

Middle Age 331

Chapter 331: Kid, You're Really Good at Sucking Up?

After sending Cockroach Qiang away, Qi Yun and Brother Hui returned to the office.

Brother Hui, who had been holding back for a long time, finally asked the question he was itching to know: "Old Brother Qi, what exactly happened just now? Why did Cockroach Qiang's attitude suddenly change?"

Qi Yun did not explain much, he simply laughed and said, "I contacted a friend who happens to know Mr. Fu."

"I see." Brother Hui nodded in understanding, yet with some curiosity.

Back when the two met, it was through General Manager Bi's introduction, so he always regarded Qi Yun as someone at General Manager Bi's level.

But now, Qi Yun could casually make a phone call and influence Mr. Fu's decision, which made him reassess Qi Yun.

To know, Mr. Fu is quite influential on Hong Kong Island, what kind of person could sway the decisions of such a big shot...

"Thanks for your help this time, Brother Hui." Qi Yun took out a cigarette and offered him one.

Brother Hui accepted the cigarette, waved his hand, and said, "We're friends, there's no need to be so formal, and besides, I didn't actually help you much." He lit the cigarette, inhaled deeply, and slowly exhaled a smoke ring, "I won't lie, before and after all this, my heart was in my throat."

"I truly cannot afford to offend Mr. Fu; fortunately, you, Old Brother Qi, have real capabilities."

Qi Yun chuckled and shook his head, choosing not to dwell on the topic: "I plan to head back inland tomorrow, let's have a good relaxation tonight."

Brother Hui waved grandly: "Oh, now that you're here on Hong Kong Island, there's no need for you to arrange anything, I'll have someone prepare it shortly."

"Old Brother Qi, did you like that restaurant we went to last time, haha."

...

Meanwhile, at a villa in France Leon.

A middle-aged man in a suit stood by the window, talking on the phone.

From his furrowed brow, it was evident the conversation wasn't pleasant.

"Sorry, De Gaulle, the one making the request of me, I cannot refuse, so I can't help with your matter."

Listening to the reply on the phone, the man referred to as De Gaulle furrowed his brows even deeper.

He keenly caught two keywords in that sentence: 'request', the other said 'request' rather than 'plea', these two words have vastly different meanings.

He toyed with a cigar in his hand and asked, "Mr. Fu, is it convenient to tell me the identity of the other party?"

"Sorry, I can't reveal that." The voice on the other end of the phone refused categorically.

De Gaulle sighed, "Alright then, I'll leave you to it."

After hanging up, his gaze pierced through the window, staring into the distance.

Previously unclear why his subordinates were captured by local Hong Kong Island gangs, from his conversation with Fu Guangxiang earlier, it was apparent it was Qi Yun's doing.

It seems he underestimated the opponent, managing to rapidly discover his people investigating him, and could also mount a swift counterattack.

What's more perplexing, the records indicate the opponent is an ordinary person, what connections did he use to make Fu Guangxiang retreat, and with such secrecy, unwilling even to disclose anything to him.

Could there be more undisclosed powerful backgrounds of Qi Yun?

...

On the next day, in the car heading to Pengcheng Airport, Qi Yun was making a phone call.

"Captain Ge, thanks a lot for this incident."

On the phone, Ge Dabao responded with a smile: "Thank Director Duan if you need to thank someone, he's the one who came forward to help contact, I don't have that kind of influence."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile upon hearing that, "Haha, I'm currently on my way to Peng City Airport, I'll thank him in person when I return."

"Alright, also, let me remind you privately, this time it's only because of catching the illegal entry, Director Duan had a reason to communicate with Hong Kong Island; next time may not be the case."

"After all, we are a special department serving national security, unless it's a threat to national security, many things we cannot easily engage in, understand?" Ge Dabao spoke earnestly.

Qi Yun quickly replied, "Understood, I'll be cautious in the future."

Ge Dabao further added, "Although said like that, you are part of us, if your personal safety is threatened, we won't stand idly by."

"Alright, let's leave it here, have a meal when you return."

"Haha, no problem."

After hanging up, Qi Yun frowned while looking out the window, feeling somewhat heavy-hearted.

Although capturing them in Hong Kong Island this time, he didn't acquire much useful information, being stalked secretly makes one feel quite uneasy.

Next to him, Chen Wei turned and asked, "What do you plan to do with that person? That guy is quite capable; if he escapes, it can be a safety hazard."

Qi Yun shook his head, his tone steady: "He can't escape, I reckon he's already been taken away."

If it were before the interrogation, Qi Yun might have worried about the opponent revealing secrets about him, but now he didn't worry at all.

Because the opponent was just doing the job, only knew about him going to salvage a sunken ship, which was not a secret affair, nor too hidden, after all, there were so many people aboard at that time.

An hour later, Qi Yun and the others arrived at Peng City Airport.

Niu Da and Duan Pingyu directly returned to Bird City, he himself took Chen Wei to Beijing.

He had two purposes for this trip, one was to thank Fu Wentao and Li Yaohua personally, as they were significantly helpful during his last trip to South Africa.

Another was to take the opportunity to inquire about Charles de Gaulle Gwen's background; with the Fu Family's global network, perhaps they might know of this person.

Chapter 332: Kid, You're Really Good at Sucking Up?

At six in the afternoon, the plane slowly descended at Beijing International Airport.

As the cabin door opened, a rush of familiar dry air flowed in.

Li Yaohua, who had gotten the news in advance, personally came to pick him up. As soon as they met, he warmly gave Qi Yun a bear hug and then took a half-step back to look him up and down, joking, "Little Brother Qi, we haven't seen each other for a few days, and you've gotten sturdier!"

Qi Yun patted Chen Wei's shoulder beside him: "I usually work out with him when I'm free."

Li Yaohua nodded at Chen Wei, then said, "Let's go, I've arranged a hotel for you. The boss is still busy at the moment; I'll take you to see him tonight."

"Sorry to trouble you," Qi Yun replied with a smile.

"Hey, don't be so formal with me." Li Yaohua waved it off casually. "Later, I'll take you to a nice place."

The three of them headed to the parking lot and left the airport in a Maybach with regular plates.

It was rush hour, so the roads were congested, and it took over an hour for the car to finally stop in front of a five-star hotel.

Li Yaohua had directly arranged for two presidential suites, each costing six figures per night.

Despite Qi Yun's current wealth exceeding hundreds of millions, he still wasn't quite used to such luxury.

Li Yaohua laughed and explained, "The hotel is owned by the boss. Next time you come to Beijing, just stay here. I've already told the manager."

"Haha, alright, thank you for your kind offer, Brother Li," Qi Yun responded with a smile.

Though he said this, even if he really came again, he wouldn't stay here, as there's no need to take advantage of minor benefits like this.

After resting in the room for a while, Li Yaohua glanced at his watch and said, "It's about time. Let's head over."

Qi Yun also took out his phone and looked, "Wait a few more minutes, the stuff I had sent is just about here."

"Alright." Li Yaohua didn't ask further.

Ten minutes later, the doorbell to the room rang.

When Qi Yun opened the door, he saw three burly men standing outside. They were dressed in uniform, and one of them was holding a suitcase.

"Are you Mr. Qi?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Yes, that's me."

After verifying the information, the man handed the suitcase to Qi Yun.

Back inside, Qi Yun put the suitcase on the table, spun the lock to open it, revealing three brocade boxes nestled inside soft fabric.

"What's this stuff?" Li Yaohua curiously approached.

Qi Yun opened the first brocade box, which held a piece of Nephrite Jade the size of a pigeon egg. Qi Yun picked up the jade and handed it to Li Yaohua.

The latter took it and examined it closely.

This piece of Nephrite Jade was a flawless snow-white, exceptionally pure, with a quality even surpassing that of traditional Mutton Fat Jade.

"Thanks for all your care, Brother Li. It's a small token of appreciation; you must accept it. Otherwise, you'd be disrespecting me," Qi Yun said with a smile.

This jade was sourced by contacting Boss Bi the night before last, then having Zhong Rui contact the logistics company that specializes in transporting high-end goods to airfreight it to Beijing.

Though not large, this jade wasn't cheap by any means, valuable enough to swap for his mansion.

The chief value, however, lies in its rarity; such items are seldom seen on the market.

Li Yaohua caressed the piece of Nephrite Jade repeatedly, feeling its smooth texture at his fingertips, "Little Brother Qi, you're too generous!" He had seen many treasures before, yet this pure Mutton Fat Jade still caught him by surprise.

"Just a token of gratitude, don't be formal with me," Qi Yun said again.

Li Yaohua nodded: "Alright, I'll accept it shamelessly then."

Qi Yun then opened the other two brocade boxes, and the items inside were even grander.

One was a jade thumb ring worn by Emperor Qianlong, with an imperial poem inscribed on it.

The other was a Han Baiyu Jade Pendant, once bestowed by Emperor Yongzheng to a certain minister.

These two treasures were prepared for Fu Wentao and Elder Tong. After some conversations with them last time, he found they were fond of things with historical and cultural significance, so he specifically asked Shi Feng to help pick these out.

These items counted as the centerpiece treasures of the store, with cost prices exceeding eight million.

So, for this trip to Beijing, Qi Yun really went all out.

However, compared to the help Fu Wentao and his associates provided him, this amount of money is trivial, especially as resolving the South African diamond mine issue alone yielded him over a billion in benefits.

After Li Yaohua carefully stored the jade stone, he gazed at the other two treasures in the boxes, finally patting Qi Yun on the shoulder and saying, "Little Brother Qi, you really went the extra mile."

Qi Yun chuckled softly, putting the box with the jade thumb ring into his pocket, then placing the jade pendant into the safe, before leaving the hotel with Li Yaohua.

Even though these items were all remarkably valuable, Qi Yun understood that for people like Fu Wentao and Li Yaohua, who had seen their share of rare goods, the essence of a gift lay in the sentiment.

Since they had lent a hand, he naturally needed to show his appreciation; this is how relationships endure.

Yet, this approach was strictly for people on Fu Wentao's level. If it were someone like Zhou Wenbin, he'd undoubtedly be carrying cash worth ten million.

...

More than half an hour later, the Maybach stopped at the door of a standalone villa.

This villa appeared quite ordinary with a modest size, yet security was tight, with many guards patrolling, each possessing sharp eyes glinting with professional alertness.

Qi Yun followed Li Yaohua inside. At the entrance, a certain kind of unrecognized flowers were placed in a celadon vase, with a faint scent of ink lingering in the air.

In the study, Fu Wentao was standing in front of the desk writing with a brush.

The brush moved skillfully in his hand, and although the posture looked convincing, the characters he wrote were a bit hard to describe.

The four characters "Hai Na Bai Chuan" had the three water strokes in "Hai" crooked into an arc, and the vertical strokes in "Chuan" wobbled like earthworms.

When he finished the piece, he finally put down the brush, looked up, and greeted Qi Yun: "Ah, Little Brother Qi, you're here! How do you like my handwriting?"

Qi Yun moved in closer, pretending to study it intently, then clicked his tongue in exaggerated admiration: "Wow, Brother Fu, your handwriting exudes hidden sharpness, paired with an effortlessly free style; it's got the charm of simplicity disguising wisdom, truly masterful!"

"In my opinion, it's not far off from Wang Xizhi."

Fu Wentao laughed heartily, pointing at Qi Yun and saying, "You, my friend, are always such a delight."

Next to him, Li Yaohua also shot him a half-amused glance, as if to say, "I never knew you were such a bootlicker until now."

Qi Yun showed no embarrassment, earnestly replying, "Brother Fu, you know me, I always prefer calling it as I see it."

"Hahaha, alright, let's eat first, chat while we dine." Fu Wentao waved his hand, inviting the two to the dining area.

The table was already set with several dishes: braised sea cucumber, nine-turn intestines, shrimp in Dragon Well tea, and a steaming pot of Buddha Jumps Over the Wall soup.

Even though these were not rare ingredients, after tasting, Qi Yun found them delicious and full of unforgettable flavor, clearly showcasing the chef's superb skill.

Li Yaohua picked up an unlabeled bottle of liquor, pouring a drink for each of them, joking, "Today I get to enjoy this fine drink, all thanks to Mr. Qi's presence; usually, I wouldn't have the chance."

Since Fu Wentao was present, he switched from "Little Brother Qi" to "Mr. Qi" to address him, showing he's a bit of a smart guy.

"Is that so?" Qi Yun sipped from his glass lightly, feeling a rich aroma spread at the tip of his nose, indicating its quality was akin to his treasured bottles of Maotai from the 1980s.

"Indeed, very fine liquor."

Fu Wentao said with a smile, "If you like it, let the butler give you a couple of bottles when you leave."

"Haha, that's too kind," Qi Yun feigned humility with his words but wouldn't hesitate in taking them, knowing these things can sometimes serve better than gold bars.

Chapter 333: Big Slick on a Hot Griddle

A hotel in Bird City.

A man with slicked-back hair was pacing back and forth in the room, his face full of anxiety.

Ever since he gave Zhou Wenbin those five million USD two days ago, he had been urging the matter of the more than five billion in project funds.

The day before, Secretary Xia had confidently assured him that the funds would start being disbursed the next day. Yet it's been two days, and not a dime has come through.

What's worse, now not only is the money nowhere to be seen, but the people on the other side can't be found either.

It's not just Zhou Wenbin; even Secretary Xia has vanished into thin air as well.

He's used all sorts of connections to inquire around, only to find out that the two haven't even gone to their offices these past couple of days. As for where they've gone, no one knows.

This has made him as anxious as an ant on a hot pan, and a sense of unease starts growing in his heart.

A few minutes later, the phone finally rings, and he eagerly picks it up.

"Hello, did you find out anything?"

"I just spoke to the office deputy director; he said that the night before last, Secretary Xia appeared at the disciplinary department! And then never came out again."

"Wha... what!?"

Upon hearing this news, the man's brain buzzes, instantly going blank.

He collapses onto the ground, his eyes vacant, feeling as if all his energy has been drained from him.

It takes him a long time to mutter to himself, "It's over, it's all over..."

Going into such a place and not coming out for a long time, even an idiot knows what that means.

He can't comprehend why they would do this; could it be Zhou Wenbin also...

With this thought, he suddenly snaps out of it, hurriedly picks up the fallen phone, and with the fastest hand speed of his life, buys a ticket back to Kashi.

Now it's not just about the money being gone; he's in danger too, after all, he has too many shady dealings with those two...

At this point, he only has the gap when he's not yet caught to quickly go back and seek help from his dying old man, or else his life won't be spared...

...

Beijing, Fu Wentao's villa.

After a good meal, the three went to the living room to drink tea.

Qi Yun took the opportunity to give the thumb ring previously worn by Emperor Qianlong to Fu Wentao.

"Thanks to Brother Fu for your timely help earlier, just a little token, I hope you won't mind."

He handed over a brocade box, inside which the jade thumb ring glowed warmly under the light.

"You rascal, you sure know my tastes." Brother Fu laughed as he took it, examined it for a moment and raised his eyebrows, "This thing has quite a background, doesn't it?"

Qi Yun poured him tea, his tone relaxed. "Hehe, supposedly used by Emperor Qianlong, I don't know if that's true."

"Oh?" Fu Wentao expressed curiosity, slipped the thumb ring onto his thumb, studied it against the light for a while, and then suddenly laughed, "Then I won't stand on ceremony with you."

"Don't be polite, don't be polite." Qi Yun replied with a toothy grin.

Fu Wentao nodded with a smile, picked up the teacup for a sip, then glanced at Qi Yun, "You rascal coming to me this time, nothing else to say?"

"If you have something to say, say it quickly," he continued with a teasing tone, "I'm getting old, I sleep early and will rest soon."

Qi Yun rubbed his hands, not awkward at all, "Hehe, there is indeed a small matter, I'd like to ask Brother Fu about."

"Go ahead." Fu Wentao folded his hands over his knees.

"Well, I know Brother Fu has widespread connections, I want to ask if you've heard of Charles de Gaulle Gwen?"

Fu Wentao furrowed his brow and murmured, "Charles de Gaulle Gwen?"

"Exactly." Qi Yun nodded, "Should be related to France."

After a moment of contemplation, Fu Wentao slowly spoke, "I don't know Charles de Gaulle Gwen, but there is indeed a Gwen Clan in France."

"Gwen Clan?" Qi Yun's eyebrows furrowed involuntarily, not expecting it to be more than an individual but a whole clan.

"Yes, this clan is quite mysterious. Many of their businesses are entrusted to outsiders to manage, they seldom appear themselves, and few outside know them." Fu Wentao concluded and turned to Qi Yun, "Why are you asking about this?"

Qi Yun sighed deeply and proceeded to recount the accidental discovery of the sunken ship and their side sending people to investigate him, although he kept the map secret.

"I can't figure out what they want exactly."

Hearing this, Fu Wentao tapped his fingers on his knee, and showed a thoughtful expression: "Considering you've already sold the salvaged items, there's no reason for them to keep an eye on you."

"Unless..." At this point, he glanced at Qi Yun again, his tone flat, "Unless they want to confirm something with you, or there's something else you have that interests them."

Qi Yun heard this and his heart tightened.

No wonder some people's businesses are so successful; damn, these people are truly shrewd, figuring out his secrets with just a few words.

Just as he hesitated, wondering how to respond to the other party, the butler walked in.

"Master, it's time to rest."

Fu Wentao nodded to the opposite party, then stood up and looked at Qi Yun with a faint smile: "Since you're the kid who brought me gifts, if you really can't handle it, you can call me."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun immediately stood up as well, baring his teeth and replied: "With Brother Fu's words, I feel much more at ease."

"Alright, both of you go. I need to rest now." Fu Wentao waved his hand and headed for the second floor.

After leaving the villa, Qi Yun felt much more relaxed. Although he hadn't gathered detailed information about Charles de Gaulle Gwen, at least he had Fu Wentao's promise. If he really encountered unsolvable trouble, he could ask for his help.

However, relying on others is not as good as relying on oneself, so he must also make the necessary arrangements himself.

"Brother Qi, let me take you to a fun place." In the back seat of the Maybach, Li Yaohua wore a mysterious smile.

Qi Yun had the intention to refuse, but he didn't want to hurt the other's feelings, so he smiled and nodded in agreement.

...

The next day, Qi Yun made a visit to Elder Tong and then set out to return to Bird City.

At 5 PM, the plane landed at the new airport, where Zhong Rui came to pick him up.

"Boss, a woman claiming to be from Maple Capital visited the company several times over the past few days to see you."

"Maple Capital?" Qi Yun queried suspiciously, "What does she want with me?"

Zhong Rui replied while driving: "She didn't say. She wishes to meet with you in person."

"I checked online. She said that company is based in Shanghai and was just established, but it seems quite formidable."

Qi Yun nodded slightly: "Then ask her to come to the company tomorrow."

"Alright."

Soon, the car drove into Golden Collar Villa.

Qi Yun took a quick shower and then called Ah Jiao and a few others to gather at a new rented apartment.

In the living room, he solemnly instructed them: "I need you to make a trip to France to investigate a person for me."

"I don't have much information at the moment, only the name, Charles de Gaulle Gwen, possibly related to the Gwen Clan."

"Prepare to depart tonight. Once there, prioritize your safety, and contact me immediately if anything happens."

Ah Jiao, Ah Jie, and Lao Hei all responded, "Alright, boss."

Qi Yun nodded slightly and turned to Niu Da: "You go along too, provide covert protection."

"Okay." Niu Da nodded.

"Make sure to stay hidden. Don't investigate openly."

"Understood." They hurried away after receiving their assignment.

Qi Yun took out a pack of cigarettes, gazing out the window.

With Ah Jiao's acumen, he trusted they would not encounter any problems.

Before finishing a cigarette, Qi Yun suddenly slapped his forehead, secretly thinking he'd forgotten something important.

He checked the time on his watch, then grabbed his phone to call Zhong Rui.

"Quickly find a way to purchase a carload of teddy bear toys and deliver them to my house. I need them tonight!"

"Huh? Oh, okay." Zhong Rui responded, bewildered.

...

In the morning, Qi Yun was having breakfast while checking the intelligence system panel in front of him.

[Current Intelligence Points: 36]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): Zhou Hongchang, captain at the Shanshan County Bureau, is eager to progress and plans to visit you and Zhang Dayong tonight in Bird City, bringing substantial gifts]

Qi Yun remembered the name Zhou Hongchang. It was him who ventured into the desert's depths to rescue them and also owed a favor in the matter concerning Ai Shan.

"Wanting to progress is good..."

If he could help, he wouldn't mind lending a hand.

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): Ignacio and his teacher found a map in a historical record, which closely resembles a marked location on a sunken ship map]

Upon seeing this intelligence, Qi Yun stroked his chin, wanting to ask more about the details, but as he pulled out his phone, he remembered that it was still dawn in Spain and would have to wait until the afternoon.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Qiu Jiahao inadvertently discovered someone monitoring him 24/7]

Chapter 334: Whether I Can Drive a Bentley Depends on You

After turning off the intelligence panel, Qi Yun felt very heavy-hearted.

Last time it was Qiu Jiahao's home that was broken into. The thief didn't find what they wanted, and he thought the matter was over. Now it turned out he was under surveillance again.

Could it be that those people have new leads?

This couldn't help but make Qi Yun think more, because the power of that group was really formidable, and in Jiang Province, they could cause quite a stir.

Even Zhou Wenbin, who had already fled to Yunnan Province, was forced to "ascend"...

At this moment, he really wanted to contact Qiu Jiahao and ask about the situation, but after a bit of thought, he dismissed the idea.

If he's being watched, then any means of contacting the outside world must be monitored as well.

Contacting Qiu Jiahao rashly now would indeed be a bit risky.

After breakfast, Qi Yun picked up his coat and hurried out of the house.

At the door, Chen Wei was already waiting in the car.

After Qi Yun got in the car, he called Duan Pingyu, asking him to come over.

Since the new dormitory was right behind the building, Duan Pingyu arrived in less than two minutes.

"Boss, any instructions?" Duan Pingyu asked.

Qi Yun pondered slightly: "In the next two days, keep an eye on someone for me. I'll send you the details on your phone."

Duan Pingyu nodded: "Alright."

"Remember one thing, do not expose yourself. The person is already under surveillance. You just need to watch their movements." Qi Yun added.

"Understood."

"Alright, that's all. Go handle it now."

Duan Pingyu didn't say more, opened the car door, and left.

After he left, Qi Yun instructed Chen Wei: "Brother Wei, to the company."

Chen Wei nodded and started the car towards the company.

Over twenty minutes later, Qi Yun arrived at the company entrance.

Since Xiang Xiaoyue wanted to expand the team before, Qi Yun simply rented the remaining three offices on this floor. Now, the entire floor belonged to his tech and trade companies.

In one of these offices, Zhong Rui was busy with his work. Seeing Qi Yun enter, he quickly got up and greeted him.

"Boss, you're here. The representative from Maple Capital will be here shortly."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, looked around the office. Though not large, it had everything necessary.

"So, Director Zhong, are you getting used to it?" Qi Yun joked with a smile.

Nowadays, Zhong Rui wasn't only his assistant but also the financial director of the network and trade companies, overseeing three financial staff.

However, his main job was still to assist Qi Yun with certain tasks, leaving specific financial work to his subordinates.

Zhong Rui scratched the back of his head, somewhat embarrassed: "Boss, don't make fun of me."

Qi Yun laughed heartily and patted him on the shoulder: "Do a good job, and maybe I'll be driving a Bentley by the end of the year, counting on you all."

Zhong Rui chuckled along.

After some casual talk, Qi Yun asked about work: "How's the progress on buying the property on Xuanwu Street that I asked you about a few days ago?"

Upon hearing this, Zhong Rui showed a wry smile: "Not very smooth. So far, we've only bought five two-bedroom units, and two more are in negotiation."

"I don't know why, but second-hand houses on Xuanwu Street have suddenly become popular. The complex I picked had over ten listings yesterday, and today only two apartments are left. It's like someone is competing with us."

Qi Yun didn't react too much, seemingly anticipating it, as such information wasn't exactly top secret.

"Just try your best to acquire them. If not, no need to force it."

Although the property prices in that area will inevitably rise, he didn't think they'd rise exorbitantly.

If one were to get hold of a hundred units, not to mention whether there were that many second-hand houses, even if there were, it would take a long time to dispose of them later.

So buying around a dozen to earn several million would suffice.

Relieved by this, Zhong Rui nodded deeply: "Alright, I understand."

"Okay, I'll check with Xiaoyue. When the people from Maple Capital arrive, call me over." With that, Qi Yun stepped out the door and entered the nearby office labeled with the operations director's sign.

Here, Xiang Xiaoyue was also incredibly busy. She tilted her head, holding a phone on her shoulder and talking, while her hands swiftly clattered on the keyboard.

It wasn't until after her call that she noticed Qi Yun standing at the door: "President Qi, you're just in time. I've already lined up the promotion channels. Now we need to choose a celebrity to endorse our game. You decide."

"Oh?" Qi Yun walked to the desk with curiosity.

Xiang Xiaoyue picked up a few photos next to her, handing them over while quoting prices.

"Ge Ge is 15 million for two years."

"This xx Yu is 7 million for one year."

Hearing these quotes, Qi Yun looked up, frowning at her: "What the heck? Why are they so expensive?"

Xiang Xiaoyue shrugged helplessly: "There's no helping it. That's just the way things are nowadays. It's all about traffic. Partnering with these young idols can bring great exposure to our game."

Qi Yun shook his head, brows furrowed, as he continued to look through the photos, mostly of celebrities whose names he couldn't call out.

Until only the last photo was left in his hand, his eyes finally lit up.

"Jimmy Zai? How much is he?"

"Teacher Zhazha Hui is 4.5 million for two years." Xiang Xiaoyue observed Qi Yun's expression, hesitated a bit, and added, "But his popularity has been low these past two years."

Qi Yun put down the photo, pondered slightly: "I'm willing to spend the money but don't want to be a sucker."

Chapter 335: Whether You Get to Drive a Bentley Depends on You_2

"Personally, I think Jimmy is pretty good. Of course, you're the operations director, so you know the market better than I do. Your opinion should take priority."

Upon hearing this, Xiang Xiaoyue remained silent for a moment, then nodded: "Let me get in touch with Teacher Zhazhahui's agent first."

Just then, Zhong Rui jogged to the door and knocked on the glass door.

"Boss, the representatives from Maple Capital are waiting for you in the meeting room."

Qi Yun nodded at Xiang Xiaoyue: "Alright, handle it as you see fit." With that, he turned and walked with Zhong Rui towards the meeting room.

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In Paris, France, Ah Jiao, who had just arrived in the city from the airport, was immediately targeted by a few ill-intentioned guys.

Ah Jiao pretended not to notice, signaled to Old Black and Ah Jie in front, and the three of them turned into a dim alleyway.

The guys following behind saw this, revealing sleazy smiles, and quickly chased into the alley.

The next moment, several dull thuds sounded from the alley, accompanied by cries of pain and distress.

With Old Black's full effort, the ill-intentioned guys were all painfully knocked to the ground.

Ah Jie turned and stared at the guys on the ground, suspiciously: "Were we exposed just after landing?"

Old Black shook his hand and replied, "Probably not, these guys don't look like it."

"Brother Wei met their underlings on Hong Kong Island, very competent."

Ah Jiao frowned, glanced at the guys on the ground, and then turned to look at the backdoor of the bar not far away: "Let's get out of here first."

Old Black and Ah Jie nodded, and the three quickly disappeared from the alley entrance.

...

Meanwhile, in the meeting room.

A short-haired woman who looked very competent proactively extended her hand to Qi Yun: "Hello, Mr. Qi, I am Dong Anyun from Maple Capital."

Qi Yun also extended his hand for a light shake, wearing a polite smile on his face: "Miss Dong, hello, please have a seat."

Zhong Rui brought two cups of tea and closed the door as he left the meeting room.

Dong Anyun placed the teacup aside, took out a document from her handbag, and directly got to the point without any unnecessary words: "Mr. Qi, I'm here on behalf of our chairman, Mr. Zhao Weilin, to discuss Dawn Technology's shares with you."

"Zhao Weilin?" Qi Yun was suddenly taken aback.

When Zhong Rui reported this matter to him yesterday, he did not mention the name Zhao Weilin, so Qi Yun only realized at this moment that Maple Capital was Zhao Weilin's company.

Seeing Qi Yun's reaction, Dong Anyun was a bit curious: "Oh, do you know our chairman?"

Qi Yun laughed: "I don't know him, but I've heard of him."

"Mr. Zhao is a great philanthropist. His act of donating thirty million to the welfare home even made the news."

"I see." Dong Anyun smiled and nodded, "Our chairman is indeed very passionate about charity."

Hearing the name Zhao Weilin, Qi Yun could already guess seven to eight tenths of the purpose of her visit.

Previously, Zhao Weilin had wanted to buy 51% of the shares through Tao Ziming, and now he was approaching him directly.

He sipped a bit of tea and remained silent.

As expected, the next thing Dong Anyun said stated her purpose directly.

"Mr. Qi, I know you currently hold 51% of Dawn Technology's shares. Our chairman is very interested. Are you considering selling them?"

Qi Yun responded with a sarcastic smile at the corner of his mouth: "Heh, your information is quite up-to-date. I haven't even filed a change of record for these shares, and you already know."

Dong Anyun maintained a calm expression and explained: "Mr. Qi, you might have misunderstood. The information about Dawn Technology's shares was voluntarily provided to our chairman by Mr. Tao Ziming."

Qi Yun shook his head: "Sorry, I don't plan to sell the shares for the time being."

Although he rejected without hesitation, Dong Anyun didn't get angry. Instead, she smiled and nodded: "Mr. Qi, why rush to reject? Why not hear our offer first?"

Qi Yun remained silent, noncommittally shrugging his shoulders.

"Fifty million! Are you satisfied with this price, Mr. Qi?" After saying this, Dong Anyun's gaze was fixed on Qi Yun.

Even though she didn't know how much Qi Yun spent on acquiring these shares, it certainly wasn't fifty million.

Because this fifty million wasn't a random offer; it was estimated based on the price Tao Ziming gave Zhao Weilin at the time.

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's face showed no change, but he felt a bit surprised internally.

The other party directly offered fifty million.

He spent a total of thirty-four million on the 51% of shares, and it had been less than two months since investing in Dawn Technology!

If he nodded now, he would easily make a profit of sixteen million!

If it was Qi Yun from two months ago, he might have agreed, but now he wasn't so easily satisfied.

Although sixteen million was not a small amount, it was still far from his psychological expectation, by more than ten times.

"I'm sorry, Miss Dong, as I said before, I have no intention of selling my shares for the time being." Qi Yun rejected again.

Dong Anyun wasn't impatient; like a seasoned negotiator, she extended a finger again, looking at Qi Yun with earnest eyes.

"Sixty million!"

Qi Yun remained unmoved and continued sipping his tea.

"Seventy million!"

Qi Yun put down the teacup and looked at her with a smile: "Miss Dong, if you're really interested in buying my shares, let me name a price. If you agree, I'll sell them; if not, we'll drop it here."

"Sounds good?"

Dong Anyun extended her right hand: "Mr. Qi, please state your price."

"Two hundred million," Qi Yun said, enunciating each word deliberately.

Upon hearing this, Dong Anyun's originally calm expression instantly turned somewhat displeased. She smoothed her bangs and spoke with a hint of discontent: "Mr. Qi, are you joking with me?"

"Do I seem like the type who jokes?" Qi Yun laughed in response, adding, "Two hundred million is the current price. In the future, who knows how many billion it might be."

Dong Anyun bit her lip, clearly a bit angered.

Although Zhao Weilin instructed her to offer more money if Qi Yun was unwilling to sell, is this how you offer more?

For something not even worth five, selling it to me for twenty? Wouldn't buying it insult my intelligence?

She believed Zhao Weilin wouldn't agree to such a price either.

After a brief silence, she coldly replied: "I understand now, Mr. Qi, you really don't want to sell."

Qi Yun put down his teacup and chuckled: "I told you earlier, don't be so stubborn next time, alright?"

"I won't disturb you today, Mr. Qi, goodbye!" Dong Anyun stood up and walked out without waiting for Qi Yun's reply.

Watching her leave, Qi Yun shook his head with a smile.

"Ding ding ding~"

At that moment, his phone on the table suddenly rang. Seeing Zhao Qing calling, he quickly put down his teacup and answered the call.

"Hello, Xiao Qing."

"Are you picking up Nuannuan this afternoon?"

"Alright, got it. Call me when you're done, and I'll come pick you up."

After hanging up the call, he went to Brother Peng's office for a casual chat, and at noon, the two of them went to a newly opened rice shop downstairs to taste the so-called universe's best delicacy.

While waiting for the roast meat, Qi Yun found a quiet spot, took out his phone, and called Ignacio.

By then, it was already morning in Spain.

As soon as the call connected, Ignacio spoke first: "Hello, Qi Yun, I was just about to call you later."

Qi Yun was puzzled: "Oh? Has Mr. Ignacio made a discovery over there?"

"Indeed." Ignacio's tone was filled with undisguised excitement. "Last night, while going through some materials with my mentor, I accidentally found a topographic map in a copy of The Travels of Marco Polo!"

"That map has a section that is 90% similar to a point on the map you gave me!"

Qi Yun had known about this for a while, but he feigned surprise: "Really? Which area does that map point to?"

"Lop Nur!"

Chapter 336: The Long-Lost Daughter

"Lop Nur!?"

Qi Yun shivered involuntarily upon hearing these three words.

"That's right, this is the result my teacher and I have calculated." Ignacio confidently replied, "However, at the moment we can only determine the general area of Lop Nur, without pinpointing specific coordinates."

"What does this place signify?" Qi Yun quickly asked.

He recalled clearly that the purple coordinates which appeared for the first time a few days ago mentioned a coordinate point that was precisely in the Ancient Loulan, located at the northwest corner of Lop Nur!

Are these two linked? Or perhaps...

The Ancient Loulan was extremely mysterious in history. Though merely a small country on the Silk Road, its legends are endless and full of a legendary aura.

Ignacio pondered for a while: "I can't answer you this question for now, but it concerns the thousand-year-old secret of the Louis Family. If such effort is put into finding this, it must not be ordinary relics or antiques."

"But my teacher already has some guesses, and we will continue to examine historical materials to confirm this hypothesis."

Qi Yun withdrew his thoughts and nodded: "Alright, thank you, Mr. Ignacio. I'm waiting for your good news."

"Sure, I'll notify you as soon as I have any progress."

The two ended their call, and Qi Yun took out a pack of cigarettes and lit one.

Perhaps it's time to go to the desert... and see if any discoveries can be made. If any clues are found, they should be helpful for Ignacio's research.

After taking a few puffs, he took out his phone and called the guide Mamati, who he had worked with before.

"Hello, Boss Qi." Mamati greeted politely.

Last time when he went to the desert to find the Qingnang Book, he brought three people along, and two got lost in greed over that batch of treasures, ultimately making grave mistakes, making Mamati deeply regretful.

Qi Yun's way of handling the aftermath was also very considerate, as the criminals were incarcerated, yet the promised pay was given without a penny missing, making Mamati feel guilty even more.

Qi Yun chuckled lightly and asked, "Do you have time recently?"

"I just took on a job and plan to enter the desert in a couple of days." Mamati answered honestly, "Do you need a guide, Boss Qi?"

"Yes, I also plan to go into the desert in a few days, but since you already have a job, I'll look for someone else then." Qi Yun said, blowing out smoke rings.

He was still quite satisfied with Mamati, though the previous operation had some minor accidents, the fault was not with Mamati, and he also proved his professional ethics.

Going to such dangerous places, especially forbidden zones like Lop Nur, requires a guide who is highly trustworthy.

If you encounter someone with bad intentions, they might leave you stranded in the desert, and even if you manage to contact rescue, it would be useless; that forbidden land has swallowed countless lives.

Next is professional capability, which Mamati possesses on both counts, hence Qi Yun would immediately think of him.

"Boss Qi, I can cancel my current job and guide you." Mamati replied without hesitation.

Qi Yun was slightly surprised: "Is that feasible?"

He knew that being a guide is a profession that highly regards reputation.

"It's no problem; the customer's destination isn't far, and I can recommend other guides to them, besides, I haven't taken their money yet." Mamati explained.

"I see." Qi Yun didn't say more after hearing this, pondering, "This time, I need to go to Lop Nur."

"No problem." Mamati confidently assured, "I have crossed Lop Nur three times and am somewhat familiar with the terrain there."

"That's good." Although Qi Yun trusted Mamati's abilities, Lop Nur remained daunting; knowing Mamati had rich experience there made Qi Yun much more at ease, "Go ahead and prepare, you take care of the desert vehicle arrangement; there will be around three to four people with me."

"Alright, Boss Qi, rest assured, I will make thorough preparations, and this time, no mistakes will happen." Mamati quickly guaranteed.

Qi Yun smiled: "Heh, alright, let me know when you're ready."

"Okay, goodbye Boss Qi."

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun tossed away the cigarette butt, turned around and returned to the dining table, and began eating rice enthusiastically.

With nothing much planned for the afternoon, after eating, he went to Shi Feng's shop on Antique Street.

Upon seeing Qi Yun arrive, Shi Feng was extremely obsequious, offering cigarettes and pouring tea.

The reason was simple—since Qi Yun's last splurge at his shop, he had become Shi Feng's number one patron.

Though he didn't earn much from that deal, it greatly eased his cash strain.

In their line of work, despite being quite wealthy, most money was tied up in inventory, and with the cold market these past two years, turnover was slow, so they actually don't have much liquidity.

"Heh, Boss Qi, anything for me today?"

Qi Yun sipped his tea, glanced askance at him: "Could you stop acting like a bootlicker? I'm not used to it."

Shi Feng wasn't offended, still grinning: "By the way, I sold that Eight Immortals table you mentioned last time, it fetched 1.2 million, already deposited in your account."

Qi Yun was slightly taken aback: "No commission taken?"

Shi Feng shook his head vigorously like a rattle drum: "Serving Boss Qi is an honor, why would I take commission?"

"Heh." Qi Yun sneered, "If you have something to say, just say it; right now you really seem like an ill-intentioned gay guy."

"In that case, I'll just say it." Shi Feng pulled a chair over and sat next to Qi Yun, placing his hand on his shoulder.

Qi Yun pushed Shi Feng's hand away disdainfully and moved his chair to the side: "Why are you sitting so close? Have you been to Rongcheng lately?"

Shi Feng didn't seem upset, grinning he edged closer: "Hehe, something suddenly came to my mind these past few days."

"What is it?"

Shi Feng turned his head to look at the direction of the shop entrance, lowered his voice and said, "I remember you told me last time that those tomb raiders dug up nine artifacts, right?"

"Hmm? I did say that." Qi Yun turned to look at him, suspiciously asking, "What's up?"

"Just look, I've been keeping an eye on the news lately. Now, all those tomb raiders have been sentenced, but not a word about that batch of artifacts has been mentioned, which clearly doesn't make sense."

"According to past practices, if the authorities find those artifacts, they would definitely announce it. That would be a huge achievement."

"I guess those tomb raiders haven't confessed about the artifacts, which also means that those treasures are most likely still out there..." Shi Feng fixed his burning gaze on Qi Yun.

Qi Yun squinted back at him, "What exactly are you trying to say?"

"Hehe." Shi Feng rubbed his hands together, "Your information is so well-connected, haven't you checked it out?"

Qi Yun took a sip of tea and casually said, "Buddy, those are artifacts. Even if they were given to you, would you dare to take them?"

Shi Feng hurriedly shook his head, "Of course I wouldn't dare. I'm not strong enough."

"But you're different, you have connections." His voice lowered further, "Although those items can't be circulated on the market, giving them to certain special people isn't a problem because they'll never see the light of day, you get what I mean?"

"Some people, they don't like money, but they're obsessed with these old objects..."

Qi Yun naturally understood what the other party meant, but those things were too valuable for him to touch, at least until the dust settled, he wouldn't consider it.

Besides, he's not short of money now, so there's no need to take that risk.

However... this seemingly correct decision of his would soon be forced to change...

"You've overestimated me. I can't handle the turmoil either, let's just live honestly and not think about those things."

Hearing this, Shi Feng paused, seeing Qi Yun genuinely uninterested, he dropped the subject: "By the way, Chen Lao's seventy-year birthday is coming up. Do you still have that Maotai from last time? Give me a box so I have something decent to present..."

Qi Yun laughed sarcastically, "That's Maotai from the eighties, and you treat it like Erguotou? Should I give you a truckload instead?"

Shi Feng scratched his head awkwardly.

Given Chen Lao's status, ordinary antiques wouldn't impress him, it's indeed better to gift something else that would please him.

Qi Yun lifted his watch to check the time, "Alright, I have to pick up my daughter. Let me know ahead regarding Chen Lao's birthday, and we can go together."

"Okay."

...

On the first floor of the mall, by the window at Starbucks, Dong Anyun held coffee in her hand, wearing Bluetooth earphones, reporting the situation to Zhao Weilin.

"I've already raised the price to seventy million, but that Qi Yun still disagrees, he actually wants two hundred million."

"Chairman Zhao, I think it's unlikely he'll let go of his shares."

On the other end of the call, Zhao Weilin contemplated for a while, "I see. You can come back now."

Dong Anyun nodded, "Alright, I've booked a flight for tomorrow morning."

"Are we just going to leave Dawn Technology behind then?"

"Heh." Zhao Weilin chuckled lightly, "Some young people always think they can control everything, but only when they feel immense pressure will they understand the lesson of knowing when to stop."

...

At the kindergarten entrance, Nuannuan had just walked out of the classroom, and immediately spotted Qi Yun waiting at the gate, sprinting into his arms with little, short legs.

"Daddy, why did you come to pick me up today?" The little girl raised her round face, the pink bow in her braid nudging his chin.

Qi Yun kissed his daughter on the face twice, making her giggle as his stubble tickled her.

He took her school bag and lifted her up, "Sister Qing has something to do today. Dad will pick her up with you, then we'll go eat big pizza, okay?"

"Yay! Add lots and lots of cheese!" Nuannuan gestured with her little chubby hands, her face beaming with joy.

"No problem!"

The father and daughter headed to the parking lot, Qi Yun driving his BMW 5 Series while Chen Wei followed in his car.

It wasn't rush hour yet, so traffic was smooth, and ten minutes later, they arrived at a nearby mall.

At the mall entrance, Zhao Qing spotted them from afar and quickly waved to signal them.

Qi Yun came closer while holding his daughter and reached out to brush Zhao Qing's hair from her forehead, "All done?"

Zhao Qing looked somewhat exhausted, "Yeah, went shopping with her all day, there's just too much to buy for the wedding."

Qi Yun smiled, taking her hand, "Let's go, let's eat first."

"Okay."

Zhao Qing nodded, hugging Qi Yun's arm, and the three headed into the mall.

Two meters away, inside the Starbucks next to them, Dong Anyun covered her mouth, her gaze following the trio's movements until they walked far away, before she slowly lowered her hand.

She turned back, shocked, muttering to herself, "Qi Yun... The woman next to Qi Yun looks so much like Chairman Zhao..."

Dong Anyun had been surprised to coincidentally meet Qi Yun, but after seeing Qi Yun and Zhao Qing together, she couldn't take her eyes off Zhao Qing's face.

As a long-time secretary of Zhao Weilin, she naturally knew some details of his private affairs; she even came to Jiang Province with him once when he returned to the country in search of his long-lost daughter.

Furthermore, Zhao Weilin often stared at an old photograph for hours, a photo of a little girl who, despite being just two or three, had features almost identical to his.

Based on all this, Dong Anyun was so shocked at the first sight of Zhao Qing.

Chapter 337: He's Getting a Little Anxious

France, Paris.

Inside an ordinary apartment.

Ah Jiao stood by the window, looking out onto the street for quite a while before she turned to the unmasking Lao Hei and asked, "We weren't exposed, right?"

Lao Hei shook his head, "I don't think so. I circled around two blocks before coming back."

Ah Jiao sat down on the sofa, "How did it go?"

"I contacted an intelligence broker in the black market. They hadn't heard that person's name but promised to gather information quickly and told me to pick it up tomorrow," Lao Hei replied as he peeled off a fake moustache from the corner of his mouth.

Ah Jiao nodded, softly saying, "Alright, let's give it a shot. If this way doesn't work, we'll have to change direction and start with the Gwen Clan."

Ah Jie scratched his head, "This job isn't easy; our yellow skin makes us too conspicuous. Wherever we go, we draw attention."

Upon hearing that, Ah Jiao furrowed her brows slightly, "Even if it's difficult, we have to do it. That's why we must be even more careful, we absolutely mustn't..."

Before she could finish, a sudden screeching of brakes sounded from the street outside.

Soon after, there were several crisp sounds of car doors opening and closing.

The vigilant Lao Hei jumped up from the sofa and quickly went to the window. Peering through the curtain's gap, he saw two cars parked across the street, with several burly men crossing the road and heading toward their apartment.

Seeing this, Lao Hei got nervous and quickly turned to the two on the sofa, saying, "Damn! Looks like they're coming for us!"

Ah Jiao and the others quickly came to the window. Upon seeing the situation outside, she made a swift decision, "To the next unit!"

The three of them didn't dare to linger. Within less than half a minute, they packed up anything that could expose their identities and swiftly left the room, shutting the door behind them.

This building had six floors, with seven or eight rooms on each floor. Besides their current apartment, Ah Jiao had specifically instructed Lao Hei last night to find a vagrant on the street and use his identity to rent the adjacent room as a temporary escape point.

Ah Jiao quickly unlocked the door to the adjacent room, and the three of them entered one after another, closing the door promptly.

A minute later, heavy footsteps echoed in the corridor, followed by a "bang" as the door to the adjacent room was forcefully kicked open.

With her ear to the wall, Ah Jiao listened intently to the noise coming from the next room.

After entering, the strangers rummaged around, speaking in unintelligible French.

Approximately five minutes later, footsteps echoed once more in the corridor as those guys finally left.

Ah Jiao, not daring to be careless, continued listening for a while longer. Once she confirmed the absence of any sound from the adjacent room, the three of them sighed in relief.

"How did they find us here? I took special care to take a long detour on my way back..." Lao Hei's face was notably grim.

"The person our boss wants us to investigate must be powerful," Ah Jiao, who seemed unsurprised, said, "The problem is most likely with that intelligence broker. He probably sold you out."

"Damn it!" Lao Hei clenched his fist, anger rising.

Ah Jie sneaked toward the window, discretely checking the street outside, "They've left."

Listening to the engines humming outside, Ah Jiao frowned, "Don't go out now. Once it's dark, we'll leave through the fire escape and find another place."

"They might have left someone watching outside, and surely have already talked to the hotel owner."

...

Meanwhile, inside the mall.

Qi Yun was dining with Zhao Qing and his daughter in a restaurant. He had just taken the menu from the waiter when he noticed Dong Anyun jogging to the restaurant entrance.

He was momentarily stunned, clearly not expecting to encounter her there.

Dong Anyun also spotted him and walked straight towards them.

"Mr. Qi, what a coincidence," Dong Anyun approached and, after discreetly glancing at Zhao Qing a few times, greeted them with a smile.

"Haha, Miss Dong is here for a meal too?" Qi Yun responded with a light laugh. Though she represented Zhao Weilin in competition against him, such matters were business-related and his demeanor remained courteous.

"Yes," Dong Anyun nodded, her gaze shifting to Zhao Qing, "Who might this be?"

"Oh, this is my wife, Zhao Qing, and my daughter, Nuannuan," Qi Yun introduced them, albeit still a bit puzzled.

Dong Anyun praised with a smile, "Mr. Qi, you're quite fortunate. Ms. Zhao is truly beautiful, and Nuannuan is very cute."

Zhao Qing, observing the newcomer, politely responded, "Miss Dong is very beautiful too."

The little girl was not involved in the adults' conversation, focusing instead on her ice cream.

"Haha, mind if I join you for a meal?" Dong Anyun suddenly made a request that surprised Qi Yun.

Logically speaking, they weren't particularly familiar with each other, their relationship primarily business-related and even laced with competition. Such a boundary-less request was indeed unexpected.

Qi Yun displayed a look of surprise, then with a forced smile replied, "Wouldn't that be inconvenient? Perhaps if there's another opportunity, I could treat Miss Dong to a meal instead." He attempted a courteous refusal.

Unexpectedly, Dong Anyun didn't retreat, instead adopting a pitiful demeanor, turning to Zhao Qing, saying, "I'm here on a business trip alone, and I'll be heading back to Shanghai tomorrow. I've been afraid of loneliness since I was a child..." Her voice trembled slightly, and her eyes seemed to well with tears.

Qi Yun frowned, watching her, unable to comprehend what the woman was trying to do. Despite her sharp and assertive demeanor during their morning meeting, her current contrast made him doubt this act.

Chapter 338: He's Getting a Little Anxious (Part 2)

Seeing Dong Anyun about to shed tears, Zhao Qing softened and, taking Qi Yun's arm, said, "Why don't we let Miss Dong join us?"

Nuannuan, who had been quietly eating her ice cream, also looked up and said in her sweet little voice, "Daddy, Nuannuan doesn't like eating alone either."

Looking at Zhao Qing and his daughter's attitude, Qi Yun helplessly turned to Dong Anyun and finally relented, "Then Miss Dong, please have a seat."

"Thank you." Dong Anyun immediately smiled through her tears and pulled out a chair to sit down.

After smoothing the hem of her dress, she turned her gaze to Zhao Qing, "Where are you from, Miss Zhao? Your skin is so fair."

Zhao Qing was wiping Nuannuan's hands with a wet wipe, and hearing the compliment, looked up and smiled, "Miss Dong, you're too kind. I'm a local from Jiang Province."

"Oh? Jiang Province?" Dong Anyun raised her eyebrow with curiosity in her voice, "I thought Miss Zhao was from the south. It's dry here; I've only been here two days, and my skin is already not adapting well."

"Yes, it is quite dry here. Using more facial masks might help a bit." Zhao Qing threw the wet wipe into the bin and casually untied Nuannuan's bib.

Dong Anyun took a sip of water, then praised Nuannuan a few times before turning the conversation back to Zhao Qing.

"Miss Zhao, do you mind sharing your age? I really can't see any signs that you've had a baby at all."

Zhao Qing showed brief surprise on her face, then patted Nuannuan's head and responded openly, "I'm twenty-six this year."

Qi Yun, who had been silent on the side, suddenly sensed something was off.

Why is this woman so interested in Zhao Qing? She seems a bit too curious...

Or is it that when women chat with each other, this is what they always talk about?

...

In a residential area not far from the New District Branch, Zhou Hongchang, the team leader of the Shanshan County Bureau, was pacing back and forth in a pavilion with two boxes of tea in his hand.

The purpose of his visit was to meet Zhang Dayong and ask him to transfer him to Bird City.

Although he currently has a lot of power in the Shanshan County Bureau, from both a personal development perspective and the issue of long-term separation from his family, he hopes to come to Bird City. Even if he can't move up, he would accept a lateral transfer.

Of course, it would be even better if there was a promotion, as he is very eager to advance.

As he hesitated, the sky gradually darkened. He had finished a whole pack of cigarettes, but Zhang Dayong still hadn't returned.

After hesitating for a long while, he pulled out his phone and sent a message to Zhang Dayong, informing him that he was waiting at the door.

Meanwhile, in the office of the New District Branch.

Zhang Dayong frowned, put down his phone, and leaned back in his chair, letting out a long sigh.

Even though he currently has strong control over the New District Branch, this control means that subordinates follow his orders absolutely. It doesn't mean he can move key positions at will.

He naturally knew why Zhou Hongchang suddenly came from the Shanshan County to Bird City to find him, and in fact, if he made an effort, he could fulfill Zhou's request.

Just like the last time with Ma Baoguo's matter.

But the problem is, he's currently at a crucial time, about to take over the head position at the New District Branch. Many eyes are on him, and he doesn't want to provide any leverage at such a time.

Even though Zhou Wenbin is no longer here, their faction is not the only dominant one; competition remains fierce.

"Pop."

The lighter flickered, and Zhang Dayong lit a cigarette, slowly exhaling a puff of smoke.

After a brief thought, he picked up his phone again and sent a message back to Zhou Hongchang, informing him that he had a meeting tonight and to come and see him at a later time.

In the pavilion, Zhou Hongchang looked at the reply on the screen, showed a bitter smile, and finally sighed, walking towards the exit of the residential area.

...

At 10:30 in the evening, Qi Yun and the others parted at the mall entrance.

"Miss Dong, I won't see you off then."

Dong Anyun nodded, "Alright, thank you, Mr. Qi, for the hospitality." As she spoke, she turned to Zhao Qing, "Miss Zhao, let's exchange contact information. If you come to Shanghai, we can go shopping together."

"Sure." Zhao Qing didn't think much of it, took out her phone from her bag, and exchanged contact information with her.

After adding each other as friends, Dong Anyun bent down and patted the little girl's head, "Nuannuan, goodbye."

"Goodbye, sister," the little girl said sweetly.

"Miss Zhao, Mr. Qi, I'll be off then." Dong Anyun waved to the three of them.

"Okay, bye-bye."

After she left, Qi Yun picked up his daughter and, holding Zhao Qing's hand, walked towards their parked car.

Once in the car, Qi Yun fastened his seatbelt. As he started the car, he said to Zhao Qing, "Xiao Qing, did you find Miss Dong a bit strange?"

"Hmm?" Zhao Qing fastened the little girl's seatbelt and asked doubtfully, "What was strange? Didn't she seem quite normal?"

"Oh, maybe I'm overthinking it." Qi Yun rubbed his nose, "Do women always get so curious about each other's private matters when they chat?"

"What else?" Zhao Qing leaned her hands on the seatback of the driver's seat, her face close to Qi Yun, "What do you mean?"

"Nothing." Qi Yun chuckled and shook his head, focusing on driving.

When they got home, it was almost midnight after they washed up.

Qi Yun went to the study and checked a few messages on his phone.

One was from Ah Jiao, reporting on the investigation progress.

Another was from two hours ago from Zhou Hongchang, asking when Qi Yun would be free to meet him.

Chapter 339: He's Getting a Little Anxious (Part 3)

He naturally knew why the other party came looking for him, so he immediately replied, "Just saw the message. Tomorrow, I'll contact you tomorrow."

Whether the thing can be done or not, at least I should invite the person to dinner to express some gratitude.

After reading the message, he dialed Zhang Dayong's number, wanting to probe his opinion, as Zhang Dayong had once said that Zhou Hongchang was considered his confidant at the Shanshan County Bureau, it seemed likely this matter wouldn't be refused.

The phone rang twice then was picked up.

"Still busy?" Qi Yun asked.

"Just finished with work, getting ready to head back," Zhang Dayong responded, then countered, "Why, what's up?"

Qi Yun picked up the pack of cigarettes on the table and replied softly, "Has Zhou Hongchang been to see you?"

At the words, Zhang Dayong paused: "Yes, he contacted you?"

"Mhm, he wants to meet me, but I was held up by some things tonight," Qi Yun replied truthfully.

Zhang Dayong was silent for a moment and sighed: "He's a bit anxious."

Qi Yun picked up on the implication, pondered briefly, and made a rough guess, then tentatively asked, "Not easy to handle?"

"Yes, you know this period is very crucial for me, if you two meet, it would be great if you could help explain a bit to him," Zhang Dayong didn't hide anything.

"Okay, I understand." Qi Yun didn't say much more, answered, then hung up the phone.

He put down the phone and took a deep drag of his cigarette.

To make progress, you need not only people but also selecting the right timing...

A familiar deep blue screen appeared before his eyes.

[Current Intelligence Points: 36]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): Descendant of a traditional Chinese medicine family, Pang Zefeng, found a strange description while flipping through a notebook left by his grandfather.

The note said that when his grandfather was young, he once accidentally saved an injured person, who seemed nearly in his sixties. The strange part was, his vital energies were extremely vigorous, and his physique was comparable to a robust middle-aged man, unlike ordinary people.]

"Hmm?"

Qi Yun couldn't help but exclaim, the recorded situation seemed quite similar to himself?

Could that person also have some prescription like the Inner Canon of Huangdi?

However, he immediately shook his head, feeling it unlikely... after all, treasures like the Inner Canon of Huangdi over five thousand years are extremely rare.

"Pang Zefeng..."

He softly uttered the name, threw this guy into Cao Yufei's pharmaceutical factory for a while now, wondered how the observation was going.

If this person is trustworthy, should his health product plan be pushed forward...

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Blue): A few hours ago, a super typhoon made landfall in Guangdong Province, severely damaging economic crops like lychees due to extreme weather, leading to a substantial reduction in yield, and prices are set to rise in the near future.]

Finally, there was some money-making intelligence, but the operation for this is a bit troublesome, requiring both buying and selling, and the intelligence is only of blue level, with limited profit, Qi Yun felt a bit reluctant to fuss over...

However, even small money is still money, earning some is better than none.

He immediately picked up the phone again to call Wei Yong, telling him to stock up on lychees tomorrow.

"Hmm? Why stock this stuff? The fruit store just got a few boxes today." Wei Yong said suspiciously.

"A typhoon hit Guangdong Province over there, the prices are likely to rise in a couple of days, get a few cold storages, stock up more, you can sell them to wholesalers then." Qi Yun explained patiently.

"Alright, how much should we stock?"

Qi Yun replied, "Go to the wholesale market in the morning, and buy up all the stock you can find."

"All... buy it all?"

Although lychees are a very popular fruit in Jiang Province, they always sell well, Wei Yong still felt a bit nervous with such a large volume to handle.

"Yes, I'll wire you two million first, if it's not enough just let me know," Qi Yun thought for a moment and added, "If you can't handle it alone, call Meng Ge to help you tomorrow."

Seeing how confident Qi Yun was, Wei Yong didn't say more; past experiences had proved that listening to him could never be wrong: "Alright, I got it, I'll handle it first thing in the morning."

"Okay, for now, let's split the profits fifty-fifty once we earn money."

After ending the call, Qi Yun put down the phone and continued checking the next piece of intelligence.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Red): Half an hour ago, Yang Zhihao, who works as a server at the Good Luck Casino in Manila, witnessed a young Chinese couple being forced into a van and driven away at the casino's parking lot.

The identities of this young couple are significant, one of their fathers is Deputy Minister of the Z Department in Bird City, the other's uncle is chief of S Bureau.]

Qi Yun looked at this piece of intelligence in front of him, an expression of amazement surfaced on his face, it took him a long time to recover, recalling a small and slim figure in his mind.

Yang Zhihao was the kid who helped fetch gold bars from the subway locker on Hong Kong Island.

Later, when Ah Jiao and the others went to Hong Kong Island, he specifically asked them to check on this guy, learned that after Yang Zhihao's mother passed away, he went with someone to the Philippines.

Unexpected to see more news about him today...

And the latter part of this intelligence is shocking as well.

Manila is even more chaotic than Africa, with kidnappings happening nearly every day. Qi Yun once watched in a documentary that some gangs specifically targeted Chinese people.

What were these two second-generation kids thinking, going to such a chaotic place.

But... if I could rescue those two kids, could it also help establish new friendships with important figures?

Chapter 340: He's Getting a Bit Anxious

Qi Yun lit up another cigarette, rubbing his chin as he fell deep in thought.

...

Meanwhile, back at the hotel, Dong Anyun stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling window, phone in hand, looking serious.

"Can you be sure!?" On the other end, Zhao Weilin's voice sounded very agitated.

"Her appearance is very similar to yours, and the age matches too. I'll send you her photo later." Dong Anyun replied calmly.

"Okay!" Zhao Weilin took a deep breath and asked again, "You said she and that Qi Yun already have a child?"

"Yes, named Nuannuan. She's over five years old and very cute."

Zhao Weilin pondered for a moment: "You don't need to come back tomorrow, just wait for me over there. I must go personally to confirm."

Hearing this, Dong Anyun hesitated for a moment and advised, "Chairman Zhao, I suggest not to rush this, it's best to make contact gradually..."

"Don't worry, I understand what you mean."

...

The next day, after breakfast, Qi Yun found Chen Wei and briefly explained the situation in the Philippines to him.

"Do you and Duan Pingyu have the confidence to rescue them?"

Chen Wei thought for a moment and replied, "In Southeast Asia, gun control is relatively lax, the other party probably has weapons. If their numbers don't exceed twenty, it shouldn't be too much of a problem."

Qi Yun rubbed his chin, somewhat reluctant to let the two take the risk.

After pondering for a while, he picked up the phone and dialed Li Yaohua.

"Brother Li, are you still in Beijing?"

"I'm still here, why, are you coming over again?" Li Yaohua asked with a smile.

After a few pleasantries, Qi Yun got to the point: "Do you know anyone in the Philippines? Two of my friends were kidnapped there."

"Kidnapped?" Li Yaohua asked in surprise.

"Yes, in Manila, they were taken from the entrance of the casino."

"Manila..." Li Yaohua repeated, "I really don't have any acquaintances there, it's too chaotic, not even our company has developed business there."

"How about I ask the boss for you? He can definitely get in touch with someone."

Hearing this, Qi Yun shook his head, not wanting to use up his favor with Fu Wentao over this: "Forget it, let's not bother him with this, I'll think of other ways."

As he was about to hang up, Li Yaohua suddenly called out: "Hey, wait a minute, it's best not to go through official channels for this, otherwise your friends will definitely be in danger, the official channels aren't reliable in that place."

Qi Yun was taken aback: "Alright, I got it."

After hanging up, he dialed two more numbers and eventually got some help from Harris.

The other party could contact friends in Manila to provide Qi Yun with a car and weapons, but manpower was inconvenient.

Qi Yun pondered for a while and made a decision on the spot: "Let's go over first to check the situation, if it's dangerous then forget it, we'll just consider it a trip."

Chen Wei hesitated: "How about just Pingyu and I go, you don't need to go, we'll do our best to bring them back safely."

Qi Yun shook his head: "I'm going too, don't worry, I won't act recklessly, I'll just wait for you guys in the car."

If he didn't go, how would people feel grateful?

Seeing his firm attitude, Chen Wei didn't try to persuade him further.

Qi Yun picked up his phone and sent a message to Duan Pingyu, telling him not to worry about Qiu Jiahao's side for the moment and to come back and meet him.

Then he looked up flight information. There were quite a few flights from Peng City to Manila, and it only took a couple of hours, so he immediately booked the earliest flight.

If things go smoothly, they'll be done over there tonight and can return early tomorrow.