

Middle Age 431

Chapter 431: Don't Buy Baisha, It Burns the Throat _3

The man took a puff of his cigarette, then replied, "Two of them are hiding at the ranch over by Nanshan now; it was them who took care of Qiu Jiahao recently."

"I don't know about Brother Biao and the other three; we usually communicate by phone and rarely meet face to face."

Qi Yun frowned slightly, "Then how do you know about the two in Nanshan?"

"One of those two is from my hometown, and he usually likes flirting with web streamers. He called me to borrow money yesterday, so I casually asked him where he was."

"Do you have the transaction record?"

"Yes, it's in my phone."

Qi Yun exchanged a glance with Niu Da beside him, who had already re-tied the cloth in Liu Jinshan's mouth, picked up a phone from the table, and asked the man, "Password."

"699298."

Niu Da unlocked the screen, clicked on the green bubble under the man's guidance, and sure enough saw the other person transferred money yesterday.

Qi Yun withdrew his gaze and continued asking, "Why kill Qiu Jiahao?"

The man shook his head, "I don't know the specifics; maybe only Brother Biao knows. It seems it was to force information out of him."

"Then what was the purpose of surveilling me?"

"I don't know either; they only said to monitor you and your family 24/7 to figure out your daily routines."

Qi Yun sighed inwardly, realizing he couldn't get more useful information, and then stood up, "What you've said doesn't help me much."

The man panicked, his mind racing, "Wait! There's something else! Brother Biao has a loan company managed by a woman! We laundered all the money we received through that loan company."

"That woman is quite pretty; she might have an affair with Brother Biao!"

"What's the company called?" Niu Da asked from the side.

"Lixin Finance!"

"Do you know anything else?"

The man shook his head, looking pitifully at Qi Yun, "That's all I've got to tell you!"

"I've admitted my crimes; you can kill me or hand me over to the police! But please save my family!"

Qi Yun glanced at him, "Where is your family?"

"In Guangdong Province..."

After questioning, Qi Yun and Niu Da made their way outside.

"How do we handle these two?" Niu Da asked in a low voice.

Qi Yun thought for a moment and replied, "Keep them here for now; I'll notify the police later to come and take them away."

"Brother Wei can come back tonight; then you can take people to follow the loan company to find Brother Biao and pin him down for me!"

"Okay." Niu Da responded, then hesitantly asked another question, "Why not hand them over directly?"

Qi Yun shook his head silently, not offering much explanation.

At this moment, a phone ringtone sounded, and Qi Yun took out his phone to see that it was Hong Weize calling.

"Hello, Brother Hong."

Hong Weize's hearty laughter came from the other end, "Qi old buddy, I looked into the matter you mentioned; indeed, someone is selling the Celestial Pearl, but they are quite cautious, and even the middlemen aren't clear about their background."

"Moreover, their asking price is high, but to be honest, there are many fakes; the black market doesn't necessarily have genuine stuff."

"Thanks for the heads-up, Brother Hong; I'll be careful." Qi Yun replied with a laugh, then quickly asked, "How much do they want to sell it for?"

"They're quoting two thousand pieces; they have quite an appetite."

After hearing this, Qi Yun was silent for a few seconds, "Can we talk to the seller face to face?"

"The counterpart doesn't want to show themselves." Hong Weize sighed, "I'll have the middleman talk to them again; after all, it's not like this expensive thing is just anything."

"Alright, then I'll trouble Brother Hong." Qi Yun thanked him.

"Don't mention it, old buddy; I'll call you if I hear anything."

"Alright."

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Elsewhere, in a small guesthouse within the city village of the New District, three men were staying there, one around forty years old, while the other two appeared a bit younger.

The skin on these three men's faces didn't look good, covered with lots of spots, obviously from long exposure to ultraviolet rays.

One of them wore a baseball cap, and the back of his head had no hair at all.

"Damn it, we spent three years stealing the Celestial Pearl; are we not going to be able to sell it?" the bald one wearing the hat asked.

The bearded man known as Nima glanced at him and calmly took a sip of his drink.

The other person beside also chimed in, "Why not lower the price a bit, get the money quickly so we can run; it would be troublesome if the police found out."

Upon hearing this, the bald man seemed even more worried, "Exactly; if the temple realizes I'm gone, they'll definitely suspect me. The police might even be after me by now."

"Hey, I think asking for twenty million is too much..."

Nima listened to the two of them rambling on, a chilly spark flashed in his lowered eyes.

At this moment, his ancient Oppo phone beside him received a text message, and Nima picked it up to glance at it, then said to the two, "Let's go, the middleman has arranged for a buyer; we'll go for a face-to-face transaction."

Upon hearing the news, the bald man's joy was overwhelming, "See, I said a face-to-face transaction would sell better; how can we sell anything if we don't show ourselves..."

Nima had a smile on his face, "Yeah, you two go wait in the car, I'll buy two packs of cigarettes."

"Sure, don't buy White Sand, it's harsh on the throat." The man beside reminded.

"Alright." Nima replied gently.

He put on his shoes and walked out of the inn, heading straight to a small shop opposite.

"What do you need?" the shopkeeper asked.

Nima scanned the shelf, "Two packs of White Sand, please."

The shopkeeper took down two packs of cigarettes and handed them over, "Fifteen bucks. Anything else?"

Nima put the cigarettes into his pocket and asked, "Do you have a fruit knife? The kind for cutting watermelons."

The shopkeeper pointed to his right hand side, "You can check yourself; there are only short ones here, for longer ones you have to go to a specialized knife shop, and those require registration."

Nima nodded and followed the direction the boss was pointing, finally choosing three small knives, each fifteen centimeters long, from the shelf on the right.

"How much in total?"

"Six yuan each, eighteen yuan in total," the boss glanced at him, "You buying so many to cut watermelons? No returns on what I sell, you know."

Nima nodded with a smile, "Yeah, I'm afraid the blade might chip."

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9:30 PM, Hutao Villa.

Inside the private room, Qi Yun had just sat down when the waiter led Shao Yuewen through the door.

"Sorry for the wait, a last-minute thing at work held me up."

Qi Yun stood up to greet him, understandingly teasing, "Haha, brother-in-law, you're always busy with affairs for us common folks. Waiting for you is the least I can do."

Shao Yuewen smiled and pointed at him, "You cheeky guy."

Since his wife had acknowledged Qi Yun as a brother, it was only natural for him to call Shao Yuewen brother-in-law.

The waiter served them tea and left.

Before Qi Yun could speak, Shao Yuewen proactively took a file from his bag and placed it in front of Qi Yun.

"Your security company license has come through."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's eyes lit up. In fact, he invited Shao Yuewen for dinner today specifically to inquire about the progress of this matter.

In China, starting a private security company isn't easy. Not only do security personnel need to have professional security qualifications, but they must also have years of industry experience.

The most crucial part is the approval process. Besides the business license procedures, the most challenging are the Public Security approvals. You need clearance from both city and district Public Security departments to operate legally.

These approval processes are extremely strict. Without some strong connections, it's almost impossible to get them done.

It was during a visit to Shao Yuewen's home that Qi Yun sought help from Shao's sister-in-law, who then used her father's connections to get it done.

Although Qi Yun didn't pay any material price for this, he did owe them a huge favor.

In short, private security companies in China are not something just anyone can manage.

"Please thank Sister Lan for me when you go back." Qi Yun briefly scanned the approval document and set it aside, then picked up a black plastic bag from the wooden floor and pushed it in front of Shao Yuewen.

"What's this supposed to mean?" Shao Yuewen casually joked as he looked at the plastic bag in front of him, "Are you trying to bribe me?"

Qi Yun chuckled along, not missing a chance to flatter, "Everyone knows Minister Shao is incorruptible and honest, wouldn't trying to bribe you just be asking for trouble?"

As he spoke, he opened the plastic bag, revealing a slightly yellow-tinted wine bottle, "This is a bottle of Moutai I've kept for years, from 1980, there's only this one bottle left, and I couldn't bear to drink it myself."

"I specifically brought it today for you to enjoy, take it home and give it a try."

Shao Yuewen listened and picked up the bottle to have a look, smiling, "You sure know what you're doing, then I won't be polite with you."

"No need to be polite! Seriously, don't be!" Qi Yun waved his hand repeatedly.

"Knock, knock, knock!"

Just then, there was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" Qi Yun called out.

The wooden door opened, and a woman in her thirties, with a very gentle and elegant demeanor, stepped inside, carrying two bottles of special liquor.

"Two distinguished guests are here."

This woman was none other than Lu Zhaoxue, the restaurant owner they had met before.

As soon as Lu Zhaoxue appeared, Qi Yun's eyes froze, and he didn't snap out of it until she walked up to them.

"Haha, what distinguished guests? We know you're busy, didn't mean to disturb you." Shao Yuewen casually responded.

Lu Zhaoxue placed the bottles on the table, and as her eyes met Qi Yun's, she noticed him staring at her and blushed slightly, pretending to be shy.

Shao Yuewen noticed this, turned to look at Qi Yun beside him, with a strange expression on his face.

"Ahem~"

A light cough brought Qi Yun back to his senses. He turned to look at Shao Yuewen, realizing his rudeness, and smiled apologetically at Lu Zhaoxue, explaining, "Sorry, President Lu, seeing you reminded me of someone."

"Oh?" Lu Zhaoxue blinked her beautiful eyes, feigning curiosity, "Who did Mr. Qi think of?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "I don't know her name, I just had a brief encounter with her in Shanghai before, and I thought she looked a lot like you, President Lu."

Chapter 433: Donate Them to the Nation

In the early morning, a flight from Abu Dhabi slowly landed at Tianshan International Airport.

In the airport's special passageway, Kang Guodong, the Director of the Railway Bureau's cargo department, personally accompanied Qi Yun waiting inside the car.

Ever since Qi Yun helped him deal with the ambitious Lin Yonggang, who had been trying to seize power, a bond had formed between the two of them.

This bond was no longer just about the face of the Bird City Chamber of Commerce's president, but rather about their genuine interpersonal interaction.

Moreover, Kang Guodong had indirectly learned some of Qi Yun's background and knew he wasn't as simple as he appeared.

"You seem to have had quite a bit to drink, huh?" Kang Guodong turned his head and asked.

"Haha, just a few drinks." Although Qi Yun's face was flushed, his mind was clear. He handed over a cigarette with a slight smile, saying, "Does the shipment still need to be inspected later? This batch of goods has no paperwork."

Kang Guodong took the cigarette, lit it with a click of the lighter, and after a deep inhale, said slowly, "Don't worry about the paperwork, arrangements have been made. The goods will just pass through the scanner, no detailed checks."

Having said that, he glanced at Qi Yun, with a teasing smile, "But what exactly are these goods? So secretive, you don't even have a proper customs declaration."

Qi Yun smiled, without directly answering, "Don't worry, it won't cause you trouble. It's just a bit urgent, no time for the official procedure, or I wouldn't have bothered you to make this midnight trip."

As they were chatting, the car door was pulled open from the outside, and Zhang Dayong stepped in, wiping the sweat from his forehead.

"Phew~ just going to the bathroom made me sweat all over, really getting old."

Kang Guodong hurriedly took out his cigarette box and offered a cigarette, "Haha, Director Zhang, it's just that work is too tiring for you. At our age, we really need to take better care of ourselves."

In terms of hierarchy, although Kang Guodong and Zhang Dayong were similar, one was in a state-owned enterprise, and the other in an administrative unit, not comparable, and their levels of influence were different.

Therefore, when facing Zhang Dayong, Kang Guodong deliberately lowered his stance a bit.

Additionally, his willingness to take the risk and use his connections to help Qi Yun with this matter was largely influenced by Zhang Dayong backing this shipment.

Otherwise, speaking frankly, even if this shipment wasn't illegal, it could be suspected of smuggling, and under normal circumstances, he wouldn't dare to do it.

Zhang Dayong accepted the cigarette, and Kang Guodong hurriedly leaned in to light it for him, but Zhang Dayong waved his hand in refusal, "I'll do it myself."

The few of them chatted idly in the car for a few minutes when Kang Guodong's phone rang. He glanced at the message and then said to Qi Yun, "Let's go, you can start loading the goods."

"Alright." Qi Yun nodded, patting the back of the driver's seat.

Lao Hei, the driver, immediately put the car in gear and slowly drove towards the front of the passage, followed by two large trucks behind the business van.

The three vehicles arrived at the entrance of a warehouse inside the airport. The rolling door slowly rose, revealing the bright lights inside.

At the door, a middle-aged man wearing glasses stood waiting.

After getting out of the car, Kang Guodong quickly approached the middle-aged man and extended his hand to shake, "Old Song, haven't seen you in a while, huh."

The man referred to as Old Song patted Kang Guodong's arm, teasing, "You busy man, it's not easy to see you."

"Always teasing me." Kang Guodong smiled helplessly, then stepped aside, "Let me introduce you, this is Director Zhang of the New District Branch, and this is Mr. Qi Yun, the owner of the shipment."

Old Song, with a warm smile, stepped forward and extended his hand, "Welcome, Director Zhang, to guide our work."

His remark was purely for politeness. Although the airport was within the New District, they belonged to different systems, so there was no basis for guiding work.

But despite the words, everyone in the circle knew that one might need help someday, so who wouldn't want to make more friends, thus the conversation was naturally flattering.

There was no one else at the warehouse door, not even a subordinate, which showed his meticulous nature.

Zhang Dayong shook hands with him, his tone also very polite, "You're too kind. We're just here to check on the goods and will leave immediately after loading, so as not to disrupt your work."

While speaking, his gaze turned to the wooden boxes in the warehouse, "The paperwork for this shipment is still being processed, Director Song, please follow the special procedure for now, Qi Yun will complete the paperwork later."

Old Song was well aware, knowing the paperwork talk was just for show, so he didn't take it seriously, just nodded with a smile, "With Director Zhang's instructions, no problem, special cases handled specially, all goods have been checked and can be taken directly."

Qi Yun also stepped forward and greeted Old Song, extending his hand, "Thank you, Director Song, for the trouble."

Old Song dared not neglect. Although he didn't know Qi Yun, someone who could have both Kang Guodong and Zhang Dayong accompany him personally must not be a simple figure, so he shook Qi Yun's hand immediately, with the right amount of enthusiasm.

"Mr. Qi, you're welcome, this small matter is no trouble at all." He pointed sideways to a lounge inside the warehouse, "Your friends are resting inside."

Qi Yun nodded, "Alright, thank you. When Director Song is free, I'll treat you to a meal, please do me the honor then."

"Sure, no problem," Old Song said with a smile, "let's arrange for the goods to be loaded now."

With that, he took a walkie-talkie from his pocket, "Xiao Wang, have the airport arrange two forklifts to Warehouse 98."

Chapter 434: Donate Them to the Country Part 2

"Okay!" A response came through the walkie-talkie, and within a few minutes, two forklifts beeped as they drove in from the side door of the warehouse. The drivers, wearing safety helmets, deftly stopped beside the pile of wooden boxes.

Qi Yun gave Old Hei a look, and the latter immediately instructed the drivers of the two trucks behind to open the doors and start loading the cargo.

Seeing that everything was in order, Old Song turned his head and smiled, asking, "Director Zhang, Mr. Qi, want to come to my office for some tea?"

Zhang Dayong waved his hand: "I'll skip the tea; drinking it this late will keep me up. Maybe next time."

Next to him, Kang Guodong chimed in: "Old Song, if you have something to do, go ahead and do your work. We'll leave once we're done loading."

Old Song smiled apologetically: "Hehe, alright, I do have some matters to attend to. Let's catch up another day, alright?"

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More than twenty minutes later, the convoy left the airport, heading toward the direction of the New District Branch.

Inside the business car, there were only Qi Yun and Zhang Dayong, along with Old Hei driving. As for Kang Guodong, he had left by himself after finishing his business.

Qi Yun took out a security company permit from his briefcase and handed it to Zhang Dayong: "Take a look at this; I have something I want to consult with you about."

"What is it?" Zhang Dayong asked, suspiciously, as he received it. After flipping through a few pages, a hint of surprise flashed in his eyes, "This isn't easy to get!"

"You've managed to find connections even in the S department now?"

Asking such a question was a bit bold, but it was only because of his special relationship with Qi Yun that he felt comfortable being so casual.

Qi Yun didn't hide anything, chuckling as he replied, "Not my own connections. I asked Vice Minister Shao from the Z department for help."

"Shao Yuewen?" Zhang Dayong was even more puzzled, "Does he have that much influence?"

"His father-in-law's surname is Pan," Qi Yun discreetly hinted.

Zhang Dayong froze for two seconds, then seemed to realize something, instantly widening his eyes: "No wonder... I heard someone say he might be getting a promotion soon."

Though Zhang Dayong was in charge at the New District Branch, he was still some distance from the real center of power, so he wasn't very familiar with some of the higher-up connections and backgrounds.

After half a minute of silence, Zhang Dayong suddenly turned to look at Qi Yun: "How's your relationship with him?"

Qi Yun naturally knew what he meant by this, so he nodded slightly, "I'll find an opportunity to introduce you two."

"Alright." A gleam of interest sparkled in Zhang Dayong's eyes. Although he also had someone behind him, the relationship was not that close due to the significant gap between them, so it was impossible to sit on equal footing.

Thus, there were some things he couldn't rely on them to help with.

The reason he managed to make this move forward was partly due to the 30 million cash tip Qi Yun previously gave him, which successfully brought down Vice Officer Zhou Wenbin, earning him great merit;

Additionally, for such a key position, they also needed one of their own people there.

The combination of these factors, along with the two paintings Qi Yun prepared for Zhang Dayong, facilitated his successful step forward this time.

But if Qi Yun could introduce Shao Yuewen to him, it would be different. Although they couldn't be completely equal status-wise, with Qi Yun's connection in the middle, at least they could sit at the same table, making it easier to broach topics and discussions.

"What do you want me to consult with you about?" Zhang Dayong put away the document and handed it back to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun placed the document back into his bag, pondering: "What if I want to get some gun permits for the security company, is there a way?"

Upon hearing this, Zhang Dayong's brows furrowed deeply: "What do you need that for?"

Qi Yun didn't directly answer the question, but instead pointed at the two trucks behind them: "Weren't you curious about where I got those artifacts from?"

Zhang Dayong nodded. Previously, Qi Yun had told him that he had brought back some valuable artifacts from abroad and intended to donate them to the country, but there were no formal customs procedures.

Out of absolute trust in Qi Yun, Zhang Dayong vouched for him.

"It all started when I went to Shanghai a while back..."

Qi Yun narrated the events in Shanghai, the subsequent arrangements to send Chen Wei and the others to London, and how they managed to bring the cargo back to Zhang Dayong.

Zhang Dayong, after listening, took a long time to recover.

"Man, you're really expanding your operations; you even brought in a naval ship..."

He didn't know much about Qi Yun's affairs and was surprised by how quickly Qi Yun had developed, which is why he voiced that admiration.

"So you're worried those people might follow you back here?"

"Not entirely," Qi Yun's answer was somewhat ambiguous, "Mainly because I've offended quite a few people recently. If the security could be armed, I'd feel more at ease." In truth, he was most apprehensive not of the foreign individuals, but of Brother Biao and those behind him.

Those guys were not only extremely powerful but also ruthless, as exemplified by Qiu Jiahao and his father.

Though according to the confessions of the two captured individuals, Brother Biao and his actual gun-wielding subordinates combined only numbered six people, who knows if the higher-ups have more than just Brother Biao as their enforcer?

"This is quite difficult. In this country, getting private security armed is practically impossible," Zhang Dayong poured cold water on the idea.

Qi Yun knew how hard it was to achieve this, but he was still unwilling to give up easily: "Is there no chance?"

Zhang Dayong remained silent for a long time before turning to look at Qi Yun, hinting with his words: "Have you been in touch with Captain Ge lately?"

Qi Yun's eyes flickered; he wasn't surprised Zhang Dayong could guess his national security connection, because last time when he was detained by Big Back for relations issues, besides Z Association stepping in, Ge Dabao also personally called Qi Yun, and Zhang Dayong was right there at the time.

Chapter 435: Donate Them to the Country Part 3

"There's no one in Jiang Province who can handle this," Zhang Dayong advised thoughtfully, "If you can achieve something significant, and the higher-ups value it enough, you might give this a try."

After listening, Qi Yun nodded thoughtfully, "I understand."

After more than half an hour, the convoy arrived at a warehouse near the New District Branch. It was just a street away from the branch, so any slight disturbance could immediately surround this place.

The batch of artifacts was temporarily stored here, it couldn't be safer.

As the wooden crates were moved from the truck into the warehouse, it wasn't long before they filled up a corner.

After the truck drivers left, Qi Yun instructed Old Eagle to close the warehouse door and then opened all the crates for inspection and photographs.

The warehouse door clanked down, obstructing the outside view. Qi Yun squatted down and personally opened the outermost wooden crate. The foam padding was gently moved aside, revealing an item wrapped in red silk.

It was a half-foot-tall bronze cauldron with exquisite cloud thunder patterns engraved on it, looking extremely ancient and full of a sense of history.

When all the crates were opened, Zhang Dayong beside him almost had his eyes pop out.

Besides the two historically significant Dog Head and Sheep Head, there were more than twenty other bronze artifacts and porcelain pieces, each incredibly valuable, otherwise, they wouldn't have been favored by the British Museum.

Zhang Dayong recovered from his shock, "Are you planning to donate these things to the Jiang Province Museum?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "I'm not sure yet, but they might end up being donated over to Beijing, they can't handle it here."

Zhang Dayong nodded slightly. Although he wasn't very familiar with antiques, he recognized the Dog Head, Sheep Head, and other treasures from Yuanming Garden. It would indeed be challenging for local places to keep them.

Of the Twelve Bronze Heads that have returned to the country, now they are housed separately in the Poly Art Museum, the Yuanming Garden Management Office, and the National Museum, none of them are located locally.

Once everything was photographed, all the artifacts were repacked into the wooden crates.

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Meanwhile, a dilapidated van was heading south along the highway, with endless Gobi Desert on both sides.

Inside the car, a bald man wearing a hat impatiently asked, "Where the hell does the buyer want to make the deal? We've been on the road all day."

Another man in the back seat, equally irritated, complained, "Yeah, why choose such a far-off place?"

Ni Ma glanced at the night outside the window, a cigarette in his mouth, "We're almost there, just at the next town; the buyer is from around here. If you two are sleepy, just take a nap."

"Alright, call me when we get there," the bald man reluctantly agreed, leaning back in his seat to start dozing off.

A few minutes later, a fork in the road appeared ahead, next to an unfrequented dirt road, leading to an abandoned mine.

Ni Ma slowed the car down, surveyed the area briefly, then turned the wheel and drove in...

About an hour later, along the dirt road, Ni Ma opened the trunk, put a shovel back into the car, and started driving back along the original route.

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At ten in the morning, inside the dormitory of Golden Collar Villa, besides the five members including Old Eagle who returned in the early hours, Niu Da was also called back by Qi Yun. The two people in West Mountain were temporarily left to be watched by Old Black, since they were tied up and couldn't stir up any trouble.

As for Ah Jiao and Ah Jie, they were assigned to guard the batch of valuable artifacts. After all the time they spent together, Qi Yun had come to trust Ah Jiao and his team a lot.

Moreover, besides the two of them, Zhang Dayong also arranged for a police car to be stationed right at the warehouse door, making it foolproof.

"Brother Niu, you make the arrangements." Qi Yun, sitting on the sofa, called out.

Niu Da nodded, stood up, and walked to a magnetic whiteboard, which had several photos and documents on it. Pointing at the photos, he began introducing the mission, "An Zai and Da Pao, you two head over to Nanshan Ranch to capture these two guys."

"I'll give you the exact address later. They may be armed, so be cautious during the operation."

Hearing this, An Zai and Da Pao immediately nodded, "Understood!"

Niu Da then pointed his finger at the nearby photos, "This guy is called Brother Biao, and the woman beside him is likely his girl, and the other three are his men. Our task is to get all these four through this woman."

"I'll team up with Bing Zi, and Old Eagle will pair with Old Bai. We'll track her twenty-four hours."

Once the tasks were assigned, everyone started to act.

Qi Yun then hopped into his BMW 5 Series, asked Chen Wei to drive to the New University.

In the office, Wei Xueming was sipping tea while reading the newspaper.

"Hmm~ the tea that kid Qi brought is indeed pretty good," Wei Xueming muttered quietly.

No sooner had he spoken the words than a figure appeared at the door, it was Qi Yun who he had just been thinking about.

"Old Wei, busy?" Qi Yun saw the office door open, so he came in with a smile.

Wei Xueming glanced at him, "Why are you here again?"

Qi Yun wasn't bothered, casually dragged a chair over, and sat down, "Hehe, just came to see you and also to check on how the archaeological team in Northern Mongolia is doing."

"Initially, I hoped to ask Director Hua about the situation, but I've been unable to reach him."

Wei Xueming flipped through the newspaper and spoke slowly, "The archaeological team organized by Beijing arrived in Northern Mongolia yesterday. They're probably handling those foreigners' corpses now."

"The archaeological team's work must be kept strictly confidential. Unless necessary, no outside communication is allowed, so it's normal you can't reach them."

Qi Yun grinned awkwardly, "So that's how it is."

"You're checking on the team's progress because you're eager to claim credit, right?"

"Haha, I'm indeed looking forward to it," Qi Yun admitted straightforwardly without embarrassment.

"You rascal," Wei Xueming laughed and put down the newspaper, picked up a teacup, and took a sip, "Just wait patiently; it'll probably be in the next few days."

"Alright." Qi Yun nodded, continuing, "Actually, there's one more thing today."

"Go on, I'll give you ten minutes. I have to go to the lab later."

Qi Yun didn't waste time, took out an envelope from his bag, and poured out a stack of photos, "Take a look at these, Old Wei."

Wei Xueming took the photos, adjusted his glasses, and after seeing the patterns on the photos, he asked in confusion, "Early Eastern Han Dynasty cloud thunder pattern cauldron?"

"Auspicious Bottle from the Song Dynasty imperial kiln?"

"Dog Head of the Twelve Bronze Heads?"

"..."

After viewing the entire stack of photos, Wei Xueming put them down, "What are you showing me these for?"

"I currently have all these items," Qi Yun said calmly.

Wei Xueming, hearing this, didn't react at first. After two seconds, like he suddenly remembered something, he looked up sharply at Qi Yun, his pupils constricting.

Qi Yun's calm words sounded like a thunderstorm in his ears, even his breathing became heavier.

"What did you say!? You have these things now?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Yes, I have them."

Wei Xueming stared intently at Qi Yun. Seeing his serious expression, not appearing to joke, he grabbed Qi Yun's arm, "Where are they! Take me to see them quickly!"

Qi Yun, fearing this old man might get too excited and pass out, hurriedly tried to calm him, "Old Wei, don't get too excited. If you want to see them, I can take you at any time."

But Wei Xueming, unwilling to wait, seized him by the arm and said, "Show me now!"

All his life he'd researched historical artifacts and had seen many rare treasures, but he had never seen national treasures like the Yuanming Garden Beast Heads, famous worldwide for their storied past.

Reluctantly, Qi Yun followed him out, "Alright, let's go now, but take it slow."

Once they arrived and Wei Xueming had thoroughly inspected all twenty or so precious artifacts, he sat down heavily on a chair, breathing rather heavily.

Qi Yun, who had been following him, drew a chair over and handed him a towel and bottle of water, "Have a drink, Old Wei, and rest for a moment."

Wei Xueming took the bottle, had a couple of sips, and after taking a two-minute break, he asked, "How did you come by these artifacts?"

Qi Yun also drew up a chair and casually explained, "Someone tried to smuggle them abroad to sell to foreigners, and I snatched them back from London."

"Snatched them back?" Wei Xueming, after hearing this, was initially unresponsive, but after two seconds, he suddenly seemed to realize something and stared at Qi Yun with wide eyes. His gaze was serious, indicating he wasn't joking, so he grabbed Qi Yun by the arm, "Where's the stuff?"

Qi Yun shrugged helplessly and reassured him, "Old Wei, don't worry. If you want to see them, I can take you anytime."

Reluctantly, he followed him outside, "Alright, let's go now, just take it slow."

Chapter 436: Stepping Down...?

In the warehouse, Qi Yun merely gave a faint smile in response to Wei Xueming's astonished look.

"Don't look at me like that. I'm not all that great."

"The reason I want to donate these things to the country, firstly, is because they are national treasures and carry deep national sentiments. They shouldn't drift overseas or be privately hoarded by anyone."

"Secondly, I'm not currently in dire need of money, and I believe the country definitely won't treat me unfairly even if I donate them."

It was only to this little old man who had always cared for him, that Qi Yun would reveal such truths. Had it been anyone else, these wouldn't have been his words.

Wei Xueming nodded after hearing and felt gratified by Qi Yun's honesty. This was the reason he had used his resources several times to help Qi Yun.

In his heart, despite Qi Yun being a bit slippery, he was a person with integrity and discretion. Although he also fought for benefits, that was only human nature.

Having lived to his age, he had seen too many people who spoke of righteousness yet were self-centered and selfish inside.

"So, how do you plan to handle this matter?"

Qi Yun gave a chuckle: "That's another reason I came to you today. I want to directly donate this batch of valuable cultural relics to the National Museum in Beijing, but I don't know their leadership. I'm hoping you could help me get in touch."

Wei Xueming glanced at him upon hearing this, naturally understanding what he meant.

"I used to know the old director of the National Museum, but he has retired now. I can't communicate with the people over there anymore."

"You should find Director Yu. He should have the channels to help you get in touch."

"Vice Director Yu?" Upon hearing this, Qi Yun shook his head like a rattle, "Better not find him."

He still remembers when Yu Qixuan, that old man, wanted to take the Lunar Meteorite for free the first time he spoke, and after his insistence, only gave sixty thousand along with three years of advertisements on museum tickets to take the Lunar Meteorite.

That's why Qi Yun now resists dealing with this person; he is too stingy. If he learns about these treasures' existence, he might report it to the higher-ups, and they could forcibly keep a couple of items.

The Twelve Bronze Heads are beyond their grasp, but with one or two porcelain pieces, it's still possible. These are treasures Qi Yun obtained at a great cost, counting on them to resolve the gun license issue.

"You rascal..." Wei Xueming chuckled, knowing what's on Qi Yun's mind, "Don't worry, Director Yu has retired. He can help you contact them as a private favor."

"Retired...retired, huh?" Qi Yun uttered, licking his lips. Yu Qixuan appeared slightly younger than Wei Xueming, but probably not by much. It's normal for him to retire.

"Will Director Yu agree to help? Can you call him?"

Wei Xueming waved his hand. "You call. It's a good deed; he won't refuse."

"Alright." Seeing Wei Xueming speak thus, Qi Yun didn't hesitate and immediately took out his phone to find Yu Qixuan's number.

Over forty minutes later, Yu Qixuan hurriedly arrived at the warehouse and was left speechless upon seeing those more than twenty treasures.

Immediately, he painstakingly examined each treasure closely, but just as Wei Xueming said, he didn't mention keeping these items in the local museum.

"Director Yu, these cultural relics have no paperwork. There won't be any issues donating them to the National Museum, will there?" Qi Yun asked tentatively.

Yu Qixuan curled his lips dismissively: "How many of those things in the British Museum have legal paperwork?"

"Once they are on our soil, no one else can meddle! Besides, these cultural relics were originally ours!"

Seeing Yu Qixuan speak so assertively, all of Qi Yun's last concerns vanished into thin air.

"Hehe, alright then. Could I trouble you to help contact the leaders at the National Museum?"

Yu Qixuan nodded. "Rest assured, I'll handle this. I'll talk with them when I return."

"Great, thank you so much, Director Yu." Qi Yun rubbed his hands and sincerely expressed his gratitude.

"No need to thank me." Yu Qixuan waved his hand, "You're doing a good deed; I will surely support it unconditionally!"

"Director Yu is so noble!"

"Alright, kid, don't butter me up. Make sure to keep this batch safe!" Yu Qixuan reminded.

Qi Yun nodded. "I know, don't worry."

...

Meanwhile, Nima, who had returned to the Bird City, didn't go to that small hotel, but instead found another densely populated urban village.

After booking a room, he dialed the middleman's number.

"Hello, how is it?"

The voice on the other end sighed: "Buddy, to be honest, not many can afford your price of two thousand."

"Also, with these deals, people can't just agree to trade after merely looking at photos. They definitely need to meet a couple of times more to check the goods, right?"

"If you agree, I'll contact them for you. There's currently a buyer interested."

Nima remained silent for a while, then replied hoarsely: "Verification is fine, but for twenty million, I want gold bars, not a bank transfer."

"That's all negotiable. Anyone who can shell out twenty million definitely has the means to get gold bars." The middleman readily agreed, "I'll ask them now, and notify you when the time and location are finalized for the meeting."

"Set the time for tomorrow; I'll let you know the place then." Nima said squinting his eyes.

The middleman hesitated for two seconds, then eventually nodded: "Alright, it's up to you."

Chapter 437: Retreat... Did They Fall Back? _2

Normally, the time and place for the transaction are arranged by the middleman, because the buyer and seller don't know each other and there's no trust involved, so they both worry about the other playing tricks. Consequently, it's logical for the commission-taking middleman to arrange it, which is acceptable to both sides.

But not everyone can be a middleman; they have to have a reputation on the black market and credibility is also crucial, otherwise, who would trust you?

After finishing the call, Nima sits cross-legged on the bed, takes out a pack of Baisha cigarettes from his pocket, and lights one up.

After taking a few drags, he seems to have made a decision, picks up his phone, and starts searching for the nearest mines.

...

At Nanshan Ranch, the summer grassland is lush and green, with the emerald river valleys and towering spruces on the slopes joining to form a stunningly beautiful picture.

In a small village at the foot of the snowy mountains, An Zai and Da Pao, disguised as herdsmen riding a 125cc motorcycle, park the bike under an old elm tree, pretending to check the bike chain while surreptitiously glancing toward the small courtyard across the road.

"The address given by Brother Niu is here," An Zai murmurs, his voice barely audible over the thumping motorcycle engine, "The chimney's still smoking, people should be inside."

Conditions in the mountains are not like the outside world; there is no natural gas. Herdsmen mostly use stoves for cooking and boiling water, and even in summer, the temperature at night in the mountains remains low, requiring the stove for warmth.

Da Pao nods, wiping his hands with his sleeve: "Go up front and keep watch to avoid suspicion. We'll move in once it's dark!"

With that, the two pretend to push the motorcycle toward a farmhouse hotel nearby.

At ten o'clock at night, it starts to drizzle in the mountains. Even though the sun is still hanging in the sky, the surroundings become shrouded in mist.

An Zai and Da Pao walk out from a yurt and head toward the courtyard two hundred meters away.

Earlier, they learned from the hotel owner that the opposing courtyard was also a farmhouse hotel before being sold to someone else. It's usually empty, but recently the lights have been noticed on at night, suggesting people are living there.

The two stroll leisurely to the entrance of the courtyard and glance inside through the gate's crack.

The courtyard is square, with rooms on the north, east, and west sides, and a sheep pen in the corner. At the moment, there's a faint light coming from the room on the north side.

Da Pao points to the nearby red-brick courtyard wall, which is about three meters high, but it seems insubstantial to them.

An Zai nods, indicating he understands.

The two look around to confirm no one is in sight. Da Pao bends his knee, extends a leg, and An Zai steps onto it, using the leverage to easily leap onto the wall like a nimble panther.

Squatting atop the wall and surveying the area, he promptly reaches down, and Da Pao grabs his hand, effortlessly climbing up to join him.

The sound of the drizzle perfectly muffles the faint noises they make. The two leap down inside the courtyard, silently making their way to the north-side room.

The window glass is filthy, making it impossible to see inside, but faint sounds of bottles clinking can be vaguely heard, mixed with strange noises.

It seems like someone is watching a live stream...

An Zai, who is seasoned in such matters, hears someone say, "Thanks to Tianzong for gifting me a Porsche, thanks geigei, mua!"

An Zai shows a knowing smile, takes out two folding knives from his pocket, then points at the wooden door.

Da Pao nods, moves to the door, takes a deep breath, and fiercely kicks at the door lock.

"Bang!"

The wooden door is kicked loose from its lock and slams into the wall with a deafening crash.

The sound inside abruptly stops, and the two burly men sitting on the earthen bed under the dim yellow chandelier suddenly turn around.

One buzz-cut guy freezes with a bottle in mid-air, while the tall, slender one has just formed a heart with his hands toward the phone screen, his "mua" unfinished as his face goes white.

However, they react quickly. Seeing the door suddenly kicked open, the buzz-cut guy, without a word, flings the bottle toward the intruders; it shatters against the wall, sending shards flying.

Meanwhile, the tall slender man grabs the nearby 92-style pistol, turns, and aims toward the doorway, preparing to fire.

But just as his finger is about to pull the trigger, An Zai, with agility like a leopard, has already rolled into the room, releasing the folding knife from his hand like an arrow!

The tall man's pupils contract, barely glimpsing what hurtles toward him, when suddenly he feels a sharp pain in his left wrist. The first knife pins accurately to his gun hand, and the pistol "clank" drops to the floor.

"Ah!" the tall man cries in pain.

The buzz-cut guy opposite prepares to grab a gun too, but An Zai doesn't give him a chance. With a quick wrist movement, the second knife flies out, embedding unerringly in the buzz-cut guy's right arm!

The buzz-cut guy groans, his right arm instantly weakened, his hand helplessly dropping the gun handle, with blood streaming down from the knife, staining his sleeve red.

Besides being skilled at explosives, An Zai's other remarkable talent is his masterful knife-throwing. Back in the army, his skills were praised and left a lasting impression on a certain commander.

The two killers are truly worthy of being desperados; despite the pain, they still refuse to give up resistance. The tall man bends down, attempting to retrieve the gun from the floor, while the buzz-cut guy does the same, sliding his knee as he reaches out with his other hand to grab the gun.

But at this moment, Da Pao had already closed in, pouncing like a fierce tiger onto the back of the tall and skinny man. Before the opponent could grab the gun, a powerful kick landed on his lower back!

"Boom!" With a dull thud, the tall and skinny man was hit like he was struck by a heavy hammer and flew forward, his face slamming into the corner of the table. Nosebleed gushed out instantly, and there was no hope for the gun in his hand.

"Still trying to pick it up?"

Da Pao sneered, bending down, stepping on his back, and quickly snatched the handgun from the ground, then used the gun butt to smash the back of his head.

The tall and skinny man groaned, slumped to the ground without making a sound, the dagger in his wrist still dripping blood, staining the cement floor of the room.

The other crew-cut man's left hand just reached out, but An Zai's fist, as large as a sandbag, had already punched over, directly hitting the crew-cut man's forehead.

The crew-cut man felt as if his head was struck by a heavy hammer, a shower of golden stars exploding in front of his eyes, his brain buzzing, and he collapsed to the earthen bed alongside the wall, though he hadn't yet lost consciousness.

An Zai didn't give him any chance to catch a breath, followed with a hooking punch that landed solidly on the side of the crew-cut man's face. Only a crisp "crack" could be heard, probably the sound of a bone cracking.

The crew-cut man didn't even have time to scream; his body rolled off the earthen bed like a kite with a broken string, crashing heavily onto the cement ground.

Blood foam instantly spilled from the corner of his mouth, a few blood-stained teeth mixed with saliva spat on the ground.

He struggled to get up, but as his vision blackened, his arm, which he had propped up moments ago, went limp again, and he completely fainted.

"Just these lousy tricks, trying to be a professional killer, even hitting on women, pfft!" An Zai spat disdainfully at the ground, then picked up the crew-cut man like a dead pig and headed outside.

...

On the other side, Qi Yun had finished eating with his daughter and Zhao Qing, and while practicing with Chen Wei, he received a call from Yu Qixuan.

"Qi Yun, I have already contacted the National Museum. When Director Fu heard about your donation, he was very happy and asked me to express his gratitude on his behalf."

"No need for thanks. As a Chinese person, this is what I should do." Qi Yun responded with a smile.

Yu Qixuan teased, "Haha, haven't seen you for months, and look at you enlightened now?"

"Not at all, Director Yu, just pursuing progress, right? Can't let my ideological awareness fall behind, wouldn't you agree?" Qi Yun hinted subtly.

"Well, wanting to progress is a good thing." Yu Qixuan laughed, "The National Museum is very serious about this donation and plans to send some leaders to come to Bird City and talk to you face-to-face. The time is likely set for the next day or two; I'll notify you once it's confirmed."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun's face also showed a trace of joy. The fact that leaders of the National Museum, who are of considerable rank, come in person to discuss already fully demonstrates their respect for him, and likely even more for those artifacts...

But that's not the main point. As long as his little request can be met, everything else can be easily settled.

"Then, thank you, Director Yu." Qi Yun politely expressed his gratitude.

"No need to thank me. I won't be involved in the matters that follow; you will have to discuss them on your own." Yu Qixuan paused and reminded him, "But Qi Yun, you do have to handle things appropriately yourself."

Qi Yun paused before responding earnestly, "Yes, I understand. Thank you, Elder Yu, for the reminder."

"Alright, that's it then."

After the call ended, Qi Yun sighed, "Really not taking the responsibility if not in the position, huh? This old man became much easier to deal with after stepping down."

Beside him, Chen Wei handed over a bottle of water, reported softly, "An Zai and the others are finished with their tasks."

Qi Yun accepted the water bottle, "Neither of them was injured, right?"

"No."

Qi Yun nodded, then twisted open the bottle and gulped down a few sips, continuing to ask, "Any leads on Niu Da and their side?"

"We've got eyes on that woman, monitoring her, and as soon as Brother Biao shows up, he won't escape." Chen Wei replied, expressionless.

"Alright, let me know if there's news, we're done practicing for today." Qi Yun wiped his sweat and headed upstairs for a shower.

...

At Tianshan International Airport, a flight arriving from Thailand slowly landed, and six men in flip-flops and short sleeves disembarked.

While taking the shuttle, seemingly wanting to avoid attention, they deliberately dispersed, not gathering together.

An hour later, in a rented apartment not far from Golden Collar Villa, the six men gathered together again...

Chapter 439: Thousand-Year-Old Ginseng and the Deal

In the early morning hours, Qi Yun sat in the study and answered a call from Hong Weize.

"Hello, Brother Hong."

"Brother Qi, they agreed to meet and talk, tomorrow afternoon at two, West Mountain Cemetery." Hong Weize got straight to the point, delivering the information without wasting words.

"West Mountain Cemetery?" Qi Yun was taken aback, "Why choose such a place?"

Hong Weize shook his head with a wry smile, "I don't know either, the middleman said it's the seller's designated location."

Qi Yun pondered slightly, "Alright, got it, I'll be there tomorrow."

"Okay." Hong Weize added another detail, "And there's another condition, if the deal goes through, they only want gold bars."

"Twenty million in gold bars?"

"Yes."

Qi Yun chuckled, "Seems like they are pretty confident, huh?"

A black market deal, daring to ask for cash, indicates a lot of confidence, not fearing a double-cross.

Twenty million in gold bars amounts to over sixty kilograms, not easy to handle.

Hong Weize also laughed, "No idea what's backing them, want me to go with you?"

"No need to trouble you, I can go myself." Qi Yun declined Hong Weize's kindness.

Hong Weize didn't insist, but he reminded, "Alright, take care of yourself, okay?"

Qi Yun nodded, "Heh, okay, thanks a lot, let's grab a meal another day."

After ending the call, Qi Yun lit a cigarette, exhaled a smoke ring.

From the previous intel, the opposite side is just a gang of thieves, not some fearless criminals, where do they get the confidence to demand gold bars? Sure they can leave safely?

Qi Yun couldn't figure out where their confidence came from...

After pondering for a few seconds, he had an idea and picked up his phone to call Ma Baoguo, the two communicated for about four or five minutes.

After the call, Qi Yun extinguished the cigarette butt and began to check today's intelligence report.

[Current intelligence point: 19]

[Today's intel 1 (Green): Old Zhao discovered a ginseng king over a thousand years old deep in Changbai Mountain yesterday, yet to be harvested]

Thousand-year-old ginseng!

Qi Yun's eyes lit up, he was practically drooling at the mouth.

This treasure, only heard of in movies, actually exists!

In legends, this thousand-year-old ginseng is supposed to have miraculous life-restoring effects... even able to change forms, resembling a small baby...

But these are just legends, can't be fully trusted.

But something that can survive for over a thousand years certainly isn't ordinary, perhaps its value might exceed that An Gong Bezoar pill from the Republic of China period!

This must be acquired!

[Today's intel 2 (Red): Due to a continuous decrease in orders, Nanhua Textile Factory is now in dire straits, Manager Sun is scouring for funds to pay employees]

Nanhua Textile Factory...

Seeing this name again, Qi Yun's memory was pulled back to the time when he was running stalls selling fried rice outside.

His first real business transaction was helping Wei Yong sell off a batch of unsold apples to the textile factory, all thanks to Manager Sun, who not only didn't take advantage but paid promptly.

Later, when the factory needed to purchase uniforms, Manager Sun also made the connection, giving the order to Brother Peng.

Qi Yun always remembered the favor.

"Couldn't believe such a big factory could just fail..."

Qi Yun sighed, picked up his phone and messaged Manager Sun, arranging to meet the next day, then continued checking the next piece of intel.

[Today's intel 3 (Red): Half an hour ago, a subordinate of Brother Biao appeared at Sha District's Red Romance Foot Massage]

Qi Yun squinted slightly, immediately went downstairs, and got into the passenger seat of a BMW 5 Series.

Chen Wei asked curiously, "Going out?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "Not going out, call An Zai and the others, go to Sha District's Red Romance Foot Massage, one of Brother Biao's men showed up there, bring that guy back."

Chen Wei immediately responded, "Okay, I'll arrange it."

...

At dawn, before the sun rose,

Qi Yun got out of bed early, went to the study, and called Tiger, who accompanied him into the mountains last time.

To be precise, he hadn't slept well the night before, thinking about that thousand-year-old ginseng, finally enduring until morning, estimating it should be dawn in the Northeast, he couldn't wait to contact Tiger.

Couldn't help it, Old Zhao lives in the mountains without signal, impossible to contact him.

"Hello, Brother Qi, how are you lately? What made you think of calling me?" Tiger was very enthusiastic, his voice cheerful upon receiving Qi Yun's call.

"Heh, I'm good, how about you?" Qi Yun also chuckled and asked.

"I'm doing alright, just making a living, definitely can't compare to you guys."

After some small talk, Qi Yun got to the point, "Tiger, do you have time these days? I have a friend heading to Fusong County today, I'd like to ask you to take him into the mountains to find Old Zhao."

"Going to find Old Zhao?" Tiger was dumbfounded, after a few seconds of silence, he didn't ask for specific reasons and directly agreed, "Alright, let your friend come to me directly, I'll take him into the mountains early tomorrow."

"Okay, I'll give him your contact, have him reach out when he gets there."

"No problem."

"Mm, thanks, Tiger." Qi Yun sincerely expressed his gratitude.

Tiger has his own business, helping out definitely delays his work, so Qi Yun plans to give him several thousand later.

"No need to thank me, let's have a good drink next time you come over." Tiger replied very generously.

"Alright, sometime when I'm free, I'll come with Old Cao to see you."

Chapter 440: Thousand-Year-Old Ginseng and the Deal

After the call ended, Qi Yun immediately called Liu Meng and gave him detailed instructions for several minutes.

"I'll have Zhong Rui book your ticket later, take the earliest flight over there."

Liu Meng didn't say much, he simply replied, "Alright, I understand."

"Okay, stay safe, and call me if anything happens."

The task Qi Yun gave Liu Meng was to go find Old Zhao and bring back that thousand-year-old ginseng.

As for why Liu Meng was chosen, it was mainly because there were too many things at hand, and he couldn't spare anyone else, plus Liu Meng was one of his most trusted brothers.

After dealing with this, Qi Yun took a deep breath and went downstairs to exercise.

Outside the courtyard, as soon as Chen Wei saw him, he started reporting: "An Zai and the others caught that killer last night at Red Romance Foot Massage, initially traced to Brother Biao, but the other party got away."

"Got away?" Qi Yun asked, puzzled.

An Zai, Da Pao, plus Niu Da's team of four, these six were top-level, yet the other side still managed to escape?

Chen Wei nodded: "They were taken away by a Government Office car, our guys couldn't just force it."

"Government Office?"

Qi Yun frowned. This sounded a bit unbelievable, but understandable.

"It's like showing our hand now..."

With Niu Da and his team appearing, the other side could easily find out they were working for him.

Qi Yun initially wanted to catch Brother Biao, then quietly contact Zhou Hongchang to secure the evidence first. Once the situation in Northern Mongolia progressed, he would present the evidence along with the USB drive to the authorities in Beijing, possibly bringing those people down.

As for why he didn't directly hand over the captives to Zhou Hongchang, it was because Qi Yun was cautious, not that he didn't trust Zhou Hongchang, but he didn't trust others.

Handing over those killers recklessly might alert the enemy prematurely.

The opposing side had significant influence in the Government Office, as seen by them daringly whisking Brother Biao away.

"Have An Zai and Da Pao also go over to Gao Min's side." Qi Yun still worried about his daughter and Zhao Qing's safety issues, concerned the other side might resort to desperate measures, so he boosted their security again.

"Okay." Chen Wei nodded and took out his phone to start arranging.

...

10:00 AM, Nanhua Textile Factory.

Ever since Vice President Liu's scandal of keeping a mistress and embezzlement was exposed, he was kicked out by the Sun Family, and the position naturally was taken over by Manager Sun.

But even though this despicable person left, he left quite a mess. He signed many low-price contracts to earn kickbacks, and some of these contracts were only halfway fulfilled.

When raw material costs were low, the factory's income could still barely break even, though there was no profit, at least the machines weren't stopped, workers had jobs, and funds could circulate.

But now, with the rise in raw material prices, these orders suddenly became a massive burden, nearly every batch shipped caused a loss, which was one reason for the factory's rapid decline.

Inside the Vice President's office, Manager Sun, who hadn't been seen in months, looked much more haggard, lacking his previous spirited demeanor.

However, upon seeing Qi Yun, he mustered his energy and showed great enthusiasm.

"What made you think of coming here today?" Manager Sun poured a cup of tea and handed it to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun picked up the cup, taking a sip, his gaze sweeping around the office. Though it was still Vice President Liu's former office, the decor was much simpler.

"I happened to be doing business nearby, thought I haven't seen you in a while, and came to check on you."

Manager Sun laughed: "Haha, it's been some time, looks like you're doing quite well lately."

"Just alright." Qi Yun put down the cup, naturally asking about the factory's situation, "How's the factory doing lately?"

Upon mentioning this, Manager Sun's smile faded immediately, he picked up his cup, only sipping tastelessly.

"Sigh, it's getting tougher, we've been losing money."

"Not afraid of you laughing, we're almost unable to repay our bank loans, I've been running around borrowing money every day."

Qi Yun was already aware of this situation, so he wasn't too surprised, taking out a cigarette box and handing one over.

Manager Sun took the cigarette, clicking his lighter several times before lighting it, exhaling a smoke ring with a voice full of helplessness: "The factory has no new orders, and we have some losing contracts we must tough out, it's like being stuck in a mire..."

Qi Yun nodded: "I'll come up with some ideas for you."

Manager Sun sighed, patting Qi Yun's arm: "Thanks for your goodwill, having you visit warms my heart."

This remark clearly doubted Qi Yun's ability to help him, given the factory's current situation, even tens of thousands wouldn't make much difference.

Qi Yun didn't explain much, standing up: "I'm gonna head to the restroom." With that, he left the office.

Once he reached the stairs outside, he took out his phone and called Mendeleyev.

At that time, it was still midnight on the other side, Qi Yun apologized a bit awkwardly before getting down to business.

"Old Mendeleyev, how's the sale of those 300 tons of cotton fabric from here last time?"

Mendeleyev yawned, sitting up and replying: "Pretty good, though the profit wasn't high, that batch only made over a million, far less profitable than our current second-hand equipment sales."