

Middle Age 311

Chapter 311: Barely Finished the Job and Got Burned

Qi Yun's mouth curled into a smile, "I was wondering why you were so concerned, turns out you're just worried about your money not being paid back."

"You bet." Shi Feng shook his hair and continued, "Why did you come to see me? You're not just here to tell me this news, are you?"

Qi Yun picked up the teacup on the table and took a sip, replying, "Do you have any paintings here? Pick out a couple for me to give away."

"Of course I do!" As soon as Shi Feng heard there was business, a smile immediately spread across his face, "Who do you want the paintings from, Mr. Qi?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "You choose for me, find two with good value for money."

Shi Feng raised an eyebrow, "Like that teacup from last time?"

"Hey, no way." Qi Yun quickly waved his hand, "This time they have to be authentic. If they're fakes and someone finds out, it would be terrible."

"Authentic, huh..." Hearing this, Shi Feng stroked his mustache, calculating the paintings he had.

"Wait here, I'll go find them for you."

With that, he got up and walked behind the counter.

A few minutes later, he came back with several scrolls in his hands and sat down again.

"This 'Lan Stone Painting,' I bought it for sixty thousand yuan, just give me the cost price."

"This 'Guangwu Crossing River Painting' is seventy thousand."

"..."

Shi Feng unrolled each scroll, introducing them one by one to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun smacked his lips, not impressed with any of them.

"Don't you have any good stuff in your shop? The quality is too low, show me something slightly higher."

Although he didn't understand paintings, from the prices alone, it was clear the intention wasn't sincere enough.

"Hey! Who do you think you're looking down on? You asked for value for money, that's why I brought these out." Shi Feng grumbled a bit unhappily and got up to go back to the counter.

A moment later, he returned with several more scrolls.

"Look carefully, this masterpiece 'Ink Bamboo Mountain Painting' by 'Mr. Dongxin,' was bought at an auction two years ago, sixty thousand."

"And this 'Women with Flower Hairpins' by Jin Tingbiao, also bought at an auction, forty-five thousand."

"Are these classy enough?"

Qi Yun nodded, "The class is enough, let's go with these two."

"Alright." Hearing this, Shi Feng's face lit up with a smile; these two paintings had been sitting untouched for ages, finally, they could be sold, "The total for both is one hundred and five thousand, you have my account information."

Qi Yun took out his phone, smiling warmly, "With our friendship, shouldn't you give me a discount?"

"Hey, you're getting it wrong, we're friends, but business is business. I'm already selling at a loss, and you still want a discount." Shi Feng reverted to his shrewd merchant nature.

Qi Yun didn't believe a single word and waved his hand, "A one-time price, two hundred thousand."

"Two hundred thousand?" Shi Feng's eyes widened in disbelief, "Are you crazy? Are you robbing a tycoon here?"

Qi Yun ignored his exaggerated expression, leisurely sipping his tea.

Finally, Shi Feng had no choice, displaying the purchase records, showing that the two paintings cost a total of seventy-six thousand.

Qi Yun immediately picked up his phone and transferred eighty thousand to him, angrily rebuking, "Didn't you say one hundred and five thousand was already at a loss? You even want to make a profit from me, your conscience is truly rotten."

Shi Feng chuckled awkwardly, "I thought you made over a million from that chair last time, this small amount is nothing to you."

Qi Yun couldn't be bothered to say more, picked up the scrolls, and left.

"Come again, Mr. Qi." Shi Feng called out, chasing after him.

Back in the car, Qi Yun pulled out Zhong Rui's number, about to dial it, when Liu Meng's call came through first.

"Hey, Meng, what's up?"

"Is... is this brother Qi Yun?"

Chapter 312: Betrayal

Qi Yun listened to the voice on the phone, a slight hesitation on his face.

He instinctively glanced at the screen to confirm it was Liu Meng's number before responding, "Ah, this is Qi Yun."

"Brother Qi Yun, it's Li Cuixia. Liu Meng has been assaulted!"

"Assaulted?" Qi Yun was stunned for a moment, then hurriedly asked, "How is he? Where are you now? I'll come right over!"

Li Cuixia replied anxiously, "We're at the city hospital. Someone hit him on the head, and the doctor is stitching him up."

"Okay, I'm on my way." After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun and Chen Wei immediately headed to the hospital.

This was his second time at the hospital today. In the corridor, Liu Meng, with his head wrapped in gauze, was complaining to his wife, "Why did you call Qi? My injury isn't that serious."

Li Cuixia, wiping her tears, sobbed, "Not serious? Your head is injured..."

Qi Yun had just stepped out of the elevator when he saw this scene, and his anxious heart eased a little.

Still having the energy to argue with his wife meant there was nothing major.

He quickly approached and looked Liu Meng up and down, frowning, "What happened?"

Liu Meng not only had his head wrapped in gauze but also had two cuts on his face. However, it seemed the wounds were not deep, just treated with some iodine.

Just as he was about to speak, Li Cuixia, still wiping her tears, said, "Liu Meng went to the construction site at noon to discuss compensation with the boss. They initially offered only half a million, and Liu Meng disagreed, leading to an argument with the boss. The boss started swearing, so Liu Meng pushed him, and then he called some people to beat Liu Meng up."

As she spoke, she pulled up Liu Meng's sleeve, revealing bruises on his elbow, "Look at the beating he took..."

After hearing this, Qi Yun frowned even deeper. Offering just half a million after a death and even orchestrating an assault, this was inhumane.

However, he also felt a bit skeptical. It was said that the construction site was building a more than one-kilometer long overpass, a major project. Logically, someone capable of handling such work shouldn't handle matters like this.

Beside him, Chen Wei also had a stern face and asked, "Didn't you dare to fight back?"

Upon hearing this, Liu Meng lowered his head and remained silent. After all, it's his old buddy who truly understands him.

Although he's older now and not as agile as before, dealing with a few ordinary people wasn't a big problem.

He was injured because he only focused on dodging and didn't dare to fight back.

Firstly, he was afraid of injuring someone and being unable to afford compensation.

Secondly, what if he fought back and ended up being charged with mutual assault and locked up? The boss is a major contractor, while he's just an ordinary person and can't afford to clash with him.

Though it felt a bit humiliating, that's reality.

Qi Yun had been watching his expression and could roughly guess what he was thinking. He turned to Li Cuixia and asked, "Did you report it to the police?"

Li Cuixia, her eyes red, replied, "We did. The ones who assaulted him were taken away by people from the Fuyang Road Branch C and told us to go to the hospital first for treatment and then head to the branch to make a statement."

"Was the one who ordered the assault taken in too?"

"Seems not. He wasn't there when the police came."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun nodded, said nothing, and with a stern face, pulled out his phone and called the city hospital director, Yu Baoshan.

"Dean Yu, I'd like to ask you for a favor."

"Haha, just say what you need." Yu Baoshan's tone was very friendly, and for good reason. Last month, a big shot had a sudden serious illness and nearly didn't survive the trip to the hospital.

Upon arrival at the hospital, Yu Baoshan used half a pill of Bezoar Antelope Decoction that he had bought from Qi Yun and saved the day.

Due to his exquisite medical skills, he's about to be promoted to head the health bureau, with substantial authority at the deputy city level.

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun didn't waste words and directly said, "A friend of mine was assaulted and just finished treatment at your hospital. Could you expedite the medical assessment report for me?"

Yu Baoshan understood the implied request in his words and responded immediately, "Sure, I'll make a call right now. What's your friend's name?"

"..."

After hanging up, Qi Yun immediately dialed Ma Baoguo's number.

"Hey, Brother Qi, about what you asked yesterday, the detention center just got back to me, it's all sorted out. I was just about to tell you."

"Haha, great, thanks." Qi Yun chuckled and expressed his gratitude.

Ma Baoguo casually replied, "No need to be polite with me, just treat me to a hotpot meal sometime."

"No problem." Qi Yun readily agreed and then continued, "I need to ask you something. Are you familiar with the Fuyang Road Branch C?"

"Yes, the director there is an old comrade of mine," Ma Baoguo responded, then asked, "What's up? Are you in trouble?"

"Yeah, someone in charge at that construction site had some people beat up a friend of mine. It's pretty serious. Those who attacked him have already been taken by the branch."

Qi Yun didn't say it was the boss but referred to the person in charge. Although Li Cuixia said it was the boss, he felt that it likely wasn't the real boss, just a project manager or foreman.

"They beat up your friend?" Ma Baoguo's tone also turned angry upon hearing this. "Don't worry, I'll call the director there right away and make sure they handle those bastards properly."

"Haha, okay. Also, I heard from my friend that the one who directed the assault wasn't taken in. Shouldn't he be brought in for investigation too?"

"Is that so?" Ma Baoguo paused, "Hold on two minutes, I'll call and ask."

Chapter 313: Betrayal

After hanging up the phone, Liu Meng looked over with guilt on his face, "Old Qi, I've caused you trouble. I know the company has been..."

"Why say all this." Before he could finish, Qi Yun interrupted, "Can I just watch you get beaten for nothing?"

Li Cuixia, next to them, also tugged at her husband's arm, signaling him to keep quiet and let Qi Yun handle it.

"Has the construction site stopped work?" Qi Yun asked again.

Liu Meng shook his head, "It seemed to have stopped in the morning, but when I got there, they were already preparing to start working again."

After hearing this, Qi Yun rubbed his chin. The construction site had an accident only yesterday, and they could resume work this afternoon. Seems like the boss is quite powerful.

Within two minutes, Ma Baoguo called back.

"Brother Qi, I just asked, when the police officers arrived at the scene, that person was indeed not there. However, the C precinct has already arranged for someone to summon him, and I will keep an eye on it."

"Alright, let me know as soon as there's news."

After hanging up, Qi Yun put his phone in his pocket and then patted Liu Meng's shoulder, saying, "Let Brother Wei take you to make a statement, don't worry about the rest, I'll handle it for you."

Liu Meng nodded after hearing this, not saying anything more.

Qi Yun didn't stay long at the hospital. He went back to the car to get the two paintings, then took a taxi to Zhang Dayong's place.

He initially planned to have Zhong Rui deliver the paintings, but Liu Meng's incident happened, so he decided to go personally.

Zhang Dayong's place was not far from the New District Branch. After receiving Qi Yun's call, he returned quickly.

In the living room, Qi Yun sat on the sofa and placed the two paintings on the coffee table.

"I picked these from a friend's place this morning, see if they're alright."

Zhang Dayong took the scroll of paintings and slowly unfolded them, just glancing briefly before closing them again.

"How much do these two paintings cost? The twenty thousand I gave you probably isn't enough, is it?" Though he was clueless about antiques and calligraphy, he sensed these paintings were worth more than twenty thousand.

"My friend gave me a discount, exactly twenty thousand." Qi Yun chuckled, not telling the truth.

These works from great artists of the Qing Dynasty, a quick search online would reveal their value, no need for him to spell it out.

Zhang Dayong scrutinized him, seemingly noticing the odd expression on his face. Just as he was about to say something more, Qi Yun waved his hand, "There's no need for us to fuss over this. As long as we can get things done, it doesn't matter how much."

Seeing him say this, Zhang Dayong didn't insist, taking a bottle of water from under the coffee table and handing it over, "If it's not enough, consider it a loan, I'll repay you later."

Qi Yun took the water, opened it, took a sip, and didn't continue the topic.

"I want to ask you about something—do you know the construction site for the elevated bridge on Fuyang Road?"

Zhang Dayong nodded, "Yes, it's this year's major project for the district, why?"

Qi Yun immediately told him about yesterday's fatal incident at the construction site and today's beating of Liu Meng.

After hearing, Zhang Dayong's brows furrowed slightly as he pondered, "What are you getting at?"

"Someone died at the construction site yesterday, and your Government Office hasn't closed the case yet. Now the site is resuming work, isn't it a bit against the rules?" Though Qi Yun framed it as a question, his intent was clear.

Zhang Dayong sighed, "That's how it is; we indeed have the authority to stop the construction. But this project is highly valued by the district, regarded as an achievement project. So even if I try to suspend it, there's likely to be interference from above."

He paused, looking up at Qi Yun, "But if you really want to do this, while I can't promise much time, getting a delay of three to five days is still doable."

Hearing this, Qi Yun didn't respond immediately, instead lighting a cigarette and contemplating.

He had already guessed the other party had significant connections, or they wouldn't have secured such a project. However, he hadn't expected the district to emphasize it so much.

Just as Zhang Dayong said, even if the Government Office were to halt the project, the district would first jump in to exert pressure.

Though the Government Office is quite special and has high autonomy, many times it still has to heed the district's opinions.

"Forget it, I won't trouble you further." After careful consideration, Qi Yun gave his answer, "But the ones who beat up, especially that person in charge, shouldn't be easily let go, right?"

"Don't worry about that; that's within our scope of business. The district won't intervene. I'll call them later to have them sent to the branch."

"Even if someone privately approaches me, I can withstand it." Zhang Dayong said confidently.

Qi Yun believed him, knowing someone was backing him up.

Noticing the time was getting late, he stood up to leave, "Alright, I'll head out then."

"Sure, I'll inform you if there are any developments." Zhang Dayong walked him to the door.

After leaving the neighborhood, Qi Yun called Chen Wei and learned that Liu Meng had finished his statement and been sent home. Only then did he take a taxi back.

...

Meanwhile, inside a luxurious standalone villa in the West Mountain Villa District.

A young man in his late twenties, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, sat upright on the sofa, his hands on his knees, with only a small part of his bottom on the seat, appearing very tense.

Opposite him, a middle-aged man sat with his legs crossed, holding a cigar in his right hand and a phone in his left, making a call.

It's unclear what was said on the other end, but the middle-aged man's expression looked somewhat unpleasant.

Chapter 314: Betrayal

Two minutes later, he put down his phone and glared at the young man with hostility: "Who the hell told you to hit people? Are you bored out of your mind every damn day?"

The young man listened to the scolding, adjusted his glasses frame, and lowered his head, not daring to make a sound.

The middle-aged man, seeing this, became even angrier, stood up and slapped the young man's gold-rimmed glasses off his face while cursing, "I get pissed just seeing you wear those shitty glasses. You didn't even graduate from middle school, so why the hell are you pretending to be something you're not?"

"Also, I clearly gave you two million, so why did you say you only compensated them fifty thousand?"

"Normally, I could overlook you being a bit greedy, but you're even greedy for the money of the dead, are you even human?"

Faced with his torrent of questions, the young man dared not say a word, clenching his butt cheeks and sitting obediently to endure the scolding.

"Every damn day you cause me trouble. You can't even manage a construction site, so hurry up and get back to farming!"

Just then, a graceful young woman descended the spiral staircase nearby, quickly coming to the middle-aged man's side, hugging his arm and coaxing, "Honey, don't be mad, Ah Hai is still young, make sure to guide him when he makes mistakes~"

The middle-aged man was unmoved, shaking her off angrily and shouting, "I listened to your damn advice and put this fool in charge of the construction site. Look at him, is he up to the task? Mud never sticks to the wall!"

"Hurry and turn yourself in to the police station, or they'll come to arrest you soon!"

The young man called Ah Hai heard this, and a look of panic immediately appeared on his face, throwing a pleading glance at the woman.

The woman embraced the middle-aged man's arm again, speaking sweetly, "Honey, you can't abandon Ah Hai, he's my only brother..." As she spoke, she even squeezed out two tears from the corner of her eyes.

"With his behavior, perhaps it's good for him to suffer a bit in jail." The middle-aged man cast a disdainful glance at Ah Hai and snorted coldly.

The woman was unwilling to comply, pestering him relentlessly.

"Enough! It's not like he's facing execution, just go turn yourself in!"

...

Meanwhile, Qi Yun leaned back in the study's recliner, having just finished a call with Li Yaohua.

He checked his mobile bank account: a seventy million transaction had been credited; additionally, there was sixty thousand from the afternoon, the reward for helping the police catch those two professional killers previously. All together, his account balance is now 53.28 million.

This doesn't count the additional hundred million, which Li Yaohua will soon deposit in the Swiss Bank for him.

Qi Yun put down the phone, lit a cigarette contentedly, and began reviewing today's intelligence reports.

[Current Intelligence Points: 34]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): Xie Mengmeng refused to collaborate with Giant Stone Technology, so they secretly bribed Wu Hongkui from the technical department, planning to have him steal the core code of "Defense of Azeroth"]

Seeing this intelligence, Qi Yun's face instantly darkened.

He remembered Wu Hongkui, one of the first hired developers, now there's a damn traitor.

Compared to the opponent's dirty tactics, the betrayal by his own people made him angrier.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): In Zhongheng Green Oasis District, Huainan Road, there are six debt settlement houses for sale, each square meter priced a thousand yuan less than the sales office, contact number ****]

Qi Yun shook his head. While this seems profitable, it's actually a trap. With the current real estate market, buying it would just leave it rotting in hand.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Blue): The TV drama "Desert Eagle" crew has finished filming and plans to sell the used old furniture; among these there's a Eight Immortals Table (the prop master bought it cheaply at a bazaar without knowing its true value), made from Hainan Huanghuali, actually worth over 1.2 million]

Chapter 315: Director Chu Who Likes to "Have Tea

The next day, in the company meeting room.

Qi Yun leaned back in his chair, talking on the phone with A-Jie.

"Investigate this person, see if they've recently had any contact with people from Giant Stone Technology."

"See if you can find any evidence."

"Knock, knock, knock~"

At this moment, a series of knocks sounded outside the meeting room. Qi Yun turned to look, and at the door stood a woman in her thirties, dressed in professional attire, exuding a sophisticated air.

"Alright, do it as soon as possible." Qi Yun instructed before hanging up the phone, then looked at the woman and said, "Are you Xiang Xiaoyue?"

"Yes, hello Mr. Qi." The woman slightly bowed.

"Hello, please have a seat." Qi Yun pointed to the chair opposite him.

The woman sat down and handed over a resume.

Qi Yun took it and briefly flipped through it: Xiang Xiaoyue, thirty years old, majored in Marketing at Tsinghua University, formerly served as the operations manager for a certain game at NetEase Games, and achieved outstanding results.

"Mengmeng has briefed you on the current situation of the company, right?" Qi Yun closed the resume and asked.

"Yes." Xiang Xiaoyue nodded, "I've also done an in-depth analysis of the game your company is currently developing."

Qi Yun crossed his arms and looked at her with interest: "Then share your evaluation."

"It has great potential, but the pace is too slow." Xiang Xiaoyue showed no sign of restraint despite being an interviewee; instead, she exuded a poised confidence as she began to speak eloquently.

"I've heard from Mengmeng that two companies have already approached you for cooperation, which sufficiently proves the potential of your company's product."

"However, in today's fiercely competitive business environment, if a good product or idea can't seize the market quickly or even monopolize a field, a lot of copycat competitors will soon emerge."

"If your company continues with the current development and operation model, I can assure you that within three months, similar games will inevitably appear on the market."

Qi Yun nodded in agreement: "That's also why I asked Mengmeng to bring you in. Now, I want to know what your plan is."

Xiang Xiaoyue handed over a document: "If you're willing to listen in detail, you might need to prepare to stay here all day. This is my proposal for the future development direction of the game."

"If you don't have much time to spend here, my answer is simple."

"As long as you provide sufficient support, I'm confident we can officially launch and start making a profit in two months."

Her gaze met Qi Yun's directly, her words full of confidence.

Qi Yun returned her gaze, looked into her eyes for a few seconds, then eventually smiled and placed the proposal aside: "Let's talk about your salary expectations."

"Fifty thousand." Xiang Xiaoyue replied bluntly.

Qi Yun agreed immediately without much thought. Judging from her resume, she was a capable person. If she could indeed achieve what she claimed, fifty thousand was not much.

He extended his hand and said: "Welcome to the team. You will be the company's product operations director from now on."

Xiang Xiaoyue smiled for the first time, stood up, and shook Qi Yun's hand: "Thank you, boss."

"Alright, go find Mengmeng to help you get familiarized first, I will announce your appointment shortly."

Xiang Xiaoyue nodded and walked out of the meeting room.

After she left, Qi Yun called in Zhong Rui and Yuan Hua, and briefed them on Xiang Xiaoyue.

"From now on, the two of you will cooperate with her work. Report anything beyond your authority to me."

They both nodded: "Okay, boss."

Qi Yun took a sip of the bottled water on the table and continued: "There's another thing, Wu Hongkui from the tech department was bribed by people from Giant Stone Technology, intending to steal our project code."

With these words, they both were taken aback, especially Yuan Hua, who seemed a bit in disbelief.

However, since the words came from Qi Yun, he had no choice but to believe it.

"Zhong Rui, go get him, and also bring his employment documents."

"Alright, boss." Zhong Rui responded and turned to leave.

After he left, Qi Yun looked at Yuan Hua and asked: "Will his departure have a major impact on the project?"

It's important to know that development positions are critical, especially for a small company like theirs, where generally every role is essential.

Yuan Hua shook off his shock and replied somewhat bitterly: "I'm sorry, boss, I didn't..."

Qi Yun interrupted by waving his hand: "Now isn't the time to talk about this, just answer my question first."

Yuan Hua took a deep breath: "Until we recruit someone, I can work overtime to cover his portion of the work."

Qi Yun nodded in satisfaction: "When he resigns, I need you to supervise and ensure he doesn't keep any of the company's code in any form."

"Additionally, as the head of the tech department, you need to be aware of such issues in the future. Don't let our efforts go to waste."

"Yes." Yuan Hua clenched his fists and, with his head down, replied, "I'll pay attention in future."

Qi Yun stood up and patted him on the shoulder: "Alright, this isn't your fault, go get back to work."

"Okay." Yuan Hua responded and left the meeting room, looking a bit dejected.

Before long, Zhong Rui came back with a slightly overweight young man.

"Boss, you were looking for me." Wu Hongkui asked somewhat nervously.

Qi Yun's face showed no emotion. He took the documents Zhong Rui handed over and pointed to the chair beside him: "Have a seat."

Wu Hongkui cautiously pulled out a chair and sat down, his gaze darting around uneasily.

Chapter 316: Director Chu Who Likes to "Have Tea" (Part 2)

Qi Yun was flipping through the other party's labor contract, not lifting his head as he asked, "How much was your monthly salary at the previous company?"

"Ah?" Wu Hongkui was caught off guard by the sudden question and hesitated before answering, "Twelve thousand."

Qi Yun closed the contract and looked up, "Then offering you fifteen thousand isn't shortchanging you, is it?"

Wu Hongkui sensed something might happen and became nervous, "No, not at all, Boss Qi has been quite kind to me..."

Qi Yun nodded, staring straight at him, "Since I haven't shortchanged you, why did you steal the company's code to sell to Giant Stone Technology?"

Wu Hongkui's plump cheeks flushed instantly, his Adam's apple bobbing, "No, I didn't..."

"No need to argue." Qi Yun waved his hand to interrupt, "If I weren't certain about this, I wouldn't have called you here for a talk."

Wu Hongkui turned pale, his palms sweating under the table.

Every programmer signs a confidentiality agreement upon employment; if his actions were confirmed, he might end up in jail.

And even after serving the time, no company would dare hire him.

Thinking of this, he started sweating profusely.

Qi Yun picked up the confidentiality agreement on the table and tossed it over, "You signed this, right?"

Wu Hongkui lowered his head to look, his pudgy fingers rubbing unconsciously on his knees as if wiping cold sweat from his palms.

Qi Yun calmly lit a cigarette, took a puff, and said again, "I'll give you a chance now, explain the whole situation clearly."

Wu Hongkui nervously swallowed, his mouth slightly open, "The day before yesterday, someone from Giant Stone Technology approached me, offered three hundred thousand for the company's core code... My girlfriend demanded thirty thousand as a bride price before marrying me, and in a moment of confusion, I agreed with them..."

Seeing the other party confess honestly, Qi Yun's expression softened a bit; he initially planned to pursue legal action if the other party refused to admit, once evidence was gathered by A-Jie.

"Have you already given them the code?"

"I've... given them some." Wu Hongkui kept his head down, speaking cautiously, "I don't have access to the rest, I was planning to find a reason to ask Yuan Hua for permissions these days."

Qi Yun frowned deeply, picked up his phone to call Yuan Hua over.

"He said he's already given them some of the code, so I want to know if that code leakage is critical for us."

Yuan Hua looked at Wu Hongkui with a grim expression, asked in detail, then turned to Qi Yun and said, "The codes he provided to them are just business codes, not our core content."

Qi Yun remained silent for a moment after listening, then sat upright, extinguished the cigarette butt in his hand, and looked at Yuan Hua, "Provide them with some fake codes, create a little trouble, understand what I mean?"

Yuan Hua nodded, "Understood."

"As for you," Qi Yun turned his gaze to Wu Hongkui, "considering you've worked diligently before, finish this task and then resign voluntarily. Sign an agreement for the three hundred thousand and hand it over to Zhong Rui, as compensation for the company's losses."

Upon hearing this, Wu Hongkui breathed a sigh of relief in his heart, "Thank you, Boss! Thank you, Boss!"

"You may leave now." Qi Yun waved him off.

After the other party left, Zhong Rui quietly asked, "Boss, not holding him accountable?"

Qi Yun gently shook his head, "No point, if we're targeting someone, it should be Giant Stone Technology."

"Alright, report to me once there's an outcome."

With that, he got up and left the meeting room.

...

On the other side, in the New District Branch Chief's office, Liang Tianyou was drinking tea with Director Chu.

"Hehe, what's brought Boss Liang here today to visit me?"

Director Chu chuckled, pouring a cup of tea for the other man. With two months until retirement, he was already stepping back from handling affairs in the office, leaving Vice Director Zhang Dayong to manage everything, thus reducing visitors.

Liang Tianyou took the teacup, smiled, and started, "It's been a while since I visited you. Last time in the district meeting, I didn't get a chance to chat with you."

Director Chu lounged on the leather sofa, fiddling with a piece of Nephrite Jade, "It's hard for someone as busy as Boss Liang to remember an old man about to retire like myself."

"Director Chu, you speak too modestly," Liang Tianyou laughed and shook his head, "You know about the Fuyang Road overpass project. Both district and city authorities place high importance on it, and I'm almost always occupied there, with no time to spare for anything else."

Saying this, he lowered his tone, "A few days ago, a friend gifted me two boxes of tea leaves. I'll ask my driver to put them in your trunk later."

Director Chu laughed heartily at that, patting Liang Tianyou's shoulder, "Boss Liang is thoughtful, remembering my fondness for tea."

After some pleasantries, they finally got to the main topic.

"Director Chu, I actually came here for something, hoping you could make a call on my behalf."

Director Chu, knowing Liang wouldn't come empty-handed, picked up the teacup and sipped, "Go ahead, what is it?"

"Hehe, here's the situation." Liang Tianyou immediately recounted the incident where someone died on the construction site and how his brother-in-law instigated others to beat up Liu Meng.

For a boss worth over a billion, there's no need to lie over trivial matters like these.

"My brother-in-law is young and reckless in his deeds. I was even considering letting him spend a few days in jail to learn a lesson."

"But my wife won't stop nagging at home, so could you see if you can pull some strings to get him out? I'll cover all compensations for the injured fully."

In truth, apart from his wife nagging, another reason for his morning visit was a call from Fuyang Road Branch C informing him that the person had been taken to the branch.

Coupled with the minor injury report from the previous day, it immediately alerted him of an unusual twist.

His brother-in-law spending a few days in detention was fine, but if he ended up in prison, his wife would be nagging nonstop.

Hearing this, Director Chu was somewhat surprised, implying with a look: Is it worth bringing this small matter to me?

"Where is he detained? I'll check." He picked up the phone on the coffee table as he spoke.

Liang Tianyou laughed and shook his head, "He was at Fuyang Road Branch C, but I heard he's been taken to the branch office."

"To the branch office?" Director Chu was taken aback, sensing that the situation might not be as simple.

"Yes."

Director Chu pondered briefly, then found the phone number of the Fuyang Road Branch C chief on his phone.

"Was there a fighting case in your area yesterday?"

"Who took the person away?"

"Public Security Brigade?"

After hanging up, he found the current team's lieutenant Ma Baoguo's number.

"Director Chu, hello." Ma Baoguo's respectful voice came through the receiver.

"Hmm, did you take some people from Fuyang Road Branch C last night?"

"Yes, Director."

Director Chu spoke irritably, "Who authorized you to take them? Is there so little work for the Public Security Brigade that you're interfering with the branch's business?"

"Yes, yes, Director, your criticism is warranted, but this matter was arranged by Vice Director Zhang; I was just following orders."

While Ma Baoguo's tone was respectful, he clearly anticipated this call, immediately distancing himself by involving Zhang Dayong.

Upon hearing this, Director Chu was momentarily speechless, paused for two seconds, then replied curtly, "Got it," before hanging up.

Seeing this, Liang Tianyou asked, "Director Chu, what's wrong?"

Director Chu sighed, "It was Zhang Dayong who took them. I'll make a call to inquire." He dialed a number while continuing, "You know I basically don't manage things anymore."

The implication being, don't blame me if it's not resolved.

Liang Tianyou, understanding, nodded with a smile, "Alright, please help inquire."

Chapter 317: The New District Big Brother's Strength

However, what Director Chu didn't expect was that he called Zhang Dayong twice, but no one answered.

Helpless, he had to call the contact person and was informed that Zhang had gone to a local substation to guide work.

At this moment, he truly understood what it meant for people to change their attitudes when one is gone.

It wasn't just his face that looked unpleasant; Liang Tianyou's face was equally gloomy. The situation was clear; Zhang Dayong had anticipated someone would look for him and had simply hidden away—he didn't want to show even a hint of courtesy.

"Boss Liang, forgive me for being an old man about to retire, but I am powerless here. You'd better find someone else for this matter. I won't take the tea, and you don't need to have the driver see me off," Director Chu sighed.

Liang Tianyou smiled and shook his head: "What are you saying, Director Chu? The tea is a gift for friends and has nothing to do with whether this situation gets resolved."

From this sentence alone, you can tell he's a billionaire for a reason; his perspective and way of handling things are something my little brother-in-law could learn from.

After leaving the branch bureau, he pulled out his phone and dialed a number.

"Go and investigate for me; what's the background of the person who got beaten at the construction site yesterday?"

"Make it quick; I'm waiting for your news."

After hanging up the phone, he got into the car and instructed the driver to head to the city hall.

...

On the other side, Qi Yun finished dealing with matters at the company and went to take a look at Peng Ge's office, but seeing that Peng Ge wasn't there, he headed to the parking lot to wait.

About ten minutes later, a brown business vehicle parked nearby, and Ah Jiao stepped out holding some documents.

"I've checked it out; the real owner of that construction site is named Liang Tianyou, the owner of Tianyou Construction Company. The company is quite powerful and has undertaken many government projects," Ah Jiao said as she handed over the documents.

Qi Yun took them and flipped through them carefully. Just as Ah Jiao said, the other party indeed had significant power, having even been involved in the city's Subway Line 2 project; no need to mention his extensive connections.

However, Qi Yun was now determined to stand up for his brother.

"Okay, there's another thing I need you to do."

"There's a film crew called 'Desert Eagle' shooting nearby, I've heard there's a batch of old furniture being disposed of. Find out where they are and buy all the Eight Immortals tables they're selling for me," Qi Yun instructed as he put away the documents.

"Huh?" Ah Jiao was stunned for a moment, not quite understanding at once, given the abrupt change in topic.

Qi Yun didn't explain further, continuing, "I'll send you an address later; once you've bought them, deliver the items there for me."

"Oh, okay." Ah Jiao responded, then headed back towards the business vehicle.

Qi Yun extinguished his cigarette and after pondering for a moment, got into the nearby parked BMW 5 Series.

...

At West Mountain, inside an office of a certain sand and gravel factory, Luo Yang was playing mahjong with some of his staff.

Just then, the door of the steel-panel room was suddenly pushed open, and Qi Yun walked in.

Noticing this, Luo Yang gave his position to one of the staff to take over, then went to sit on the sofa with Qi Yun.

"You're such a big boss; why have you come to hang around a sand and gravel factory personally?" Qi Yun took the smoke offered by the other party and asked curiously.

Luo Yang flicked his cigarette on the table and smiled: "I've already told you I'm a straightforward guy, just love playing cards and spending time with ladies."

Qi Yun smacked his lips and then asked, "How's Old Ghost?"

Luo Yang held the cigarette in his mouth, lit it, and took a puff: "Went to the hospital to see him this morning; he should be able to get up and around after staying in bed for another couple of days."

Qi Yun nodded, lighting his cigarette as well.

"Have you come looking for me for something?" Luo Yang glanced at Qi Yun.

"Yes, wanted to ask if you know Liang Tianyou?"

"Liang Tianyou? That guy from Tianyou Construction Company?"

"Yes."

Luo Yang stroked the stubble on his chin: "I wouldn't say I know him, but we've had business dealings; almost any local construction site buys sand from my factories."

"What's up? Why are you asking about him?"

Qi Yun exhaled a smoke ring and replied, "We've got a bit of a conflict. From your site, was it that the materials for Fuyang Road's elevated bridge construction were sourced?"

"Yeah, the sand and gravel for the New District is sourced from this yard." Luo Yang pointed outside as he spoke.

Looking through the steel-panel room's window, Qi Yun saw the yard's considerable size. There were several conveyor belts running; in the center, a dozen soil trucks were parked, while two large excavators loaded materials into them.

He turned back to Luo Yang and said, "I want to hold him up; can you help?"

Luo Yang was momentarily stunned, then after a brief silence, he asked suspiciously, "You've got conflict with him?"

Qi Yun nodded: "My friend's brother-in-law died on his construction site. My friend went to demand compensation and got beaten by his men."

"Is that true?" Luo Yang furrowed his brow, flicking off some ash. "Deaths on construction sites are common, but such handling is somewhat inconsiderate."

"Indeed."

Luo Yang continued asking: "You want me to stop supplying his sand and gravel?"

"Exactly, but don't make it obvious, so it doesn't damage your factory's reputation," Qi Yun replied.

After hearing this, Luo Yang rubbed his face and said to Qi Yun: "Technically, with Old Ghost's connection, we should be friends too, it's not that I don't want to help you, the problem is I have a contract with their company. Delaying supply even for a day would cost me tens of thousands in penalty."

Qi Yun chuckled: "I'll cover the penalty, plus I'll throw in an extra fifty for your trouble."

"But I think he's unlikely to ask you for the penalty; his site's schedule is tight, he can't afford delays. With this matter of mine, it has to be settled within three days."

Upon hearing this, Luo Yang's furrowed brow immediately smoothed: "You've said this much; what else is there to discuss? Shall we start the hold-up today?"

"Alright."

Having received confirmation, Luo Yang immediately called over a staff member and instructed: "Go tell the dispatcher, move Tianyou Company's materials to the back of the line, each truck."

The staff didn't ask for details and quickly ran off to pass on the instruction.

"Thanks, eh."

Luo Yang waved dismissively: "No need for thanks between friends."

Qi Yun nodded and continued asking, "Is there any chance he might source from another yard?"

"Impossible." Luo Yang shook his head confidently, "Those smaller yards are too slow, and without my approval, they wouldn't dare supply the New District's sites."

His words displayed his unmistakable clout as the New District boss.

With things settled, Qi Yun didn't linger.

Even though Luo Yang refused the fifty for trouble, Qi Yun still called Chen Wei over asking him to bring in a parcel.

"Okay, I'll head out now; once done, let's have a meal," Qi Yun said.

"Alright, I'll see you off then." Luo Yang stood up and escorted Qi Yun to the exit.

Back in the car, Qi Yun was about to call Zhang Dayong to ask about the situation, but just as he pulled out his phone, a call came in.

Chapter 318: Thirty Million in the Photographs

"Qi Yun, I've been researching the map you sent me recently, and I've made some progress!" Ignacio's voice was full of excitement on the other end of the phone.

Qi Yun's heart involuntarily skipped a beat; he was equally curious about the map salvaged from the San Jose.

What kind of mysterious treasure was worth the entire Louis Family's thousand-year search, even prompting each king since Louis II to order secret investigations upon their accession?

"Based on my research, the map appears to depict six locations, all within Asia."

"But I still can't determine the exact positions. I need to go back to Spain to consult my teacher, who has extensive research on Ancient European culture."

Qi Yun felt slightly disappointed after hearing this; he initially thought Ignacio had already cracked the map.

Then again, if it was that easy to find, it probably wouldn't have been his turn.

Even though the exact locations aren't known yet, at least progress has been made.

"Alright, Mr. Ignacio, if you need any help from me, just let me know directly."

"I will." Ignacio paused momentarily, then continued, "Qi Yun, I must remind you, you must keep the map's details confidential. Try not to disclose it to others; otherwise, it might bring trouble to you."

Qi Yun knew this even without being told. Since he got the map, only he, his roommate Old Hei, and Ignacio had seen it.

"Rest assured, Mr. Ignacio, I won't reveal it to others." Qi Yun replied immediately.

"Good, I'll return to Spain soon. I'll inform you as soon as I have any news." With that, Ignacio hung up the phone.

...

Meanwhile, a hotel in the old town welcomed several special guests.

Five men and one woman, one of the men had a panicked expression, with sweat occasionally dripping from his forehead.

His hands were bound in front of him, covered by a coat, while four stern-looking men surrounded him in the middle.

They were taken to two guest rooms at the far end of the second floor. After entering the room, the woman instructed the attendant, "The room doesn't need cleaning, don't disturb unless I call for you."

"Alright." The attendant responded and turned away.

After the attendant left, the woman also closed the door.

The sweating man was pressed into a chair, and the coat covering him was removed, revealing handcuffs on his wrist.

A middle-aged man who seemed to be the leader pulled up a chair and sat down, opening with, "Zhou Wenfu, are you going to come clean yourself, or do we have to ask?"

The man named Zhou Wenfu lifted his arm to wipe the sweat from his forehead and nervously replied, "Comrade, what crime have I committed for you to arrest me so suddenly? I don't even know why."

The middle-aged man stared at him for a moment before taking a stack of photos from his pocket, placing them on the table, and sneering, "You'd better think carefully before speaking. If you confess voluntarily, the outcome is different from us interrogating you."

Zhou Wenfu's pupils suddenly contracted as he stared at the photos on the table; they depicted a closed room filled with shelves stacked high with hundred dollar bills and some gold bars.

At a rough glance, there were at least tens of millions!

The panic on his face became more evident, sweat soaking his collar.

"These photos were taken in a secret room on your estate. Do you think we'd bring you here without sufficient evidence? I hope you seize the opportunity," the middle-aged man continued to wear down his psychological defenses.

Zhou Wenfu raised his head, swallowed hard, and opened his mouth: "This... this... this money is all earned from my business."

"Earned from your business?" The middle-aged man sneered, "It seems you're still unwilling to cooperate."

Zhou Wenfu's gaze lingered on the photos. After a moment of silence, he spoke again: "Can I have a cigarette?"

The middle-aged man signaled to a subordinate, who stepped forward, took a cigarette from his pocket, put it in Zhou Wenfu's mouth, and lit it for him.

Zhou Wenfu took several deep puffs, and the smoke slowly seeped from his nostrils, alleviating some of his tension.

From the moment they found him, he had guessed the reason. Combining that with the photos in front of him, he could confirm that these people were targeting his cousin.

Though hard to believe because his cousin was a high-ranking officer, the evidence before him left him no choice but to accept.

After the initial panic, he gradually calmed down, contemplating countermeasures...

"You've had your cigarette, can you talk now?" The middle-aged man urged.

Zhou Wenfu's hand holding the cigarette slightly trembled, the handcuffs making a faint sound, and he suddenly grinned: "Comrade, I don't know why you broke into my house, but this money is all earned from my business, and the estate is my legal asset."

The middle-aged man's eyebrows rose, fingers tapping on the cash in the photo: "There's a total of 30 million in this secret room, can your shell company earn that much?"

"It seems you still hold onto some wishful thinking, thinking Zhou Wenbin can save you? Let me tell you, even if you remain silent, we too have ways to apprehend him."

Zhou Wenfu's eyelid twitched at this, seeming to assess the truth of the middle-aged man's words.

After a while, he spoke again: "Comrade, I don't know what you're talking about. If Zhou Wenbin is a criminal, you should just go arrest him, why bring me here."

The middle-aged man frowned slightly, seemingly unwilling to waste more words on him, stood up, and instructed the four men behind him: "From now on, work in pairs and make sure he spills everything he knows."

"Yes." The four stood straight and answered.

...

Antique Street, Qiuyue Pavilion.

Shi Feng looked at several Eight Immortals tables placed in the room, flicked his sparse bangs, and asked the pretty woman in front of him, "Did Old Qi have you deliver these?"

Ah Jiao nodded: "Yes, the boss instructed me to deliver them."

Upon hearing this, Shi Feng suspiciously pulled out his phone to call Qi Yun.

"Why did you bring a few broken tables to my store?"

On the other end of the phone, Qi Yun was having tea with Zhang Dayong. When he instructed Ah Jiao in the morning to buy Eight Immortals tables, he had no idea how many the film crew was selling, so he asked her to buy them all.

Hearing Shi Feng's question, he laughed and replied: "Testing your eyes, one of the tables is made of Hainan Huanghuali wood."

Hearing the mention of Hainan Huanghuali, Shi Feng immediately circled the tables, scrutinizing them closely, and replied disdainfully: "What, you think this could test my eyesight?"

Qi Yun didn't hang up, quietly waiting.

A few minutes later, an exclamation came through the receiver, "Damn, it really is Hainan Huanghuali!"

"Found it?" Qi Yun laughed and asked.

"You think I wouldn't? If I couldn't recognize this, I might as well close shop," Shi Feng scoffed, "Why did you have it delivered to me? Is it for me?"

Qi Yun replied helplessly: "Your appetite is getting bigger, just help me sell it off, I'll give you ten percent commission."

"Alright!" Shi Feng responded happily.

After hanging up, Qi Yun smiled and shook his head, turning his gaze back to Zhang Dayong opposite him.

"You just mentioned, how many years could he get sentenced to?"

Chapter 319: Sincerity Worth Five Million

In a private room of a certain teahouse, Zhang Dayong was twirling a tea cup in his hand, answering Qi Yun's earlier question.

"Normally, with the injury report from a top-tier hospital, and the fact that those guys who beat you up have confessed, they should get a sentence of two to three years without any issue."

"However, if we don't push hard on our side, this case might get stuck at the prosecutor's office even if we submit it."

"The guy who instigated the beating is Liang Tianyou's brother-in-law. They have significant connections in the city; I've already received several calls this morning alone."

Qi Yun chuckled, took a sip of tea, and said, "Then he should understand the situation by now."

"My original intention wasn't to lock those guys up. If he can put down his bossy attitude and show the right kind of responsibility, then this matter can be settled. But if he's as bad as his brother-in-law, then I'll definitely make things difficult for him."

Zhang Dayong nodded in agreement, "As long as you know what you're doing. Personally, I suggest that if there's room for negotiation, it's best not to get too hostile with them."

Qi Yun slightly nodded, indicating his understanding.

...

Meanwhile, Liang Tianyou walked out of the city government building with a grim expression.

He initially planned to use his connections to get his brother-in-law out, but unexpectedly, Zhang Dayong was unyielding and refused to give face to anyone.

Moreover, the people he consulted with told him that the people behind Zhang Dayong were very powerful, and since this was within their jurisdiction, they could not force them to release anyone.

Returning to his car, Liang Tianyou took out his phone and dialed a subordinate's number.

"I asked you to investigate that person's background. Have you figured it out?"

"Yes, the information is clear. I'll send it to you now."

After hanging up, Liang Tianyou opened a file which detailed Liu Meng and his family's information.

But after reading it, his frown deepened, as the other party's background was exceptionally clean—just an ordinary citizen.

Yet, how could such an ordinary person make Zhang Dayong go to such lengths?

Just as he was puzzled and was about to personally visit Liu Meng, another call from his subordinate came through.

"Boss, the sand and gravel supply from the Fuyang site is falling behind."

"If it's behind, can't you call the quarry to hurry them up? Do I have to teach you these things?" Liang Tianyou said irritably.

"I've already reminded them several times, but it's still no use. Half the day has passed, and we've only received one truckload. I asked the driver, and he said other sites are being served as usual."

"Maybe you should think of something, or else today's work will be delayed again."

After the report, Liang Tianyou furrowed his brows.

He immediately connected this matter with Zhang Dayong's response, his expression gradually becoming serious.

The sand and gravel company owner is Luo Yang, and Liang Tianyou knows very well who Luo Yang is, having no prior feuds with him. The reason why Luo Yang did this was obvious.

"I understand." After saying that, Liang Tianyou hung up and, after considering for a while, looked up Luo Yang's number and dialed out.

However, the phone rang for a long time but was never answered.

He set the phone aside, not attempting to redial, and instead lit a cigarette.

As the ash neared dropping, he suddenly told the driver, "Inform them to prepare some wreaths to send to the funeral home, and prepare five million in cash to be taken to the entrance of the funeral home to wait for me."

After giving his orders, Liang Tianyou gazed out the window with a long sigh.

He had figured out the meaning behind the other party's actions. He wasn't doing it because he was scared, but because he deemed it unnecessary.

With his connections in the city government, even if he couldn't get his brother-in-law out now, he could certainly ensure he wouldn't go to prison. However, doing so might cost more than five million.

Moreover, another crucial point was that although Liang Tianyou wasn't a saint, he still had a conscience regarding the money he earned.

Upon learning about the death at the construction site, he had prepared two million for compensation to the deceased's family. It was just his foolish brother-in-law's excessive greed that worsened the situation to this point.

An hour later, outside the entrance of a rural funeral home, Liang Tianyou, accompanied by his driver, walked into the lobby.

Led by the staff, they arrived at a room where the coffin was placed.

Besides Liu Meng and his wife, Li Cuixia, and a few relatives, there was also an elderly man with a grief-stricken expression—Liu Meng's father-in-law.

Faced with the sudden appearance of this stranger, everyone looked over in confusion.

Liang Tianyou walked up to the coffin, solemnly bowed three times, and then approached Liu Meng, saying, "You're Liu Meng, right? I'm the boss of the construction site. Mind stepping outside for a chat?"

Upon hearing him declare himself as the construction site boss, everyone inside immediately looked at him unfavorably. While Li Jie died due to an accident, it happened on his site, and Liu Meng was beaten when seeking compensation.

"I'm deeply sorry for what happened before."

Liu Meng gave the man a cold look and then walked towards the door, his wife, Li Cuixia, following worriedly to prevent her husband from being wronged again.

After both parties came outside, Liang Tianyou signaled to the driver, who handed two briefcases to Liu Meng.

"The cases contain a total of five million, with two million as compensation from our company for Li Jie's unfortunate demise and an additional three million as my personal compensation to you."

Chapter 320: Sincerity Worth Five Million

"My brother-in-law is young and reckless, so I'm here to apologize on his behalf. I hope this can resolve the misunderstanding between us."

Liu Meng stared at the briefcase handed over by the driver, his expression somewhat stunned. He hadn't expected the other party to come bearing money, and it was five million right off the bat.

However, considering the changes in the other party's attitude, he guessed that Qi Yun must have done something, so he didn't just take the money on his own accord.

Li Cuixia next to him was equally shocked, somewhat scared by the figure of five million.

Seeing Liu Meng hesitate to take the money, Liang Tianyou spoke again: "I was on a business trip out of town a couple of days ago and didn't address this matter at the construction site in time, which is why things escalated to this point. I also owe you an apology."

"If you have any other requests, feel free to ask."

Liu Meng snapped out of his shock, shook his head, and said, "Let me make a call first."

Liang Tianyou nodded slightly: "Go ahead."

Liu Meng walked a few steps away, took out his phone, and dialed Qi Yun's number.

"Old Qi, someone claiming to be the boss of the construction site came over to apologize and brought five million, wanting to settle."

Qi Yun had already received a message from Luo Yang, informing him about Liang Tianyou's call. Qi Yun had initially thought it would take two or three days before the other party would come around, but he didn't expect them to get impatient after just one day.

He thought to himself, it seems they're really anxious.

However, he was wrong this time. Although Liang Tianyou was indeed anxious, he wasn't so desperate as to surrender so easily.

The fundamental reason was that he also felt his reckless brother-in-law acted inappropriately.

Even without the gravel incident, after Liang Tianyou cleaned up his brother-in-law's mess, he would still come to Liu Meng for compensation, though it might not have been as much as five million.

"Haha, since they gave it to you, just take it. Consider this matter settled," Qi Yun replied with a chuckle.

Liu Meng nodded: "Alright, I'll find some time to send the money to you."

"Why send it to me? Do I lack that bit? Handle the money yourself. If someone comes asking you to sign a reconciliation agreement, just sign it."

"This..." Liu Meng initially wanted to say something more, but knowing Qi Yun's temperament, he ultimately sighed, "Okay, I'll do as you say."

After hanging up the phone, he returned and took the two cases from the driver's outstretched hand.

"I've accepted the money, and the matter is settled."

"Haha, well, thank you then. I won't bother you any longer," Liang Tianyou said, then left with the driver. As for what happens next, his subordinates would naturally handle it.

Once they were far enough away, Li Cuixia tugged at Liu Meng's arm and pointed at the cases, asking, "Didn't they say they'd only compensate fifty thousand? Why did they bring five million this time?"

"Old Qi handled it, I don't really know the specifics either."

Hearing this, Li Cuixia paused, then sighed, "Brother Qi Yun arranged such a good job for you, and we haven't repaid him for that favor yet. Now, he helped again with such a big issue..."

"Why don't you take out the two million from Dad, and send the rest to him."

Liu Meng shook his head helplessly: "He won't accept it. Forget it, let's hold onto it for now." With that, he glanced at the relatives inside the house, "Don't tell anyone about this for now. Wait until Xiao Jie is buried, then send the money to Dad."

Li Cuixia also glanced over, understanding what he meant, and nodded to show she understood.

.....

That night, after coaxing Zhao Qing to sleep, Qi Yun went to the study, just about to light a cigarette when the phone on the desk vibrated softly.

He picked it up and saw Mendeleyev's name on the screen.

Judging by the time, it should be afternoon for our friends over there.

"How's the situation?" Qi Yun answered the call and asked.

Previously, for the shipment that was detained, Mendeleyev had sought Nokovic, but to no avail. He said he'd think of other ways, though it was unclear if it was successful.

"No luck," Mendeleyev sighed, "I've confirmed that someone is playing tricks behind the scenes."

"A company here has started the same business as us, and this company is backed by H gang, so those officials are scared to take our money."

Qi Yun frowned slightly after hearing this: "Are you sure?"

"Yes, a senator here told me."

Qi Yun thought for a moment and replied, "Then let me try something. Take care of yourself, and don't engage in open conflict with them."

"Don't worry, I understand."

"Alright, keep it this way. I'll inform you if there's any progress on my end."

Qi Yun said no more, hung up the phone, and immediately dialed Li Yaohua's number.

However, the dial tone was replaced by an "unavailable" message.

Knowing the other party was busy, Qi Yun assumed he might be on a plane and planned to try contacting him again tomorrow.

After putting down the phone, he lit a cigarette, starting to review the day's intelligence.

[Current Intelligence Points: 34]

[Today's Intelligence #1 (Green): The Bayin River section flowing through the north of the city has initiated a river sand mining project, which will be conducted through public bidding. The bidding deadline is tomorrow at noon; the third segment of the river holds a large amount of high-quality quartz sand]

Quartz sand?

Though quite common, high-quality quartz sand is rare and expensive.

Cheap ones go for twenty or thirty thousand per ton, while the expensive ones can reach hundreds of thousands. Many photovoltaic and semiconductor companies have a massive demand for this.

Green-grade intelligence means a minimum profit of tens of millions, but the bidding deadline is tomorrow, making it too tight a schedule.

Participating in such project bids definitely requires professional qualifications...

And everyone understands how these bids work—without prior connections, you're just there for show.

The only chance to avoid missing this opportunity is to collaborate with others...

[Today's Intelligence #2 (Red): Half an hour ago, two mysterious white men approached Jeff, the captain of the Deep Sea Hunter, inquiring about his last voyage. Jeff couldn't resist the temptation of money and revealed everything to them]

Seeing this intelligence, Qi Yun's heart skipped a beat.

Two mysterious white men!

The secret of the sunken ship's treasure was bound to be discovered eventually; he had anticipated this since there were so many people on board at the time.

However, since those items were long sold and likely already in the market, the fact they're still asking around seemed rather unusual.

What is their motive? Are they after the map? Or do they know some insider information?

Qi Yun, with a furrowed brow, was deep in thought.

[Today's Intelligence #3 (Red): Disciplinary staff dispatched from the province has secretly begun investigating Zhou Wenbin]

Another bombshell of news!

Zhang Dayong's backer has begun to make a move...

This is favorable news for him since Zhou Wenbin is also on the USB list... if he's taken down, that will be one less potential threat.

But the next second, Qi Yun suddenly remembered something, quickly picking up his phone to dial a number.

The call rang for half a minute before it was answered, with Mr. Bi's voice coming through: "Brother Qi, calling so late, what's up?"

"Mm, I have something to tell you. It's not convenient over the phone, let's meet up."

Mr. Bi, suspicious, asked, "Now?"

"Yes," Qi Yun confirmed.

Mr. Bi seemed to pick on the seriousness in Qi Yun's tone, asked no further questions, and promptly replied, "Alright, let's meet at the same place as last time, I'm heading there now."

After hanging up, Qi Yun changed his clothes and quietly left the house.

Gao Min was on duty outside. Upon hearing noises, she opened the door and leaned out to ask, "Heading out?"

Qi Yun nodded at her: "No need to follow. I'm just meeting a friend."

Upon hearing this, Gao Min didn't insist: "Then give me the address."

Qi Yun knew she was just being cautious, but to cooperate with her work, he took out his phone and sent the address over.

After he drove away, Gao Min took out her phone and called Laohai: "The boss has gone out. I'll send the address over, go keep an eye."