

Middle Age 581

Chapter 581: Showing Off, Huh? (Double Length)

"Junkai, have a seat, why are you standing there like that?" Yu Zheyu hadn't noticed anything unusual and pulled Ding Junkai toward the booth, "Let me introduce you, this is Young Master Kang, Brother Kai, Qi..."

"No need for introductions!"

Before Yu Zheyu could finish his words, Ding Junkai interrupted him, his face turning grim as he glared at Qi Yun, gritting his teeth, "What a small world for enemies to cross paths!"

The atmosphere in the booth immediately became a bit awkward upon hearing this.

Yu Zheyu's outstretched hand froze in midair, looking bewildered as he glanced at Ding Junkai and then at Qi Yun, realizing there was something between the two.

Next to them, Young Master Kang's heart skipped a beat, and he quickly stepped forward to mediate, "What's going on, is there some misunderstanding here?"

Qi Yun didn't say a word, just looked at Ding Junkai with a half-smile, calmly smoking a cigarette.

Ji Kai squinted, remaining silent for two seconds, then patted Qi Yun on the arm, "Brother Qi, why don't we call it a night? I'll take you back to the hotel to rest."

Qi Yun flicked some ash from his cigarette and, not wanting to cause more trouble, stood up and agreed, "Alright, let's go then."

"Go!? Where do you think you're going?" Ding Junkai stepped forward with his neck stiffened, reaching out as if to block Qi Yun and said angrily, "About that debt you tricked me on last time at Bird City, aren't we going to settle it today?"

With that move, the already awkward atmosphere became charged with tension.

Yu Zheyu glanced at Qi Yun and then at Ding Junkai, asking, "Junkai, what's going on?"

Ding Junkai fiercely stared at Qi Yun, "This bastard tricked me last time at Bird City." Since it wasn't a glorious matter to be locked up in a small dark room, he didn't go into details.

Upon hearing the word "bastard," even before Qi Yun could react, Ji Kai's expression turned cold.

However, he didn't direct his anger at Ding Junkai but instead looked at Yu Zheyu, saying in a deep voice, "Little Yu, is your friend drunk?"

Beside him, Young Master Kang also gave Yu Zheyu a look, signaling him to quickly take Ding Junkai away.

However, Yu Zheyu stood still, looked at the furious Ding Junkai, and then at the calm Qi Yun, frowned, and turned into a mediator, "President Qi, what's going on exactly?"

"Maybe you should apologize to Junkai, and we can call it even?"

In his mind, his relationship with Ding Junkai definitely outweighed that with Qi Yun, whom he had known for less than an hour.

Besides, his family's logistics business is notable nationwide, contributing ten figures in taxes to the local government each year, so naturally, he has a high opinion of himself. Even though he knew Qi Yun had some connections, he didn't consider him an equal.

"Little Yu!" Ji Kai's face turned dark immediately, "What nonsense are you talking about!"

Yu Zheyu shrugged it off, "What? Did I say something wrong?"

Qi Yun glanced at him, not inclined to argue with such a stubborn kid, he stepped forward to leave.

However, Ding Junkai was relentless, stepping forward to block the way, clearly unwilling to settle, "Think you're leaving? Do you think this is still Bird City? If you don't give me an explanation today, don't think you'll leave through this door!"

The situation has now erupted into a full-blown conflict.

"Get the hell out of the way!" Ji Kai was visibly angry, this gathering was organized by him, and this fool who appeared out of nowhere was causing trouble, essentially embarrassing him.

Young Master Kang also tried to mediate, "Since everyone knows each other, there's no need for this to escalate, Little Yu, take your friend away, and let's resolve any misunderstandings another day."

"Why resolve it another day?" Yu Zheyu retorted, pausing before adding, "Junkai's father is Ding Sanshi."

He felt that his two friends didn't quite understand the situation, so he bluntly stated Ding Junkai's background.

Hearing the name "Ding Sanshi," Young Master Kang, who was about to continue persuading, froze, and hesitated to pull at Yu Zheyu's arm.

Although Net One Company's influence in the north may be slightly weaker compared to other giants, in the coastal and Yangtze River Delta regions, Ding Sanshi's early ventures in the internet and e-commerce industries gave him an extensive network and resources, making him a distinguished guest wherever he went.

Ji Kai's face also showed a hint of uneasiness, but it didn't change his decision as he said sternly again, "Let's call it a night! If this drags on, don't blame me for not showing kindness!"

Ding Junkai ignored his warning, pulling out his phone, ready to call people over.

Yu Zheyu was also dissatisfied with Ji Kai's stance, "Brother Kai, are you taking sides?"

"I..." Ji Kai was about to say something, but Qi Yun raised a hand to stop him.

A smirk played on his lips, and after putting out his cigarette butt with a stomp, he suddenly did something no one expected to see.

"Slap! Slap! Slap!"

Crisp slaps landed on Ding Junkai's face, making the booth eerily silent.

Everyone was stunned, not expecting Qi Yun to lay a hand on anyone.

Even Ji Kai, who had been tense, widened his eyes.

In their circle, a quarrel might not be a big deal, but publicly slapping someone was definitely a major affront.

In these social scenes, it's all about maintaining face, and with those slaps, Qi Yun had essentially ground Ding Junkai's dignity into the floor.

Ding Junkai held his face, stunned for a full three seconds before reacting, his eyes now burning red with anger, "You damn well slapped me again!?"

"I'm going to kill you today!!!"

Having said that, he lunged at Qi Yun like a madman, but was firmly held back by the now-recovered Young Master Kang.

Among everyone present, he was definitely the most afraid of the situation blowing up.

Because offending either Qi Yun or Net One Company meant a loss for Shanghai.

"Calm down! Young Master Ding! Don't be impulsive!" He was sweating profusely, dragging Ding Junkai backward with effort.

Yu Zheyu's face also turned grim, regardless of anything, Ding Junkai was a friend he brought along. To have his friend humiliated like this left him in a tough spot.

"Qi Yun, don't you think you've gone too far!?"

"You..."

"Shut the hell up!" Qi Yun suddenly turned to glare at him, his tone hostile, "Keep your mouth shut, and I'll take care of you too."

Yu Zheyu was momentarily at a loss for words, not knowing how to react.

Did this guy really dare to speak to him that way?

As a top-tier second-generation rich kid in their circle, he certainly couldn't tolerate this.

Yet, faced with Qi Yun's cold gaze, he suddenly felt a bit intimidated... opening his mouth several times but failing to utter a word.

Unnoticed, with his change in status and his increasing interactions with top figures, Qi Yun had naturally developed an air of authority.

Under the stunned gazes of everyone, he sat back down on the sofa, lit another cigarette, and casually said to Ding Junkai, "I'm giving you a chance, I'll wait right here, let's see what you've got."

With such a dismissive posture, Qi Yun completely ignited Ding Junkai's fury, who pushed Young Master Kang away with a sneer of rage, "Fine! Acting all superior huh? Let's see how long you can keep it up!"

Leaving those words, he started calling reinforcements.

Seeing this, Ji Kai didn't mention leaving again and silently returned to sit beside Qi Yun, lighting a cigarette from his pack as well.

Only Young Master Kang was sweating profusely from anxiety.

He glanced at the menacing Yu Zheyu and then moved beside Qi Yun, quietly advising, "President Qi, I think it might be better to let it go, everyone knows each other, there's no need for things to get this tense, plus Ding Sanshi..."

Before he could finish, Qi Yun understood what he meant and chuckled indifferently, "No worries, you don't need to get involved."

Seeing that he couldn't persuade Qi Yun, Young Master Kang turned his gaze to Ji Kai, "Brother Kai..."

Ji Kai also remained silent, keeping a composed face.

Young Master Kang stood still for a few seconds before finally sighing helplessly and turning aside to make a phone call.

He needed to inform his father of what was happening here, otherwise, if something serious occurred, it would be difficult to handle.

After Young Master Kang left, Ji Kai leaned in closer and asked softly, "Brother Qi, should I make a call too?"

Qi Yun shook his head, "No need."

Though he didn't understand why this guy he had known for only a day was supporting him so much, he didn't want to owe him a favor rashly.

Besides, it wasn't necessary.

Chapter 582: Not Afraid of Making Trouble

Shanghai, an underground parking garage of a certain residential area.

Leader Kang, just finished with work, got out of his car and immediately received a call from Kang Shao.

With his phone in hand, he walked toward the elevator while listening to the account from the other end. As soon as he heard about the conflict between Qi Yun and Ding Junkai, he stopped in his tracks.

"Ding Junkai? Ding Sanshi's son? How did he end up clashing with Qi Yun?" Leader Kang's brows furrowed, and his tone darkened.

On the other end, Kang Shao quickly summarized the background and then hastily said, "Dad, Ding Junkai has already called for reinforcements, and that Qi Yun refuses to leave. I tried persuading him but to no avail."

"If this thing gets out of hand..."

Leader Kang paused for a few seconds and immediately instructed, "No matter what, we must ensure nothing happens to Qi Yun! I'm heading over right now!"

After hanging up, he disregarded going upstairs and quickly returned to his car. While opening the door, he called Guo Ju from the precinct, his voice serious, "This is Kang Jianhong, arrange for people to head to the ** Bar on Century Avenue at once!"

"Make sure to protect a person named Qi Yun; nothing must happen to him!"

On the other end, Guo Ju didn't dare to hesitate, immediately responding, "Understood! I will dispatch the nearest patrol units right away, and I'll head over myself!"

After hanging up the phone, Leader Kang started the car and sped off towards the bar.

To those outside the core circle, Qi Yun's significance might not be clear, but as Huang Zhiqiang's right-hand man, he knew it very well.

Qi Yun was not only the appointed head of a major project but also had important connections to those in power. Should anything happen to him in Shanghai, no one could bear the consequences, and everyone would face the fallout.

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Outside the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Ding Junkai, who had just been slapped, was gripping his phone with an enraged glare, "Yes, he's still here. I'll send you the location!"

"Alright, I'm nearby and heading over. What's his background?"

"Just some lucky idiot! Knows a few people over in Province J."

"Got it, wait for me."

After hanging up the phone, Ding Junkai continued to grind his teeth, looking as if he wanted to devour someone.

He refused to believe that while he couldn't deal with Qi Yun in Province J, he couldn't handle him in the Yangtze River Delta?

A few minutes later, a black Magotan pulled up outside, and a youth around thirty, with gold-rimmed glasses and a refined appearance, stepped out from the backseat.

In a city filled with luxury cars like Shanghai, a Magotan of this class was barely noticeable. The classic expression would be "not even a dog would drive it."

But despite the ordinary car, the SW pass displayed inside the window was particularly conspicuous.

"Brother Feng." Ding Junkai greeted in a deep voice.

The youth called Brother Feng nodded, raised his hand to pat his arm, and said, "Let's go." With that, he proceeded towards the lobby.

Ding Junkai immediately followed.

The two took the elevator to the bar's floor, and as soon as they stepped out of the elevator, they saw Kang Shao waiting there.

"Ha, Little Kang's here too."

Kang Shao turned his head at the sound, and upon seeing Brother Feng, his face visibly tensed.

"Feng... Brother Feng, what brings you here?"

He obviously knew the answer, with Ding Junkai right beside, clearly having called for backup.

Brother Feng had a faint smile, "Hmm, I heard Junkai got into a fight, so I came over to see what's going on."

Kang Shao's heart sank. He quickly stepped forward half a step, lowering his voice to advise, "Brother Feng, there's a bit of a misunderstanding here... you—"

"Little Kang." Brother Feng raised his hand, pressing it on his shoulder, interrupting before Kang Shao could finish, "We can talk later."

Kang Shao hesitated for a moment, opened his mouth wanting to advise further, but was stopped by Brother Feng's gaze.

Brother Feng disregarded him, turned to look at Ding Junkai, and nodded his head, "Let's go, take a look inside."

Ding Junkai seemed dissatisfied with Kang Shao's stance and wasted no words, striding towards a corner booth.

Kang Shao had no choice but to steel himself and follow, already having cursed Ding Junkai countless times in his mind.

This damn guy really wasn't afraid to make things big! He actually brought this person along...

The three arrived at the previous booth, where Yu Zheyu was standing by the window playing with his phone, looking rather unhappy.

Qi Yun and Ji Kai were sitting there drinking, their expressions calm as if they were in their own living room.

Upon hearing the footsteps, Qi Yun turned his head, his gaze pausing briefly on Brother Feng.

Though he didn't recognize the newcomer, from the positioning of the three and the aura this young man exuded, he deduced the person's identity was likely significant.

However, despite this, there was no change in his expression.

Next to him, Ji Kai clearly recognized Brother Feng, and his formerly relaxed face became unconsciously tense.

Yu Zheyu, seeing Brother Feng, immediately brightened up, quickly walking over, "Brother Feng!"

As he passed the sofa, he glanced towards Qi Yun, his eyes filled with ridicule, as if expecting a good show.

Brother Feng smiled at him, "How's Uncle Yu's health recently? It's been a while since my last visit."

Yu Zheyu's demeanor towards Brother Feng was noticeably friendly, grinning as he replied, "Quite well, give me a call when you have time, and I'll go back with you."

"Alright." Brother Feng nodded, saying nothing more. His gaze shifted past Yu Zheyu, ignoring Qi Yun, and spoke to Ji Kai instead, "When did you come back?"

Ji Kai glanced at him, his tone indifferent, "Didn't attend the meeting this afternoon, huh?"

Brother Feng was unfazed by the jab, casually sitting on the sofa, responding nonchalantly, "I honestly don't know what meeting you're talking about. I just got back from leading a team on an inspection in Peng City."

"Haha." Ji Kai sneered, choosing not to continue.

"Your friend?" Brother Feng pointed at Qi Yun without ever looking at him.

At that moment, Qi Yun was holding a cigarette, about to put it in his mouth. Ji Kai picked up the lighter from the table to help him light it, then glanced sideways at Brother Feng, "What, are you here to back that kid up?"

"Backing him up is a bit much, just came to see what's going on." Brother Feng still wore a slight smile, as if everything was within his control, "Junkai is my friend."

Ji Kai smirked, "Ha, do you know what I hate most about you?"

"Oh? Let's hear it, I'd like to know."

Ji Kai leaned in, his eyes filled with obvious sarcasm, "What I can't stand is your pretentiousness!"

"If you want to back him up, just say so. As the Crown Prince of Shanghai, who wouldn't listen to you if you said to leave?"

Upon hearing this, the smile on Brother Feng's face cooled down. After a brief silence, he looked at Ji Kai and said, "So if I tell you to leave now, will you listen or not?"

With that, the atmosphere instantly grew tense.

Kang Shao, Yu Zheyu, Ding Junkai, and others all looked to Ji Kai, awaiting his reply.

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Chapter 583: Bouncing Back Again

"Rumble, rumble."

Just when the atmosphere in the booth was extremely tense, hurried footsteps approached from afar.

Guo Ju, dressed casually, was leading a few patrol officers quickly towards them, accompanied by a middle-aged man, who happened to be Brother Feng's driver.

The patrol officers had actually arrived earlier but were stopped downstairs by Brother Feng's driver. Due to his status, they didn't dare to disobey and only followed up when Guo Ju arrived.

The driver quickened his pace, reached Brother Feng's side first, and whispered a few words.

Brother Feng raised his hand, signaling for the other to step back, then turned his gaze towards the approaching Guo Ju.

With a forced smile, Guo Ju approached, his face plastered with a grin, "Director Zhang, you're here too."

As he spoke, his eyes darted around, and upon seeing all the young masters present, he felt a headache; these were all people he couldn't afford to provoke.

Kang Jianhong had only told him to come and protect someone named Qi Yun, without explaining the specifics of the situation.

As his gaze swept across the room and landed on Qi Yun, sitting composedly and smoking on the couch, his expression paused.

Why does this person look somewhat familiar?

He couldn't remember Qi Yun, but Qi Yun recognized him instead.

A few days ago, when he was in Shanghai, he had dined at Wangjiang Pavilion with Old Wai and Shi Feng, and at that time, the troublemaker Brother Xiong had come to cause trouble, and it was precisely Guo Ju and that Miss Lu who had arrived.

"Hmm, I'm just gathering with friends here, so why have you come, Guo Ju?" Brother Feng asked with a half-smile.

Guo Ju wiped the sweat from his forehead and replied with an accompanying smile, "Director Kang personally called me, instructing me to handle some things here."

He knew that even though he was personally present, he couldn't intimidate these young masters, so he had to mention Kang Jianhong.

After hearing this, Brother Feng narrowed his eyes, took out his phone, and dialed a number.

The call was quickly connected.

"Uncle Song, it's me, Little Feng."

"Hehe, hope I'm not disturbing your rest?"

"Ah, nothing really, just playing with friends at the bar and happened to see Guo Ju here too."

"Hmm, yes."

"Hehe, alright, let's meet at your office some other day."

After hanging up the phone, Brother Feng turned to look at Guo Ju, his tone non-negotiable, "Guo Ju, you should head back."

Guo Ju was stunned for a moment, not daring to move immediately.

He was just the second in command, and the "Uncle Song" mentioned on the phone earlier was the first in command. Making this call in front of him was a very clear indication.

But even so, he didn't dare to just leave.

Director Kang had specifically instructed him to come and protect Qi Yun, and now he wasn't even sure who Qi Yun was. If he just walked away and something went wrong, he would surely be held accountable.

Guo Ju had no choice but to turn his pleading eyes toward Young Master Kang, hoping he could step in to share some of the pressure.

Young Master Kang gritted his teeth, hesitating as he spoke, "Brother Feng, can this matter be postponed, talk about it tomorrow, okay?"

This time, Brother Feng didn't respond, crossing his legs and lighting a cigarette as well.

With his status, making that call earlier had already given Young Master Kang and Guo Ju an out, hinting for them not to get involved in this matter anymore.

The atmosphere instantly became silent, and no one spoke further.

Young Master Kang weighed the pros and cons for a while before signaling to Guo Ju to leave with him.

He originally wanted to resolve the matter amicably so as not to cause trouble for their families, but Brother Feng's attitude was clear, and he was already sidelined, making it pointless to intervene further.

If a negative impact were to happen, even Brother Feng's father would lose face.

Moreover, from his impression, Brother Feng had always been a rather steady person, so he felt the other party wouldn't go too far.

Receiving Young Master Kang's signal, Guo Ju felt like he had received amnesty, quickly taking his men and leaving.

A group of people reached the elevator entrance, where Young Master Kang called his father, informing him of the situation.

Unexpectedly, instead of feeling relieved, Kang Jianhong frowned even more after hearing it.

"I get it, you guys go ahead and leave."

Kang Jianhong said briefly before hanging up the phone, then found a spot to pull over his car, and immediately dialed Huang Zhiqiang's number.

The appearance of Brother Feng had made the situation more severe, beyond his control...

Young Master Kang and Brother Feng were unaware of Qi Yun's true connections behind the scenes.

In their eyes, this guy was just an ordinary person with some background, and even if rewarded, it wasn't due to true resources or networks, so Ding Junkai and Brother Feng dared to act as they pleased.

But Kang Jianhong had heard from Huang Zhiqiang that Qi Yun was a protégé of Director Xiao, and the Xiao family, in particular, had more power than Brother Feng's father...

They were destined for the very pinnacle...

So from his and Huang Zhiqiang's perspective, they certainly didn't want to see any conflict breaking out between the parties or for anything unexpected to happen to Qi Yun in their territory.

Even if the unexpected incident was unrelated to them.

The big shots only cared about the final outcome, not the process...

Once the call was connected, Kang Jianhong briefly explained the incident and then asked, "I'm heading over there now, what do you think?"

Huang Zhiqiang on the other end remained silent for a moment, pondering, "You don't need to go, I'll call Old Zhang personally."

Hearing this, Kang Jianhong breathed a sigh of relief. As long as Old Zhang could call Junior Zhang back, things wouldn't get out of hand.

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Inside the bar, seeing Young Master Kang and Guo Ju leave, Ding Junkai visibly became more arrogant.

Before Brother Feng could speak, he impatiently jumped out, looking down at Qi Yun, "Qi, no one's protecting you now? The account of you hitting me must be settled today!"

He thought with Brother Feng around, he could completely take control, finally regaining some pride.

Qi Yun glanced at him, the look in his eyes resembling one he'd give a stray dog barking furiously by the road.

This completely enraged Ding Junkai, who pointed at Qi Yun's nose, angrily cursing, "You bastard, still acting all high and mighty?"

"Junkai." Brother Feng raised his hand, interrupting him, not minding Qi Yun's attitude, and instead asking Ji Kai, "What's your take on this?"

"For your sake, let him sincerely apologize, and Junkai can vent, then let's call it a day."

Ji Kai laughed directly after hearing, leaning back on the sofa, "Apologizing is out of the question at all. If you want to resolve it, just go ahead, I'll handle this for Brother Qi."

Originally, he didn't want to escalate things too much, after all, everything these people did represented more than themselves, and it wouldn't be a pretty sight if relations were completely torn apart.

But since Brother Feng was shielding Ding Junkai, insisting that Qi Yun apologize, Ji Kai lost any intention of de-escalating the tension.

Before taking on the role as Sky Shining Energy's general manager, his uncle had reminded him to make sure to maintain a good relationship with Qi Yun, so naturally, there was no reason to back down now.

Chapter 584: If You're Going to Pretend, Go Big

Faced with Ji Kai's unyielding attitude, the smile on Brother Feng's face completely disappeared, and his tone turned cold: "Ji Kai, are you sure you want to go against me for his sake?"

Ji Kai was not daunted in the slightest and was just about to respond when he saw Qi Yun patting his thigh, laughing lightly as he said, "Brother, I appreciate your goodwill."

"Since they're here for me, let me handle it."

Ji Kai looked at Qi Yun, hesitated for a moment, and swallowed his words: "Alright, let me know if you need me to do anything, Brother Qi."

Qi Yun nodded at him, then turned to Brother Feng, his tone calm: "You're Brother Feng, right."

"Apologizing is definitely out of the question. This kid runs his mouth, fixing him up casually is no problem, that's my stance."

Brother Feng sneered, looking squarely at Qi Yun for the first time: "Heh, if you put it that way... then me fixing you up casually is no problem, right?"

Qi Yun stubbed out his cigarette and exhaled a smoke ring: "Of course you can. In the world we live in, who doesn't get hurt? As long as you have the capability."

"Alright, you talk tough." Brother Feng nodded and picked up the phone on the table, "Let me show you if I have the strength to handle you."

After dialing, he held it to his ear: "Bring the team over, Century Avenue."

From the previous conversation, Qi Yun had already figured out who Brother Feng was. Although his background wasn't ordinary, his old man's power didn't equate to his own.

Qi Yun, as a special security consultant for Guo An, had earned this entirely by himself.

Venturing into Lop Nur, descending ancient tombs, confronting assassins head-on, which of these wasn't dangerous?

He also took out his phone from his pocket and dialed a number for Chen Wei, who was waiting in the suite: "Bring the crew up, wear your credentials, and everyone be armed!"

Hearing the words "everyone be armed," the faces of everyone present changed.

The hand holding the cigarette in Brother Feng's hand paused in mid-air, Ding Junkai shrank back in fear, and even the corners of Ji Kai's mouth twitched involuntarily.

Qi Yun took out his special security consultant ID from his bag and pinned it to his chest, glancing at Brother Feng with a half-smiling expression.

As if to say, just try messing with me?

Brother Feng clearly didn't expect Qi Yun to have such a background, but he had already spoken up just now; could he back down now?

Clearly not possible.

"Are you trying to scare me?" he stared at Qi Yun and said.

Qi Yun shrugged nonchalantly: "Think whatever you want. Anyone who wants to test me, go ahead and try."

He indeed had the intention to scare them, never show weakness in such situations, if you need to pretend, then do it big, you must be imposing!

Otherwise, on someone else's turf, if they really want to play dirty and lock you up for a beating, it's not impossible...

As soon as he finished speaking, several figures quickly came running over, it was Chen Wei, Da Pao, An Zai, and Xiao Wu.

Except for Xiao Wu, the other three followed Qi Yun's instructions and all wore their IDs, with their weapons in their holsters at their waists, the half-exposed black barrel instantly amping up the atmosphere.

The group stood silently behind Qi Yun, ready to act without hesitation at his command or if someone posed a threat to his safety.

Whether you're the Crown Prince of the city or a delivery man, they're all the same in their eyes.

Brother Feng clutched his phone, his expression somewhat unsightly.

Qi Yun and his group had very special identities, even the people he called over couldn't act recklessly.

Moreover, they were armed. If an actual conflict broke out, and a gun accidentally went off, it would land him in trouble.

The current situation was entirely beyond his expectations.

Ding Junkai behind him felt his knees go weak, and there was no trace of his earlier arrogance on his face. He hadn't expected Qi Yun to dare to confront Brother Feng head-on.

And he even had the backing.

Just when the atmosphere in the booth was incredibly tense, a pleasant ringtone broke the silence.

It was the phone in Brother Feng's hand that was ringing.

He looked down at the caller ID, his pupils contracted instantly, then he stood up and walked to a distance to take the call.

"Hello, Dad."

A powerful voice came from the earpiece, the words concise, just four words: "Come back right away."

Upon hearing this, Brother Feng knew that Old Zhang had likely heard about what was happening here, and without giving him a chance to explain, the authority in his voice dared not allow him to refute.

"Yes..." Brother Feng answered softly, followed by a busy signal from the other end.

After putting down the phone, he took a deep breath, knowing that he had completely lost face today.

Turning back to the booth, Brother Feng gave Qi Yun a deep look, then said to Ding Junkai and Yu Zheyue, "Let's go," before striding toward the elevator.

Ding Junkai and Yu Zheyue exchanged a look, somewhat baffled.

Hadn't they just called people over? Why were they suddenly leaving?

Not dealing with Qi Yun?

But it's for the best...

In fact, from the moment Chen Wei and his crew appeared armed, they both hoped to leave as soon as possible.

With their status, there was no point in taking risks personally; they would find another chance to deal with Qi Yun in the future.

Hence, Ding Junkai didn't even dare to utter a harsh word, quickly following Yu Zheyue and Brother Feng without courage to even look back at Qi Yun.

Once the three figures completely disappeared into the elevator, Ji Kai secretly breathed a sigh of relief.

Despite his earlier tough stance, it was more of a forced show; if they really fell out with Brother Feng, none would emerge unscathed, so a peaceful resolution was naturally for the best.

"You're awesome, Brother Qi, with just a phone call, even the Crown Prince of the city had to retreat!" Ji Kai gave Qi Yun a thumbs up, unreservedly praising him.

Qi Yun laughed, glancing back at him, thinking that this kid's flattery skills weren't much worse than his.

"Thanks for today," Qi Yun said.

Upon hearing this, Ji Kai immediately waved his hand, smiling as he said, "You're too polite, Brother Qi! We're partners now, if you have trouble, I definitely have to step up, saying thanks is too formal."

Qi Yun wasn't sure why this guy was so supportive, but it wasn't something he could ask directly, so he simply smiled and raised his glass: "Alright, I won't say any more, if you ever need me, just say the word."

Ji Kai quickly picked up his glass and clinked it with Qi Yun's, making a loud sound: "Haha, that's great."

"To be honest, I quite fancy the exotic vibes of your side..."

After leaving the bar and just getting into the car, Qi Yun received a call from Huang Zhiqiang, inquiring about the situation on his side.

"Director Huang, sorry for troubling you, the matter is resolved," Qi Yun politely replied.

Knowing that Huang Zhiqiang was aware of the situation here, Qi Yun wasn't surprised, it must have been Kang Jianhong who informed him.

On the other end, Huang Zhiqiang's tone also relaxed, chuckling as he said, "It's good that it's resolved, didn't I tell you, any difficulty here, just call me directly."

"Hehe, alright, I remember, next time, for sure!" Qi Yun responded while secretly lamenting, it's really nice to have protection...

Chapter 585: Rejection

Beside the Huangpu River, a certain residential area.

The light was still on in the study room, where a man in his fifties was looking at the documents on the desk. Opposite him, Brother Feng, the Crown Prince of the Magic City, had been standing for nearly half an hour.

Since coming home, his father hadn't said a word, only silently looking at the documents, which made him a bit anxious.

"Dad, I was wrong." Brother Feng stood straight, slightly afraid, with his head bowed.

Since he was a child, his father was the one he was most afraid of. No matter how he acted outside, he dared not be presumptuous in front of his father.

Old Zhang finally put down the pen in his hand, looked up at him, his gaze as calm as a still lake.

"Where did you go wrong?"

Brother Feng pursed his lips, "I shouldn't have almost gotten into a conflict with Qi Yun without fully understanding his identity, bringing risk to the family..."

Being the leading figure in the younger generation of the circle, he relied not only on the title of Crown Prince, but also on his cunning and skills naturally.

From the moment his father called him back suddenly, he realized that something was off with that Qi Yun, whose identity might not be simple...

Old Zhang nodded, without any blame in his tone, "I know you value Ding family's resources and want to make them work for you, that's a good thing."

"But you cannot underestimate any opponent, ignoring the heroes of the world."

"Making mistakes is not scary, I can allow you to make countless mistakes, but you must learn from them."

"Your identity easily makes you lose your sense of awe, and that's very dangerous..."

After hearing this, Brother Feng felt ashamed. His father was right; his identity destined him not to be like ordinary people. No matter where he went, there were always many people flattering him, which, over time, made him arrogant.

Even though he always appeared humble superficially, deep down, he was arrogant and didn't really respect many people.

Only those few in the north...

Brother Feng took a deep breath, speaking sincerely, "Yes, Dad, I understand."

"Hmm, go and rest." Old Zhang waved his hand, saying no more. Different levels of people educate their children in different ways.

Meanwhile, in the Pudong District's Hai J compound.

Ji Kai was also facing his father's inquiries.

Unlike Old Zhang's reaction, Old Ji looked satisfied after hearing Ji Kai's account, "Well done! Didn't embarrass your old man!"

"Since you've chosen to befriend that kid, you must be firm in your stand! Either stand not, or stand firmly!"

Ji Kai nonchalantly picked up his father's cigarette box, "I understand, if Zhang Feng hadn't backed down earlier, I certainly wouldn't have let him off."

"At that time, I had already planned, if things turned ugly, I'd immediately call over my cousins."

Old Ji listened, the smile in his eyes deepened, leaning back in his chair, he continued, "Your uncle went through a lot of trouble to get you this position. You should work well there, maintain a good relationship with that Qi Yun, and after the project ends, he has other plans for you."

"I know, Dad."

"Hmm, off you go."

Ji Kai chuckled, casually putting the special edition cigarette into his pocket as he left the room. Outside, he said to a middle-aged man sitting in the living room, "Uncle Han, it's your turn."

"Alright." The middle-aged man, referred to as Uncle Han, stood up, straightened his clothes, and then walked into the study.

Old Ji, upon seeing him enter, simultaneously searched for something on the desk and gestured him over, "Old Han, come sit."

Old Han nodded and sat down opposite the desk.

"Damn it, this little brat!" Old Ji cursed.

"What's up? Did Xiao Kai cause trouble again?" Old Han laughed and asked.

Kids growing up in the compound are generally lively, unwilling to suffer losses, and often causing trouble day after day.

"No." Old Ji chuckled, then briefly recounted what Ji Kai did at the bar earlier.

Old Han also laughed after hearing it, pondered for a moment, then mused, "I just don't know if that gentleman might overthink..."

Old Ji didn't pay it any mind, pursed his lips, "Who cares what he thinks, I don't give a damn."

Saying that, he stood up, walked to the window, looked at the bright moon in the sky, and said with deep meaning, "To advance further, I think he's still lacking a bit."

...

The next day, Qi Yun received a message from Lu Xingye that they had results from the investigation into Changrong Shipping's major shareholder, Zhang Wei, which he had asked him to help with before.

This former Crown Prince's life story is quite dramatic, almost worthy of a movie.

Originally born with a silver spoon, with a bright future ahead, he gave up all the family assets over a dispute with his father for a flight attendant when he was young.

Later, when his old man passed away, he left most of his Changrong Shipping shares to him.

According to the current market value of Changrong Shipping, those 12% shares are worth over a hundred billion, which is an enormous fortune.

However, this also aroused the jealousy of his two brothers, who secretly colluded with company executives to squeeze him out of the core power circle.

Disheartened, Zhang Wei grew tired of the intrigues in the business world and didn't want to fight with his brothers anymore, hence, the idea of selling off his shares and leaving materialized.

Looking at the information Lu Xingye had gathered, Qi Yun pondered for a moment, then took out his phone and dialed Zhang Wei's number.

The phone rang several times before it was answered. A low voice came from the other end, not revealing much emotion, "Who is it?"

"Mr. Zhang, hello, my name is Qi Yun."

"Qi Yun?" The person on the other end paused, as if recalling.

Not many people knew this personal number, and he couldn't remember a person named Qi Yun.

"Sorry, I don't seem to know you."

Qi Yun detected the wariness in the other's words and went straight to the point, "Indeed, you don't know me. I got your number through a friend."

"The reason I'm calling is to discuss the Changrong Shipping shares. I heard you're considering selling your shares."

A couple of seconds of silence passed, and Zhang Wei's voice came through again, "Sorry, I'm not sure where you got that information, but you might be mistaken. I have no intention of selling my shares."

"Please don't call me again."

After saying this, he didn't give Qi Yun a chance to explain and hung up.

Qi Yun listened to the busy tone on the receiver, a hint of bewilderment crossing his face.

No intention of selling?

Could the system's information be wrong?

But that seems unlikely...

Qi Yun wiped his face, pondering for a good while before roughly guessing the reason.

The other party probably didn't trust him, hence the outright rejection.

In such a transaction involving billions, if you're not an acquaintance from within the circle or don't have an intermediary, no one would readily engage with you.

Any slight mistake could potentially cause severe fluctuations in the company's stock price.

And Qi Yun lacked experience in negotiations of such magnitude, which led to this oversight.

Understanding this, he rubbed his chin and dialed another number.

"Hello, Mr. Wei..."

Chapter 586: Departing for the Tibetan Area

Two days later, in the Tibetan Area, on National Highway 219, a convoy of eight Land Cruisers was heading towards the Ali region.

Inside the lead vehicle, Ignacio, who had just rushed here from Spain, was studying the map on his tablet.

Qi Yun had been in constant contact with him. Upon learning from De Gaulle that the final destination was in the Kunlun Mountains, he immediately informed Ignacio.

The latter was extremely shocked by this result because the Kunlun Mountains have always been a place filled with mystery.

From the beginning of studying the sunken ship map, Ignacio speculated that all the marked points should be in Asia.

But later, after finding clues from various materials and some key hints, this conjecture was overturned time and again, constantly refreshing his understanding of the matter.

Still thinking too narrowly...

So when Qi Yun told him the final location was in the Kunlun Mountains, he couldn't wait to come over to join Qi Yun in going there, hoping to personally see what secrets the "Land of Eternal Life" held.

"How did they determine that the final destination is at the southern foot of the Kunlun Mountains?" Ignacio asked, suppressing his discomfort from altitude sickness, turning to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun shook his head: "Their family must have mastered some very ancient records, but they did not share this information with me."

After speaking, he turned and glanced backward.

In these eight vehicles, except for the last two carrying various equipment and supplies, the other six had two groups of people; one was naturally Qi Yun's group, and the other was De Gaulle and his men.

The two sides had met in Yutian, with equipment, supplies, and various formalities all arranged by Qi Yun. He started preparations after returning from Shanghai two days ago.

Qi Yun withdrew his gaze and pointed at the tablet in Ignacio's hand, "We're almost there ahead."

The southern foot of the Kunlun Mountains is in the area bordering the Tibetan Area and Province J, with Yutian in Province J to the north and Ali region to the south.

This area is a typical high-altitude desert and grassland ecosystem, with elevations generally above four or five thousand meters, covered with snow and ice year-round, with very thin air.

Before the self-driving route on Highway 219 rose to prominence, this place was hardly seen by anyone, and the only living creatures visible were Tibetan wild donkeys, Tibetan antelopes, and cold-resistant animals like wolves.

At eight o'clock in the evening, the convoy stopped in front of a few yurts. These were temporary resting places prepared by the people from Yutian in advance for Qi Yun.

This site is at the northernmost edge of Ritu County, and heading south leads to the famous Keriya Pass; northwards lies the area inhabited by the Keriya People, and to the west is the origin of the sacred jade-producing area—the Yurungkash River.

Historically, the Keriya Ancient Route was the most perilous channel between Province J and the Tibetan Area, becoming a major route for person-to-person exchanges as early as the Tang Dynasty.

Therefore, many stories have happened in this area in the past.

The group got out of their cars one after another, with the stove inside the yurt already prepared with food, and two professional guides were already waiting, arranged by the people from the Yutian government for Qi Yun.

This is the convenience his current status brings; many things don't require him to run around, just a few phone calls, and the follow-up coordination and interfacing will be smoothly arranged by others.

Just like this operation, everything was directly arranged by the people over in Yutian, saving a lot of effort.

Entering the yurt, the cold was driven away significantly. Qi Yun sipped a few mouthfuls of steaming butter tea, finally relieving his exhaustion from the journey.

In this operation, besides Ignacio, he brought along six people: Xiao Wu, Brother Quan, Chen Wei, Niu Da, Da Pao, and An Zai.

On De Gaulle's side, there were eight or nine people, including two cultured individuals conducting research, and the rest were strong fellows.

Among them, two had been previously encountered by Qi Yun; they didn't get along with Niu Da, being De Gaulle's bodyguards.

Before on the car, Qi Yun had quietly asked Brother Quan and Xiao Wu whether they were confident in handling De Gaulle's people.

Brother Quan replied that these people were not weak, even stronger than Niu Da's group. Hitting them might take some effort, but it wouldn't be a problem to take them down.

If guns were to be used, that would be a different matter.

Xiao Wu's reply was even simpler, just a disdainful snort.

Seeing the two so confident, Qi Yun felt reassured.

The aluminum pot on the stove was bubbling with soft, tender beef mixed with the aroma of radishes, spreading everywhere. Even De Gaulle and his entourage were eating with delight.

After dinner, Qi Yun called De Gaulle over to discuss upcoming matters.

"Now that the guides are here, you should reveal the final destination, right? They need an accurate location to plan the route."

De Gaulle nodded and gestured to one of his subordinates. The latter opened the backpack he carried, taking out a GPS device. When the screen lit up, it was already locked onto a precise point on the map.

He handed the device to Qi Yun, pointing at the screen, "Roughly this area, but the exact entrance still requires field investigation."

Qi Yun received the device, took a quick glance, and handed it to Ignacio, who then passed it to the two guides.

The two guides were famous in the Ali region, especially familiar with the terrain of the Kunlun Mountains. Previous expeditions always sought them to lead the way.

One was slightly older, named Losang, about forty years old, sporting a small mustache.

The other was named Danzeng, in his early thirties, with typical highland-red skin.

Losang pointed at the topographical map on the screen, frowning his eyebrows, "This area is called Rizuofeng, with a maximum altitude of about five thousand meters; it's not very far from here."

"However, this whole area is an exposed ice cap, without any wind sheltering places, and the ice cap surface has many crevasses. They look like narrow cracks but are bottomless beneath. It's a bit dangerous."

Qi Yun nodded after listening, then asked, "How long does it take to get there?"

Danzeng replied, "It takes about two and a half hours to drive from here to the foot of Rizuofeng. But from the foot upward is all ice cap, and the car can't go up, you have to hike."

"The spot on the map is likely on the mountainside; the icy road is very slippery, and if things go smoothly, it should take about four hours to reach the mountainside location."

After finishing, Losang added, "If we encounter snowstorms on the way, time will be further delayed."

"This season, the mountain winds can blow suddenly, sometimes strong enough to knock you over, then we'll have to stop and wait for the wind to die down."

Qi Yun calculated the time; just finding the place alone might take longer. Just going back and forth wouldn't fit into one day, so they'd probably have to spend the night on the mountain.

However, thankfully, they were fully equipped, with mountaineering, camping cold protection, oxygen absorption, and various emergency medications ready.

Chapter 587: Mount Ritsuofeng

After understanding the situation clearly, Qi Yun instructed An Zai to take two guides to check the equipment and see if anything was missing.

Then he turned his gaze to Ignacio, looking somewhat worried.

Originally, he didn't want the other party to come along for the adventure, but Ignacio insisted on coming, claiming he must see for himself the "Land of Eternal Life" that the ancient man sought for a thousand years.

An altitude of five thousand meters is no challenge for people like Qi Yun and Chen Wei, who are in incredibly good physical condition.

But Ignacio hasn't adapted well to high altitudes and already shows mild signs of altitude sickness; truly hiking three hours across the ice cap might be too much for him.

Qi Yun carefully spoke, eyes full of concern: "Why don't you stay here first and wait? We'll come back for you once we've found the entrance."

"The wind is strong on the ice cap, and if your altitude sickness gets worse, there's no place to hide."

Ignacio shook his head, his expression resolute: "Don't worry about me. If my body can't handle it, I will give up."

Seeing him say this, Qi Yun no longer tried to persuade him. If his condition truly becomes perilous, he will ensure Ignacio is forcefully taken down the mountain, regardless of whether he agrees.

After the two guides finished inspecting the equipment and confirmed everything was fine, the group rested individually.

Qi Yun lay on the Kang bed, not feeling sleepy, pondering the matters concerning the Land of Eternal Life.

After pursuing the secret for so long, it's finally close to the moment when the mist will be uncovered, and there's a hint of excitement.

He attempted to receive some intelligence information today, hoping to find anything related to the next day's actions, but the results were not quite valuable.

Unknowingly, the outside grew light.

At eight in the morning, the group finished breakfast and started heading towards Ri Cuo Peak.

On the car, Ignacio had absorbed oxygen and taken some medicine last night, and his body should gradually be getting used to it; he looked more rosy than yesterday.

He leaned against the car window, gazing at the snow plains whizzing by, eyes full of anticipation.

Qi Yun sat next to him, asking Brother Quan in the passenger seat, "Any signs of anomalies?"

Brother Quan shook his head: "No."

"Is everything ready over there?"

"Ready, I've synchronized the location of the destination with them, and support can be sent within half an hour if needed."

Qi Yun softly responded, not saying more.

The snow plains outside the window grew increasingly vast, with distant peaks gradually coming into view.

The Land Cruiser's performance excelled on these non-paved roads; even with the ground full of holes, its passage remained unaffected.

A few hours later, the convoy slowly stopped on a stretch of open snowfield.

Guide Losang pointed at the snow-capped mountain ahead of the canyon: "That's Ri Cuo Peak where we're headed; the rest of the way can only be traveled on foot."

They took equipment off the two supply vehicles, each carrying some, and headed towards the canyon.

Losang led the front team, while Danzeng was responsible for the rear.

Already chatting up front, De Gaulle's voice wasn't loud, yet Qi Yun faintly heard words like "entrance."

About an hour walking in the canyon brought them closer to Ri Cuo Peak.

"Everyone, attention," Losang suddenly shouted, pointing his climbing stick towards the mountain ahead, "In front is the ice cap's start, probe with your climbing stick before stepping up, don't tread the edges, try to follow my path."

The path uphill wasn't very steep but still pretty exhausting, and it wasn't long before Ignacio began to breathe heavily.

Chen Wei quickly retrieved the oxygen tank beside him, giving Ignacio a few breaths, then supporting him as they advanced.

Qi Yun didn't feel anything special; ever since he drank those herbal remedies, he felt like he was bursting with energy, even stronger than when he was in his twenties.

Upon reaching the mountain base, Losang stopped and arranged: "Now let's tie the safety ropes, preferably in groups of three..."

Everyone followed his instructions, making the final preparations before setting off again.

Losang deliberately slowed down, ensuring the team remained compact, occasionally turning back to count heads.

"There are many hidden crevices under the ice cap, don't fall behind!"

Qi Yun dared not be careless, knowing the environment was dangerous.

He had seen news reports before, about an adventure-enthusiast streamer who fell into a crevice and rolled into a river, rapidly losing body temperature, and eventually didn't make it.

But that guy was alone, whereas they had an entire team, well-prepared with equipment, so the safety factor was much higher.

With the stops and starts, roughly two or three hours passed uneventfully, and they finally reached the hillside area.

De Gaulle put down his backpack and took out a navigation device, saying to Qi Yun: "Mr. Qi Yun, we've reached the place."

"There are two guides here, so why not take one each and search for the entrance nearby, which could save us some time."

Qi Yun saw through his sly intentions and immediately refused: "It's better not. The environment here is too dangerous; splitting up is too risky."

"I believe sticking together is better, and we can look out for each other in case of any emergencies."

De Gaulle stopped insisting, leading the group to search around.

Qi Yun's group followed them.

Since the routes could precisely locate here, there's definitely a reference point, evident from the Loulan Ancient City's stone stele and the text on the back of the Bronze Mirror.

Rather than running around like a headless fly, it was better to earnestly follow De Gaulle's group.

They circled much of the mountain waist area, eventually stopping in front of a bare rock wall.

A researcher stared at the rock wall for a few seconds, reaching out to touch the surface, which was covered by a thin layer of ice, beneath which faintly visible were peculiar dark rock patterns.

He adjusted his position, looked up at the sun, and assessed the surrounding environment.

"Is it here?" De Gaulle asked, somewhat excited.

The researcher hesitated, seemingly undecided, then discussed briefly with another person before responding, "Based on the records, it should be here, but the surrounding environment doesn't completely match."

"Perhaps due to so much time passing, geological changes occurred in this area, causing discrepancies between the environment and the records."

Upon hearing this, De Gaulle signaled to his men, who immediately took out climbing picks and began striking near the rock wall.

The picks struck the rock wall with a dull "thump thump" sound, causing icy fragments to fall along the wall.

They dared not strike too hard, fearing that the mountaintop's snow accumulation might trigger an avalanche.

After just a few strikes, one of the men suddenly halted, turned back to De Gaulle, and shouted, "There's something strange here! The sound is hollow!"

Chapter 588: The Dog Tags That Shouldn't Exist

Upon hearing the report from his subordinates, everyone immediately gathered around.

De Gaulle impatiently grabbed the climbing pick and struck twice more at the previous spot.

Indeed, unlike the crisp sound of the solid rock wall, the sound here was notably muffled, indicating there might be a space hidden below.

De Gaulle's eyes lit up and he immediately instructed, "Find where there might be a gap around!"

The subordinates immediately scattered and carefully searched around the rock wall.

After a short while, one of them suddenly shouted, "It seems to be here!"

Everyone quickly gathered again, and saw a nearly ice-level gap at the bottom of the rock wall, close to the ice cap.

Once the ice debris was cleared away, a gap as thick as a finger could be seen.

De Gaulle crouched down and placed his hand near the gap, faintly feeling that there might be wind blowing from inside.

His eyes brightened even more, and he quickly turned and shouted to his men, "It's right here!"

Qi Yun and Ignacio also reached out to feel, and indeed, there was faint wind blowing out!

However, such a large rock, without machinery, would be difficult to break open.

After some discussion, they decided to first find a safe place to hide, then use localized explosives to blow it open.

The explosives were specially obtained from Yutian before departure. Given the stringent security in J Province, acquiring such items quickly would be quite difficult without Qi Yun's connections.

This was one of De Gaulle's purposes for cooperating with Qi Yun.

Among those present, there were naturally experts in explosives, whether An Zai, Brother Quan, or De Gaulle's own people, someone could do the job.

Ultimately, the task fell to An Zai. Once everyone had found a recess to hide in, An Zai went to operate with his tool bag on his back.

In less than five minutes, he came running back urgently, followed by a "bang!" sound from outside, with ice flakes falling from above. The commotion wasn't particularly loud, like a big firecracker.

Everyone waited for a moment, and the expected avalanche didn't occur. The snow on the mountain top probably wasn't very thick, and An Zai controlled the amount of explosives and the explosion angle very precisely.

De Gaulle couldn't hold back and was the first to dash out of the recess towards the rock wall, with Qi Yun and the others quickly following.

Upon arriving at the rock wall, they saw the blown-up hole was more orderly than expected, nearly half a person high, sixty to seventy centimeters wide, just enough for a person to enter sideways.

As they approached the entrance, a cool breeze surged out from the cave, seemingly carrying a strange scent in the wind.

Someone took out a detector from their bag, extended it into the entrance, and confirmed no issues. Then De Gaulle lit up his flashlight and crawled in.

Everyone entered the cave one by one. The inside was more spacious than imagined, resembling a tunnel, though the lighting wasn't very good.

De Gaulle shined his flashlight ahead; about five or six meters away was a turn, not very far.

After pondering for two seconds, he turned to Qi Yun and said, "Why don't we have the guides wait at the entrance for us to come out?"

Qi Yun naturally understood what he meant, considering the unknown dangers inside, he agreed to the decision.

"Losang, Danzin, you two don't need to go in, just wait for us here."

Although the two guides were curious, they didn't dare to disobey Qi Yun because the person who contacted them yesterday was a big shot.

"Alright, Director Qi, be careful."

After arranging the guides, De Gaulle led the way towards the bend, sweeping the flashlight beam ahead.

Qi Yun was in the middle, while Xiao Wu closely followed beside him, while Brother Quan walked at the rear, occasionally turning to observe behind them to prevent any accidents.

The rock wall of the passage showed no signs of chiseling, seemingly naturally formed, causing Qi Yun to silently swallow, unable to help but marvel at nature's craftsmanship.

The passage was very quiet, with only the sound of footsteps echoing. After turning the bend and walking a few dozen meters, De Gaulle suddenly stopped, aiming the flashlight seven or eight meters ahead on the ground, displaying an extremely shocked expression.

Qi Yun quickened his pace, catching up to see what was illuminated by the flashlight, and was stupefied.

That looked like... it looked like a person!

He was sitting on the ground, his back leaning against the rock wall...

There seemed to be a hat on his head!

Qi Yun's nerves instantly tightened, and the atmosphere in the passage became tense. Everyone held their breath.

The flashlight illuminated for a long time but that "person" remained motionless.

"I'll go check." Chen Wei said to Qi Yun, then stepped forward.

Approaching, he bent down to examine the "person," then turned back and gestured, "Come over here."

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and gathered around.

Getting closer, they saw it indeed was a "person," but long dead, leaving just a skeleton.

He was wrapped in an army coat, wearing a uniform inside, degraded to the point where it was almost unrecognizable.

What was on his head wasn't a hat but a helmet.

Chen Wei picked up the helmet, blew off the dust and tapped it, revealing a about-to-fade symbol in the center.

It was a symbol familiar from movies, the "卐" symbol!

At the sight of that symbol, the air in the passage seemed to freeze suddenly, plunging into dead silence.

Ignacio instinctively retreated half a step, nearly losing his balance, eyes filled with shock: "How could... how could this thing appear here!?"

No one answered him; no one could explain it, as everyone was still deep in shock...

Such an eerie scene appeared inside the mountain tunnel.

Could a crew have shot a movie here?

But it was too realistic...

One of De Gaulle's subordinates crouched down, carefully searched the remains, and finally opened the coat pocket, discovering two metal tags.

He took them out; they were two rectangular metal tags, rusted to the point of only vague outlines.

Under the flashlight beam, the front of the tag vaguely showed "Max Müller" and a series of numbers, while the back etched a letter "O" and a letter "K."

"This... this is a German soldier from World War II!"

"After 1942, German military ID tags were designed as two pieces, one for recording sequence numbers... the other for recording blood types to ensure injured soldiers can receive timely treatment."

Ignacio said, voice trembling, "Max Müller is his name... also his unit number..."

"The 'O' on the other tag represents his blood type... 'K' indicates he is a Catholic..."

Qi Yun swallowed, feeling a shortness of breath.

A World War II German soldier, how... how could he appear in a passage within the Tibetan area's mountain!?

Germany is vastly distant from here...

The passage fell into silence, no one spoke again, all fixating on the two dog tags...

Chapter 589: The Earth's Axis

"During my last trip to the Vatican to search for the final clue, I saw a document in the Apostolic Archive..."

In the passage, De Gaulle's voice slowly echoed, breaking the dead silence.

Qi Yun turned his head towards him: "What document?"

De Gaulle took two steps forward, crouched down, and took the dog tag from his subordinate: "This document records that during the two Z period, the leader sent people to the Huaxia West Z Region twice..."

The little mustached man was a very superstitious person when it came to mysticism; he believed that the Aryan people were the most excellent race in the world, descendants of Atlantis, and should rule the world.

For this, he had his most loyal subordinate - SS leader Himmler, establish an organization called the "Ancestor Heritage Society" in 1935.

This organization included historians, anthropologists, geographers, and various scientists, including explorers and prophets.

The sole purpose of the Ancestor Heritage Society's establishment was to study ancient documents and various legends to find evidence that the Aryan people were the superior race.

Himmler, eager to cater to the little mustached man, even claimed to him that through their Ancestor Heritage Society's research, they discovered Aryans were divine beings, who once possessed abilities like clairvoyance, invisibility, and teleportation.

It was only because of the great flood that the race temporarily lost its divinity and no longer had these supernatural abilities, but through breeding with pure Aryans for several generations, these abilities could be restored.

The little mustached man was convinced of this, and to find pure Aryans, he immediately ordered Himmler to organize an expedition to the West Z Region.

Why should they go to the West Z Region and not elsewhere?

This was thoroughly researched by the Ancestor Heritage Society.

They believed that after the flood that destroyed Atlantis, the world turned into a vast ocean, except for the world pinnacle, West Z Region, which still retained some land, so some pure Aryans migrated to West Z and began to settle and reproduce.

In June 1938, led personally by Himmler, the organization departed from Germany to the Huaxia West Z Region.

After arriving in the West Z Region, they visited various places, not only walking through various temples and historical sites but also measuring the physical features of many local West Z people and creating some facial models, trying to prove that West Z people were Aryans.

At this point, Ignacio chimed in: "I've also seen records of this time in some documents, but it seemed their actions did not succeed then."

De Gaulle nodded: "That's right. The expedition did not find what they were looking for."

"But they weren't left empty-handed; instead, during their visits, they discovered a larger secret..."

While visiting an ancient village, Himmler learned from the local Tibetans about a legend concerning the 'Earth Axis'!

The legend spoke of a cave named Shambhala in the West Z Region, a passage to the Earth's Axis that contained mysterious energy.

Once obtained, this energy could control the operation of the entire universe!

Even control time, making it reverse!

The locals called this power 'Mystical Force!'

"Unfortunately, they never found the exact location of the Shambhala cave at the time..."

"What happened next?" Qi Yun asked.

"Later..." De Gaulle fell into recollection, "Later, Germany was continuously losing on the European battlefield..."

Even though the little mustached man verbally shouted victory was certain, he knew deep down the tide had turned, so he pinned his last hope on the news Himmler would bring back.

He even gave Himmler a final order, instructing him to assemble an elite team and find the Shambhala cave and the mysterious force that could control time.

Against this backdrop, Himmler selected several confidants from the SS, along with scientists and translators, to form an expedition. Once again, they set off for West Z.

These individuals traveled east, passed through India, crossed the Himalayas, and ultimately reached West Z again.

"However, by May 1945, the Allied forces had breached Berlin, and the expedition had still not returned..."

"The last record in the archive is a telegram sent in March 1945 by the team, stating that they had confirmed the specific location of the Shambhala cave and were very close to the target. Soon after... communication was completely lost..."

De Gaulle placed the dog tag back beside the skeleton, with a tone carrying complexity, "After the Allies breached Berlin, most of the Ancestor Heritage Society's materials were burned, leaving the team's whereabouts a mystery..."

Silence returned to the passage, as everyone was still immersed in the story De Gaulle told.

After a long while, Qi Yun slowly said, "So, you speculate that the corpse here is a member of the German expedition team that went missing in 1945?"

De Gaulle nodded: "I think it's very possible; otherwise, why would he be here?"

Qi Yun paused, turning his gaze to Ignacio beside him, seeking his opinion.

Even though De Gaulle's account logically connected and seemed plausible, it was still somewhat unbelievable.

Ignacio furrowed his brows, as a historian familiar with rumors from that era, albeit not as detailed as De Gaulle.

He paused and pondered, "If this information is from the Vatican's Apostolic Archive, then it's highly likely to be true!"

Seeing Ignacio also acknowledge this, Qi Yun temporarily accepted the conclusion.

Chapter 590: Earth's Axis_2

"If this corpse is from that expedition team, does it mean... the passage we're in now is the legendary Shambhala?"

Kunlun Mountain itself is a place full of mystery. If there really is an earth axis, a mysterious power controlling time, perhaps only this place can fulfill such a fantasy...

"It's still uncertain..."

De Gaulle stood up and pointed the flashlight forward down the passage.

A thought suddenly rose in his mind: Could it be... the target he's seeking and the earth axis the Germans want to find are essentially the same thing?

Or perhaps the same place?

"Uh... Boss, can I ask a question?" The demolition expert An Zai suddenly raised his hand, awkwardly smiling at Qi Yun.

Qi Yun nodded: "Go ahead."

"I'm just curious." An Zai scratched his head, "Wasn't it said that when the Allies broke into Berlin, they never found that mustached man?"

"Could it be... he didn't commit suicide then, but secretly fled to Tibet, intending to join this expedition team to find the earth axis and turn the tables?"

As soon as he said this, the passage immediately fell silent.

Regarding the final resolution of the mustached man, opinions online are varied.

Some scholars say that when the mustached man's guards opened the door to evacuate him, they found he had already shot himself in the mouth and committed suicide, while his wife also followed suit and died from poison.

The guards, not wanting the mustached man's body to be made a spectacle by the Allies, decided to move their bodies out of the bunker, douse them in gasoline, and burn them directly.

This is the most mainstream view, logically sound with a certain credibility.

The only thing that triggers imagination is whether such a paranoid and crazed individual would truly choose suicide?

Additionally, there's a theory that the mustached man was directly captured alive by the Allies, and to gain his boundless treasures, the Allied high command publicly announced his suicide.

The actual situation was that he was captured alive and secretly held in an underground fortress deep in the Swiss Alps until his death...

However, some have also mentioned the possibility An Zai alluded to.

For example, the famous Argentine journalist Abel Basti, in his book "He Deceived the World: The Mystery of the Mustached Man's Death," claims the mustached man didn't commit suicide but escaped.

"Let's not dwell on this issue now." Qi Yun looked at his watch and noticed it was already noon, so he urged, "Let's make good use of our time and keep moving forward."

Everyone put aside their thoughts and continued deeper into the tunnel.

After about ten minutes of walking, this passage showed no sign of ending, and it seemed to have a slight slope leading downwards, albeit very slight and hard to notice without careful observation.

Suddenly, the team stopped as one of the researchers brought by De Gaulle stood motionless, shining his flashlight onto the nearby rock wall.

"What's wrong?" De Gaulle asked him.

He squatted in front of the rock wall, reaching out to touch a small indentation: "Look here."

"This doesn't seem naturally formed."

A nearby bodyguard glanced at it and remarked, "That's a mark left by a rifle bullet."

The team scattered, their flashlights scanning the rock walls on both sides of the passage, revealing not only the bullet hole from before but many others in the vicinity.

Moreover, there were rusty bullet casings scattered on the ground.

An Zai bent down and picked up a shell casing, pinching the rusty surface with his fingers: "7.92mm caliber."

"Why did they fire here?"

No one answered this question, as apart from the scattered casings, they found no other useful clues on site.

Qi Yun glanced at Ignacio, who was visibly exhausted from the several hours of trekking since morning.

Thus, he suggested to De Gaulle: "Let's rest here for a bit."

De Gaulle nodded in agreement, and everyone leaned against the rock wall to take a break, pulling out some rations to replenish their energy.

Qi Yun chewed on his dried beef while gazing at the marks on the rock wall.

The course of events was rather unexpected.

Originally thought they'd simply follow clues to locate the "Land of Eternal Life," but instead they stumbled upon the expedition team, bringing forth the legend of the "earth axis" along with these mysterious bullet holes...

Exactly what did this German team encounter in the tunnel, recklessly firing in such a narrow and enclosed space, without fear of causing a collapse?

...

After a brief rest, the group continued onward.

It was now noon, and if they couldn't reach their destination soon, they wouldn't be able to descend the mountain that night.

The passage seemed to have a more evident slope, the downward trajectory becoming clearer; the air grew colder, and the white breath was particularly noticeable under the flashlight beam.

After another twenty-plus minutes, they navigated countless bends within the tunnel, losing track of their direction.

The tunnel entrance was in the south; if this passage ran through the mountain northward, they should have reached the end by now.

The only possibility... is that they aren't moving across the mountain but horizontally, along the east-west direction, following Kunlun Mountain's alignment, suggesting they might be traversing through an internal fault of the mountain.

Qi Yun raised his watch to check the time, only to be shocked at the sight of the watch hands spinning like a crazed top.

"Magnetic disturbance!"

This phenomenon had been encountered before in Lop Nur.

Brother Quan took out his phone; the screen flickered twice before going completely black, with the power button yielding no response; the satellite phone also reacted similarly.

Ignacio's expression turned serious: "Besides magnetic fields, abnormal energy fields can also disrupt electronic and mechanical devices, even altering the stability of surrounding materials."

He used a climbing pick to tap on the rock wall and collected a small scoop of rock chips, examining them in his palm.

"The rock density here is higher, indicating that deeper within, the changes in rock properties become more prominent."

An Zai scratched his head: "What does that mean?"

Ignacio dusted off his palms and looked forward through the flashlight's beam: "It means we have reached a very special area."

One of the researchers with De Gaulle added: "Such changes in rock properties aren't caused by ordinary geological movements; they might be related to what the expedition team was searching for."

"But it's hard to be certain; we'll have to take it one step at a time."

An Zai listened, half-understanding: "Should we keep going? What if the rocks ahead become as hard as iron, and we can't even blast our way out?"

The unknown is always the most frightening.

Qi Yun also had to consider the safety of himself and his team, but after so much effort and several days of trudging, now that they're here, there's no reason to simply abandon their mission.

After contemplating for a moment, he pulled Chen Wei aside, whispering: "Return the way we came, and wait outside. If we're not out by nightfall tomorrow, contact someone outside for a rescue."

Chen Wei nodded seriously, "Be careful."

"Don't worry, with Brother Quan around." Qi Yun patted his arm as if in jest, "Go on."