a snowy landscape, except for the sound from the tires crushing the snow, all was silent.

While passing through a village, they had a simple lunch at a homestay.

Then continued driving east for over two hours, finally arriving at Bailong Village.

Hu Zi got out again to ask locals, confirming the map was accurate, and then bravely continued forward.

The further they drove, the thicker the snow became, the tires kept slipping, but fortunately, there were snow chains, when unable to climb slopes, they got out to push.

When dusk fell, a small cabin finally appeared up ahead.

Hu Zi stopped the car, pointed at the map and said: "No more roads beyond here, we'll need to walk five kilometers east from this cabin to reach those families."

"But it's unsafe to travel in the mountain at night, we'll stay in the cabin tonight and set off early tomorrow."

Qi Yun nodded in agreement with the proposal.

They took some food from the trunk and stepped towards the cabin.

The cabin door wasn't locked, just latched, inside was small, a wooden bed, a stove, a pot, a kerosene lamp, a pile of firewood, and half a piece of smoked meat hanging from the chimney.

Hu Zi lit the kerosene lamp, explained to everyone: "Many such cabins are scattered in these mountains, originally built by hunters, later banned hunting, so medicine gatherers began to build cabins."

"We'll rest here tonight, so we have strength to find those families tomorrow."

With that, he squatted down, started to collect firewood to light the stove.

Cao Yufei pointed at the smoked meat on the chimney and asked: "Is this left by someone else?"

Hu Zi nodded with a smile: "Yes, if you're craving it, cook it up later, and when we leave tomorrow, we'll also leave some food here."

Cao Yufei smiled: "Well, that's nice, a hot meal is rare in the mountains."

Soon, the fire in the stove blazed, Hu Zi took the pot outside, filled it with snow, and placed it on the stove to melt.

When the water boiled, he added several packs of instant noodles, along with that smoked meat, and a warm supper was ready.

Not much to fuss over in the mountains, after eating supper, they slept in their clothes.

Despite the cold winds outside, the cabin offered a sense of warmth.