

Middle Age 571

Chapter 571: Loads of Hot Money

The Xuanyuan Mirror, along with the Qin King's Bone-Reflecting Mirror, the Six-Nose Mirror, and the No-Disease Mirror, is collectively known as one of the four mysterious ancient mirrors of archaic Huaxia.

According to the pharmacological classic "Compendium of Materia Medica," this mirror was created by an ancient Huaxia emperor—Huangdi, hence it is later referred to as the Xuanyuan Mirror.

This magical mirror is reputed to ward off evil spirits and possesses the ability to discern the true identity of emperors, only usable by royalty.

A folk tale speaks of this unique ability of the Xuanyuan Mirror, stating that it can identify true emperors; if an emperor lacks legitimate lineage, the mirror will fall and crush him.

It is said that former President Yuan ordered the dragon throne to be moved back by three meters during his enthronement to avoid the Xuanyuan Mirror hanging above the Taihe Hall, fearing it might fall...

After reading the online introduction about the Xuanyuan Mirror, Qi Yun became even more puzzled.

According to what was online, the Xuanyuan Mirror is spherical and now hangs directly above the emperor's throne in the Taihe Hall. So why did De Gaulle say this Bronze Mirror was the Xuanyuan Mirror?

Qi Yun fixed his gaze on De Gaulle and voiced his confusion: "Mr. De Gaulle, how did you determine this mirror is the Xuanyuan Mirror? Shouldn't the real Xuanyuan Mirror be in the palace in Beijing?"

De Gaulle took a deep breath, trying to calm himself before speaking, "Mr. Qi, you're right, there is indeed a Xuanyuan Mirror in the palace in Beijing."

"But that's just a replica, created after Zhu Di moved the capital, to showcase legitimacy—a replica that can't even reflect people, let alone discern emperors."

Qi Yun raised an eyebrow, a hint of surprise in his eyes, "You know all this?"

De Gaulle nodded, his voice full of certainty, "Mr. Qi, to be honest, although my family doesn't have a complete map, there is a record regarding six items."

"Years ago, my ancestors went to that palace in person and recognized that Xuanyuan Mirror was not the real one."

"If you don't believe me, you can check the back of the Bronze Mirror you're holding. See if there is a circle in the center, with seven dots arranged in the order of the Big Dipper stars."

With this, most of Qi Yun's doubts were alleviated.

Although he didn't photograph the back of the Bronze Mirror, as it holds critical information, he clearly remembers that the back of the mirror does indeed have a circle, matching De Gaulle's description.

"Alright." Qi Yun nodded.

Seeing that Qi Yun believed him, De Gaulle's expression turned serious again, "Then Mr. Qi, next we need to gather the clues from the six locations together to unveil the final secret."

"According to my family's records, these six clues are actually guides; breaking them will lead to the true Land of Eternal Life."

Qi Yun did not respond immediately, if he just revealed the information behind the Bronze Mirror, what if this guy sneaks off alone to the 'Land of Eternal Life' and leaves him out?

Wouldn't he have worked so hard for nothing?

De Gaulle kept observing Qi Yun, seemingly sensing his hesitation, and spoke again, "Mr. Qi, I understand your concern."

"Whether it's the stele buried in Lop Nur or this Bronze Mirror, you've contributed a lot, so I understand your worries."

Saying this, he pulled a piece of paper from his suit pocket and pushed it towards Qi Yun, "This is a Swiss Bank promissory note worth five hundred million euros, representing my sincerity. Regardless of whether we find the Land of Eternal Life, this money is yours."

"Additionally, I promise on the Gwen Clan's honor not to head to the Land of Eternal Life alone if we decipher the clues from the guides."

Five hundred million euros!

Not a small sum...

It's clear De Gaulle came well-prepared, considering even his worries, and genuinely went all out for this so-called 'Land of Eternal Life.'

As for the honor of the Gwen Clan? It's far less credible to Qi Yun than those five hundred million euros.

In the face of absolute benefits, the word 'honor' seems too flimsy.

But since the other party showed enough sincerity, Qi Yun, not being one to hem and haw, nodded satisfactorily, "Mr. De Gaulle, I've seen your sincerity, and when I return, I will take photos of the back of the Bronze Mirror for you."

"At the same time, I hope you can share information regarding the other four locations with me, so we can jointly find ways to decipher them. Progress should be a bit faster."

De Gaulle did not directly refuse, pondering for a few seconds before replying, "No problem, but I can't decide alone; I need the family's approval."

"I will communicate with them as soon as possible and let you know the answer."

Qi Yun was unsure about the truth in his words, but receiving five hundred million euros provided some reassurance: "Alright, then I'll be waiting."

After leaving the tea house, Qi Yun returned home, retrieved the Bronze Mirror from the safe, took several photos, and sent them to De Gaulle.

Then, just as he was about to head to the company to handle some affairs, he received a call from Vice President Song Zhenhai of the Huaineng Group, naturally about the photovoltaic project.

Qi Yun had a good impression of this person, future collaboration wouldn't always involve constant scheming.

But over in Shanghai, he had Huang Zhiqiang's request, and both his future father-in-law and Xiao Hanguang hoped to collaborate over there, so Qi Yun was still leaning more towards Shanghai.

Chapter 572: Hot Money Flood (Part 2)

After pondering for a few seconds, he sighed and truthfully explained to Song Zhenhai, "President Song, I'm sorry, I do intend to collaborate with you, but I have ties with Shanghai..."

Song Zhenhai, after listening, was silent for a moment, then laughed heartily, "Thank you, President Qi, for being so honest with me. If you eventually choose Shanghai, then I can have a talk with Old Huang. After all, Shanghai and Jiangsu are so close, it's not unreasonable to let him share a bit of the soup."

Qi Yun didn't expect the other party to adjust his mindset so quickly; indeed, he hadn't misjudged him.

"Haha, I have no objection on my side, President Song can go ahead and negotiate with Shanghai."

"Alright, alright, thank you, President Qi. Then I won't disturb your work, and you're always welcome to Jiangsu."

After some polite exchanges, the two ended the call.

Qi Yun sat back down on the sofa and dialed Huang Zhiqiang's private number to inform him of the final decision.

After hearing it, Huang Zhiqiang sounded very joyful, "Great! Thank you, Little Qi!"

"Some things are inconvenient to discuss over the phone; we'll talk in detail when you come to Shanghai."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile, "Alright, see you in Shanghai then."

...

In the state of Washington, within a mansion overlooking Puget Sound.

Harris was sitting opposite a bald man around the age of sixty.

The bald man's name was Bezos, who once appeared on the cover of the American magazine "Time" and was named Person of the Year—a figure watched by the United States and the world.

"Mr. Bezos, it's an honor to meet you." Harris greeted him with great respect; although he had never collaborated with this business tycoon before, he pulled many strings to arrange this meeting.

Bezos, holding a cigar, looked very imposing: "Deron said you have something priceless you want to sell me. Let me see what it is."

Harris nodded, took out an exquisite wooden box from his pocket, opened it, and pushed it in front of Bezos.

Inside the wooden box was the Eight-footed Jade Hook from the Japanese imperial palace.

"Mr. Bezos, I heard you are fond of Japanese culture, so I specially sought this out for you. Please have a look."

Bezos put down his cigar and picked up the Eight-footed Jade Hook, examining it for a full ten seconds. Even he, accustomed to rare collectibles, couldn't hide the amazement in his eyes.

"This is the Eight-footed Jade Hook?"

"That's right, Mr. Bezos," Harris smiled, "this is indeed one of the three sacred treasures of Japan—the Eight-footed Jade Hook."

After scrutinizing it for a long time, Bezos finally placed the Jade Pendant back in the box and looked up at Harris, "How did this come into your possession?"

Harris shook his head gently, "I'm sorry, Mr. Bezos, I can't disclose its specific origin."

"You also understand that the circulation process of such high-level collectibles is always quite complicated."

Bezos took a deep look at him but did not press further. He picked up his cigar again, leaned back on the soft sofa, and said indifferently, "Name your price."

Harris didn't hesitate, immediately holding up his hand: "500 million USD."

Hearing this offer, Bezos didn't even blink; he scrutinized Harris and suddenly burst into a soft laugh.

"Haha, I can accept this price, but there is a condition."

This stirred Harris slightly, but he maintained his composure, "Please speak, Mr. Bezos!"

Bezos leaned slightly forward, flicking the ash in the ashtray indifferently, "I'm very curious about its origin."

Harris, hearing this, immediately looked troubled and declined without thinking, "Mr. Bezos, I'm very sorry!"

"You know that for us intermediaries, our most important asset is our reputation. My client does not want their identity revealed, so I can only assure you of the authenticity of the Eight-footed Jade Hook; I really cannot disclose anything else."

Bezos stared at Harris for a full half-minute before suddenly laughing again, "Haha, well! You are indeed an excellent middleman."

"I'll take this Jade Pendant, and I have another business proposition for you."

...

Elsewhere, Qi Yun made a round at the company and found that there wasn't much needing his attention; except for providing financial support, the company operated the same with or without him...

Qi Yun was happy to have some leisure, carrying the water quality inspection report from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and headed to the Jiangsu branch of Farmer Three Punch.

In the realm of drinking water, this company is unquestionably the big brother in China. From bottled water to jugs, its distribution network is wider than even the postal service; you can see those iconic red packages even on the shelves of remote village shops.

Moreover, they also have water sources in Jiangsu, though located in the Tianshan Mountains, the quality doesn't compare to the one Qi Yun found.

The reason for initially approaching Farmer Three Punch for collaboration was due to a special investigation by Xie Mengmeng.

In the past couple of years, they have been searching for high-quality water sources to break the stereotype of mid-to-low-end bottled water by launching a high-end mineral water line targeting international brands.

Unfortunately, such qualifying water sources are not easy to come by, and acquisition would cost a fortune, so after much effort, they were still empty-handed.

This water source precisely meets their demand.

The Maybach came off the highway and parked temporarily by the roadside. After just a couple of minutes, President Bi opened the car door and sat in.

"Wow, you've really upgraded your arsenal, huh?"

As soon as he got into the car, President Bi looked around the latest top-spec Maybach and teased.

Qi Yun grinned, "If you like it, I'll give it to you?"

"No thanks!" President Bi quickly waved it off, jokingly adding, "I can't handle your license plate number."

After a few idle remarks, they got back to business.

"Why is your business so diversified now? Even getting involved in sourcing water?" President Bi asked in amazement, looking at the water quality inspection report, "You're making all the money for yourself these days..."

Qi Yun ignored his teasing and asked after he finished looking through it, "I'm planning to sell the location of this water source to them. What do you think the reasonable price should be?"

He wasn't entirely sure about the value of this water source, which is why he enlisted President Bi's help to analyze it.

President Bi frowned, thought for a moment, and answered, "According to your report, the water quality of this source surpasses all products on the market, making it a scarce resource."

"I remember last year Hua Run acquired a far inferior site for 380 million, but neither its quality nor output can compare to yours."

"That much!?" Qi Yun clicked his tongue, realizing his initial estimate of possibly two or three hundred million might be way off the mark.

"That's right," President Bi nodded, paused briefly, and asked curiously, "but why do you want to sell it? This is a veritable golden goose."

Qi Yun rubbed his chin, contemplating the matter himself.

Initially, he wanted to sell because he was low on cash and needed more liquidity to support his health supplement and gaming companies. Plus, his upcoming photovoltaic company would require a substantial investment, placing considerable pressure on his finances.

However, the situation was different now; De Gaulle just provided five billion euros, equating to nearly 4 billion RMB, so he no longer needed to worry about funds.

Thus, even though he didn't have the capability to produce and sell, partnering with Farmer Three Punch via equity investment could also be an excellent option.

They have the brand and channel, allowing him to profit through dividends, making it more worthwhile in the long run than a one-time sale.

"Hmm, let's see their attitude first; if cooperation is possible, that's naturally best."

President Bi, hearing this, laughed and leaned back in his seat, "That's the spirit. I'm telling you, this is worth more than our diamond mine; you've truly found a treasure this time."

"If they're not sincere, you can deal with other companies, or if worse comes to worst, do it yourself! With your current status, President Qi, which channel couldn't you open?"

Qi Yun glared at him teasingly, speaking in a sinister tone, "Why do I feel like you're trying to flatter me to death?"

Chapter 573: You've Hidden This Little Brother Well

Development Zone, headquarters building of the Farmers' Three Punches J Province branch.

Qi Yun and President Bi were invited to the top floor VIP reception room, where the branch manager Lin Fan personally met them.

"President Qi, hello, welcome, welcome." Lin Fan was a middle-aged man in his forties, his hair meticulously combed, looking very capable.

"Hello, President Lin." Qi Yun politely shook hands with him and introduced President Bi beside him, "This is my friend, President Bi."

Lin Fan immediately turned to President Bi, "President Bi, nice to meet you! Please have a seat, both of you."

The three sat down in the sofa area, and through the glass window, they could see a busy scene in the factory area not far away.

"Freshly brewed Da Hong Pao, please taste it." While pouring tea for the two, Lin Fan casually eyed Qi Yun, as Chairman Jiang hadn't mentioned on the phone why Qi Yun was looking for him.

"President Lin, you're too kind." Qi Yun sipped his tea and got straight to the point, "I came here unannounced today to discuss a business opportunity with you."

"President Qi, you shouldn't be so formal. It's an honor for us to have you as our guest..."

After some pleasantries, Lin Fan took the initiative to ask, "I wonder what kind of collaboration President Qi wants to discuss this time?"

Qi Yun put down his teacup and took out the ecological environment department's water quality testing report from his briefcase, "President Lin, you might want to have a look at this first."

A hint of doubt flashed in Lin Fan's eyes as he reached for the report.

As his gaze swept over the rows of data on the A4 paper, his expression gradually became animated.

"This..." he looked up at Qi Yun, with unrestrained surprise in his voice, "President Qi, what is this report?"

Qi Yun didn't beat around the bush and said directly, "I recently happened upon a natural water source by chance, the water quality is excellent, and it has already been tested by a professional agency."

"I heard that your company has been looking for high-quality water sources in recent years, so I came to see if your company is interested in this water source."

Lin Fan tightly clutched the report and confirmed the data repeatedly; having worked in the industry for nearly twenty years, he was witnessing this grade of natural spring water for the first time.

Although it's hard to believe, the ecological environment department stamp on the report doesn't lie, and he believes that someone like Qi Yun wouldn't come idle and take him for a ride.

"President... President Qi, could you reveal the location of this water source, is it... in the country?" Lin Fan's voice was unconsciously trembling, as the report was incredibly startling.

"Of course it's domestic." Qi Yun nodded with a smile, "And it's right in J Province."

Lin Fan swallowed hard, forcing himself to calm down, "President Qi! Our company is very interested in this water source! How do you plan to collaborate?"

Qi Yun exchanged glances with President Bi, who took over the conversation, "Our idea is to form a joint venture."

"President Qi will be responsible for securing the mining rights of this water source and government support, while you, Farmers' Three Punches, will provide the brand, technology, and channels."

"If needed later, President Qi can also invest additional funds."

President Bi was very skilled in negotiations, his tone calm and measured, "As for whether to establish a new company or have us as shareholders in Farmers' Three Punches, that's negotiable, but the bottom line is that while we won't overly participate in management, we must have a certain degree of say."

After listening, Lin Fan adjusted his glasses, finding President Bi's demands reasonable.

"President Qi, President Bi, I understand your intentions clearly, and I believe there's a significant possibility for collaboration between our two sides."

"But this matter is beyond my authority, and I need to report to the head office."

President Bi nodded, "Understandable, but you need to quickly provide a response. Considering your company is an industry leader, we chose to negotiate with you first..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but Lin Fan understood the latter part.

Companies eager to collaborate over this grade of water source are plentiful.

"No problem, rest assured, we will deliver an answer in the shortest possible time, perhaps Boss Xu will personally come to discuss with the two of you."

"Great, we await the good news."

...

In the afternoon, Da Pao and Chen Wei returned to Bird City from the Capital City, and after a few days of recuperation, Chen Wei's injuries were largely healed.

Qi Yun initially planned to give him a month off, but Chen Wei insisted on returning to work, taking over as a driver from Brother Quan.

With additional members in the team, the original dormitory was becoming cramped, so Qi Yun immediately spent six million to purchase the adjacent three-story villa.

After all, property prices in Bird City are low enough now, and even a loss wouldn't amount to much.

The villa's previous owner was a major cotton planter with tens of thousands of acres of cotton fields over in Northern Border, but the market has been unfavorable these past two years, making cash flow quite difficult, so as soon as the property manager contacted him, he agreed to sell.

With the location secured, Brother Quan planned a training area in the yard, and in the upcoming period, everyone except Old Ghost and Ah Jiao would undergo special training to improve their combat abilities.

Receiving guidance from a master of Brother Quan's caliber was thrilling for everyone, naturally making them eager to cooperate...

After dinner, Qi Yun went to the study, turned on the computer, and inserted the USB drive Da Pao brought back from Japan, browsing through the files within.

Once he finished examining the photos and interviews, his brow furrowed involuntarily.

The nuclear power plant's wastewater discharge wasn't as harmless as claimed, instead causing severe harm locally, with many coastal fishermen suffering from serious illnesses.

Chapter 574: Your Little Brother Is Quite Well Hidden

The information, however, was all tightly sealed off, leaving the outside world in the dark.

If the data on this USB were exposed, Japan would face an unprecedented trust crisis. Not only would the fishing and tourism industries suffer devastating blows, but its credibility in the international community would also completely collapse.

After all, the lie they told the public about their wastewater reaching drinking standards would be utterly shattered by this bloodstained evidence.

Qi Yun's fingers hovered over the mouse for a moment before he finally clicked the exit button and placed the USB in the safe.

Exposing this matter requires a lot of media resources, and it's best to make it explode in that free country.

After a quick shower, Qi Yun was about to start the software hardening project, but an unexpected phone call interrupted his plan.

The caller was Lu Zhaoxue, the owner of Hutao Villa.

Seeing the name on the phone screen, Qi Yun hesitated for two seconds but decided to answer the call.

"Hello, Miss Lu."

"President Qi, are you free? I'd like to meet with you."

Qi Yun glanced at Zhao Qing in his arms, intending to refuse because he had already guessed why the other party was looking for him.

However, remembering that she had been quite courteous to him before and had indirectly helped with Tian Yaosheng's matter, he couldn't bring himself to turn her down.

Whether or not he could help, he wasn't one to refuse a meeting entirely. That wasn't his style.

"Sure, Miss Lu, are you at the hotel? I'll come find you."

"I'm already at the entrance of your residential area." Lu Zhaoxue's voice carried a hint of unease.

Qi Yun was momentarily stunned. It's often said that when disaster strikes, couples fly their separate ways. Now that Qin Minghui was being investigated, yet she was out in the middle of the night for him, she was indeed a person who values loyalty and sentiment. What's more, they weren't even married.

"Alright, wait for two minutes at the entrance. I'll be right out."

Qi Yun hung up the phone and explained to Zhao Qing, "A friend has something for me to deal with. I'm going out to meet her. Do you want some barbecue? I'll bring some back later."

Zhao Qing turned over, obediently releasing her hands from around his neck: "Sure, and bring two bottles of yogurt. Although it's a sin to eat this in the middle of the night, since you're offering, I'll reluctantly accompany you in your crime."

"Alright, just wait." Qi Yun chuckled as he pinched her cheek, quickly changed clothes, and gently closed the door before heading downstairs.

The night wind was refreshing, and Lu Zhaoxue stood by the roadside greenery, wearing a gray trench coat, with her bangs somewhat disheveled.

Seeing Qi Yun come out from the residential gate, she stepped forward in her high heels to greet him.

"Sorry for bothering you so late, President Qi."

"Heh, it's alright." Qi Yun smiled indifferently, pointing to a hotel next to them, "Let's talk in the hotel lobby's café."

Lu Zhaoxue nodded: "Sure."

The two entered the hotel lobby and found a seat by the window.

Qi Yun waved to order two cups of coffee and then proactively asked, "Miss Lu, what's the urgent matter you wanted to discuss with me?"

Lu Zhaoxue pursed her lips: "President Qi, you must have heard about his situation. I'm here to ask for your help because of this."

Qi Yun nodded, naturally knowing who she was referring to. After contemplating his words, he replied apologetically, "Yes, I've heard about it."

"But Miss Lu, strictly speaking, I'm not really part of that circle. I'm afraid I have no power to help..."

The light in Lu Zhaoxue's eyes dimmed considerably, and her voice took on a hint of bitterness: "I know... I know it puts you in a difficult position."

"But I'm truly at my wits' end. To be frank, among the people I can think of, you're the only one who still agreed to see me."

Qi Yun was at a loss for words upon hearing this; perhaps this is how reality works.

Once, wherever Qin Minghui went, he was surrounded by admirers. But now, with his recent detainment, those people quickly distanced themselves, fearing they would become entangled.

"President Qi, I know you have some friends over there. Please, on account of our past interactions, just put in a word for me." As she spoke, Lu Zhaoxue took out a black card from her bag and handed it over, "There's twenty million in here; no one will know about today's meeting."

Looking at the bank card on the table, Qi Yun's face showed no expression: "Miss Lu, I understand how you feel right now, but please take it back; otherwise, I'll regret meeting you."

Lu Zhaoxue was taken aback; her face turned ashen: "I'm... I'm sorry, President Qi." Hastily retrieving the card, she apologized hurriedly, "I was too anxious, I'm sorry."

Qi Yun watched this once elegant woman, now at a loss, and couldn't help but sigh.

Although he had dealings with Qin Minghui, it was only because of their common goals that they developed a cooperative relationship, which can be summed up with "fair-weather friends."

So even knowing that the other party was taken away, he had no intention of getting involved.

But the attitude of the woman in front of him did move him a bit. He decided to first understand the situation. If it was within his capabilities, perhaps he could help, as Qin Minghui's status in itself represented a valuable favor.

However, this was contingent on the nature of the crime not crossing a line and on his own ability to intervene.

After a long silence, Qi Yun took a sip of his coffee and slowly said, "I only know he was taken away for investigation; I don't know the details. Why don't you tell me, Miss Lu?"

Lu Zhaoxue, as if grabbing hold of a lifeline, eyes once again lit up with hope: "Alright! Alright! Thank you, President Qi."

Chapter 575: Your Little Brother Sure Knows How to Hide

She forced herself to calm down, then began to describe what she knew: "It should be Ma Chaoyang and He..."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun frowned. Those two were already being watched by the investigation team and had no time to spare, yet they still aimed for Qin Minghui? Desperation leads to reckless actions?

But these were questions he couldn't ask.

Qin Minghui himself wasn't clean to begin with; one could see it from the hints he dropped to Zhang Dayong, but still, he wasn't known for anything too outrageous.

Moreover, Zhang Dayong's assessment of him...was passable, considered him as someone who got things done.

After pondering for a few seconds, Qi Yun extended a finger and wrote a word on the table: "He should have friends too, right? Did you contact them?"

"I did." Lu Zhaoxue's face showed bitterness, "That person's secretary said they have gone abroad."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun also showed a faint bitter smile; this attitude was somewhat intriguing.

After a full minute, he pondered, "Alright, Miss Lu, it's getting late, you should go back and rest. Once I understand the situation more clearly, I'll contact you."

Lu Zhaoxue's eyes, which had just lit up with hope, dimmed again, but at least his words didn't close all pathways.

"Alright...Thank you, President Qi."

"You can contact me anytime if you have any news, no matter how late it is."

Qi Yun nodded, "Okay, be safe. I won't see you out."

"Okay, goodbye." Lu Zhaoxue stood up, gave Qi Yun a slight bow, then picked up her handbag and left the hotel.

After the other party left, Qi Yun called over the waiter to settle the bill, then went over to the barbecue stand next door to buy BBQ for Zhao Qing.

While waiting for the food, his mind was still weighing the pros and cons of the situation.

Only when all the barbecue was packed did he check the time, heading home while dialing Shao Yuewen's number.

"Brother-in-law, I hope I'm not disturbing your rest?"

"No, what's up?" Shao Yuewen asked with a light laugh.

"Yeah, I wanted to ask you something, do you know about Qin Minghui's situation?"

The receiver went silent for a while before Shao Yuewen finally answered, "I know some things. Come find me tomorrow, we'll talk face to face."

"Alright..."

In a residential area, You Wenlan was doing her facial care while asking Shao Yuewen who had just hung up the phone, "Who was that, so late?"

"Your brother."

You Wenlan turned to look at him, "Qi Yun? What does he want with you so late?"

Shao Yuewen lit a cigarette and walked to the window sill, "He's asking about Qin Minghui."

"Qin Minghui?" You Wenlan's face showed surprise, paused and asked, "He wants to get involved in this matter?"

"He didn't say explicitly." Shao Yuewen exhaled a smoke ring, his gaze deep, "I can't quite understand your brother anymore, last time even old He couldn't manage to deal with him."

You Wenlan stood up, walked slowly to her man's side, and asked, hugging his arm, "What's his relationship with that one from the Xiao Family?"

Shao Yuewen shook his head, "Not clear, but certainly very close, and... it's probably not just that person from the Xiao Family..."

"Do you know what kind of car he drives now?"

"What kind of car?"

"Maybach, the top model."

"So what?" You Wenlan asked suspiciously, "He runs a company, it's not surprising to drive such a car, right?"

Shao Yuewen chuckled, "Driving a Maybach isn't surprising, but when I went to see him the night before last, I saw his license plate, it's five sixes."

"I had someone check, this license plate was bought by Li Yaohua of the Fu Group from a boss."

"Fu Group!?" You Wenlan's eyes widened, "The Fu Group from Beijing?"

Shao Yuewen nodded, "Yes, and then I asked a friend in Beijing to inquire, and got a piece of news."

"What news?"

"The private jet of that person from the Fu Family flew from Beijing to Bird City a few days ago and is still parked in the hangar here. The person who flew back on this jet was Qi Yun..."

At this point, Shao Yuewen sighed, "I didn't realize before, your brother hides things quite deeply..."

Beside him, You Wenlan was utterly shocked, unable to digest the news for a while...

Chapter 576: Returning to Shanghai Again

The next day, the office building in the city center.

Qi Yun first visited Vice Secretary Peng before heading to Shao Yuewen's office.

"You're here, have a seat." Shao Yuewen set aside the documents in his hand and invited Qi Yun to sit on the sofa.

"This office is much brighter than before." Qi Yun said with a smile, glancing around the room.

With his father-in-law's support, Shao Yuewen had advanced another step. Now he was zzbz, and things were certainly different from before.

Shao Yuewen smiled at the comment, fiddling with the tea set on the coffee table. After a few off-topic exchanges, they turned to the main subject.

"What are you planning to do, suddenly inquiring about him?"

Qi Yun sipped his tea and sighed, "Lu Zhaoxue came to me last night."

Shao Yuewen frowned, "You and she shouldn't be that close, right?"

"Indeed." Qi Yun nodded, "So I didn't make her any promises."

The room fell into a brief silence as Shao Yuewen pondered the implication of Qi Yun's words, before saying after a while, "The matter of Qin Minghui is not simple; they must have prepared for a long time."

Qi Yun naturally knew who the 'they' Shao Yuewen referred to were: "Tell me the details then."

Shao Yuewen glanced at the door and then lowered his voice, recounting the events surrounding Qin Minghui's removal...

"Reported by real name?"

"Yes."

Qi Yun nodded slowly, his face giving nothing away, though anyone with insight could see the situation clearly.

Shao Yuewen patted his arm, stood up, walked to his desk, unlocked a drawer with a key, and took out a dossier.

"If you plan to get involved in this matter, this might be useful to you." He said, handing the dossier to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun took the dossier, glanced through the contents briefly, and then put them back inside.

"Alright, thanks a lot, Minister Shao."

Shao Yuewen smiled and said no more.

These materials clearly weren't prepared on short notice...

After he left the office, Qi Yun returned to his car and made two phone calls, and then once again went to the six-story building where the investigation team was located.

The guard at the door did not stop him this time and led him in courteously. Qi Yun met the investigation team leader, Zhang Jianjun, in an office on the second floor.

...

France, Lyon.

It was already late at night, but the Gwen Clan's castle remained brightly lit, with a high-level family meeting in session.

At the end of the long conference table sat the current head of the Gwen Clan—George Gwen.

His face was pale, clearly in poor health, yet he still forced himself to attend this meeting.

To his left was De Gaulle, dressed impeccably in a suit and tie.

He glanced around at the elderly faces and slowly spoke, "Ladies and gentlemen, I just returned from Huaxia. I have obtained the final clue to the map from my collaborator there."

Upon hearing this, the once silent meeting room erupted into a flurry of activity.

The elders turned their gaze to De Gaulle, their cloudy eyes filled with incredulous brightness.

The old man sitting opposite him even stood up shakily on his cane, his voice trembling, "Is what you're saying true?"

Aside from George, he held the highest status in the Gwen Clan, akin to a grand elder.

For centuries, this family's generations had been relentlessly searching, and now, could they finally be achieving their desire...

"Of course." De Gaulle's voice remained calm as he personally distributed the photos Qi Yun had given him.

After seeing the photos, the elders were all excited, "It's the same as what's recorded on the parchment!"

"Oh God! Finally, it's all found!"

"De Gaulle, you've done well! Quickly hand them over to the researchers to decipher." The grand elder tapped his cane with a sigh, "I hope to find out what's behind this secret while I'm still alive..."

De Gaulle nodded, "Rest assured, elders, I have already arranged for the researchers to begin deciphering the guides."

"However, as you all know, two clues on the map come from Huaxia, and Huaxia's ancient civilization is profound. Our researchers lack experts in this area."

"It just so happens that my partner in Huaxia wishes to obtain the complete guide and work with us to decipher it; he knows many scholars in Huaxia, and I believe it's a good proposition."

As his words fell, the room suddenly grew quiet.

The elders exchanged glances but remained silent.

George, sitting at the head, had not spoken since the meeting began, entirely leaving it to De Gaulle to handle.

Just as De Gaulle was about to pass the proposal, the grand elder suddenly spoke, "I oppose!"

"Experts from Huaxia can be hired, but the secret of the Land of Eternal Life must not be leaked!"

"De Gaulle, have you forgotten the family rules?"

These words were like a cold shower, quenching the heat in the conference room.

With the grand elder's stance, several elders immediately echoed beside him, "That's right! The secrets of the Gwen Clan must not be exposed to outsiders!"

"I also disagree!"

"..."

De Gaulle listened to the words of opposition in his ears without speaking.

According to the rules of the Gwen Clan, even the family head could not make this decision alone.

This ancient family's internal operations were actually quite similar to a nation.

The family head was equivalent to a prime minister, while these elders were akin to parliament members. The prime minister could decide most daily affairs, but crucial matters still required the final decision of the parliament.

Chapter 577: Back to Shanghai Again (Part 2)

As the dissenting "buzzing" gradually subsided, Old George, sitting at the head of the table, moved his lips and slowly began to speak.

However, he did not continue with the previous topic.

"Everyone, my body... can't hold on much longer."

"From now on... my nephew De Gaulle will take over the position of Family Head."

His voice sounded very weak, as if he needed to use all his strength to utter each word.

The elders were not too surprised that De Gaulle would take over as Family Head. They were already aware of the scandal, and indeed, De Gaulle was the most capable among the younger generation of the Gwen Clan.

"I agree."

"Agree."

"..."

After everyone had expressed their stance, Old George nodded and continued, "Since we all acknowledge him as the leader of the family, I hope everyone will support his decisions."

This time, no one immediately stood up to oppose, clearly indicating that Old George's words carried undeniable weight among these elders.

Only the Great Elder remained with a tense expression, showing no sign of loosening in his gaze.

...

The next afternoon came in the blink of an eye, and Qi Yun arrived in Shanghai by private jet.

As the plane taxied to the tarmac, a convoy was waiting in the distance to welcome him.

At the forefront was Huang Zhiqiang's deputy, standing beside him were Director Sun from development and the head of the Fruit Committee.

As Qi Yun descended the stairs, he was slightly taken aback by such a grand scene.

When Director Sun contacted him, he had only mentioned arranging a pickup, but Qi Yun hadn't expected such a formal reception.

Huang Zhiqiang's deputy quickly came forward, a warm smile on his face, "President Qi, we have been eagerly awaiting your arrival!"

"Director Huang intended to come in person, but he was called away to an emergency meeting. He specifically asked me to apologize on his behalf."

Director Sun stepped forward and quietly introduced, "President Qi, this is Deputy Director Kang."

Qi Yun immediately extended his hand for a shake, smiling in response, "Deputy Director Kang, you're too kind to come in person; I don't deserve the honor."

"President Qi, there's no need for such formality. You are bringing the photovoltaic industry project to Shanghai to aid our development; it should be us who are grateful."

He stepped aside, making a gesture for them to proceed, "The cars are ready; let's talk more on the way."

"Alright." Qi Yun nodded and followed him into the black Audi with the license plate 0004.

The convoy left the airport, heading toward the city center.

Deputy Director Kang leaned back in his seat and proactively started discussing the project with Qi Yun, "President Qi, besides the land and policy aspects, is there anything else regarding the project that needs coordination?"

"If there's anything, please feel free to mention it. As long as it's a reasonable request, we'll find a way to solve it for you."

According to the outlined plan, the specific affairs of the photovoltaic project should be handled by a state-owned company, so Qi Yun shouldn't have to worry about it. Hence, while the question seemed to be about project needs, it was in fact inquiring about Qi Yun's personal needs.

Qi Yun smiled and replied, "Thank you, Deputy Director Kang, for your goodwill. At the moment, there's nothing else that requires troubling the city. If any issues arise in the future, I will definitely reach out to you for assistance."

"Haha, alright!"

"Whether regarding project matters or personal needs for coordination, feel free to call me anytime."

Forty minutes later, the convoy arrived at a hotel.

Shortly after the group sat in the banquet hall, Huang Zhiqiang hurried in with his secretary.

He walked straight to Qi Yun's table, a smile of apology on his face, "President Qi, I truly apologize. I was held up by an emergency meeting and arrived late, keeping you waiting!"

Qi Yun didn't dare to appear arrogant and immediately stood up to greet him, "Director, you're busy with official duties; how could I mind?"

Huang Zhiqiang patted him on the arm, then guided him to sit down.

Most guests attending the welcome banquet were from departments related to the city and the project. The discussion wasn't too in-depth; it was mainly for both parties to get acquainted.

Since there was no alcohol consumed, the banquet didn't last long. Once Qi Yun had satisfied his hunger, he was invited to the meeting room on the top floor of the hotel.

"Would you like to rest for a bit first?" Huang Zhiqiang considerately asked Qi Yun.

Qi Yun shook his head with a smile, "No need, let's start directly."

Huang Zhiqiang nodded, giving a subtle nod to the Director of the Fruit Committee beside him, signaling him to begin.

This meeting was a preliminary meeting before the official contract signing. The number of participants was much fewer than earlier, with only about ten people present in the meeting room.

The Director of the Fruit Committee personally distributed the documents and then looked at Qi Yun to introduce, "President Qi, this is the proposal we've prepared for this cooperation..."

Qi Yun flipped through the material in his hand while listening to the explanation.

The core content was similar to the conditions proposed in Jiang Province last time, where he and Tianxing Company would jointly invest in establishing a new company. He would invest half a billion and hold 10% of the shares.

Though Tianxing Company was registered just last year and had relatively weak capabilities, its backing, Huayi Group, was a traditional state-owned enterprise. Its business not only covered the energy sector but also included advanced materials, fine chemicals, and more, consistently ranking among the top 500.

Though its overall strength is slightly weaker than the Huaineng Group discussed last time, it is still a large-scale group company.

The head of Tianxing Company sat beside Director Sun and smiled warmly at Qi Yun, "President Qi, rest assured, although our company has a short history, our team's business experience is very rich, and the group directly oversees our financial and technical support, ensuring that no problems will arise with the project."

Qi Yun nodded and didn't say much more.

After the overall introduction, the Director of the Fruit Committee smiled at Qi Yun and asked, "President Qi, do you have any concerns on your end?"

"No, I quite agree with the overall plan."

The points Qi Yun was concerned about were few: first, ensuring his own interests, as investing half a billion was no small amount for him.

Secondly, the partner company's technical experience couldn't be substandard.

Even though the photovoltaic project was just an initial move from Salaman, provided the real, substantial amount of one billion USD invested, a significant mishap would tarnish his reputation.

Seeing Qi Yun's approval, everyone present, except for Huang Zhiqiang, visibly relaxed.

"Since President Qi has no objections, all departments should expedite preparations to form the new company and complete the signing within two days."

With Huang Zhiqiang's command, the matter was settled.

After the meeting concluded, everyone greeted Qi Yun before leaving, leaving only him and Huang Zhiqiang in the meeting room.

With no outsiders present, Huang Zhiqiang became more casual. He took out a pack of cigarettes, handed one to Qi Yun, and sighed, "Xiao Qi, a big thank you for this."

Qi Yun took the cigarette, responding with a light laugh, "Director, your words are too polite. The proposal from Shanghai is indeed very satisfactory to me."

"Moreover... Director Xiao is also very supportive of this cooperation."

Huang Zhiqiang paused, holding the cigarette, turning to look at Qi Yun, then slowly nodding.

...

Returning to his hotel room, Qi Yun took a shower, and as he lay on the bed ready to call his daughter, he received a call from Duan Pingyu.

"Hmm, what's up?"

"Boss, the guy is trying to run."

Qi Yun's gaze sharpened upon hearing this. He had already assigned Duan Pingyu to have people secretly monitor Ma Chaoyang and his group.

"What about the people sent by the investigation team?"

"This guy prepared well in advance, arranged personnel, and managed to shake off the investigation team. He's now seemingly trying to leave the city," Duan Pingyu explained.

Qi Yun rubbed his chin, swiftly making a plan, "Catch him. I'll send you an address, and you hand him over to them."

Duan Pingyu didn't ask further, immediately replying, "Yes!"

After hanging up, Qi Yun promptly called Zhang Jianjun to relay the recent update.

"Alright, thank you, Consultant Qi! Please deliver him to us, and we'll handle the subsequent matters."

Chapter 578: Kunlun!

Which land route offers the greatest chance of escape? Perhaps none other than Yunnan or Xinjiang.

The Xinjiang border stretches over five thousand kilometers, making up a quarter of the national land boundary, and borders eight countries.

However, border ports here are managed very strictly, with patrols in place year-round, making it difficult for ordinary people to leave through illegal means.

On the city bypass expressway, Ma Chaoyang sat in an inconspicuous Passat, occasionally turning to look through the rear window, appearing somewhat uneasy.

He didn't understand why Old He suddenly wanted him to leave when they had just framed Qin Minghui a couple of days ago, diverting external attention.

Yet Ma Chaoyang knew one thing for sure, as his greatest protector, the connections and information channels his mentor controlled were unparalleled.

Arranging for him to leave might have been due to receiving some kind of tip-off...

As the car was about to reach the highway toll gate, queuing to pass through the ETC.

Suddenly, a blinding headlight shot in from the rear door.

Startled, Ma Chaoyang hurriedly turned back to check, but the intense light stabbed his eyes painfully, prompting him to instinctively shield them with his hand.

"Boom!"

A dull loud bang suddenly exploded from the rear of the car, the impact arrived unexpectedly!

The immense force thrust the Passat forward several meters, as Ma Chaoyang felt a tremendous force push him forward, his head colliding directly with the metal frame of the front passenger seat, plunging his world into darkness and leaving his ears ringing.

Before he could gather himself, another more violent collision struck the right side of the car!

"Crash!"

The entire car tilted to the left, with the left front wheel climbing over the curb of the ETC lane, the screeching sound of metal friction reverberating.

Following that, two people emerged from the SUVs that collided with the Passat, none other than Duan Pingyu and An Zai.

They strode over to the Passat, with An Zai placing his hand in his coat pocket as if grasping something, aiming it at the driver.

Duan Pingyu then yanked open the rear door, pulling the still-dazed Ma Chaoyang out and dragging him towards the SUV.

"What are you doing!"

"What are you doing!"

Snapping back to reality, Ma Chaoyang realized things weren't right and started struggling desperately, but against Duan Pingyu, he had no chance of escape.

The entire process lasted less than a minute, and the two SUVs swiftly left the scene.

Elsewhere, Old He, who was practicing calligraphy in his study, received a phone call. His hand holding the brush paused abruptly, turning the once neat words "tranquility leads to far-reaching" into a large blot of ink.

After discarding the brush, he stepped to the window, frowning at the night outside, seemingly lost in thought.

After five or six minutes, he picked up his phone again, dialing a number with a Jing city area code.

"They've made their move after all..."

...

France, Lyon.

Inside a research center controlled by the Gwen Clan, De Gaulle sat in his office, reviewing documents.

This research center housed over twenty experts in archaeology, geography, astronomy, including two history experts who had just arrived from Huaxia.

All researchers had signed strict confidentiality agreements and were prohibited from leaving the research center for a long time.

At the last Gwen Clan meeting, the elders had agreed to De Gaulle sharing information with Qi Yun, but he seemed only to have spoken of doing so without actual intention.

Perhaps mentioning the proposition was merely to test whether the elders supported him...

"Zzz..."

The communication device on the table suddenly emitted static, followed by a slightly excited voice, "Mr. De Gaulle! We made a major discovery!"

De Gaulle abruptly sat up straight: "I'll be right there!"

Saying that, he grabbed his coat and hurried towards the laboratory.

Upon entering, a researcher immediately approached him with a tablet.

"Mr. De Gaulle, through our research and analysis, we've identified the final destination of these clues!"

"Where!?" De Gaulle asked eagerly upon hearing this.

The researcher adjusted his glasses with excitement: "Huaxia! Kunlun Mountain!"

"Kunlun Mountain!?" De Gaulle's eyes lit up as he looked at the topographic map on the tablet.

Over an hour later, De Gaulle left the research center and returned to the manor.

In the castle's conference room, the family elders were already waiting.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the map's clues have been deciphered, the Land of Eternal Life is in Huaxia's Kunlun Mountain!"

"I plan to personally lead the expedition!"

...

Shanghai, in a hotel room, Qi Yun was awakened by a ringing phone.

Bleary-eyed, he glanced at the caller ID, then sat up and answered.

"Mr. Qi Yun, I've got news for you, my team has deciphered those guides, and the final location is at Huaxia's Kunlun Mountain!"

"You should prepare in advance, I'll come over soon to meet you."

Kunlun Mountain!

These words thundered through Qi Yun's mind, instantly dispelling any drowsiness.

This vast mountain range, stretching over two thousand kilometers across the northwest, not only held the prestigious title of "Ancestor of All Mountains," but also was imbued with mythical elements in ancient texts.

According to the "Classics of Mountains and Seas: Records of West Mountain," 400 li southwest, known as Mount Kunlun, is truly the earthly capital of the Emperor, overseen by the deity Lu Wu.

Chapter 579: Kunlun! (Part 2)

In "Mu Heavenly Son," it also mentions that King Mu of Western Zhou rode the Eight Stallions westward and saw the Western Mother at Kunlun Mountain.

The story is about the earliest traveler, King Mu of Western Zhou, who once traversed Tianshan and ascended Kunlun, eventually seeing the Western Mother at the Jasper Pool.

However, these tales are too fantastical, often regarded as mythical stories fabricated by people of that era.

But now, the "Land of Eternal Life" that the Gwen Clan has been searching for is unexpectedly also at Kunlun Mountain...

Coupled with those legends... it's intriguing and imaginative.

Myth... Eternal life...

Qi Yun flipped out of bed, came to the sofa, lit a cigarette, and the words "Kunlun Mountain" echoed repeatedly in his mind.

He didn't believe De Gaulle was deceiving him, because there was no reason to.

If the other party didn't want him to know the real location, they could have kept this information from him, especially when he was unaware of the specific progress in solving it.

The reason De Gaulle disclosed this information to him was likely purposeful, probably to leverage his influence in Huaxia to facilitate subsequent operations.

"Phew~"

Qi Yun exhaled a long plume of smoke and detached himself from chaotic thoughts. It's useless to dwell on these now; the key is that if any secrets are truly found, he can't let that guy take full advantage.

Having made a decision, he stopped dwelling on these matters and began to receive today's intelligence reports.

[Current Intelligence Points: 15]

[Today's Intelligence 1 (Red): The day before yesterday, Japan's Imperial Family discovered the theft of the Eight-footed Jade Hook, but the Emperor, fearing accountability by the public, strictly sealed this news from outside, simultaneously arranging forces for a secret investigation, including the FBI team in Japan;

Currently, the fugitive Ichiro Kojima, who fled to Seoul, has been captured by agents]

FBI!

Seeing these words, Qi Yun couldn't help but twitch his brows.

Even though they confirmed repeatedly that no traces were left that day, he inexplicably still had some apprehension about what is reputed as the world's most powerful intelligence agency.

After contemplating for a few seconds, he picked up his phone, composed a message for Harris, reminding him to be cautious and to avoid going to the United States anytime soon.

Harris had long transferred the 3.5 billion USD from selling the Eight-footed Jade Hook into his Swiss Bank account without revealing his identity to the buyer, so unless issues arose on Harris' end, Qi Yun felt they shouldn't trace back to him.

Moreover, Harris isn't an easy character; as long as he's not on U.S. soil, the FBI might not necessarily handle him...

[Today's Intelligence 2 (Red): Mossad agents have located the hiding spot of Husse spokesperson Hayah, situated in the eastern part of Mulan Province, planning retaliatory action for Husse's sneak attack with the second round targeting Hayah, scheduled for 4 AM today]

Hmm?

Qi Yun was taken aback, having seen the news earlier in the morning about Israel's sneak attack on Husse, and now another piece of intelligence arrives.

The other party happened to assist him at sea once before, knowing this, he couldn't just stand by idly, right?

He checked the time, it was already nearing half-past three in the morning, with only half an hour left before the raid time, heedless of whether Salaman had rested, he immediately dialed the number.

"Doo doo doo..."

The phone rang for quite a while before being answered.

"Hello, Qi Yun, is there something you need?" Salaman's voice sounded muddled, though awakened in the middle of the night, there was no trace of displeasure in his tone.

Qi Yun wasted no words, promptly informing the other party of the matter: "Just now, a friend told me some news..."

After listening, Salaman swiftly sat up from bed: "Can you be sure!?"

"My information is reliable and won't be wrong." Qi Yun confidently replied.

Salaman paused for two seconds, his voice instantly losing any sleepiness, becoming exceptionally serious: "Alright, got it, thank you for telling me this news."

"Additionally, I originally had something I wanted to ask of you, but I'll contact you after handling this matter first."

If Salaman was seeking help, it certainly wouldn't be simple, but Qi Yun didn't pry further, just concisely replied: "Okay, you take care of it first."

The two ended the call, Qi Yun continued looking at the last piece of intelligence.

[Today's Intelligence 3 (Green): The internal turmoil within Bao Island's Evergreen Marine has led major shareholder Zhang Wei to complete disappointment with the company, deciding to sell off all his shares, currently searching for suitable candidates]

Evergreen Marine.

One of the world's largest shipping companies, also one of the most profitable shipping companies.

Its routes cover global locations, with a market value exceeding hundreds of billions.

The company operates hundreds of merchant ships, an absolute industry overlord.

Moreover, shipping is not only a profitable business but also a crucial element controlling the lifeline of global logistics.

Especially in cross-border trade and resources transportation, whoever holds shipping channels can occupy a proactive position in the industry chain.

Qi Yun stroked his chin, quickly calculating in his mind.

This Zhang Wei intends to sell shares, not favoring the internal shareholders' foundation but seeking candidates outside, there must be some rationale here...

Could he seize the opportunity to acquire the shares from the other party?

Even securing just a portion would be worthwhile.

...

The next morning, Qi Yun contacted Road Xingye from Bao Island, asking him to assist in investigating the situation with Evergreen Marine.

Then began a busy day.

With Huang Zhiqiang personally instructing, all departments gave green lights, so Qi Yun and Sky Company jointly formed — Sky Shining Energy quickly completed the approval process.

Qi Yun held the position of vice president at Sky Shining Energy.

The general manager was a person named Ji Kai, who was around thirty years old, even younger than Qi Yun.

Everyone knew this newly established Sky Shining Energy was a prized commodity, and given how long this matter had been brewing, it was obvious how fierce the competition for this general manager position would be.

This Ji Kai managed to emerge victorious, and the power behind him is evident.

"President Qi, I look forward to your guidance in the future." Within the temporary office building of Sky Shining Energy, Ji Kai warmly shook Qi Yun's hand, his demeanor suggesting he was more like the vice president.

"Haha, President Ji is too kind." Qi Yun wore a smile as well, since the other party offered goodwill, he was willing to accept it.

Furthermore, he wasn't particularly concerned about who would be in charge of this new company in the future, as long as the project gets completed well and he isn't shortchanged in dividends.

After all, he's merely holding the position, possibly getting reassigned to the group company after some time...

"I've arranged a gathering this evening, and I hope President Qi will grace us with your presence so we can get acquainted, facilitating work in the future." Ji Kai released his hand and continued in a low voice.

"Sure, no problem, contact me tonight." Qi Yun agreed with a nod and a smile.

That afternoon, the Oil Country delegation arrived in Shanghai.

Leading the delegation was the Minister of Energy, a trusted associate of Salaman, knowing the intricacies of the situation.

So upon landing at the airport, he declined the official and Sky Company's arrangements, opting to visit Qi Yun at the hotel first.

This action made many realize the clear message: the Oil Country only recognized Qi Yun.

Even after the contracts were signed, it would be impossible to oust him...

The signing ceremony's press conference was held in the banquet hall of the International Conference Center, with not only officials and key company executives attending but also packed with journalists from various media.

Seated on the podium, Huang Zhiqiang sat centrally, with the Oil Country's Minister of Energy to his left, and Qi Yun to his right, followed by Ji Kai, state-owned and Huayi Group executives.

Qi Yun initially asked Director Sun whether the seating order between him and Ji Kai was incorrect, only to be told it was Huang Zhiqiang's decision.

The ceremony began with Huang Zhiqiang delivering a brief speech, lasting barely five minutes, illustrating that this individual was indeed pragmatic.

Everything proceeded smoothly thereafter, with agreements signed with the Oil Country's representatives, solidifying the matter, and subsequently minimizing the need for Qi Yun's involvement.

After the ceremony, numerous media outlets sought interviews with Qi Yun, all of which he politely declined.

PS: Thanks to all godfathers for the monthly votes, thank you!

Chapter 580: Showing Off, Huh?

On the 58th floor of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, there's a bar here known to touch the skyline of Shanghai.

Ji Kai had booked a corner booth, offering excellent privacy and quietness. It provided a stunning view of the river without interruption from other guests.

When Qi Yun arrived, Ji Kai was already there, along with two other young men who seemed rather youthful.

Upon seeing Qi Yun enter, Ji Kai stood up to greet him: "President Qi, you're here, please, take a seat over here."

Qi Yun nodded with a smile, walking towards the booth, his gaze subtly scanning over the two young men, judging by their dress, they seemed to come from well-to-do families.

It made sense; anyone mingling in Ji Kai's circle would naturally have influential backgrounds.

"Let me introduce you," Ji Kai said, pulling Qi Yun down to sit, pointing at the young man in a suit, "This is Xiao Yu, Yu Zheyu, his family is in the logistics business."

Then he turned to the other, "This is Kang Shao, you've met his father before."

With the surname Kang, and having already met him... Qi Yun thought for a moment and understood who Kang Shao was.

"Kang Shao, Xiao Yu, this is President Qi," Ji Kai added with a smile, giving them a nudge, "Haven't you always wanted to meet President Qi? Here's your chance today. Whether you can become friends with him is up to you."

"President Qi, hello." Kang Shao stood up and shook hands with Qi Yun.

The young man named Xiao Yu just nodded slightly and continued playing with his phone.

Ji Kai poured a drink, smilingly asked Qi Yun, "President Qi, should we invite some female friends to liven up the place? Xiao Yu knows Tian Ai, who's filming nearby."

"It's very private here; there won't be any disturbance."

Qi Yun hesitated, somewhat unexpected, but it felt reasonable...

"Haha, thank you for the offer, but let's not."

Seeing Qi Yun not interested, Ji Kai didn't push the matter further, and slid the filled glass in front of him: "Alright, we'll go with President Qi's choice!"

"Let's raise a toast to welcome President Qi to Shanghai!"

Kang Shao lifted his glass, smiling at Qi Yun: "Certainly a toast to President Qi! For bringing such a big project to our Shanghai." Saying this, he gulped down his drink smoothly.

"You're too kind." Qi Yun politely replied, raising his glass and finishing it.

All three drank their drinks, while Xiao Yu still kept his head down.

Kang Shao frowned, nudging him: "Xiao Yu, stop chatting."

Yu Zheyu finally looked up, glanced at the glass on the table, and then at Qi Yun, said nothing, took a random sip from his glass, and continued tapping his screen.

Ji Kai felt a bit awkward, smiled at Qi Yun to ease the mood: "That's just how he is, President Qi, don't mind him."

Qi Yun smiled, not taking any offense.

As they drank and chatted, Qi Yun gained a favorable impression of Ji Kai, who was sociable and down-to-earth, a typical product of a high-standing family.

"Brother Qi, I know you won't be here long; I'll keep an eye on the project, don't worry."

Unconsciously, Ji Kai's address for Qi Yun naturally transitioned from "President Qi" to "Brother Qi."

Qi Yun wasn't swayed by the change to "brother" and kept his composure, nodding: "Alright, I'll leave it to you."

"It's my duty, my duty!" Ji Kai laughed, refilling Qi Yun's drink, "Brother Qi, you..."

As he was about to have a deeper exchange with Qi Yun, Yu Zheyu suddenly interrupted: "I have two friends in Shanghai, should I call them over to hang out?"

Ji Kai was momentarily stunned, his expression briefly unnatural, regretting inviting this fool to accompany them.

This gathering didn't even include any girls, and you want to invite friends...

Kang Shao was equally speechless, but being close to Yu Zheyu, seeing Ji Kai's face, he nudged him and suggested: "Xiao Yu, maybe another day, today's not appropriate."

Yu Zheyu sneered: "What's inappropriate, everyone's friends, the more, the merrier."

Kang Shao stayed silent.

Seeing the guy was insistent on inviting people over, Ji Kai awkwardly glanced at Qi Yun: "Brother Qi, please don't mind."

Qi Yun didn't seem to care, nodding with a smile.

Shortly, Yu Zheyu's phone rang, and he answered casually, "Hello? You're downstairs? Come straight to the bar on the 58th floor, corner booth on the right." He hung up and stood up, "I'm going to greet my friends."

Watching Yu Zheyu walk away, Ji Kai twitched his mouth, turning to give Qi Yun an apologetic smile: "Come, Brother Qi, another toast to you."

Qi Yun raised his glass, thinking to himself he'd probably leave after a while.

Just after they clinked glasses, footsteps approached the booth, and Yu Zheyu came back with two individuals.

A young man and woman, both seemed youthful.

"Let me introduce you, this is my buddy, Ding Junkai."

Hearing the name, Qi Yun turned his head and upon seeing the person, his gaze paused slightly.

Even in the dimly lit bar, he recognized Yu Zheyu's buddy as the same Ding Junkai who wanted to acquire his company in Bird City.

Ding Junkai obviously recognized Qi Yun too, his smiling face suddenly stiffened.