

Middle Age 281

Chapter 281: The Meaning of the Fu Family

After speaking, Qi Yun and the others left Demira's residence.

Back in the car, Qi Yun handed over a cigarette and asked, "Demira is just a councilman, can his attitude really have such a big impact?"

Ye Hanwen took the cigarette, lit it, and took a deep drag: "Although he's just a councilman, 90% of South Africa's diamond mines are concentrated in Kaken City, so many times, the South African Government has to respect his opinion."

"But nothing's absolute, we can only hope his words work this time."

...

Time quietly slipped by, and finally, two days later in the evening, Ye Hanwen received Demira's call.

"Mr. Councilman, how are things going?" Ye Hanwen eagerly asked.

During these short two days, news came from the mine that it had been harassed by small armed groups four more times, yet thankfully, no one was killed.

On the phone, Demira sighed: "I clearly supported your company in today's meeting, hoping to reopen negotiations to resolve certain conflicts, but the people above did not adopt my opinion."

"I've done my best."

The cigarette held between Ye Hanwen's fingers was crushed out forcefully. Although he already knew the South African Government was adamant, he hadn't expected them to completely disregard Demira's stance.

It seems this juicy piece of the mine has already been considered some people's possession.

After a long silence, he sighed and replied, "I understand; thanks for your help, Mr. Councilman."

With that, he hung up the phone.

Seeing his grim expression, Qi Yun immediately deduced the outcome.

"The plan failed; the South African Government is stubborn, and Demira's influence isn't useful," Ye Hanwen said in a low voice.

Qi Yun frowned upon hearing this and asked, "What's the mine worth now?"

If it's something that high-level people are so fixated on, it's certainly not just a matter of a few tens of millions.

Ye Hanwen took a gulp of beer and replied, "According to previous exploration results, the diamonds inside are enough for us to mine for ten years, making at least twenty million US dollars annually."

"And even though our company's performance hasn't increased much in the past two years, there are many high-quality diamonds stored in bank safes that haven't been released yet..."

Twenty million a year, two hundred million over ten years, in USD...

Converted to Chinese yuan, that's nearly 1.3 billion, with a 5% share, that equals 65 million!

"The South African Government wants to snatch 65 million from their pockets!" Thinking this made Qi Yun uneasy.

He opened a bottle of beer, took two gulps, and asked, "Are there other ways?"

Ye Hanwen shook his head in frustration: "I've maintained some connections, but those people's influence isn't enough to decide the course of this matter."

"Given the current situation, unless we find a big shot whose clout makes the South African Government wary, this diamond mine will most likely be snatched away by those bandits."

Qi Yun listened, mind racing, as he took a cigarette from his pocket and lit it.

Seeing Qi Yun silent, Ye Hanwen took out his phone and started a video conference with General Manager Bi and Manager Li, informing them of the current situation.

Both sighed helplessly on hearing the news, realizing they were now at others' mercy.

Even if they exposed the matter, it wouldn't help because such events, if not common in Africa, are certainly not isolated cases.

Despite this, people constantly flood in to try their luck because the rewards are enticing.

With quiet on the other end of the line, Qi Yun exhaled a long smoke ring, sat up, and said, "Have you heard of Beijing's Fu Family? Are they influential enough?"

Upon hearing this, not only Ye Hanwen beside him but also General Manager Bi and Manager Li far away, were all stunned.

After several seconds, Ye Hanwen excitedly asked, "Qi, can you get the Fu Family involved?"

Qi Yun crushed the cigarette butt, seriously replied, "Not certain, but I can try."

Ye Hanwen's eyes lit up with hope: "The Fu Family is seriously weighty! Qi, you haven't been abroad for long, you might not know their international status."

"Let me tell you, even Germany's leader would have to lean in to light a cigarette when meeting the Fu Family head."

Qi Yun laughed, "Is it really that exaggerated?"

Manager Li, on the other end, chimed in: "It really is that exaggerated."

"If the Fu Family were to withdraw investments from Germany, twenty percent of their workers would be laid off, and their business isn't just limited to Germany; across Europe and even globally, wherever there's profit to be made, the Fu Family has some presence."

"If you could get the Fu Family involved, the one drooling over our diamond mine would come groveling at your feet tomorrow."

Qi Yun smacked his lips, realizing that what he'd learned about the Fu Family online was just a piece of the puzzle...

No wonder they've been a prominent family since the early Qing dynasty; they truly are elites...

He coughed lightly and said, "Since we're all on the same side, I won't hide it. I do have some dealings with the second in command of the Fu Family, but whether he'll step in, I can't guarantee."

"Also, I personally think we should express some sincerity first, to make discussions easier."

General Manager Bi quickly agreed on the line: "Naturally, Qi, if you have ideas, feel free to express them."

Qi Yun did not hesitate and stated: "I propose we release some shares, gifting them to the second in command of the Fu Family, making him a shareholder too. Wouldn't that secure the diamond mine's operations?"

This might seem like a loss, but it's actually hugely profitable.

Putting aside the diamond mine, just having the Fu Family's involvement would allow our company to go into any lucrative industry, who would dare oppose us?

There are barely a handful of entities bold enough to challenge the Fu Family, especially in capitalist countries, where even governments have to respect them.

With none of them responding for a while, Qi Yun was puzzled; given their experience, they should understand such reasoning.

As he was about to explain, General Manager Bi's voice came through: "I think Qi's proposal is excellent, but I think it could be slightly altered."

"Qi doesn't have many shares, and the Fu Family connection is his, so I suggest that Li, Ye, and I release some shares. What do you think?"

"I agree," Ye Hanwen quickly responded.

Manager Li also spoke on the line: "I have no issue."

After hearing this, Qi Yun smacked his lips, realizing they were considering his interests; no problem then...

With the two agreeing, General Manager Bi continued: "Let's settle on 20% for now, and if it works, Li, you talk to Deputy Squad Leader Zhou to release some shares."

Manager Li contemplated: "Wouldn't that upset him?"

General Manager Bi laughed coldly: "Frankly, the value he provides to the company compared to what he takes annually doesn't equate."

"If this works, we won't need to manage such relationships moving forward; the Fu Family will suffice."

Qi Yun felt a stir in his heart.

From General Manager Bi's words, his relationship with Deputy Squad Leader Zhou isn't deep; it's mere mutual benefit exchange.

This was what Qi Yun hoped for, considering General Manager Bi was a decent person, worth befriending, and he didn't want to be on opposing sides unnecessarily.

"Of course, everything depends on the result of Qi contacting the Fu Family; if things don't go well, you wouldn't need to approach him, just keep it as usual," General Manager Bi added.

Seeing the matters settled, Qi Yun lit a cigarette, stood up, walked afar, and dialed the Fu Family's second in command whom he had seen in Beijing.

Chapter 282: Severance

"Hello, Mr. Qi. The boss is currently in a meeting. Is there anything you'd like me to pass on?"

The person who answered the call was Zheng Lin, the one who was with Fu Wentao last time. He seemed to be an assistant of sorts.

"I see." Qi Yun thought for a moment and replied, "There's no need to pass a message. I'll call back later."

"Alright, goodbye, Mr. Qi."

After hanging up, Zheng Lin glanced at the adjacent reception room and only entered after the people inside came out.

"Mr. Qi just called and was looking for you."

"Oh?" Fu Wentao picked up a cigar with a playful expression. "Is that kid in trouble?"

Zheng Lin shook his head: "Not sure. From what he said, he wanted to speak directly with you."

Fu Wentao smiled, reaching out to take the phone from Zheng Lin's hand.

He had two phone numbers. One was generally managed by Zheng Lin, who screened calls and reported back—a form of work number, which was the one he initially gave to Qi Yun.

Although it was a work number, getting contact information for him was extremely difficult. Ordinary people had no chance, even businessmen of Bi's stature.

The other was his personal number, known only to a select few with whom he was very close.

With a cigar in one hand, Fu Wentao found Qi Yun's number and dialed back.

"Brother Qi, Zheng Lin told me you were looking for me?" Fu Wentao said with a smile.

In the yard, Qi Yun raised his watch to check the time, planning to call back later, but he didn't expect the other party to return the call.

"Haha, yes, I have a business matter I'd like to discuss with Brother Fu. I'm wondering if you'd be interested."

"Oh? Let's hear it."

Qi Yun immediately explained the matter regarding the shares to him.

After listening, Fu Wentao smiled, "Giving me shares for free? Is your company in trouble?"

"Yes." Qi Yun had no intention of hiding it. People at that level were all astute, and concealing the truth would only be off-putting. It was better to be transparent, as it might even earn respect.

"Our company has a diamond mine in South Africa worth over two hundred million USD, currently targeted by some high-ranking officials here who see it as an easy prey."

"I know that overseas, Brother Fu, you have a lot of influence, so I hoped you could help resolve this. That 20% of shares would be a token of my gratitude."

After listening, Fu Wentao laughed heartily, "Qi Yun, you know how many people beg to give me money every day without needing me to do anything for them?"

Qi Yun remained calm, undisturbed by Fu Wentao's words or his sudden change in tone.

He calmly replied, "Haha, I'm aware of that."

"Given your status, there must be countless people wanting to associate with you."

"But although those people make no immediate requests, I assume they all hope to rely on you or the Fu Family to resolve some issues in the future."

"We're friends, so I chose to lay the problem and benefits on the table honestly. Even if you refuse, I won't bear any resentment."

After a moment of silence, Fu Wentao then chuckled lightly, "Brother Qi, I appreciate your honesty."

"You're right; we are friends. I mentioned before if you run into trouble, you can come to me."

"I can help resolve the mine issue, but as for the shares, there's no need."

Qi Yun wasn't too surprised upon hearing this. He had already considered that Fu Wentao might refuse those shares. While the billions involved are considerable, for someone of Fu Wentao's level, it might not be that appealing.

They value their reputation more, so they wouldn't rashly accept without understanding the company's background.

Despite anticipating the outcome, he still placed the offer on the table, leaving the choice to the other party.

"I'll arrange for someone to handle this later. I have another meeting, so I won't chat for now."

Knowing the value of the other party's time, Qi Yun quickly expressed his gratitude, "Alright, thank you for your help, Brother Fu. I'll visit you in Beijing when I return to the country."

After hanging up, he nodded slightly towards Ye Hanwen, who had been watching from the side.

Upon seeing this, Ye Hanwen became immediately excited, quickly resuming a video conference to share the news with President Bi and President Li.

Upon hearing, both felt relieved. The diamond mine is crucial to a jewelry company; losing it would mean relying on external suppliers, which would put them at a disadvantage.

Seeing Qi Yun approach and appear on the video, President Bi spiritedly said, "Brother Qi, you have done a great service for the company this time! During the next profit-sharing, I'll give you half of my share!"

Qi Yun shook his head with a smile, "No need to do that. I'm part of the company, and naturally, I won't stand by in times of trouble."

"However, regarding the 20% shares, Fu Wentao refused them."

"Re... Refused?"

Stunned momentarily, the other three quickly figured out why.

After a moment of silence, President Bi spoke again, "If he refused, so be it. The help from the Fu Family is entirely because of Brother Qi's influence, so I propose we transfer the shares we discussed directly to Brother Qi. What do you two think?"

Qi Yun was taken aback this time, never expecting President Bi to make such a suggestion.

Chapter 283: Severance (2)

20% of the shares, based on his current understanding of the company's situation, are worth at least several hundred million.

"I agree," Ye Hanwen was the first to respond.

After two seconds, General Manager Li also spoke: "I have no problem either."

Seeing the two agree, General Manager Bi smiled: "Good, then it's settled. Once Old Ye and Brother Qi return after handling their matters, we can sign the share transfer agreement."

Qi Yun felt a bit moved inside. These three were indeed very good business partners, willing to share the benefits they got.

However, he also knew very well that the reason they made such a suggestion was largely because of his connection with Fu Wentao.

But knowing is one thing, and a gentleman judges by actions, not intents, and this time he got a real benefit.

After a courteous refusal, Qi Yun eventually accepted their goodwill.

...

On the other side, in a certain hotel in Bird City.

The man with the slicked-back hair held a phone, pacing back and forth in the room.

The woman on the bed beside him was covering her mouth and wiping away tears, and from the clear slap marks on her face, it was clear the man with the slicked-back hair was not in a good mood.

After about two or three minutes, his phone finally rang, and he impatiently pressed the answer button.

"Well? Did you find where he is?"

The voice on the other end replied: "Yes, we found him. He hasn't been home for the past two days, staying at a friend's place."

"Give me the address!" the man with the slicked-back hair said urgently.

"Shuimu Huafu*****"

After getting the address, the man with the slicked-back hair grabbed his coat and hurriedly left, completely ignoring the heartbroken woman behind him.

More than half an hour later, his figure appeared in front of an ordinary residential building.

"Knock knock knock!"

"Creak~"

The door opened, and the person inside looked visibly surprised to see the man with the slicked-back hair, then sighed, "Why did you come here?"

The man with the slicked-back hair's eyes were bloodshot, and he said angrily: "Why are you deliberately avoiding me?"

The person inside, who was Secretary Xia, a close friend who once shared everything with him, knew very well why the other party was deliberately avoiding him.

What he really wanted to ask was about the person behind Secretary Xia.

Secretary Xia peeked around, noticing the emotional instability of the man with the slicked-back hair, fearing a bad impact, he reluctantly let him into the house.

After the two sat on the sofa, he handed over a bottle of water and said, "Have a drink of water first."

The man with the slicked-back hair took the water, placed it aside, and kept his eyes fixed on Secretary Xia: "What exactly happened?"

"Why hasn't the demolition compensation, which should have been paid long ago, arrived yet? Do you know that my company's cash flow is almost broken?"

Although his statement was somewhat exaggerated, it was true that the demolition project had indeed tied up a lot of his funds, severely affecting his other projects, forcing him to apply for bank loans.

What angered him, though, was that the bank managers who once treated him like a VIP were now avoiding him like the plague.

Fortunately, he had strong connections in Kashi, and managed to secure some funding from the bank to temporarily ease the crisis.

Secretary Xia sighed helplessly, lit a cigarette, took two puffs, and slowly said: "There are some things I can't say, and why it became like this, I think you should know in your heart."

The man with the slicked-back hair got even angrier hearing this, slammed the table, and shouted: "If I knew, would I still be here looking for you?"

"What does he mean by this? Is he trying to burn bridges after gaining benefits from me? If it wasn't for my old man supporting him back then, would he be where he is today?"

Upon hearing this, Secretary Xia's expression immediately turned grim. Although the man with the slicked-back hair said "he," it was clear he was also warning him.

He could feel the anger brewing inside the man with the slicked-back hair; it seemed he was indeed at his wit's end.

"You're going too far!" Secretary Xia coldly reminded.

No matter how much the other party shouted or lost his temper, he didn't take it to heart, but such words signaled a potential fallout.

The man with the slicked-back hair seemed to realize he lost his composure, picked up the cigarette from the table, lit it, and took a deep drag to suppress his excitement.

Seeing this, Secretary Xia didn't press further about the other's previous behavior. After a moment of silence, he spoke again: "You really don't know?"

The man with the slicked-back hair's hand holding the cigarette trembled slightly, ash falling onto the sofa: "I know nothing!"

Secretary Xia's gaze swept over the man with the slicked-back hair's face, seemingly determining whether he was genuinely unaware or just probing.

After staring at him for a full half-minute, he sensed that the other man truly seemed ignorant.

After exhaling a puff of smoke, he contemplated, "Out of old times' sake, I'll tell you the truth, but honestly, I don't know much more than you do."

"I was suddenly instructed that night not to contact you anymore, and as for the reason, I don't know, as nothing was disclosed."

After saying that, Secretary Xia stubbed out the cigarette in the ashtray, leaned back against the sofa, and let out a long sigh.

In fact, by speaking those words, he had already broken the rules, and if it reached his ears, he'd surely be sent away to guard a pond.

But he couldn't help it; the man with the slicked-back hair had been overly generous before.

After hearing everything, the man with the slicked-back hair frowned deeply, unable to understand what could have caused such a sudden change in attitude from the other party.

Did they detect a danger and decide to cut ties with him?

But he hadn't done anything illegal recently!

Chapter 284: Severance (3)

After thinking for a long time, he still couldn't come up with an answer.

"Do you think it might be Qi Yun playing tricks?" The man with the slicked-back hair raised his head and asked.

Secretary Xia shook his head immediately upon hearing this and countered, "Do you think he has that kind of power?"

"I've investigated that guy, he has some connections, but not enough to influence his decisions."

The slicked-back hair man irritably scratched his head, extinguished his cigarette, and then immediately lit another one.

"I must meet him face-to-face to clear things up, help me think of a way."

"Help you?" Secretary Xia sneered, "How can I help you? By defying his orders and bringing you over?"

"Telling you this much is already a huge risk for me."

Although the man with the slicked-back hair felt dissatisfied, he understood that what the other person said was true.

The next moment, he decisively took out two keys from his pocket, pushed them towards Secretary Xia, and said, "The key on the left is yours, the one on the right is his."

Secretary Xia glanced at the two keys on the coffee table. These were keys to a certain private club, with which he was very familiar, as it wasn't the first time he had received them.

In the past, upon seeing these keys, his eyes would reveal excitement.

But this time was different, he simply shook his head and pushed the keys back.

"Take them back; this isn't about what's inside."

The man with the slicked-back hair stared at the keys on the coffee table and suddenly laughed, his laughter carrying a hint of desolation.

He silently grabbed the keys and stuffed them back into his pocket, then stood up and patted Secretary Xia on the shoulder, and left through the door.

After the other person left, Secretary Xia went to the window and looked at the night outside, letting out a sigh.

...

Next day, noon.

Qi Yun and Ye Hanwen stood at the door, as if waiting for someone.

Before long, a Lexus business car slowly drove up and stopped at the entrance of the courtyard.

The car door opened, and a middle-aged man with yellow skin stepped out of the car. He glanced over Qi Yun and Ye Hanwen's faces, then quickly came to Qi Yun and extended his hand voluntarily: "Hello, Mr. Qi, I'm Li Yaohua. Mr. Fu instructed me to come over and help you deal with some troubles."

Qi Yun smiled and extended his hand to shake with the other person, speaking with gratitude, "Thank you, President Li."

"It's no trouble, serving Mr. Qi is my honor." Li Yaohua kept a smile on his face as he continued, "Mr. Qi, you don't have to call me President Li, just call me by my name."

Qi Yun knew that the other person was being so polite entirely due to Fu Wentao's influence, so he didn't take the pleasantries seriously and continued to show respect.

"Haha, President Li, let me introduce you. This is my company's partner, Ye Hanwen, President Ye."

Li Yaohua turned to look at Ye Hanwen, extended his hand, and said, "Hello, President Ye."

Ye Hanwen could naturally sense the difference in attitude towards him and Qi Yun, but he didn't mind at all, his face full of smiles: "President Li, hello. I've had the privilege of hearing your speech at the Cape Town Economic Forum and have always wanted to meet you. I'm glad it's happening today."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun looked at Li Yaohua with a hint of surprise.

From Ye Hanwen's words, it was clear that the other party had a significant background. But it was to be expected; someone Fu Wentao specially arranged to handle trouble wouldn't be an ordinary person.

Li Yaohua humbly smiled, "President Ye, you are too kind."

After entering the courtyard, someone brought tea, and Qi Yun raised the teacup and took a sip, looking at Li Yaohua and asked, "President Li, are you also Chinese?"

Li Yaohua smiled and shook his head, "Mr. Qi, I'm Singaporean, but my ancestors were Chinese."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, and after some pleasantries, he learned of Li Yaohua's identity — the person in charge of the Fu Family's affairs in Africa.

He was clearly a high-level person, no wonder Ye Wenhuan treated him with such courtesy.

Chapter 285: The President Steps In

Once the two parties became familiar, Li Yaohua got straight to the point: "Mr. Qi, before I came, Mr. Fu only instructed me to come and help you with some troubles, but he didn't tell me the specifics. You'll have to briefly explain it to me."

"Of course, President Li, you're too kind."

Qi Yun responded with a sentence, then gave Ye Hanwen a look. Ye Hanwen caught the hint and briefly explained the situation to Li Yaohua.

After listening, Li Yaohua nodded slightly, his face showing no change in expression.

"Mr. Qi, President Ye, I have some connections with the upper echelons of the South African Government. If it's convenient, why don't we go and communicate with the Minister of the Mining Department about this matter?"

Upon hearing this, Ye Hanwen's face showed joy. The Minister of the Mining Department was certainly a figure of significance in the government, ranking higher than Demira, whom he had previously visited but hadn't even gotten a meeting with.

If he could gain the support of that Minister, things might become much easier.

Qi Yun nodded and expressed his gratitude: "Then thank you very much, President Li."

Li Yaohua smiled politely: "It's what I should do. Let's head out now."

With that, the three of them got up and stepped into the business car parked outside the door.

Chen Wei, on the other hand, drove behind them with Old Black.

In front of the Mining Department building, as soon as the car was parked, a well-dressed black man led two subordinates to greet them.

"President Li, long time no see." The black man's bald head gleamed in the sunlight, and his smile was as enthusiastic as could be.

Li Yaohua just shook hands with him politely, then gestured towards Qi Yun and introduced, "Minister Bogus, this is Mr. Qi, a friend of my boss."

Upon hearing this, Bogus was slightly taken aback, turned his head to scrutinize Qi Yun for a moment, and his gaze became more respectful.

He knew very well who Li Yaohua's boss was, having tried to visit the man several times but had never met him.

And the man in front of him was actually a friend of Li Yaohua's boss, so he secretly decided to make a good impression on this person.

"Mr. Qi, hello, nice to meet you." Bogus's smile was even broader, nearly reaching his ears.

Qi Yun could naturally sense Bogus's change in attitude, but he didn't mind. He smiled and shook hands with him, introducing Ye Hanwen's identity as well.

After all, the future affairs of the mining site would still need Ye Hanwen to handle.

After a brief introduction, Bogus led the group to his office.

Bogus's office was on the nineteenth floor. As soon as Qi Yun stepped in, he was stunned by the luxury before him.

The dark handwoven carpet felt as soft as stepping on cotton, and to an extreme extent, some of the lines on the carpet were even outlined in gold thread.

Every piece of furniture and painting in the room seemed incredibly valuable.

Qi Yun was secretly taken aback; was this an office or a palace, for crying out loud?

Indeed, this was South Africa, where the gap between rich and poor was the largest. The rich thrived while the poor perished.

Bogus casually closed the door, walked around the large oak desk, and took a bottle of wine from the liquor cabinet: "Esteemed guests, try this bottle of Macallan from 1964. I just bought it from an auction last week."

He spoke while moving to the guest area to pour drinks for the group.

Li Yaohua took the wine glass and, after Bogus sat down, got straight to the point: "Minister Bogus, I came this time on my boss's instructions."

"Mr. Qi's company is experiencing some trouble with its business in your South Africa. My boss specifically asked me to come over and coordinate, hoping to obtain your support."

Bogus twirled the wine glass in his hand, turned his gaze to Qi Yun, and said, "May I ask what sort of trouble Mr. Qi's company is facing? If it's within my jurisdiction, I will definitely help you resolve it immediately."

These words equated to a position statement, showing how much he valued or perhaps feared the Fu Family.

Without needing Qi Yun to speak, Li Yaohua recounted the issues regarding the mining site.

After hearing this, Bogus furrowed his brows, and the muscles on his face involuntarily twitched, indicating he was aware of this matter.

After two seconds of silence, he managed a bitter smile: "President Li, Mr. Qi, to be honest, I am aware of the situation with that diamond mine; the government does indeed plan to take it back."

Upon hearing this, Li Yaohua crossed his legs, tapping his fingers on his knee: "Minister Bogus, matters related to mining should fall under your department's purview, right?"

"Mr. Qi's diamond mine was purchased from your government a few years ago, and all procedures are legal and compliant. Your government can't unilaterally tear up the contract and reclaim the mine, can you?"

Bogus hurriedly nodded in agreement: "Right, right, President Li, you're correct. Normally, matters concerning mining are indeed handled by our department, but..."

Seeing him hesitant to speak, Li Yaohua frowned and asked: "But what?"

Bogus sighed and continued: "But the initiative to reclaim that mine came directly from the Vice President."

"According to him, the real value of that mine far exceeds its original sale price, which is an infringement on the interests of the local people, hence the reason for wanting to reclaim the mine for the local people."

"Moreover, this effort has garnered support from many people..."

Upon hearing this, Li Yaohua chuckled lightly: "The Vice President? I believe his name is Davala, correct?"

"I've heard such high-sounding rhetoric too many times before. Cloaked under the guise of public interest, isn't it just an attempt to pocket all the benefits?"

Faced with Li Yaohua's bluntness, Bogus dared not respond. He squeezed out an awkward smile and nodded in agreement.

Chapter 286: The President Steps In (Part 2)

Li Yaohua noticed his difficulty and knew he couldn't make a decision on this matter, so he said directly, "Let's do this, since your Ministry of Mining can't make the call, could you help me arrange a meeting with the Vice President? I'll talk to him personally."

Upon hearing this, Bogus felt relieved. He couldn't afford to offend Li Yaohua, but neither did he want to offend the Vice President. Being able to extricate himself from this situation was the best outcome.

He quickly nodded in agreement, "Alright, please wait a moment, I'll contact him now."

Saying this, he hurried to the desk, picked up the phone, and made a call.

A few minutes later, Bogus returned to the sofa, smiling, and said, "Mr. Li, I have informed the Vice President about this matter, but he is currently attending a meeting in Morocco and cannot discuss matters with you in detail."

"Do you think you could wait a few days until the Vice President returns? I'll inform you as soon as possible."

Li Yaohua sneered upon hearing this, "No need, I don't have time to waste here with you."

Saying this, he took out his phone from his pocket, stood up, and walked to the window.

He had only met the Vice President twice and wasn't familiar with him. Since the Vice President was avoiding him, he decided to contact his superior directly.

The call was quickly connected.

Li Yaohua said while holding the phone, "I am Li Yaohua from the Fu Group, please help me schedule a meeting with the President."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun was once again shocked by the power of the Fu Family.

Being able to directly contact the South African President with one phone call was incredibly intimidating.

Ye Hanwen, however, showed no surprise, as if he was expecting this.

"Yes, I am in South Africa now and hope to meet with the President as soon as possible."

"..."

After the call ended, Li Yaohua walked over to Qi Yun and said, "Mr. Qi, let's go. Since Minister Bogus cannot provide assistance, let's go meet the President."

His words had a very obvious undertone, and Bogus broke into a cold sweat.

Not to mention the expansive business the Fu Family has in Africa, their connections alone are terrifying enough. If he displeased them, it would be difficult for him to keep his position.

Thinking of this, Bogus quickly stood to apologize, "Mr. Li, I'm sorry for this matter. I..."

Li Yaohua interrupted him with a wave of his hand before he could finish, "Minister Bogus, I understand your difficulty, I will resolve this myself, but I hope Mr. Qi's mining site won't have any issues in the future, I'd appreciate it if you could take care of things."

Having said this, he patted Bogus on the shoulder and turned away.

After hearing this, Bogus breathed a sigh of relief, quickly caught up, and said, "Mr. Li, rest assured, I will make sure the people below understand clearly, and Mr. Qi's mining site will certainly not face any trouble in the future."

...

After leaving the Ministry of Mining, Qi Yun and his party drove to the President's Mansion.

Once the car was parked, Li Yaohua smiled at Qi Yun and said, "Would Mr. Qi like to accompany me to meet the President?"

Qi Yun shook his head slightly, "No need, it's better if Mr. Li goes alone, having a stranger in your conversation wouldn't be convenient."

Qi Yun understood that the invitation was only out of courtesy, and if it were truly convenient to bring him along, they wouldn't have made a redundant offer.

"Alright, then please wait for a moment." After saying this, Li Yaohua opened the car door and headed towards the President's Mansion.

Qi Yun sat in the car and looked through the iron fence of the President's Mansion. He saw Li Yaohua exchange a few simple words with the guard before being respectfully let in.

Twenty minutes later, Li Yaohua returned to the car and handed over a document, explaining, "This is the approval document from the President's office; the mining site recovery plan will be suspended."

Qi Yun took the document and directly handed it to Ye Hanwen, then said with a hint of gratitude to Li Yaohua, "Thank you for your immense support, Mr. Li."

Li Yaohua smiled and waved his hand, "Mr. Qi, no need to be polite, I was simply following instructions from the boss."

Although he said this, Qi Yun still felt it was right to express his gratitude.

That evening, a banquet was held in the city's most upscale hotel for Li Yaohua. After the dinner, Ye Hanwen placed a briefcase on the table in front of Li Yaohua, which contained diamonds worth over three million USD.

"Thank you, Mr. Li, for your help this time. It's a small token of appreciation, and please do not decline."

These diamonds were a decision made after discussions with Mr. Bi and others. Although their assistance was instructed by the Fu Family, it was still necessary to show some gratitude.

Most importantly, even though Li Yaohua isn't part of the Fu Family by name, in Africa, he still represents the Fu Family. Building a good relationship with him will undoubtedly benefit the company's future development.

It's unrealistic to say one can always ask Qi Yun to seek help from the Fu Family when encountering issues.

Maintaining a good relationship with Li Yaohua, coupled with Qi Yun's connection with Fu Wentao, means that in the future, smaller matters can be directly handled by Li Yaohua.

Li Yaohua glanced at the briefcase and then shook his head to refuse, "President Ye is too kind, I've received the gesture; please take back the briefcase."

Ye Hanwen felt a bit awkward and looked towards Qi Yun.

Recognizing that he needed to step in, Qi Yun lightly coughed and smiled, "Brother Li, I know you're not concerned about these things, but since you helped us resolve such a big issue, we had to express our gratitude."

"In the future, in South Africa, our company will still rely on your support. Please consider it a gift from friends for our meeting."

Upon hearing this, Li Yaohua laughed heartily, "Alright, since Brother Qi has spoken, it would seem rather ungrateful if I didn't accept the gift."

"I will accept it for now, and I am honored to become friends with you both. Let's continue to help each other in the future."

Having said this, he placed the briefcase by his feet without examining its contents.

To him, it didn't matter what was inside; given his status, the monetary value was negligible. What he truly valued was Qi Yun's connection with Fu Wentao.

Though he held a significant role in the Fu Group, he remained just a high-level employee, unable to enter the core of the Fu Family.

Before coming to South Africa, Fu Wentao had personally called him, asking him to come and assist Qi Yun in resolving the problem, which showed their unusual relationship. Normally, tasks were rarely assigned to him directly.

So he had already decided to seize this opportunity to build a good relationship with Qi Yun, as it might help him take that crucial step in the future.

Seeing Li Yaohua accept the items, Ye Hanwen internally sighed with relief.

The resolution of the mining site crisis was completely reliant on Qi Yun's connections, which left him feeling somewhat ashamed, as his years spent in South Africa seemed wasted.

With the gratitude expressed and the tokens given, the dinner was close to its conclusion.

Upon exiting the hotel, Li Yaohua shook Qi Yun's hand and said, "Brother Qi, I have work arrangements tomorrow, so I can't stay longer. Let's meet again when I return to the country."

Qi Yun smiled sincerely and replied, "Brother Li, you're too polite; there will be ample opportunities for me to thank you properly."

Li Yaohua waved his hand with a smile, "No need for thanks, don't be a stranger; contact me anytime if you encounter any difficulties."

"Certainly, will do."

After seeing Li Yaohua off, Qi Yun and the others returned to their accommodation.

The next day, Ye Hanwen took the President's office document and revisited Bogus, whose attitude was extremely courteous, immediately stating that he would communicate with the relevant departments to send personnel to the mining site and resolve the private armed harassment issues.

Though nothing was explicitly stated, Ye Hanwen understood that the matter was essentially resolved.

...

In the following days, things were quite calm. Considering the instability in South Africa, Qi Yun even heard gunfire at night, so he didn't track information, instead waiting for the salvage company's ship to return.

Until the 25th, Kaisen from Deep Sea Exploration called him, informing that the salvage ship would return to Cape Town's port the next day. Qi Yun immediately bought tickets for him and his party to head to Cape Town.

Ye Hanwen also learned from Qi Yun that they were going for deep-sea salvage, so he specially arranged for Tata to join them to assist.

Chapter 287: San Jose

The next morning, the sky was overcast with a brewing storm, and the salty scent of the harbor mixed with the smell of diesel filled the air.

The salvage ship "Deep Sea Hunter" was docked at Pier 5.

This salvage ship looked old, the rust-covered hull was adorned with seaweed, and it appeared to be about 160 meters long, like a giant steel beast. Only such a large vessel could withstand the tumultuous waves of the sea.

Qi Yun boarded the salvage ship with Chen Wei and others, where the captain was already waiting on deck.

"Hello, Mr. Qi, welcome to the Deep Sea Hunter. I'm the captain of this ship, you can call me Jeff."

Qi Yun sized up the black man in front of him, who was half a head taller, with a robust physique. The muscles on his arms were particularly pronounced, visible even through the clothing.

The standard bald head coupled with sharp eyes gave a strong sense of pressure.

"Nice to meet you, Captain Jeff," Qi Yun politely greeted him.

After a brief chat, Jeff led everyone to the ship's cabin.

"Mr. Qi, according to the coordinates you provided to the company, our destination this time is deep in the Atlantic Ocean, about 300 nautical miles from here, and we expect to arrive tomorrow afternoon."

"According to the latest navigation weather, our route will pass through a storm zone, with maximum winds reaching force 8, which is within the navigable range..."

Jeff introduced some situations to Qi Yun as they walked.

Qi Yun casually asked as he examined the slightly old-fashioned decor of the ship's cabin, "How many people are there on the ship in total?"

Jeff was a bit puzzled about why Qi Yun was interested in this, but patiently replied, "Including me, there are a total of 19 crew members and 2 engineers responsible for the salvage equipment, making a total of 21."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, "Alright, please take us to our rooms first."

"Alright, please follow me," Jeff agreed, leading the group to the lower passenger cabins.

Space on the ship was limited, with all cabins accommodating two people. Although the rooms were not large, they were fully equipped with beds, wardrobes, and a small radio on the bedside table.

"Are you satisfied with the room, Mr. Qi?" Jeff asked.

"Very good," Qi Yun glanced around and wasn't picky; it sufficed for rest.

Jeff continued, "The ship is well-stocked with provisions, with enough fresh water and food to support a two-week voyage."

"If you have any special needs, feel free to let me know."

Qi Yun nodded, "Alright, I'll leave the rest of the journey to you, Captain Jeff."

"Happy to serve you," Jeff replied with a smile, "I'll arrange for the crew to prepare for departure right away."

After Jeff left, others went to settle in the adjacent rooms, while Chen Wei shared a room with Qi Yun.

Qi Yun put down the bag he was carrying and walked to the window to view the dark sea outside, feeling inexplicably oppressed.

Beside him, Chen Wei carefully inspected the room and then said to Qi Yun, "I'll go familiarize myself with the ship."

"Okay, go ahead," Qi Yun understood his purpose. It was Chen Wei's habit to first familiarize himself with the surroundings and objects whenever in an unfamiliar place.

Over half an hour later, with the sound of a long whistle, the ship slowly left the dock and headed for the sea.

Three hundred nautical miles might not sound far, but for this salvage ship with a maximum speed of just over ten knots, it would take over thirty hours.

Life on the ship was very monotonous, consisting of eating and sleeping.

The only perk was the abundant meals, with plenty of lobsters and sea fish, and everything was very fresh, offering impeccable taste.

Late at night, as Qi Yun lay sound asleep on his bed, he suddenly woke up to a violent shake.

He sprang awake to find his body uncontrollably sliding to the side, instinctively reaching out with his right hand to grab the bedframe to avoid falling to the floor.

The pounding rain outside smashed against the glass, and the ship tilted nearly parallel to the sea surface, with the wardrobe doors swinging open and the backpack rolling to the floor.

Beside him, Chen Wei was also awake, holding onto the bedframe to barely maintain his balance.

Qi Yun got out of bed, holding onto a support and moving to the porthole to try and check outside, but the stormy raindrops hitting the glass blocked his view, and he couldn't see anything.

"The wind strength must be more than force 8," Chen Wei shouted loudly.

Qi Yun nodded and pointed upwards, "Let's check the cockpit."

With that, the two staggered left and right, making their way out.

Fortunately, the passageway was inside the hull; if it were outside, they'd probably get blown away the moment they opened the door.

The ship's tilt increased, and a thin layer of rainwater began to accumulate on the metal floor beneath their feet, seeping in from somewhere unknown.

They hadn't yet reached the cockpit when they already heard cursing, with items clattering on the floor amid the chaos.

"The wind is breaking force 9!" The first mate's shout mixed with the red glow of the alarm lights exploding in the cabin.

Captain Jeff had both hands on the helm, staring gravely at the instrument panel.

Qi Yun staggered up, shouting, "What's going on!"

Jeff turned his head and, seeing it was Qi Yun speaking, shouted to explain, "The meteorological satellite has updated the data! The storm has upgraded to a strong tropical storm, and now wind speeds have reached 24 meters per second!"

"But we can't turn back now, there's storm territory within a hundred nautical miles! We can only push through!"

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's expression turned grave. The most terrifying aspect of the sea was precisely this: lives were no longer in one's own control.

Chapter 288: San Jose! (Part 2)

"Can the ship hold up?"

Jeff heard this and nodded, "Mr. Qi, rest assured, I've been through this kind of situation more than once..."

Before he finished speaking, another giant wave loomed ahead, causing the ship to tilt sharply and the metal framework to creak continuously.

The first officer next to him nearly lost his balance and almost got thrown onto the control panel. Luckily, Jeff was quick to grab his belt, barely steadying him.

Then a voice came from the intercom: "Seawater is flooding into the engine room!"

Jeff frowned even tighter upon hearing this and shouted into the intercom, "Chief engineer! Chief engineer! Report the situation immediately!"

"..."

Come dawn, a rainbow hung across the distant horizon, and Qi Yun's salvage vessel was less than a hundred nautical miles from their destination.

Qi Yun went up to the deck, taking a few deep breaths of fresh air. The storm at dawn had been quite the ordeal, but fortunately, they had made it through without incident.

At this moment, two fair-skinned men approached from behind, holding fishing rods. One of them smiled and asked, "Mr. Qi, want to fish?"

Qi Yun had seen these two men yesterday, the only two white men on the ship, responsible for operating the deep-sea salvage equipment.

Qi Yun shook his head with a smile, "No, thank you."

The two men didn't say much else, heading straight to the edge of the deck, baiting their hooks and casting their lines.

The sea under the clear sky was beautiful, with the morning sunlight piercing through the clouds, casting patches of golden light on the water.

Qi Yun also walked over, taking out cigarettes to offer to the two men, "How long have you been working at sea?"

The two men took the cigarettes and thanked him, and the slightly older one replied, "I've been at sea for more than seven years, and Mike has been here for two and a half years."

Qi Yun nodded, lighting his cigarette and taking a drag, seemingly casually asking, "Have you ever salvaged anything valuable from the sea before?"

With a cigarette in his mouth, Mike grinned, "Last month, I just salvaged a few boxes of silver coins from the Indian Ocean, worth over four hundred thousand US dollars."

The older Frank, while fiddling with his fishing rod, replied, "Once, I salvaged an ancient cannon from the waters near Southeast Asia. The employer said it's very valuable, probably over a million."

Qi Yun laughed and took a puff of his cigarette, "Anything more valuable?"

Mike shook his head, replying, "No, although many treasures are buried in the deep sea, few truly encounter them."

Frank didn't rush to answer, seemingly surprised as he looked at Qi Yun.

After casting his line, Frank cautiously asked, "Mr. Qi, is what you're looking to salvage this time very valuable?"

Qi Yun smiled noncommittally, "Maybe, I don't know either."

As they spoke, Mike's fishing rod suddenly dipped, and from the bend, it was clear something big was hooked.

"Here it comes!" the two men excitedly began to struggle with the underwater creature.

Qi Yun, however, showed no interest in watching and turned to head back to the cabin.

By evening, as the sun was about to disappear from the horizon, Jeff pointed at the map on the screen and said to Qi Yun, "Mr. Qi, we have now reached the target location, ready to start the operation."

Qi Yun glanced at the fluctuating coordinates on the screen and nodded slightly.

Working at night was actually no different from the day, as visibility in the deep sea was nonexistent anyway.

At this time, Mike and Frank also came into the cockpit. Frank looked at the radar map and said, "The water depth in the target area shows 1300 meters. The seabed is flat, so let's conduct a detailed scan over a two nautical mile area and generate image data."

Next to him, Mike nodded and took out a notebook to start operating.

With a crisp beep twenty minutes later, the seabed image was completed.

Frank leaned over, pointing to a shadow on the screen, "The echo strength here is higher than the surroundings, like something is there."

"Should we send the robot down to take a look?" Mike suggested.

Frank shook his head, "We can receive signals at this depth. Let's drop the grapple hook first, check the current situation below before deploying the robot."

Mike didn't insist further, reaching to operate the red knob on the console.

In the next second, the hydraulic systems below deck roared to life, and three mechanical arms extended from both sides of the ship, followed by long grapple hooks descending into the deep sea.

Each of the three grapple hooks was equipped with spotlights and cameras, displaying surveillance-like footage on the notebook.

The deep sea was very dark. As the grapple hooks descended slowly, the screen grew murkier, with the spotlight beams refracting eerie halos in the suspended silt, causing a sense of inexplicable fear.

After two minutes, the seabed appeared on the screen, stirred by the currents, agitating vast clouds of murky silt.

The image on the screen was blurred by swirling sediments, vaguely revealing the uneven surface of the seabed.

When the silt settled, a long object appeared under the spotlight on the right side, capturing everyone's attention.

Mike opened his mouth, somewhat surprised, "It seems like... a shipwreck?"

Frank compared the sonar chart again, taking a deep breath and slightly excitedly agreed, "It seems correct, the area with the anomalous echo strength is right here."

At this point, Captain Jeff spoke up, "Send the robot down and clean off those attachments."

"Aye, Captain." Receiving the order, Mike pressed the silver button on the side of the console, and a sound of gears meshing came from the hull's bottom.

Chapter 289: San Jose

A deep-sea exploration robot, resembling a mechanical spider, slid into the water along the track, adding another image to the laptop screen.

Mike placed the computer on the console, holding the device to control the robot in his hands.

The robot continued to descend, getting closer to the shipwreck-like object. When it arrived nearby, under Mike's control, the high-pressure water gun at the front suddenly activated, instantly washing away the muddy sand and revealing a section of barnacle-covered wooden ship hull.

"It's really a shipwreck!" Mike shouted excitedly.

Jeff and Frank also looked thrilled, as often some treasures could be salvaged from these shipwrecks.

If the treasures were valuable enough, the employer would usually also give the crew a bonus.

Although Qi Yun already knew the result, he still showed joy on his face.

As everyone was excited, the image on the screen suddenly shook violently.

In the robot's camera, a dark shadow slowly emerged from the crack in the shipwreck, and the suction cups covered with slime looked somewhat unpleasant under the spotlight.

"Not good! It's an octopus!" Frank had just finished speaking when the robot's mechanical arm was suddenly entangled by the shadow, making the metal joints emit a twisting sound under heavy strain.

The octopus's eight arms spread out as large as half a ship, with serrated edges of the suction cups as thick as fingers!

"Hurry and retrieve the robot!" Jeff shouted anxiously.

But it was already too late, as the giant octopus's ink instantly shrouded the screen, and the camera image turned into snowflakes, losing the robot's signal.

From another hooked camera, they could see the huge octopus directly wrapping up the robot and then returning to the crack in the shipwreck.

"That octopus treated the robot as prey..." Mike smacked his lips and said.

Jeff sighed, looking somewhat gloomy.

The robot lost just now was worth sixty thousand USD; once the company knows about this, a scolding is definitely unavoidable.

Qi Yun observed everyone's expressions carefully, patting Jeff's arm and asking, "Are there any more robots on the ship?"

Jeff nodded, "There are two more, but unless we drive that octopus away, any robot we send down will still be attacked by it."

"Is there any solution?" Qi Yun asked.

"We've never encountered an octopus this big before, as for solutions..." Jeff rubbed his chin and frowned in contemplation.

Mike and Frank also remained silent.

Just then, Ah Jiao, who had been quietly standing in the back, suddenly said, "Boss, I remember during college, my professor once mentioned that octopuses have extremely sensitive olfactory systems; the larger they are, the more sensitive. They really dislike the smell of industrial chemicals."

"Why not try spraying some preservatives or paint on the robot's shell?"

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's eyes lit up, turning to Jeff and asking, "Captain Jeff, is it feasible?"

Jeff frowned and replied, "Sorry Mr. Qi, I've never heard of this saying. I'm aware of the octopus's sensitive smell, but whether they dislike the smell of industrial chemicals..."

Qi Yun interrupted with a wave of his hand, "Do you have any other solutions?"

"Not at the moment." Jeff sighed.

"Then let's do what she says, try it with one first; I'll cover all losses."

Seeing Qi Yun's determination, Jeff could only agree, nodding in response, "Alright, Mr. Qi, I'll have someone execute it now."

With that, he grabbed the intercom nearby and gave a few instructions.

After about ten minutes, Jeff received a reply, then turned to Mike and said, "The robot is ready."

Upon hearing this, Mike pressed the button on the console again, sending another robot into the water, and video signals appeared on the screen.

This time the operation went smoothly; until the robot reached the edge of the shipwreck, the octopus did not appear again. It might indeed have been driven away by the chemical smells.

Qi Yun turned and gave a thumbs up to Ah Jiao, who responded with a gracious smile.

Jeff leaned closer to the computer, pointing to a spot on the shipwreck on the screen, saying, "Clean this place with the high-pressure water gun and see which ship it is."

Mike controlled the mechanical arm, with the high-pressure water gun spraying water to peel off the barnacles and algae layers attached to the ship's hull.

As the water swept over a mottled bronze nameplate, everyone in front of the screen practically held their breath simultaneously.

The seaweed wrapped around the nameplate was washed away, revealing a few letters—SAN JOSÉ.

It was precisely the legendary treasure-laden "San Jose" shipwreck!

Chapter 290: Overnight Fortune

"San Jose!"

"My God! It's actually the San Jose!" Jeff was completely incredulous.

Seeing this, Qi Yun turned to him and asked, "Captain Jeff, do you know this ship?"

Jeff's Adam's apple bobbed, his eyes fixed on the letters on the screen, his voice squeezed out from his chest: "Every sailor has heard the legend about it."

"According to the records, in 1708, the Spanish ship San Jose, laden with gold treasures, was sunk by the British fleet off the coast of Colombia. For three hundred years, countless salvage ships have tried to find it in that area, but it has always remained elusive."

"Some say that a sea monster guarding the treasure hid it, but who would have thought it would appear here..."

At this point, Jeff turned to Qi Yun and asked, "Mr. Qi, how did you know..."

However, just as he spoke a few words, he suddenly realized that some questions might not be his to ask, so he quickly chose to keep silent and swallowed the rest back down.

Qi Yun smiled at him but didn't explain, merely instructed, "Keep working."

"Yes, Mr. Qi." Jeff responded, then patted Mike, who was still immersed in shock, "Let the robot enter the ship to check the situation."

Mike snapped back to reality, his fingers trembling as he controlled the robot.

The mechanical spider slowly crawled into the ship's deck crevice, and the moment the searchlight pierced the darkness, numerous decaying wooden boxes appeared on the screen.

"These boxes must be filled with treasures! Legend has it that this ship was loaded with endless gold!" Frank nearly pressed his face up against the screen, his voice full of uncontrollable excitement.

Mike swallowed hard, carefully maneuvering the mechanical spider closer to one of the boxes. As soon as the mechanical arm's claw touched the lid, the rotten wood quickly dissolved in the water.

If it weren't for the ship structure blocking it, the currents might have washed these boxes away long ago.

As the murk cleared, countless silver coins spilled out, glistening coldly under the searchlight. There were emblem-like designs on the coins, though time had worn them so much they were hard to discern.

Yet, as the camera panned down, everyone's smiles froze—among the pile of silver coins, there was shockingly a partial human hand bone, with a sapphire ring still on it, indicating something had happened on this ship...

However, the oppressive atmosphere didn't last long, quickly dispelled by the appearance of more and more boxes of silver coins.

"Equip another robot with tools and send it down to collect all these silver coins!" Jeff excitedly ordered.

"Yes, Captain!"

While Frank and Mike continued to operate the equipment, the other crew members began to gather on the deck. At the first mate's command, one by one, square metal mesh bags were brought out.

The crew attached the mesh bags to specially designed iron frames and lowered them into the sea along the hooks.

Underwater, Mike operated the robot equipped with a mechanical scoop to scoop up all the silver coins from the wreck into the mesh bags.

Frank controlled another robot, continuing to explore the ship's interior.

"Gold coins! These are gold coins!"

The next second, Frank shouted excitedly.

On the screen, inside a broken box, was a full chest of gold coins, covered in a layer of green algae fuzz. Though their brilliance was gone, their value remained immense.

Qi Yun was a bit excited internally—just recovering this chest of gold coins made the trip worthwhile.

Noise soon came from the deck as the first haul was brought up by the hook.

"Careful!"

"Slowly! Ao Debiao, you fool! If you spill these treasures into the sea, I'll shove a banana up your backside!" The first mate frantically commanded from the side.

Qi Yun signaled to Ah Jiao in the pilot room to keep an eye on things while he went outside with the others.

On deck, the wet mesh bags dripped seawater, rising slowly amidst the winch's roar.

The crew held the swaying mesh bags together, a mix of algae and silt stinging the nostrils. The first mate swiftly rinsed off the surface sediment with a high-pressure water gun.

Once the rinsing was done, the contents were dumped onto a plastic sheet spread beside them.

Soon, a small mountain of silver coins appeared before everyone.

Qi Yun stepped closer, crouched down, and pinched a silver coin between his fingers, examining it carefully under the light.

The surface of the coin was uneven, its once-clear design blurred by years of seawater erosion, tiny holes covering the edges, like they had been gnawed by something.

With a gentle rub, he could feel a layer of rough calcification.

Wondering if the damage was so serious, could these be as valuable as a silver dollar?

At this moment, Captain Jeff approached with a metal detector gun, waving a silver coin over it. The detector emitted intermittent beeps, its display numbers jumping wildly.

After a while, he said with a hint of regret, "Mr. Qi, the silver content in these coins is only 63% left; the rest has been eroded by seawater."

"But they have immense historical significance. I think those antique dealers in Spain would be willing to pay a high price for them."

Qi Yun nodded, "We'll discuss it back on shore."

Then he waved over to Ajie not far away, instructing, "Go fetch the storage bags we brought and package all of this."