

## Middle Age 441

### Chapter 441: Thousand-Year-Old Ginseng and the Deal \_3

The initial cost for that batch was five million, and including transportation and other expenses, it shouldn't exceed six million. Yet this guy isn't satisfied with nearly a 20% profit, seems he's really gotten greedy recently...

"Is that so?" Qi Yun thought for a moment, then asked, "If I send you three thousand tons, can you sell it all?"

"Three thousand tons!?" Mendeleyev was taken aback; that's quite a number, and the entire Tuva market can't digest that much in a short time.

"Yes, three thousand tons. My friend's textile factory hasn't been doing well lately. If there's a market on your side, I'd like to help him clear some orders," Qi Yun briefly explained.

After a few seconds of silence, Mendeleyev replied slowly, "I can reach out to Nokovic and have him help sell it to the military industries of the Russians. The frontlines still consume a lot of these strategic materials."

"It's just that... the profits might not be very high."

Qi Yun's eyes lit up at this. The war over in Russia shows no signs of ending, indeed a stable channel.

"Lower profits are fine. With raw material prices high now, establish the channel first. We can consider the profits once prices drop."

Hearing this, Mendeleyev hesitated no more: "Alright, send the goods over; leave the operation here to me."

"Sure, I'll have Xie Mengmeng contact you later."

After ending the call, Qi Yun made another call to Brother Peng, securing his support before tucking away his phone and returning to Manager Sun's office.

"You took quite a long time in the bathroom; is that part not working well?" Manager Sun awkwardly joked.

Qi Yun didn't respond to the joke, as the strong never need to prove themselves. He sat down on the sofa, crossed his legs, and said, "Recently, I and a friend started a trading company, flipping some goods to the Russians."

"I can't help you much, so I'll order three thousand tons of cotton textile from your factory, the same as last time."

Upon hearing this, Manager Sun's eyes widened like a bell, staring at Qi Yun speechlessly for a long time.

After several seconds, he suddenly grasped Qi Yun's arm, his voice trembling: "How much did you say? Th-three thousand tons!?"

Qi Yun nodded, appearing calm and composed: "Yes, if the channel there can be established, we can consider long-term cooperation."

Confirming that Qi Yun wasn't joking, Manager Sun swallowed hard: "It's not that I don't trust you, but three... three thousand tons would cost several tens of millions..."

Qi Yun smiled nonchalantly: "I can transfer the payment to you first. I'm not pressing on price, so you can keep the necessary profit."

Hearing this, Manager Sun firmly grasped Qi Yun's hand, his eyes red with emotion.

On one hand, he marveled at Qi Yun's strength gained in just a few months; on the other hand, he was moved, knowing Qi Yun made the decision purely to help him.

This is beyond business, it's basically charity...

"Th... thank you!" Manager Sun choked with emotion as he expressed his gratitude.

Qi Yun pulled his hand free, jokingly saying, "Thank me if you will, but why are you holding my hand so tightly?"

Realizing he got a bit too emotional, Manager Sun awkwardly chuckled.

Glancing at his watch, Qi Yun then stood up to leave: "I have something to attend to shortly, so I won't stay long. My company's business manager will come over to sign the contract with you later today, and the payment will be transferred today."

Manager Sun hurriedly got up to see him off, almost stumbling: "Okay, okay, let me see you out."

Qi Yun patted his arm, sincerely saying, "No need to see me off. Take care of your business and treat me to a meal after you get through this."

Manager Sun didn't insist further, nodding earnestly, his eyes moist with tears.

After leaving the textile factory, Qi Yun got into his car, and his phone rang as soon as he sat down. He took out his phone to see a call from a Beijing number.

"Hello, is this Mr. Qi Yun?"

"Yes, this is Qi Yun."

"Hello, Mr. Qi. I'm Xiao Han, the liaison officer for Director Xiao of the National Cultural Heritage Administration. You can call me Xiao Han." The girl's voice on the other end was gentle and crisp, very pleasant.

Upon hearing the words "National Cultural Heritage Administration," Qi Yun's demeanor turned cautious: "Hello, Secretary Xiao Han."

"Mr. Qi, it's like this. I'm calling to invite you to come to the National Cultural Heritage Administration at 6 PM tomorrow night. Are you available? Director Xiao would like to meet you."

"Absolutely!" Qi Yun replied without hesitation. Finally, after such a long wait, there's news. "Please tell Director Xiao that I will be there on time."

The National Cultural Heritage Administration reaching out must mean that there's been a development from Northern Mongolia.

"Alright, please call me when you arrive, and I'll meet you at the entrance," Xiao Han kindly offered.

"Sure, thank you."

After hanging up, Qi Yun gazed out of the window, lost in thought.

At 6 PM, it would be past office hours in Beijing...

...

Elsewhere, Nima was driving his rundown van, struggling along the road toward West Mountain Cemetery.

With the highest temperature reaching 38 degrees today, Nima appeared as if he were sitting in confinement. Not only did his car lack air conditioning, but he was also wearing a long-sleeved black jacket, sweat streaming down his face, soaking the cigarette in his mouth.

The van wobbled as it traversed a section of dirt road, finally pulling into the parking lot at West Mountain Cemetery.

Nima pushed open the door, avoiding the surveillance at the entrance, and walked towards a hill on the left.

About ten minutes later, a commercial vehicle and a BMW 5 series also arrived in the parking lot, with Qi Yun and Shi Feng stepping out of the commercial vehicle alongside a middle-aged man in his forties.

Chapter 442: Thousand-Year-Old Ginseng and the Deal \_4

The middle-aged man was named Brother Jun. He was quite well-known locally, having influence in both the underworld and legitimate circles. Apart from acting as a middleman to facilitate transactions, he also occasionally mediated disputes, earning himself some respect.

In the nearby BMW, three people sat: besides Chen Wei, there was Eagle and Lao Bai as well.

Brother Jun raised his hand to block the scorching sun above, then pointed to the mountain on the left, saying, "The seller is on the hillside over there."

Qi Yun nodded, "Let's go then."

As soon as the words fell, the group started walking toward the small path leading up the hill.

Brother Jun led the way in front, taking only a few steps before sweat started to trickle down his face from his forehead. Behind him followed two of his brought-along subordinates.

After about seven or eight minutes of walking, a man was standing under a pine tree halfway up the hill. It was Nima, who had arrived ahead of them.

Seeing Qi Yun's group approach, he swallowed slightly, his gaze vigilant, scanning the few individuals.

Brother Jun took out a handkerchief to wipe the sweat off his forehead and said to Qi Yun, "This is the seller."

"You two can talk on your own."

Qi Yun observed the somewhat odd-looking middle-aged man in front of him, feeling a bit suspicious internally.

The intelligence mentioned the other party was a theft gang, so why did only one person come?

Is he confident in himself? Or are his accomplices hiding elsewhere?

"What's your surname, brother?"

Nima didn't respond, staring at Qi Yun for two seconds, seemingly not wanting to say much.

Qi Yun wasn't bothered, chuckled lightly, "Let's see the goods."

Nima still remained silent, his left hand tucked into the pocket of a long sleeve jacket without moving, while his right hand extended, handing over a small cloth bag used for jewelry.

Standing beside Qi Yun, Chen Wei's gaze sharpened, eyes fixed on Nima's left hand hidden in the pocket.

Meanwhile, Eagle and Lao Bai, who had followed them up the mountain, were nowhere to be found.

Qi Yun signaled to Shi Feng, and the latter stepped forward two steps, took the bag, untied the string, and cautiously emptied its contents into his palm, revealing an entirely dark Nine-Eyed Celestial Pearl.

The pearl was shaped somewhat like a pen holder, oval in form, its surface covered with many white patterns, and there were nine white circles resembling eyeballs.

Shi Feng took out a magnifying glass from his pocket, staring at these patterns closely for a long time, and then rubbed them with his index and thumb, feeling the pearl's texture.

"The patterns are natural, the patina is rich, it's an antique." Shi Feng put down the magnifying glass, keeping the pearl steady in his palm, fearing a slight tremble might damage it.

After hearing this, Qi Yun turned to Brother Jun and smiled, "Brother Jun, it's really hot. Go down the mountain and wait in the car."

Brother Jun glanced at Nima, nodded expressionlessly, and headed down the hill with his two subordinates.

Actually, logically speaking, a middleman should witness the entire process. Firstly, you need to know the transaction price between buyers and sellers to take a commission. More importantly, you must ensure the safety of both parties, prevent any chaos.

But Brother Jun clearly didn't consider these, heading directly down without looking back. As for why, maybe only he and Qi Yun knew...

Nima wasn't panicked by the situation, instead a cold smile appeared on his face.

With Brother Jun's departure, the atmosphere suddenly became more murderous, as though the heat simmered down several degrees.

Qi Yun took out a cigarette and lit it, took a puff, then looked at Nima and asked, "How much do you want to sell this for?"

Nima stared fearlessly at Qi Yun, his voice hoarse and firm, "Twenty million, only gold bars."

Note that the pearl was still in Shi Feng's hand, yet he seemed not worried at all, even without asking for it back.

Qi Yun exhaled a ring of smoke and slowly shook his head, "I know how you got this thing, it's unsavory, I can't give you twenty million."

Nima's eyelid twitched slightly, the gravity in his gaze flashed through fleetingly.

Yesterday after returning to the hotel, he deliberately checked the news on the theft of the pearl from the Tibetan Area, yet nothing was disclosed online. Then how did this guy in front of him know?

After pondering for a few seconds, he fixedly stared at Qi Yun and spoke, "How much are you willing to offer?"

Qi Yun pointed to a leather suitcase Chen Wei was carrying, speaking calmly, "Here is two hundred grand, take it and leave, making it as if I've never seen you."

"Or, there are two police cars parked down the hill. I can have them come up anytime."

"It's your choice."

Chapter 443: Taking Me Away Is Easy, Bringing Me Back Will Be Hard

West Mountain Cemetery, at the mountainside.

After hearing the two choices Qi Yun presented to him, Nima suddenly flashed a sinister smile, his eyes fixated on Qi Yun.

At this moment, Chen Wei's earpiece transmitted the voices of Eagle and Lao Bai, who had checked the nearby slopes and found no hidden threats.

This should have been good news for them, but instead of relaxing, Chen Wei grew even more vigilant.

He silently stepped forward, standing in a position where he could shield Qi Yun at any moment.

Nima stared at Qi Yun for a few seconds, then suddenly pulled his hand from his coat pocket, clutching an object resembling a lighter.

"Two hundred thousand! What the hell do I need that for!"

With that, he yanked open his coat zipper, revealing the densely wrapped homemade detonators around his waist.

This sudden change caught everyone off guard.

Chen Wei's pupils constricted, and he instinctively moved to shield Qi Yun, while Shi Feng, shocked, almost dropped the Celestial Pearl, stumbling back to the ground.

These homemade detonators are used for blasting mountains in mines, not as powerful as military ones, but at close range, they can blast a big hole in this mountainside!

"Today, I either take the twenty million in gold bars, or we all go up in flames together! None of you are taking this lousy pearl!" Nima pressed his left thumb on the detonator switch, his voice low, as if ready to die together at any moment.

The muscles on Qi Yun's face twitched, his heart pounding in his throat.

Never expected this piece of shit to pull such a stunt, hell, he's not just a thief, he's crazier than a bandit, a downright desperado.

No wonder he dared to choose such a place for a transaction alone...

Chen Wei also looked grim, he looked intently at the detonators around the opponent's waist and knew they were real, these homemade detonators require some skill to make a detonator.

Qi Yun took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing the panic in his heart.

Though he was extremely anxious inside, he maintained a calm facade.

He could tell that although the opponent seemed deranged, his left hand holding the detonator showed no sign of trembling.

Although a bit inexplicable as to why a thief would have such psychological fortitude, it was at least good news for him, indicating that the opponent still had some sanity left and wouldn't impulsively detonate it.

The only thing he needed to do now was to stabilize the opponent...

"Don't be impulsive, let's talk more." Qi Yun squinted, speaking calmly, "We have no grudges, how about this, I'll return the Celestial Pearl to you, and these two hundred thousand are yours, you take them and leave."

Nima sneered: "You think I'm a fool? You've even called the cops here, do you think I can leave?"

Qi Yun smirked, speaking unhurriedly: "The cops are my friends, I'll call them right now to leave, consider today my two hundred thousand spent on a lesson."

This proposal seemed like Nima was getting away with two hundred thousand, but he refused without a second thought: "I must get the gold bars today, or we'll go down together!"

Qi Yun glanced at Chen Wei and Shi Feng in front of him, pondered for two seconds, then nodded: "Fine, I'll call now and arrange for them to fetch it."

Nima again refused: "I'll go fetch it with you alone, once I see the gold bars, I'll let you go."

"Alright." Qi Yun smiled gently, "I'll call someone to prepare the gold bars now."

Nima looked at him, then extended his right hand, turning to shout at the collapsed Shi Feng: "Hand over the Celestial Pearl."

Shi Feng shivered, scrambling up from the ground, eyes filled with panic as he looked at Qi Yun, lips trembling, unable to utter a word.

This situation was indeed terrifying, the Celestial Pearl in his hand now felt like a hot iron, making his palms sweat, fearing he would be blown to pieces the moment he handed it over.

Qi Yun responded calmly: "Give it to him."

Only then did Shi Feng stagger forward two steps, trembling as he placed the Celestial Pearl into the opponent's hand, then quickly retreated to the side.

Nima stuffed the Celestial Pearl into his pocket and said to Qi Yun: "You come over and make the call, put it on speaker."

Qi Yun nodded, slowly taking out his phone from his pocket, about to step forward.

But Chen Wei blocked him, not letting him pass.

"It's fine." Qi Yun patted Chen Wei's shoulder, "He's after the money."

Chen Wei frowned, looked at Nima, then stepped aside.

Qi Yun walked to a spot two steps away from Nima, slowly raised his phone, shook the screen at Nima, then dialed the number of Tian Yaosheng, the president of the bank, and pressed the speaker button.

The phone rang twice and was quickly answered, a warm voice from Tian Yaosheng came through the earpiece: "Hello, Mr. Qi."

"President Tian, I need twenty million in gold bars right now, can you arrange that for me?" Qi Yun skipped the pleasantries, speaking directly to the need.

"Twenty million in gold bars!?" Tian Yaosheng was taken aback, almost thinking he heard wrong, it wasn't about doubting Qi Yun's financial capabilities, but because very few would purchase this much in gold bars from a bank at once.

Qi Yun glanced at Nima and replied: "Yes, please prepare them for me, I will come by later to collect."

After confirmation, Tian Yaosheng frowned and pondered for a moment before readily agreeing: "No problem, I'll arrange it for you right now."

Typically, transactions of this magnitude require advance application, and although their bank is the largest branch in the New District, they still couldn't produce this many gold bars without coordinating with higher-ups, and the procedures are tedious.

If this were an ordinary customer, such a request would certainly be beyond Tian Yaosheng's capability to fulfill.

Chapter 444: Taking Me Away Is Easy, Bringing Me Back Will Be Hard

But he was well aware of Qi Yun's identity. Not only was he the largest shareholder of the city's biggest jewelry company, but Qi Yun's company also had over a hundred million in cash sitting in their bank's account.

So, for the sake of future deposits, even if it's difficult, he'd find a way to get it done.

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun waved his phone at Nima: "It's done."

Nima, who had been listening by the side, saw Qi Yun's cooperative demeanor and his expression relaxed slightly.

...

Meanwhile, at the foot of the mountain.

Laoying, drenched in sweat, sprinted to a J car and called Ma Baoguo to a small woods nearby, then succinctly explained what had happened on the mountain.

Upon hearing it, Ma Baoguo's eyes widened in shock: "Detonator!?"

"Yes!" Laoying nodded, reaching out his hand: "Lend me your gun."

Ma Baoguo's brows instantly furrowed, placing his hand on the gun at his waist without moving and stared at Laoying's sweat-soaked face: "What are you going to do? You can't act recklessly!"

He was an old detective and knew the moment he heard the word detonator that the situation was grave. Although the West Mountain Cemetery was remote, if it really exploded, it wouldn't be minor.

Moreover, by standard protocol, he shouldn't be carrying a gun, but coincidentally he just returned from an arrest mission, hence he had the gun with him.

Laoying, listening through his earpiece, knew time was tight and didn't explain further: "I'm sure! They're coming down the mountain right away, if delayed too long, the boss might be in danger!"

Hearing this, Ma Baoguo gritted his teeth, stared into Laoying's bloodshot eyes, glanced at the mountainside, and finally seemed to make up his mind.

He picked up the walkie-talkie and shouted: "Xiao Wang, drive the two cars away first, I'll call you to come back up."

"Received, Captain Ma!"

As a response came through the walkie-talkie, the two J cars which hadn't turned off their engines drove down the mountain.

Once the cars disappeared from view, Ma Baoguo pointed at the back of his neck: "I can't give you the gun."

From his perspective, reaching this point was already incredibly challenging, and it was only because Qi Yun had been kind to him, and they had a good relationship; otherwise, he definitely wouldn't have done this.

If something went wrong, he would definitely face punishment and might even lose his position.

Laoying understood, didn't hesitate, and delivered a swift chop to the back of Ma Baoguo's neck, causing him to collapse, unconscious.

Then he quickly pulled the gun from Ma Baoguo's waist, a well-maintained Type 92 pistol, checked the magazine to ensure the first bullet was live, reinserted the magazine, and switched off the safety.

No time to think further, Laoying tucked the gun behind his waist and quickly sprinted towards the mountainside.

At the mountainside, Chen Wei and Shi Feng walked in front, while Nima cautiously held Qi Yun's arm behind them, his other hand never leaving the detonator, causing immense psychological pressure on Qi Yun, fearing this guy might set it off accidentally.

The four of them were sweating profusely, not knowing if it was due to the scorching sun or the intense atmosphere.

From their previous position to the parking lot below, it was only a six to seven-minute walk, and they'd already covered half the distance.

Chen Wei in front wasn't walking fast but subtly scanned the front woods as if searching for something.

When his gaze swept over a small mound, his eyes flickered and he stopped, turning back to glance at Qi Yun.

Qi Yun seemed to understand something from his eyes and turned to Nima: "Brother, want a smoke?"

Nima didn't respond, just continued pulling Qi Yun along.

"I hope you don't mind if I have one?" Qi Yun tiredly asked again, to which Nima still didn't reply.

Qi Yun stopped, acting as if reaching for a cigarette box: "I need a smoke, got to have one."

Nima finally grew impatient, turned as if to say something, but before he could open his mouth, a gunshot rang out in the mountains, startling a flock of birds into flight.

The next second, a bullet tore through the air, precisely hitting Nima's left arm, a trail of crimson blood in its wake!

"Ah!" The sudden pain made him twitch violently, his fingers on the detonator instantly loosening, and the detonator fell to the ground with a thud.

"Bang!"

The echo hadn't dispersed when another gunshot followed!

Nima let out half a scream before losing his voice entirely—a bullet struck him squarely in the forehead!

His body stiffened, and a small blood hole on his forehead burst open, blood gushing out, splashing onto his face while dribbling down to the dust.

The hand clutching Qi Yun's arm lost strength, the madness and pain in his eyes slowly froze, and he finally fell backward, hitting the ground hard, raising a cloud of dust.

Qi Yun instinctively stepped back, barely able to breathe!

That moment when Nima fell was seared into his retinas like a brand—his first time witnessing a life end right before his eyes.

He had never been so close to death...

"Are you okay?" Chen Wei rushed over as soon as the gunfire erupted, quickly pulling Qi Yun aside and checking him all over.

After confirming Qi Yun wasn't injured, he ran to the fallen Nima to examine the detonator cluster.

Qi Yun hadn't yet snapped out of the shock; his throat felt tight, his stomach churned, and bile rose in his throat.

Chapter 445: Taking Me Away Is Easy, Bringing Me Back Won't Be

Immediately, he placed his hands on his knees, bent over, and started to vomit...

The sunlight dazzled his eyes, flashing before him the instant Nima fell, the warm smell of blood mingled with dust invading his nostrils, intensifying the urge to vomit.

Fifty meters away, behind the slope, both the Eagle and Lao Bai were sprinting towards them, the former clutching that 92-style pistol.

Those two shots just now were fired by the Eagle, with precise accuracy; fifty meters is indeed the maximum range for this pistol.

The Eagle disregarded Qi Yun's vomiting, tucked him under his arm, and moved to the side, intending to completely stay away from those detonators.

Shi Feng, still scared out of his wits, was also dragged to safety by Lao Bai.

A few minutes later, Qi Yun somewhat regained his strength, feeling his body wasn't as uncomfortable.

He shakily took out a cigarette from his pocket, lit it up, and took a few puffs, slightly relaxing his nerves.

In the distance, Chen Wei had already dismantled that circle of homemade detonators, picked up the detonator from the ground, and was walking over, wiping his sweat.

"How are you feeling?"

Qi Yun shook his head to indicate he was fine, then responded with a bitter smile, "This time I was really fucking careless."

Thinking back to the scene just now, he still felt lingering fear...

Despite already arranging Ma Baoguo as a backup and even specifically calling back the Eagle and Lao Bai, he still almost encountered danger.

Still not fucking careful enough...

Chen Wei sat down beside him, patted him on the shoulder, and comforted, "You acted very calmly just now."

Qi Yun nodded, finished a cigarette, and asked the Eagle, "Where's Lao Ma?"

"I knocked him out." The Eagle scratched his head, somewhat embarrassed.

Qi Yun was taken aback, then quickly instructed, "Quick, go get him up here!"

Making such a mess, it definitely needs to be addressed officially. With such a big ruckus just now, if other constables arrive first, things might get complicated.

After saying this, he pulled out his phone from his pocket and called Brother Jun down the mountain, intending to have him leave first.

However, Brother Jun didn't need his reminder; he had already fled at the first sound of gunfire.

Worthy of being an old hand in the underworld...

Qi Yun threw away the cigarette butt and stood up, forcing himself to endure the discomfort, returned to Nima's corpse, bent over, fished out the Nine-Eyed Celestial Pearl from the latter's pocket, glanced at it, and then shifted his gaze to Nima's motionless body on the ground.

At this moment, Nima's eyes were still open; perhaps "dying with open eyes" refers to this.

Qi Yun sighed, "People really die for money and birds die for food..."

More than ten minutes later, Ma Baoguo came to the hillside, rubbing the back of his head, and when he saw the corpse on the ground and the dismantled detonators nearby, his expression turned extremely serious.

"This morning we received a coordination notice from the municipal bureau, yesterday a mine in Black Mountain Gully lost two kilograms of homemade detonators, and a demolition worker was murdered. It looks like this guy did it."

After hearing this, Qi Yun took two steps in place, then looked towards the distance at West Mountain Cemetery, and slowly said, "You take people to patrol this side of West Mountain, encounter a public report, there's a guy acting suspiciously like a bad guy."

"Then personally come to check, happened to catch the thug carrying the detonators in the act of robbing, you shot him dead, successfully protecting the lives and property of the people."

After speaking, Qi Yun looked at Shi Feng, then at the suitcase on the ground.

The latter understood, patted the dust off his backside, and stood up, "Yes, I'm the public, will cooperate with your work at any time."

Ma Baoguo glanced at the two of them, "Do you two think you're writing a script? Such a big matter, the forensic department will definitely send people."

"But the one who fired the shots can only be me..."

Qi Yun frowned, pondered for a moment, then whispered a few words into Ma Baoguo's ear.

After hearing this, Ma Baoguo also frowned, with a surprised look in his eyes directed at Qi Yun.

After deliberating for a while, he sighed, "Then you better leave first, I'll arrange the rest."

Qi Yun nodded, turned to Chen Wei and the others, "You coordinate with Captain Ma." Having said that, he patted Shi Feng on the arm, "Thanks for being the public for a while."

After finishing the business on the mountain, Qi Yun went to the parking lot alone, drove away first.

This wasn't him being unkind, leaving Shi Feng and Chen Wei unacknowledged, but he couldn't afford to get entangled in these matters right now. Otherwise, if those people knew about this, they would definitely create trouble, making the situation complicated.

With Zhang Dayong present, as long as it's determined the deceased is the one who stole the detonators and the perpetrator of the murderer of the demolition worker, then it's a merit for Ma Baoguo, and others won't be in trouble.

Over an hour later, Qi Yun returned home, preparing to call Zhang Dayong to discuss the situation, when his phone rang first.

Qi Yun picked up the phone and saw it was Gao Min calling, immediately went on high alert, and quickly pressed the answer key.

"Hello, what's up!"

"Just now, while sending them to kindergarten, I noticed a car tailing us. An Zai and others went to intercept it, but there were too many cars on the road at the time, and the other party got away." The voice on the other end was a bit noisy. Gao Min concisely reported the situation.

After hearing this, Qi Yun's brow furrowed deeply, his expression extremely grim.

It seems the other side is really desperate, starting to target his family.

"I got it."

After saying this, Qi Yun hung up, immediately found Niu Da's number, and called to inquire about the progress of finding Brother Biao.

However, Niu Da replied that the guy was probably spooked and might not show up in the short term.

Chapter 446: Taking Me Away Is Easy, Bringing Me Back Will Be Hard

Qi Yun paced back and forth in the room with his phone, contemplating for a few minutes before contacting Zhou Hongchang, arranging to meet him after work.

"Since there's no breakthrough for now, let's just get everyone involved..."

...

At the New District Branch, outside the lab, Ma Baoguo anxiously waited by the door.

After a few minutes, a young officer came out holding a lab report.

"Captain Ma, after comparing the footprint of the deceased, we confirmed it matches the footprints found at the Black Mountain Gully crime scene provided by the municipal bureau. More evidence will await other lab results."

In theory, such a homicide case should be handled by the Criminal Investigation Unit, and Ma Baoguo, being from the Security Unit, had no right to the detailed case information, but with Zhang Dayong's nod, he was able to obtain this information promptly.

Ma Baoguo took the report, breathing a long sigh of relief, his eyebrows also revealing an uncontrollable delight.

Now it was basically certain that the person who died at West Mountain was the murderer of the quarry incident, and this murderer was carrying two kilograms of detonators, making them an extremely dangerous individual.

There was absolutely no problem with him taking down the criminal, not only was there no problem, it was quite a commendable feat!

In the questioning room on the first floor, Shi Feng and Chen Wei cooperatively explained the "factual course" of events at the West Mountain Cemetery. The officer in charge of questioning was courteous, only asking them to wait a bit after finishing the questioning records before leaving.

...

At ten o'clock in the evening, Qi Yun and his family were playing in the garden after having dinner.

Zhao Qing hugged his arm, her voice gentle: "What are you going to Beijing for?"

"It's something good," Qi Yun affectionately patted her head, smiling mysteriously, "You'll see it in the news in a few days."

Zhao Qing's curiosity was piqued even more, shaking his arm, she asked coquettishly, "No way, you have to tell me now!"

"I..."

Before Qi Yun could finish his sentence, he saw three police cars driving up the road outside the community with loud police sirens approaching, finally stopping at the gate of the courtyard.

In the nearby business car, Duan Pingyu, Gao Min, An Zai, and Da Pao got out one after the other. Seeing the situation going sour, the four quickly moved forward to block Qi Yun.

The doors of the three police cars opened, and more than ten officers in uniform strode over.

Leading them was a middle-aged officer in his forties, who showed his credentials and spoke calmly, "Mr. Qi, we are from the Anti-Smuggling Bureau, we suspect you are involved in a smuggling case. Please come with us to assist in the investigation."

Qi Yun glanced at them and didn't speak. Upon hearing the word "smuggling," he understood everything.

They couldn't play tricks in the dark, so they came openly.

However, he was not in the least bit panicked, instead maintaining a composed demeanor.

Beside him, Zhao Qing was somewhat stunned, looking at the suddenly appearing officers and Duan Pingyu, whom she and the others didn't know, except for Gao Min.

She nervously grabbed Qi Yun's clothes, her face showing some concern, "He...he said something about smuggling? Will everything be alright?"

Nuannuan also hid behind Qi Yun in fear, holding onto his leg.

Qi Yun patted her back, quietly comforting her, "You take the child inside first, leave this to me."

Zhao Qing was a bit reluctant, but still took Nuannuan's hand and walked into the house.

At this moment, Duan Pingyu, who was blocking the front, carefully examined the credentials of the middle-aged officer, then said to him, "President Qi's identity is..."

Unexpectedly, before he could finish, the middle-aged officer took out a cooperation letter and handed it over, "This is a cooperation letter directly issued by the SZ collaboration, if Mr. Qi has any doubts, you can call the relevant department to inquire."

Duan Pingyu's face changed slightly, he opened his mouth but had nothing to say.

Qi Yun sneered internally, thinking they had indeed prepared well, bypassing the city administration to get a collaboration letter from the central administration, no wonder the Deputy Secretary hadn't informed him in advance.

"No problem, I will cooperate with your investigation."

"However, taking me away is easy, but sending me back may not be so simple." Qi Yun looked at the leading middle-aged officer, saying something with deep implication.

The middle-aged officer remained unfazed, smiling as he gestured with his hand, "Please,"

Qi Yun nodded and instructed Duan Pingyu and the others, "Carry out the tasks I assigned to you, don't worry about anything else."

The four nodded seriously.

Chapter 447: Attitude

New District, 295 Beinan Road.

Inside the customs compound, three police cars were parked in the parking lot.

The lead middle-aged policeman got out from the passenger seat and waved his hand, "Take him to the interrogation room."

"Yes, Director Han."

Two policemen responded and "escorted" Qi Yun toward the office building ahead.

The middle-aged policeman called Director Han checked the time, walked to a nearby flowerbed, took out his phone, and dialed a number.

"Secretary Ji, the person has been brought back."

There was a two-second silence on the other end before an insidious voice said, "The person didn't resist, right? Remember, follow the procedure, ensure the evidence chain is solid, don't give anyone cause for complaint, or the municipal government will have issues."

"No resistance, I personally led the team to arrest him," Director Han responded quickly, "Rest assured, we'll make sure the evidence is solid."

A light 'hmm' came from the other end, followed by instructions: "And one more thing, do not release him at anyone's request."

"Understood, understood." Director Han nodded repeatedly.

After hanging up the phone, Director Han wiped the sweat from his cheek and then headed into the building.

In the interrogation room, the incandescent light was harsh and piercing, making it difficult to look directly at it.

Qi Yun leaned against the chair back, his wrists were not cuffed, but the surveillance camera on the wall silently aimed at him, capturing every subtle expression.

A few minutes later, Director Han brought a cup of warm water and placed it on the table in front of him, "Mr. Qi, please have some water first."

"We are just following procedures, please cooperate and clarify the matter."

Qi Yun glanced at the water cup handed over and smiled lightly, "Sure, I will definitely cooperate well."

Director Han sat on the chair opposite, opened the folder in front of him, "Mr. Qi, we received a report that on the night before last, June 23, 2025, you used illegal means to withdraw a batch of goods from a special channel at the New District Airport. Is this true?"

Qi Yun shook his head, calmly replied, "I did retrieve a batch of goods from the airport the day before yesterday, but I don't know what you mean by illegal means."

"I see." Director Han gave him a long look but did not press on this issue, "What exactly were the goods you took, and where are they now?"

"And why are there no customs declarations and inspection records?"

Qi Yun leaned back calmly and replied, "The lack of customs procedures is because this batch of goods is quite special. As for the specific reason, I cannot answer."

...

Meanwhile, at Qi Yun's home.

Since Qi Yun was taken away, Zhao Qing had been distracted, fearing something might happen to him.

Gao Min stayed with her in the living room and confessed her identity to her.

"So did Qi Yun offend someone? Do you need so many people to protect me?" Zhao Qing's eyes welled with tears, and her hands were tightly clasped together.

She rarely asked about Qi Yun's affairs outside, always thinking her husband was just doing some business, including Qi Yun's ventures which she only knew involved a company partnered with Peng and Lao Feng's hot pot restaurant.

So suddenly having so many bodyguards and being taken away by the police made her panic-stricken.

Gao Min shook her head, comforting her, "You don't need to worry, the boss arranged everything in advance, there won't be any problems. We've been assigned to protect you just in case of sudden incidents."

Zhao Qing nodded, not sure if she really understood.

She glanced at Nuannuan, who was already asleep on the sofa, and said to Gao Min, "Thank you, I'll take the child to sleep first."

"Alright, I'll be just outside, you rest easy." Gao Min said as she stood up and walked towards the outside.

Zhao Qing gently picked up the little girl, went to the bedroom upstairs, covered her with a small blanket, and then entered Qi Yun's study, phone still in hand.

She opened the contact list on her phone, found the unmarked number she had never called before, and decisively dialed it.

The phone rang twice before it was quickly answered, and a middle-aged man's voice, sounding quite delighted, came through the receiver.

"Hello, Xiao Qing!"

Zhao Qing was silent for two seconds before speaking expressionlessly, "Didn't that Miss Dong say your business is doing great? Now that Qi Yun has been arrested, get him out."

...

Meanwhile, on a bench in Koi Mountain Park, Zhou Hongchang had been sitting there for over half an hour.

His scheduled meeting time with Qi Yun was eleven o'clock, but he hadn't shown up, and his phone was turned off, making it impossible to reach him, which made Zhou Hongchang feel something was wrong.

When Qi Yun called him in the afternoon to arrange the meeting, his tone was very serious. Although he didn't specify what it was about, Zhou Hongchang could feel it was something important.

When the cigarette in his hand burned out, Zhou Hongchang stood up, deciding not to wait foolishly anymore and to go directly to Qi Yun's house to see.

Over half an hour later, he arrived at Qi Yun's doorstep, just about to knock, when a figure jumped out of the darkness to block him.

"What are you doing here!" The man was Duan Pingyu, who had never met Zhou Hongchang and didn't know his relationship with Qi Yun.

Zhou Hongchang was startled by Duan Pingyu's sudden appearance. Despite the streetlamp nearby, he hadn't noticed this man coming out of nowhere.

He steadied himself, scrutinized Duan Pingyu for a few seconds, and seeing his imposing presence, mistook him for a colleague, so he revealed his identity, "I'm Zhou Hongchang from the municipal police team, which department are you from?"

Duan Pingyu frowned, speaking with not the slightest politeness, "Which department? What are you doing here!"

Chapter 448: Attitude \_2

Zhou Hongchang was slightly startled. Seeing the other's attitude, he realized he might have guessed wrong. Generally speaking, as long as someone is from the same organization, even if they're not from the same unit, they would try to speak politely when meeting. After all, everyone needs help now and then.

So he thought for a moment and asked again, "Are you with Qi Yun? I'm looking for Qi Yun."

"Qi Yun is not home," Duan Pingyu still had a cold expression.

"Not home? Can you contact him?"

Duan Pingyu didn't make a sound again, still blocking the door without any intention of letting him in.

Zhou Hongchang could sense the other's resistance emotion and patiently explained, "I'm a friend of Qi Yun's. He arranged to meet me tonight but never showed up. I couldn't reach him, so I came over to check."

Upon hearing this, Duan Pingyu's expression slightly softened, "The boss is not here, I can't reach him now."

"Can't reach him?" Zhou Hongchang frowned, "Did something happen?"

Duan Pingyu didn't respond. He couldn't confirm Zhou Hongchang's identity, so he naturally didn't say much.

Just then, a beam of light shone from behind. Zhong Rui drove Chen Wei, Eagle, and Old Bai back from the New District Branch.

Seeing Zhong Rui through the windshield, Zhou Hongchang immediately approached. Last time in Shanshan County, when Qi Yun treated Zhou Hongchang and his group to a meal, Zhong Rui was present, so the two had met.

With someone familiar around, Zhou Hongchang finally learned that Qi Yun had been taken away by the Anti-smuggling Bureau, and his brow furrowed tightly.

From the conversation he had with Qi Yun a few days ago, he could confirm that Qi Yun knew something, and today's secret meeting was likely related to Qiu Jiahao's case.

But being taken away so coincidentally made him have some hidden suspicions in his heart.

After leaving Qi Yun's house, Zhou Hongchang made a phone call in the car and then went directly to another residential area.

...

In the office of Maple Capital in Shanghai.

Zhao Weilin sat on the sofa, his eyes occasionally glancing at the phone on the coffee table, seemingly waiting for a call.

Beside him, Dong Anyun, holding a teacup, struggled to stay awake and asked in a low voice, "Even Ji Liyang stumbled because of Qi Yun. He seems to have quite a few connections, right? Why would he still..."

She didn't finish her sentence, but the meaning was clear.

Zhao Weilin shook his head, "Ji Liyang's situation is not that simple. Let's wait for the news."

At that moment, a clear ringtone finally rang, and Zhao Weilin picked up the phone almost instantly, eagerly asking, "Hello, how is it?"

A response quickly came from the other end, "I just called the customs, and the Qi Yun you mentioned was indeed taken by the Anti-smuggling Bureau, and..."

Saying this, the other side paused for a moment before continuing, "This matter is quite complicated. It might not be easy to get him out now."

Zhao Weilin furrowed his brow, "Is it very serious?"

The person on the other end didn't answer directly, instead asking, "What's his relationship with you?"

Zhao Weilin was stunned for a moment. After a few seconds, he replied, "My son-in-law."

The other end fell silent for a moment, seemingly digesting this information, before sighing, "So he's your son-in-law... I'll be blunt; customs shared some inside information with me."

"Someone has made their position clear, so the smuggling issue might just be a pretext."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Weilin pondered for a while, "They won't even show you any respect?"

The person on the other line remained silent, which was a tacit agreement.

Zhao Weilin's expression immediately darkened, considering the position of the person he was talking to, one could imagine the level of the person who had made the call.

After a few seconds of silence, he spoke again, "In that case, I won't make things difficult for you. I'll think of another way."

The person on the other end sighed, "Try to exert some pressure from above, I really can't help you."

"Alright, we'll leave it at that." Zhao Weilin said no more and ended the call.

From the earlier conversation and Zhao Weilin's expression, Dong Anyun could almost guess the situation and tentatively asked, "Is it serious?"

Zhao Weilin shook his head, his face full of fatigue, "Tomorrow morning, help me ask when Chief Huang is available."

"Alright." Seeing that Zhao Weilin didn't want to elaborate, Dong Anyun didn't press further.

...

On Xuanwu Street, in the residential area directly opposite No. 15 High School's new campus, a black Magotan was quietly parked downstairs, the window rolled halfway down.

Inside the car, Zhang Dayong listened to Zhou Hongchang's recount and exhaled smoke, remaining silent for a long time.

In the passenger seat, Zhou Hongchang seemed anxious, "Director Zhang, can you think of a way to persuade customs to make an exception?"

Zhang Dayong didn't answer directly, instead turning to look at him, "I understand the situation, you should head back first."

Zhou Hongchang was stunned, almost thinking he heard wrong. He stared at Zhang Dayong for a long time, feeling that this former superior had become unrecognizable.

He knew that Zhang Dayong and Qi Yun were very close, which is why he informed him of the news immediately. But Zhang Dayong's reaction left him extremely disappointed.

Previously, due to a work transfer issue, he had approached Zhang Dayong once, but the latter didn't even give him a chance to speak, let alone meet. It was later Qi Yun who helped him with the matter.

However, Zhou Hongchang didn't take it to heart much. This society is like this; only people with value are needed, and if you can't offer it, so be it.

But Qi Yun is different from him. For Zhang Dayong to reach his current position, a large part was due to Qi Yun. Now that he's in trouble, is that the attitude you show when he asks for help?

Chapter 449: Attitude \_3

Zhou Hongchang swallowed the words he was going to say, gave Zhang Dayong a deep look, then opened the door and got out of the car, his back resolute.

Zhang Dayong sighed and shook his head, not bothering to stop him. Instead, he took out his phone from his pocket, quickly found Ge Dabao's number, and dialed it.

The phone rang twice and was quickly answered, with Ge Dabao's voice coming through the receiver: "Hello, Director Zhang."

"Sorry for bothering you so late, Captain Ge." Zhang Dayong spoke very politely. He wasn't personally acquainted with Ge Dabao; their connection was purely work-related.

"Hehe, I haven't slept yet. Is there something you need from me, Director Zhang?"

"Yes, I wanted to confirm something with you." Zhang Dayong pondered before asking, "Has Qi Yun contacted you today?"

"Qi Yun?" Ge Dabao paused and asked back, "Why do you want to ask about him, Director Zhang?"

"Nothing much, just a casual inquiry." Zhang Dayong carefully chose his words and responded cautiously, "I heard someone say he was taken away by the Customs Anti-Smuggling Bureau today, and they went with szx's paperwork."

Although he guessed Qi Yun's role in national security, he couldn't directly reveal it; otherwise, he would be asking for trouble, given the special nature of that department.

Ge Dabao was silent for several seconds after hearing this: "He hasn't contacted me."

"Alright, I understand. I won't bother you any longer, Captain Ge. Goodbye."

After hanging up the phone, Zhang Dayong let out a long sigh.

As soon as he heard Qi Yun was taken by the Anti-Smuggling Bureau, he immediately thought of the artifact pickup at the airport two nights ago.

Zhang Dayong knew Qi Yun planned to donate these artifacts to the country and had contact with Beijing on this matter. So the Anti-Smuggling Bureau's attempt to frame Qi Yun would likely yield no results.

As to why they would even try, the answer was obvious.

It's just a smuggling case, yet the Anti-Smuggling Bureau bypassed the city's *zx*, clutching *szx*'s paperwork to arrest someone. It seemed too hasty, and any slightly politically astute person could see what was happening.

Although he understood this, he didn't have the power to intervene. With his insignificant stature, he couldn't make a splash; even those backing him wouldn't be effective.

Therefore, he contacted Ge Dabao at the first instance to inform him, providing Qi Yun with an extra layer of security.

As for Shao Yuewen, whom Qi Yun had mentioned last time, his father-in-law had the qualifications to get involved.

Zhang Dayong decided to wait another day or two to see the situation. If Qi Yun hadn't been released, he would then inform Shao Yuewen.

...

Sure enough, Ge Dabao, upon hearing the news, did not care that it was already early morning and immediately called Director Duan to explain the situation.

Qi Yun, though only an external investigator, was still part of national security and received a salary from them every month.

Ge Dabao was very fond of Qi Yun and had earned several significant merits following his lead, with advancement opportunities already under review.

"The kid was caught by the Anti-Smuggling Bureau?" Director Duan was somewhat surprised.

Ge Dabao nodded: "Yes, Director Zhang from the New District Branch informed me. Their relationship seems quite close and has probably guessed Qi Yun's identity."

Director Duan pondered for a moment: "What do you think?"

"I don't think Qi Yun would be involved in smuggling; he does legitimate business, and quite large ones too." Ge Dabao expressed his thoughts truthfully, then added, "This matter... feels quite suspicious."

After hearing Ge Dabao, Director Duan instructed: "Tomorrow, personally go to the Anti-Smuggling Bureau and ask them about the situation."

"What's the reason?"

"Last time we exposed ourselves, who needs a reason now?" Director Duan said with some frustration.

Ge Dabao scratched his head: "Alright, I'll go first thing tomorrow morning."

...

At the Anti-Smuggling Bureau, inside the interrogation room.

Qi Yun was feeling uncomfortably thirsty but dared not drink the water on the table, only licking his dry lips and enduring.

Across from him sat Director Han, who hadn't spoken for a while. Beside them, a young officer endlessly repeated the same questions.

Qi Yun was annoyed by the incessant questioning but didn't snap, knowing it was their interrogation tactic. He simply crossed his arms and started to doze off.

However, under the glaring incandescent light, sleep wouldn't come. It was destined to be a difficult night...

The next day, Ge Dabao indeed arrived early at the Anti-Smuggling Bureau to meet their leader.

"Director Fang, sorry to bother you. I'm here on Director Duan's behalf to inquire about some matters."

The middle-aged man called Director Fang stood up and gestured for Ge Dabao to sit on the sofa beside him. Although his rank was much higher than Ge Dabao's, he dared not take him lightly.

"Haha, I haven't seen your Director Duan for a long time. Is he getting better with that back pain?"

Ge Dabao placed his briefcase down and replied, "Summer helps a bit, but it's an old problem, must visit the hospital every few days."

Director Fang nodded and poured Ge Dabao a cup of tea: "What does Director Duan want you to inquire about?"

Ge Dabao accepted the cup with thanks, then seriously said: "Director Fang, yesterday, our external investigator named Qi Yun was taken away by your Anti-Smuggling Bureau colleagues. Are you aware of this matter?"

Director Fang nodded slightly, his smile not reaching his eyes as he replied: "This matter is under the investigation of our Deputy Director."

"Director Han reported to me that this Qi Yun has a special identity, belonging to city zx, and I didn't expect him to also be your external investigator."

Ge Dabao inwardly sneered, thinking it's hard to believe he didn't know.

Chapter 450: Attitude \_4

"Yes, he is indeed one of our people."

"Director Duan entrusted me to come and ask whether our anti-smuggling bureau has any concrete criminal evidence against Qi Yun? If so, we'd like to remove him from the national security team."

Director Fang scraped the lid off his teacup at the tea mouth: "As for evidence... Director Han's side said there's a report letter and airport surveillance capturing Qi Yun taking a batch of goods from Beijing Airport. That batch lacked valid customs procedures and hadn't undergone inspection, but whether smuggling occurred is still being verified by the staff."

"After all, it involves the people from the municipal administration, so we must be cautious."

He left his words ambiguous, neither confirming the evidence's presence nor its absence, clearly playing it safe.

Investigating smuggling is their domain of responsibility. Since there is indirect evidence, it's fair to initiate inquiries. After all, they obtained documentation from the municipal administration, and being an external investigator for national security doesn't exempt him from scrutiny.

Ge Dabao rubbed his hands after listening and smiled, "Director Fang, I have a favor to ask."

Director Fang nodded, "Go ahead."

"Qi Yun previously participated in several confidential missions. Given he's now implicated in illegal issues, perhaps our initial evaluation of him was insufficiently thorough, posing a risk of compromising state secrets."

"Would you allow us to bring him back first to investigate thoroughly and then hand him over to you? This is also Director Duan's intention."

After Ge Dabao finished speaking, he looked sincerely at Director Fang, awaiting his response.

Director Fang's expression twitched as he looked meaningfully at Ge Dabao and sighed, "I understand your intention. Please relay to Director Duan that it's not that I don't want to accommodate, but I'm also in a difficult position."

His words were transparent; he genuinely didn't want to offend Director Duan.

Ge Dabao didn't make it further difficult, stood up to bid farewell, "Okay, I understand. I'll report back to Director Duan truthfully." He then left the anti-smuggling bureau.

Over half an hour later, Ge Dabao returned to the national security office, heading directly to Director Duan's office without even unpacking.

After listening to Ge Dabao's report, Director Duan sighed helplessly, "Things have gotten complicated. That kid Qi Yun has gotten into trouble."

Ge Dabao scratched his head, "What are we supposed to do then? We can't just ignore him, can we? Director Duan, this guy Qi Yun..."

"Is it your ability or mine to manage it?" Director Duan interrupted, giving him a sidelong glance.

Ge Dabao was momentarily speechless, his open mouth failing to produce any words.

"You go out first, let me make a call." Director Duan waved him away.

...

In Shanghai, inside the city government building's lounge.

Zhao Weilin waited for about ten minutes before being led by the secretary into an office.

Typically, meeting with the person inside this office requires not only status but waiting for many days in the queue. Yet, Zhao, having been arranged for a morning meeting, shows his significant influence in Shanghai.

Behind the desk, a dignified middle-aged man pointed at the chair in front of him, "Sit, I heard from the secretary you were eager to meet me."

Zhao Weilin pulled out the chair and sat down, apologizing slightly, "I'm sorry, Chief Huang, for intruding on your work time for my personal matters."

"..."

A few minutes later, after Zhao Weilin finished explaining, Chief Huang leaned against the back of the chair, remained silent for a long time.

"Chief Huang, I understand this request puts you in a challenging position, but I'm out of options."

Chief Huang nodded, "Old Zhao, I get it. We're all parents."

"Alright, don't rush; let me inquire. If your son-in-law has no issues, I can speak up for you."

Zhao Weilin hurriedly stood up after hearing this, "Thank you! Thank you, Chief Huang!"

...

Meanwhile, at Beijing Airport, a team dispatched by the National Museum is waiting for a flight.