

Middle Age 681

Chapter 681: Treasure

Just when everyone's attention was focused on the giant snake, that old fox Yao Yuzhong had sneaked away unnoticed.

Qi Yun kept his face stern, without a word.

He cursed inwardly, thinking this old guy truly couldn't sit still.

"Forget it, let's not worry about him for now, let's go ahead and take a look!" Qi Yun quickly made a decision.

After a brief rest, the group prepared to set off, and Brother Quan came over holding something the size of a cantaloupe, encased in a layer of emerald green liquid. As he approached, a foul stench hit their faces.

"Damn, is this that creature's snake gall? This big?" An Zai peeked over and, hardly taking a breath, was choked by the smell and stepped back a couple of steps, "Damn, can you really eat this stuff?"

But Qin Sizhi's eyes were glowing, not at all repulsed by the sticky liquid, as he took it with both hands.

"Jin Bao, quickly pack this up! This is genuinely good stuff!"

"Back in ancient times, a giant snake like this was called a young dragon. If it lived longer, its body might mutate, becoming something known as a jiao, and all its essence and energy is held in this snake gall. Brewing it into medicinal wine yields extraordinary effects!"

Jin Bao took out a jacket from his bag, quickly wrapping the snake gall carefully, and then tucked it into the bag.

"Mr. Qi, when your child grows up, just let me know, and I'll personally bring you a jug of snake gall wine, highly beneficial." Qin Sizhi was beaming, clearly valuing this item immensely.

Qi Yun laughed, thinking this old man was speaking quite mysteriously, but Nuannuan wouldn't come of age for over ten years—could this geezer even live that long?

"Boss, we're ready to go."

"Hmm, let's go."

The group stepped over the giant snake's corpse and continued deeper into the cave.

Though they had just gone through a perilous ordeal, none of them relaxed their guard, all remaining vigilant.

Thankfully, nothing else cropped up, and within a few minutes, they encountered a natural stone chamber.

It wasn't large, perhaps thirty or forty square meters, filled with wooden chests, the type used in rural areas for storing clothes.

Every chest was covered in a thick layer of dust, suggesting they had been undisturbed for many years.

The beam of the flashlight swept over, revealing faint carvings on the wooden chests, though they were obscured by dust, making the patterns unclear.

This should be the place.

Standing outside the stone chamber, Qi Yun signaled to Brother Quan, "Check to see if Yao Yuzhong has been here."

Responding, Brother Quan stepped into the chamber, circled the chests, and soon found several distinct footprints at the edge of the ground, along with two chest locks that had been pried open.

After thoroughly checking every corner of the chamber, and glancing into the two opened chests, he came out to report.

"He must have just left."

Qi Yun sneered inwardly, thinking, old bastard, don't let me catch you.

"What's inside the chests?"

"Gold."

"A lot of gold," Brother Quan added.

Qi Yun was not surprised. The Li Family had monopolized the lucrative trades here since the Ming Dynasty, later engaging in the despicable opium trade, amassing considerable wealth.

Besides, Li Run was a diehard hoarder; even when facing execution, he refused to relinquish this treasure.

"Open the chests; I'm looking for something like that stone you brought me last time."

Brother Quan paused, but didn't ask further, returning to pry open each chest in the chamber.

Without Qi Yun's command, the rest didn't move, and despite knowing there was a lot of gold inside, none showed excessive greed, including Qin Sizhi and his disciples.

One by one, the chests were opened, and Qi Yun walked in, lifting the lids to reveal neatly cut, palm-sized gold bricks gleaming brightly in the flashlight's beam.

Even Qi Yun took a deep breath.

What a hoard of gold.

These chests didn't just hold gold; there were also silver ingots, jewelry, ancient silk, and so on—valuables that easily exceeded ten figures in worth.

Qi Yun even found a Luminous Pearl inside a brocade box, egg-sized.

This item was a rare treasure, favored by historic emperors. Legends say it was placed in coffins to prevent the body from decaying.

Empress Dowager Cixi's tomb had one, which Sun Dianying dug out. Could it be the one in front of him now?

Qi Yun wasn't interested in these valuables, continuing his search for his target.

Luckily, fortune smiled upon him, and soon he found what he was looking for in a small box.

A spherical object, the size of a ping-pong ball, with a jade-like texture, its surface a blend of pale yellow, brown, and black-gray patterns—identical to the one he had acquired previously.

Can Cong's other eye!

"Whew~"

Qi Yun exhaled deeply, finally finding it.

He placed the stone back in its box and secured it in the innermost part of his backpack, planning to study it well back home, then turned his gaze to the treasure in the chamber, pondering how to handle it.

Taking it all was out of the question; it had taken five hundred porters to bring it here years ago.

After a brief ponder, he approached the group: "Take the gold from the chests, as much as you can carry—consider it your reward for this trip."

"But leave the other stuff alone; once we're out, I'll notify the National Cultural Heritage Administration to take over here."

The group was instantly delighted, and An Zai cheered, "Thanks, boss!" before rushing into the chamber.

Chapter 682: Treasure (Part 2)

Only Qin Sizhi and his apprentice stayed still.

"Why aren't you going to take some?" Qi Yun asked Qin Sizhi.

Qin Sizhi smiled awkwardly, "Mr. Qi, is this... might not be appropriate..."

Their identities were indeed special, with many concerns, and they dared not take casually.

Qi Yun was initially wary of the two, but as they hadn't displayed any abnormal behavior, he didn't mind letting them make some small gains.

He waved his hand and said, "Go ahead, as long as you don't say anything, it'll be fine."

"Even if questions come from above later, I'll explain."

Qin Sizhi's eyes darted around, and then he nodded with a smile, "Alright, thank you, Mr. Qi."

"Jin Bao, since Mr. Qi is so kind, go grab some, just enough for our travel expenses, hahaha..."

Qi Yun found it amusing; the old guy feared a trap from him and worried that not taking some might make him suspicious.

However, he didn't point it out; after all, the opportunity was given, whether you take it or not is up to you.

The weight of these small gold bricks was considerable, each estimated to be one or two kilograms.

Jin Bao took just one symbolically and stepped back, while An Zai and the others weren't so reserved, packing as much as they could carry.

They knew their boss's temperament well; once Qi Yun gave the go-ahead, they could rest easy.

Once everyone was loaded, they prepared to leave.

Exiting the stone chamber, Qi Yun shone a flashlight deeper into the cave, looking thoughtful.

"Should I go and take a look up ahead?" Brother Quan noticed Qi Yun's intention and asked quietly.

Qi Yun shook his head; what they sought was already obtained, no need to risk further.

This mountain range stretched for dozens of kilometers; no one knew how long the cave was or if hidden dangers lay ahead.

If another giant snake appeared, they'd truly be courting death.

Anyway, after exiting, he would inform Xiao Hanguang; whether to explore further would be decided from above.

"Let's return the way we came."

Seeing Qi Yun's decision, everyone maintained formation and began retreating.

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When they reached outside, it was nearly dark.

An Zai looked around and suddenly exclaimed, "Eh, why is there one person missing?"

Qi Yun took out a cigarette and lit it, without answering.

Five minutes later, Xiao Wu emerged from the cave entrance, shaking his head at Qi Yun.

Qi Yun cursed inwardly, damn, they really let him escape.

With nightfall, traveling through the mountains was impossible, so they found a flat spot to camp overnight.

Dinner was simply instant noodles with canned beef; after eating, Qi Yun sought out Qin Sizhi to inquire about the cave.

"Master Qin, in your opinion, where does the deep end of the cave lead?"

Previously, Qin Sizhi had mentioned Ailao Kingdom clues, and Qi Yun thought he might know more.

However, hearing this, Qin Sizhi fell into prolonged silence, finally sighing and shaking his head, "I can't guess, but your decision not to venture further was correct."

"Oh?" Qi Yun raised an eyebrow, waiting for more.

"Let me tell you a story. Years ago, my master and I visited Qinling, inside a long passage within the mountain, ending at a vast underground hollow."

"Just entering, you could smell a pungent stench, ten times stronger than today's giant snake."

"We proceeded with torches, feeling increasingly uneasy; large scales began appearing on the floor, and further ahead, irregular scratches emerged on the cave walls, as if caused by something massive rubbing over years.

The most terrifying part was hearing... breathing from the cave's depths, slow and heavy, a sound unforgettable for me."

"It felt like... like something enormous was breathing in slumber... even the ground trembled slightly..."

At this point, Qin Sizhi's voice lowered involuntarily, his eyes reflecting fear.

"Eventually, we dared not proceed and retreated. Afterwards, my master warned me never to return there; it seemed to be a creature's lair."

"In this world, there are many things beyond our comprehension, requiring a respectful heart..."

Hearing this, Qi Yun suddenly recalled something; he pulled out his phone, found a photo, and showed it to Qin Sizhi.

"Is this the kind of scale?"

Qin Sizhi leaned closer to the screen for a careful look, his face turning pale.

"Yes... that's the kind of scale! Silver sheen, with unique markings on the back..."

He looked up at Qi Yun, voice trembling, "Mr. Qi, where... where did you get this?"

Qi Yun couldn't answer that question, nor was it appropriate to; he simply shook his head, saying, "Found it by chance."

Qin Sizhi understood he didn't want to say, so he didn't pursue further.

"What do you think these scales could belong to?"

"I can't say." Qin Sizhi's voice was dry, "I wanted to bring some scales out, but my master forbade it..."

Qi Yun squinted, feeling increasingly mystified by Kunlun Mountain's secrets.

"Back then, in which part of Qinling was the cave?"

"Taibai Mountain... Black Cloud Valley."

"But that place is no longer found on maps; within half a year of our exit, the entire valley was buried by a landslide."

Qi Yun frowned, "Are there other entrances?"

Qin Sizhi noticed Qi Yun's keen interest and hesitated before replying, "There might be; the passage is large, likely with more than one entrance."

"Alright, I'll further consider it; accompany me on another visit when I contact you." Qi Yun patted his arm with reassurance, "Rest assured, I'll fully prepare before going."

Qin Sizhi showed a bitter expression but ultimately nodded in agreement.

Nothing more was said aloud; the next day, before dawn, they began their return journey, with familiarity making it quicker than their arrival.

Trailing the group was Eagle, who constantly wrote and sketched in his notebook, recording the route from the mountain; upon exiting, Qi Yun planned to pass it to Xiao Hanguang.

By dawn, the group finally appeared at the checkpoint.

Qi Yun immediately called the local police and the Jade Seal branch, asking them to monitor major exits for the chance of capturing Yao Yuzhong.

Though he held only a tryout attitude, not relying too much on it; given the old man's cunning nature, capture seemed unlikely.

The main hope was on Yao Fengjuan's side, as he didn't believe Yao Yuzhong could escape without contacting his daughter, even if just a message, with current technology, they could quickly pinpoint his location.

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The next day, National Cultural Heritage Administration.

In the office, Xiao Hanguang, upon hearing the Ailao Mountain account, didn't display the shock Qi Yun anticipated, instead remaining calm, leisurely sipping tea.

"I said there was a giant snake in the cave! Nearly twenty meters long!" Qi Yun emphasized again.

"I heard, just a snake, isn't it?" Xiao Hanguang glanced at him, a mischievous air suddenly about him, speaking elderly teasingly, "Little Qi, you've heard of the Yellow River drying in the '90s, and what was dug up from the riverbed?"

Qi Yun blinked, "What was unearthed?"

"Haha, those are secrets; your level isn't enough to know such things yet."

"Now you're considered part of the system; why not come and be my secretary? That way, you'll have a chance to see those files." Xiao Hanguang lightly chuckled.

Qi Yun had no interest in serving others, promptly declined.

Before leaving, he inquired about Qin Sizhi's background, receiving results closely aligning with what Yao Yuzhong had said.

With matters settled there, Qi Yun didn't return to Shanghai, heading straight back to J Province.

It was because Qin Minghui sent word, Zhang Dayong was in trouble, and even trouble Qin Minghui couldn't mediate...

On the plane, Qi Yun frowned at the phone, asking, "Does Li the Eighth have such influence? Even you can't save it?"

On the other end, Qin Minghui explained, "It's a bit complicated... seems like he's been set up."

"Evidence has already been exposed by out-of-town media; I can't strongly intervene..."

Chapter 683: I'll Handle Things Outside for You

Evening, Hutao Villa.

Qi Yun and Qin Minghui sit opposite each other.

"Take a look at this first."

Qin Minghui hands over a tablet, the photo on the screen shows a somewhat familiar living room, smoke is rising from where the TV cabinet is, seemingly on fire.

But that's not the main point, the key point is the suitcase opened on the coffee table in the living room, neatly packed with cash, it looks like at least two million.

"Someone discovered the fire at Zhang Dayong's house, contacted the property management to break in and put out the fire, and then found this."

"Moreover... after the investigation by the disciplinary department, it was found that Zhang Dayong's account had received several unknown transfers, the remitters were a shell company from Hong Kong Island."

Qin Minghui sighed: "Now, several foreign media outlets are reporting on this matter. If I forcibly suppress it, I might get caught in the fire."

Qi Yun stared at the photo for a while, then looked up and asked, "Did the surveillance find any clues?"

"No, the property management said that the surveillance for that unit happened to break down two days ago."

"Break down at such a convenient time." Qi Yun sneered, "This setup is quite convincing."

He knows Zhang Dayong's character well; the latter is not someone greedy, so this is clearly a setup.

"How did you deduce it was Li the Eighth behind this?"

"Because of that flour case, some time ago Zhang Dayong reported to me, the case involved Li the Eighth, and he faced significant resistance, hoping to get my support."

"In recent years, Li the Eighth has been very low-key, you might not know much about him." Qin Minghui lit a cigarette, took a deep breath, "He made his early fortune through violent demolition, then his business grew larger, transforming into a prosperous entrepreneur with real estate, KTVs, hotels, shopping malls."

"The most crucial thing is..."

Qin Minghui dipped his index finger in his teacup and wrote a 3 on the table, lowering his voice, "Their connection is quite deep."

Qi Yun squinted at that number, no wonder they dared to be so blatant in their schemes.

He had seen Qin Minghui's acquaintance before, right when Fu Wentao picked him up at that big courtyard, the man was sitting next to Old Hou, rarely speaking.

"So, does Li the Eighth not know Zhang Dayong is your man?" Qi Yun asked Qin Minghui.

Things seem logical, Zhang Dayong wanting to dig deeper into Li the Eighth might have found critical clues, leading the latter to retaliate and set him up.

But Zhang Dayong was so easily taken away, could Qin Minghui really not exert any influence? Qi Yun found it hard to believe.

After all, he is a local bigwig, even a 3 would give him some face.

Facing Qi Yun's questioning, Qin Minghui forced a bitter smile: "The last incident had a considerable impact on me, now it's already sunset at West Mountain."

Qi Yun didn't know enough about the inside workings, unable to tell whether the other was speaking truth or not, and after two seconds of silence, he said: "Where is Zhang Dayong now? I'll go see him first."

"He's temporarily detained, you can go, I'll make a call and arrange it."

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More than half an hour later, Qi Yun met Zhang Dayong in a small room.

The latter looked a bit haggard, but his eyes were still clear.

When he saw Qi Yun coming in, he was astonished for a moment, then smiled bitterly: "I've caused you trouble again."

Qi Yun waved his hand and sat down opposite him: "Let's cut to the chase, do you know who's targeting you?"

"Li the Eighth." Zhang Dayong answered straightforwardly, "I found some evidence, plus the testimony from his subordinate Brother Qiu, enough to lock him down. He probably received word of it and moved against me early."

Qi Yun nodded, at least Qin Minghui didn't lie about this.

"What about the money at your home and the account?"

"I've been living at the unit recently, my wife and kids are in the house near 15th Middle School, someone must have planted the money there ahead of time..."

"As for the account... I don't know, I only use a payroll card normally."

The situation was pretty much what Qi Yun had expected, he stroked his chin and asked: "What about the evidence you found?"

Zhang Dayong lowered his voice: "Go find Ma Baoguo, I informed him before leaving."

Qi Yun understood, stood up, patted Zhang Dayong's shoulder, and consoled him: "Alright, got it, you stay here at ease, just treat it like a vacation, I'll handle the outside matters."

After leaving the detention point, Qi Yun immediately contacted Ma Baoguo to inquire about the current situation.

"People from the city bureau came and temporarily took charge here, the investigation has been paused for now, but those key pieces of evidence are still confidential."

Hearing this answer, Qi Yun felt some disappointment towards Qin Minghui, unable to fully control such critical **.

After a brief thought, he said into the phone: "I'll give you a number, his name is Bao Cheng, hand over all the evidence to him."

"Alright, I'll take care of it right away."

Bao Cheng was previously Ge Dabao's assistant, now, since Ge Dabao has been transferred to Nanjiang, he's taken the captain position.

Ordinarily, Guo An wouldn't conveniently intervene in such criminal cases, but on this land, nothing is absolute, everything has maneuverability, it depends on whether you have the capability.

After finishing matters here, Qi Yun went to the hospital.

After several days of recovery, Zhao Qing's health condition had improved significantly, and the little girl had already been discharged early, taken home by Brother Peng's wife.

Even when Qi Yun called just now, the little girl didn't want to return home with him, wishing to stay there and play with Peng Sixin for a couple more days.

Qi Yun felt helpless, but had to yield to the little one, with Song Xiaojing helping to care for her, he felt at ease.

Chapter 684: I Took Care of Things Outside for You (Part 2)

After some intimate moments, Qi Yun took a shower in the bathroom of the special care ward and went to bed early.

The next day, Gao Min brought breakfast early in the morning.

As Qi Yun ate buns, he received the day's intelligence, hoping for any information related to Li the Eighth.

However, the outcome was a bit disappointing; none of the three pieces of intelligence were useful.

But there was an unexpected surprise—the system welcomed another upgrade.

[Daily Intelligence System bound for 180 days, upgraded to Lv6!]

[Host: Qi Yun]

[System Level: Six (Three precious intelligence pushes are available every seven days, the probability of purple intelligence will greatly increase, and the system will actively prompt when target individuals possess retrievable intelligence.)]

[Current Intelligence Points: 33]

Intelligence changed from three per day to three per week, reducing in quantity but increasing in quality.

Moreover, the intelligence inquiry feature will actively prompt... Qi Yun silently digested this information.

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Elsewhere, in a mansion halfway up the hillside in Sha District, two cars with special insignia drove into the yard.

"Boss, a group of police is outside asking for you."

Li the Eighth was woken by the young, beautiful maid. He rubbed his eyes, showing some irritation:
"What do the police want from me!?"

"I... they didn't say."

"If they didn't say, let them wait."

The maid dared not say more and was about to turn and go downstairs when footsteps on the stairs were heard; Bao Cheng was already bringing people up personally.

"Hey, you people..."

"Please do not obstruct our task." A female team member stopped the maid's attempt to block and led her to the side.

Li the Eighth heard the commotion and stepped out of his bedroom. Seeing the scene before him, his face immediately darkened.

"What are you doing! Who gave you permission to trespass on private property!"

Bao Cheng glanced at him, then showed a document: "Li Guofu, we have received public reports suspecting your connection with JW intelligence personnel. Come with us for investigation."

Li the Eighth was stunned: "JW intelligence personnel? Nonsense!"

"This is slander! Slander!"

Bao Cheng put away the document indifferently: "Whether it is slander or not, an investigation will clarify. Please cooperate with our work."

After saying this, he waved to his colleagues behind him, signaling "Take him away."

Li the Eighth's face turned ashen; after a brief stupor, he made some connections and shouted: "I demand to contact my lawyer! This is abuse of authority!"

"Li Guofu! You'd better clearly see what it says here!" Bao Cheng pointed to the badge on his uniform with a serious tone.

Li the Eighth was momentarily speechless and stopped shouting.

Those few words represented complete independence, with no need to care about anyone, including the one behind him.

Two team members stepped forward, escorting Li the Eighth into the car parked in the courtyard.

In the lead car, Bao Cheng took out his phone and sent a message.

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Nanjing Road No. 28.

The interrogation room door opened from the outside, and Qi Yun stepped in.

The two team members inside saluted him and then exited, closing the door securely.

Li the Eighth turned to assess Qi Yun, who in turn was observing him.

Qi Yun pulled out a chair and sat down: "Let me introduce myself, I'm Qi Yun."

"I know." Li the Eighth interrupted, pulling a slight cold smile, "You're the one who got me in here, aren't you?"

He had certainly heard of this rising star, but Li the Eighth was no pushover; as long as no fatal flaw was caught, no one could easily topple him.

Qi Yun smiled noncommittally and spoke directly: "The matter with Zhang Dayong was your doing, wasn't it?"

Li the Eighth leaned back comfortably: "Speak with evidence, what's Zhang Dayong's receiving got to do with me?"

Seeing this guy's confidence, Qi Yun knew that further talk was pointless. He directly pushed several pages of documents in front of him: "Ha, how about you take a look at this before answering my question."

The first page of the document was a confession provided by Brother Qiu, followed by other evidence chains brought over by Ma Baoguo last night.

Li the Eighth's originally calm expression changed instantly, but he was a seasoned veteran and quickly regained composure.

Zhang Dayong's investigation was highly confidential, with few knowing the specifics, yet Li the Eighth had caught wind, prompting his attack.

Even if Brother Qiu spilled, without other direct evidence, they couldn't touch him, but he hadn't anticipated Zhang Dayong's investigation being so deep with a complete evidence chain, catching him unprepared.

This put him in a passive position.

"What do you want?"

With evidence right in front of him, denial was useless. Li the Eighth bluntly asked the question.

Qi Yun took back the documents: "It's simple, have the person you sent to put money in Zhang Dayong's home come forward and confess, take the blame."

Saying this, he pulled out Li the Eighth's phone and handed it over, "Of course, you can also call your backing, see if they can pull you out."

"The choice is yours, but I don't have much patience; if Zhang Dayong isn't out by 12 o'clock, then you'll accompany him inside."

Qi Yun remained calm, speaking slowly, already exuding an authoritative presence.

Li the Eighth didn't become angry due to Qi Yun's threat; instead, he asked calmly: "Evidence?"

"Returned to you." Qi Yun threw the file over, continuing, "Zhang Dayong will cease to investigate you. We have no personal grudge, and I'm not interested in your affairs."

Li the Eighth stared at Qi Yun for a few seconds and asked gravely: "Can I trust you?"

"You don't have to trust me." Qi Yun got up from the chair, putting a hand on the door handle, with his back to Li the Eighth, "But there is only one chance, choose for yourself."

With that, he pushed the door open and left, not giving Li the Eighth another glance.

The iron door closed slowly in front of Li the Eighth, with a dull thud.

Only he remained in the interrogation room, along with the cellphone on the table.

His expression shifted unpredictably, weighing his options before cursing under his breath, grabbing the phone, and dialing a number: "Have Afa come forward and confess, take the blame for Zhang Dayong's matter."

After hanging up, he leaned back wearily in his chair, gazing complexly at the tightly closed iron door.

At this moment, he truly realized that things were slipping out of his control, and this young man named Qi Yun likely wasn't an easy character to handle.

Two hours later, Zhang Dayong sat in the black Maybach.

"Thanks!"

"No need for formality with me." Qi Yun handed over a bottle of water, "Better call home, they're probably worried."

Zhang Dayong nodded and assured his wife, then turned to Qi Yun with a question: "On Li the Eighth's side..."

He heard someone had stepped up to confess, which must be related to Li the Eighth.

Qi Yun didn't hide anything, explaining the agreement with Li the Eighth.

After hearing this, Zhang Dayong furrowed his brow, his gaze filled with complex emotions, struggles, and unwillingness.

"Don't rush."

"I only promised him you wouldn't investigate him further, but didn't say others couldn't."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Dayong's eyes lit up.

"You mean..."

Qi Yun patted his shoulder, smiling: "I'll take you to meet someone."

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At Blue Sky Club, Qi Yun and Zhang Dayong entered; shortly after, an Audi A6 parked at the entrance, and an imposing middle-aged man stepped out.

"Stay in the car while you wait for me." The middle-aged man instructed his companion, striding inside.

Inside the private room, Qi Yun greeted the visitor: "Ha, Uncle Ji, hope I'm not interrupting your work."

It was Ji Kai's uncle, Ji Hongzhang.

Ji Hongzhang chuckled, shaking hands with Qi Yun: "No, weren't you in Shanghai? When did you come back?"

After the affair with Ji Kai and Ji Hongzhang's intent to get closer to the Xiao Family, Qi Yun's relationship with the Ji Family naturally entered a honeymoon period.

Upon meeting again, both were warmly engaging.

"I returned last night."

"Uncle Ji, let me introduce you to Zhang Dayong from the New District Branch, also a good friend of mine."

Chapter 685: Hua Weiguo's Speculation

Outside the Blue Sky Club, Qi Yun got into the car and lit a cigarette.

The connection has already been introduced to Zhang Dayong. Whether he can seize the opportunity depends on his own luck.

As for Li the Eighth, in the eyes of the working group, he's nothing more than a big fly, with almost no chance to resist if they want to deal with him.

If the person behind him doesn't want to die together, they'll just watch silently.

"Brother Quan, to the National Cultural Heritage Administration."

"Alright," Brother Quan agreed, as the vehicle slowly started moving.

Qi Yun took out a small wooden box from his bag. When the lid was opened, a stone lay quietly inside the box—it was the other eye of Can Cong.

He had already scrutinized it with a magnifying glass but found nothing unusual.

The information said this stone could lead to the treasure buried by Can Cong, whether the stone itself held some information... or needed to solve some mystery or mechanism with them?

Qi Yun couldn't figure it out.

The research on Ignacio's side had also hit a bottleneck. Many documents only had a few words describing that part of history, so Qi Yun planned to take a dual approach and hand this other one to Hua Weiguo for research.

Hua Weiguo is an expert in archaeology and has extensive knowledge of ancient history. Perhaps he could offer a different perspective to unravel the mystery of this stone.

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Inside the office of the National Cultural Heritage Administration.

"You...you said this is the eyeball of the Ancient Shu King Can Cong?" Hua Weiguo, having heard Qi Yun's description, was full of incredulity, as it clearly exceeded his understanding.

"How did you determine that?"

"A stone tablet. I recently saw a stone tablet at an ancient site of the Ailao Kingdom, which recorded that this stone is the eyeball of the Ancient Shu King Can Cong."

"There are two stones in total, the other one is with a foreign professor friend of mine."

Qi Yun couldn't directly tell the reason, so he made up a plausible story.

Hua Weiguo snapped back from the shock and murmured as he looked at Qi Yun: "No wonder you asked me about the history of the Ancient Shu Kingdom last time; so that's what it was about."

"Where did you say the stone tablet was? Can I see it?"

"The stone tablet...the stone tablet was taken and sealed by people from the National Cultural Heritage Administration. You probably won't get a chance to see it."

Hua Weiguo listened with regret: "That's really a pity."

However, he quickly adjusted his mindset and put on white gloves, carefully picked up the stone, and moved to the window to examine it in natural light.

"I also have some knowledge of the history of the Ailao Kingdom, which existed around 300 BC. According to unofficial history, this country was initially a small mountain state and later expanded during the pre-Qin period, claiming to span three thousand li from east to west and four thousand six hundred li from north to south."

"Its general location is from the southern part of Nanzhao in the east to the northeast of Myanmar in the west, the northern part of Thailand in the south, and the southeast of Tibet in the north."

"And the Ancient Shu King Can Cong should have existed in the late Western Zhou period, about three to four hundred years earlier than the Ailao Kingdom. The geographical activity ranges of the two countries are quite close, so theoretically, what's recorded on that stone tablet does have a certain possibility."

"However..."

"However, what?" Qi Yun leaned in and asked.

Hua Weiguo carefully observed the stone again and spoke with a suspicious tone: "But I still can't understand how this stone could be the eyeball of the Ancient Shu King Can Cong?"

"Could it have undergone some transformation that caused its surface to fossilize?"

Qi Yun felt a slight stir in his heart upon hearing this.

The possibility Hua Weiguo proposed had been guessed by Ignacio before. However, the stone's composition is very peculiar, and even with advanced testing equipment, no anomalies could be detected.

"You mean, this stone could be some kind of... biological tissue that has been transformed over long ages?"

"That possibility cannot be ruled out," Hua Weiguo adjusted his glasses. "Under special geological conditions, organic matter can indeed mineralize, but what puzzles me is..."

He picked up the stone and rotated it under the light.

"If this is truly the result of an eyeball undergoing mineralization, then its internal structure is remarkably intact. Look at these lines—they are almost as if..."

Hua Weiguo suddenly paused, as if he'd thought of something, and quickly moved to the bookshelf to search.

Soon, he pulled out the book he had shown Qi Yun last time, which documented the bronze masks, and rapidly turned to a certain page.

"Indeed!" Hua Weiguo pointed at the image in the book, so excited that he was sputtering. "Look at these patterns on the Ancient Shu bronze mask—aren't they very similar to the lines on your stone under ultraviolet light?"

Qi Yun leaned in for a closer look, and indeed, the eye part of that bronze mask, carved with peculiar spiral patterns, did bear some resemblance to the lines on the stone.

"What does this... signify?"

Hua Weiguo's eyes glinted with excitement: "I have a bold hypothesis!"

"If this stone is truly the eyeball of the Ancient Shu King Can Cong, then it might not be a natural mineralization, but a product of some special craft from the Ancient Shu Kingdom!"

Qi Yun blinked, not quite understanding.

"You mean...the Ancient Shu King Can Cong died, and then someone dug out his eyeball and processed it?"

"That's exactly it!" Hua Weiguo was so excited he waved his hands and feet.

"Historical records recount that the bronze smelting technology of the Ancient Shu Kingdom was very advanced at that time! This can be proven by the authenticity of the unearthed bronze sacred tree!"

"So, this stone might have been made using some kind of technology we are still unaware of."

Qi Yun felt this hypothesis wasn't entirely impossible either. After all, the craftsmanship of the bronze sacred tree couldn't be perfectly replicated even today, and its purpose remained a subject of much debate, with no one able to give a completely convincing explanation.

Chapter 686: Hua Weiguo's Speculation _2

If the Ancient Shu People really mastered some special processing technology to make Can Cong's eyeballs into this special stone, it would make sense.

Qi Yun pondered for a moment and then said, "The stone tablet also recorded another thing, saying that the Ancient Shu King Can Cong buried a treasure, and his two eyeballs are the key to unlocking it."

"Treasure!?"

"Yes, you might want to research this clue."

Hua Weiguo paused in place and then suddenly turned to Qi Yun: "I always suspected that the eyes of this bronze mask are so prominent, it might not just be an artistic exaggeration."

"Do you think there's a possibility that this mask itself is some kind of mechanism? When the two eyeballs are placed in the correct position, it might trigger some mechanism..."

Mechanism?

There might really be such a possibility...

Qi Yun touched his chin: "How about... I ask my friend to bring over the other stone, and you guys give it a try?"

Upon hearing this, Hua Weiguo's expression immediately turned awkward. He quickly walked to the door, confirmed that the corridor was empty, and then lowered his voice: "Let's not mention that the bronze mask is a national treasure-level artifact that I can't even get close to."

"Even if we could access it, trying it out recklessly without full confidence—if the artifact got damaged, no one could bear that responsibility."

He returned to the table, pointing at the pattern on the document: "Look at the eye structure of this mask; these intricate lines and grooves shouldn't be just simple decorations...

I suspect it requires a certain angle, order, or even... some activation method we don't yet know."

"If my speculation is correct, this might be some extremely precise linkage device, where the two eyeballs must be placed in a specific way simultaneously to trigger the mechanism... I need to study it further."

Qi Yun nodded, understanding his concerns.

The bronze mask could be considered one of the most highly regarded national treasure-level artifacts domestically. Even if Qi Yun managed to temporarily take it out, Hua Weiguo wouldn't dare to experiment on it.

If anything truly got damaged, aside from the issue of responsibility, public opinion alone would be enough to crush him.

"Alright, you keep it for research first, and consider the next step once you're confident enough."

"Sure, sure," Hua Weiguo replied, relieved.

Qi Yun smiled at him, reassuring, "No need to feel too pressured. Just think of it as academic research. If you need anything, just ask, and I'll do my best to cooperate."

"Also... what I told you today, please don't reveal it to anyone else."

Hua Weiguo's expression turned serious, and he nodded solemnly: "Rest assured, I will strictly keep it confidential."

"Alright, thank you. You get busy then; I'll be leaving," Qi Yun said as he took his leave.

Through the interactions over this period, Qi Yun came to trust Hua Weiguo considerably. Previously, when it came to the Qin King's mirror, Hua Weiguo promised to keep it secret for Qi Yun and didn't mention it to anyone until he returned it.

...

Leaving the relic bureau, Qi Yun first went to check on the network company.

Since the game officially launched a while ago, the company finally started to turn a profit, with revenues incredibly high, nearly in eight figures daily, and ranking high on major gaming platforms.

If this trend of stable development continues, perhaps within a year, J Province will see the emergence of another unicorn enterprise.

The company's operations, under the management of Xiang Xiaoyue and Xie Mengmeng, were orderly. Technology was also monitored by Yuan Hua, so Qi Yun hardly had to worry about it.

"President Qi, the current number of online users has exceeded three million, and the servers are struggling to keep up. We plan to purchase another batch of servers, which will cost approximately..."

Qi Yun took the proposal Xiang Xiaoyue handed over, gave it a quick glance, and signed his name: "Okay, execute according to this plan, and also inform the finance department to give double bonuses to all employees this month."

"Thank you, boss! We all adore you! I'll go inform everyone right away!" Xiang Xiaoyue happily took the signed proposal, walking briskly out of the office.

Which employee wouldn't love a boss who's so quick to hand out money?

Qi Yun chuckled, and after dealing with the backlog of documents, he called Zhong Rui, who was far away in Alaska, to ask about the progress of the gold mine.

The foreigners worked with low efficiency. They had been there for over a week, and the paperwork was still not done.

However, Zhong Rui didn't idle away his time there. Under Qi Yun's arrangements, he had already started to learn about the mining process and purchasing mining equipment.

The modern large-scale mines in Alaska generally use mechanized operations. The environment there is harsh, the ground is hard, and in winter it can reach minus forty degrees, so only machinery can handle it.

Moreover, using equipment also minimizes the risk of accidents, almost eliminating fatalities.

Especially in a place like the United States, if a fatal accident occurs at a mine, the compensation and litigation fees would be astronomical.

After finishing up matters on this end, Qi Yun prepared to inspect Dawn Technology.

Tao Ziming had already converted the twenty billion he was given into the most advanced production lines, and the factory buildings were also nearly completed.

However, just as he was about to leave the office, the phone in his pocket rang.

He took out his phone and saw that it was a call from Wei Zhe, the CEO of T Group Electronics.

Qi Yun slapped his forehead, realizing he'd forgotten something.

Previously, he'd asked Wei Zhe to help him get in touch about buying shares in Evergreen Shipping, and they had agreed to meet in a week's time to discuss this on the island, but after Zhao Qing and his daughter were attacked, it slipped his mind.

Qi Yun quickly answered the call, his voice apologetic: "President Wei, I sincerely apologize. Recently, I've encountered some urgent matters that have delayed my schedule."

On the other end of the phone, Wei Zhe was quite courteous: "It's no problem, Mr. Qi. I called to let you know that there will be a semiconductor industry forum in Shanghai in a few days, which I plan to attend personally this year."

"Meanwhile, there have been some developments on Mr. Zhang Wei's side. He hopes to sell his shares soon, so if it's convenient for you, I intend to come to you to discuss business matters with him."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun felt a sense of joy; it spared him the trouble of making a dedicated trip.

"Of course, it would be my honor for you both to come in person."

"When do you plan to arrive? I can arrange the reception accordingly."

"We plan to set off the morning after tomorrow," Wei Zhe responded with the schedule, and then added, "Mr. Qi, please keep this trip confidential, as I prefer not to draw too much attention."

"Understood, I will arrange it properly."

Qi Yun could understand the other party's concerns, given their sensitive status and the numerous people eager to collaborate with them.

But... can such news really be kept hidden?

Nevertheless, Zhang Wei's eagerness to sell Evergreen Shipping shares was undoubtedly beneficial news for Qi Yun, as at least the other party wouldn't demand an exorbitant price.

After hanging up the phone, Qi Yun left and called on Xiang Xiaoyue to make arrangements for the reception. He then temporarily canceled his trip to Dawn Technology and turned to the jewelry company.

.....

In the president's office.

Qi Yun glanced at President Bi's new female secretary, her figure and long legs slenderer than the previous ones, even more alluring.

Once she left, Qi Yun teased, "You sure change your secretaries quite frequently, huh?"

President Bi gave a wry smile: "Xiao Xia has been assigned to Tianshan Ice Spring."

Tianshan Ice Spring is the new company that Qi Yun co-founded with Farmer's Three Punches. Qi Yun originally held 40% of the shares in the new company, and he gave 10% to President Bi, who, with his rich experience, could keep an eye on things there.

The two are now deeply bound together. As for the jewelry company, Qi Yun is also the second-largest collector.

"What brings you here personally, busy as you are?"

Qi Yun put aside the jokes: "I need your advice on a matter. I'm planning to buy 12% of Evergreen Shipping's shares. What do you think would be a suitable price?"

"Evergreen Shipping!?" President Bi paused with the teacup in hand, hesitated, and then replied, "This might not be easy to buy, right?"

"As far as I know, although this company is quite profitable, it's a family business with shares scattered among various family members. Even if someone wants to sell..."

He didn't finish the sentence, but Qi Yun understood what he was implying, so he gestured for him to come closer and lowered his voice: "I enlisted Wei Zhe from T Group Electronics as the intermediary. They will come over here with me the day after tomorrow to discuss the deal."

Chapter 687: Some Things Are Beyond Your Control

"Tai... TSMC!?"

When President Bi heard these three words, his mind buzzed, and it took him a moment to process.

"TSMC's CEO is acting as an intermediary for you? And even coming personally to discuss a deal with you?"

"Yes, you heard right." Qi Yun nodded calmly.

Since that batch of EUV lithography machines was still under the highest level of confidentiality, only a very few people were involved, so it was normal for outsiders, like President Bi, to be unaware of the connection between Qi Yun and Wei Zhe.

"Damn." President Bi smacked his lips, uncharacteristically showing a crude side in front of anyone other than his secretary, "You've got such strong connections now?"

TSMC is different from other big companies, as there's no individual meddling in its operations; the main decision-making power is held by a team of professional managers.

So Wei Zhe essentially represents the will of TSMC, and many wealthy businesspeople and politicians are eager but helpless to connect with him.

This was evident from when Qi Yun initially went to Taiwan, hoping to meet him, but could only "偶遇" him at a temple.

"I've only had a few dealings with Mr. Wei, it's not as deep as you think."

Qi Yun waved his hand to explain, "The reason he's willing to help this time is mainly because that person from Everlasting is also looking to sell his equity, and they have a good personal friendship."

President Bi took a deep breath, trying to calm his shock: "Even so, to have Wei Zhe personally step in as an intermediary means you have quite the clout, especially since he's the one coming over here to see you..."

"If Wei Zhe himself is making the connection, then what I said about the transaction takes on a different significance."

He pondered for a moment, his expression becoming serious as he carefully analyzed, "Everlasting Marine's current market value is about 35 billion USD, 12% equity is 4.2 billion USD, but since it's a private transfer, such transactions usually come with a premium..."

"Considering Everlasting Marine's stable profit-making ability and the uniqueness of this transaction, I'd suggest a quote between 4.4 to 4.6 billion USD."

Upon hearing this number, Qi Yun was taken aback; it was much higher than he had anticipated.

After investing 2 billion into Dawn Technology, he only had over 3.2 billion in cash left, and that's in RMB.

While that number might seem small compared to those with assets worth hundreds of billions, most of that wealth is tied up in fixed assets and equity valuations, not liquid cash.

To be able to mobilize over 3 billion in cash at any time, in J Province, there probably aren't more than a handful, so Qi Ting is indeed quite powerful.

President Bi saw his furrowed brow and could more or less guess the reason. After contemplating briefly, he offered a suggestion: "I noticed your game company is doing quite well, you might consider using the equity as collateral, or selling a portion of the equity to bring in investors, which should raise a significant amount of cash."

Qi Yun thought for a moment and found the suggestion feasible.

However, bringing in investors wasn't an option; the gaming company would be a cash cow for a long time, and both the team and operations are on track, requiring almost no oversight. He didn't want anyone interfering at the moment.

Using it as collateral seemed more feasible.

Recently, he had just helped Tian Yaosheng rise to the position of Deputy Branch Manager in the provincial branch, and now it was time for him to reciprocate, just a matter of how much could be maneuvered...

"Actually, I'm quite optimistic about this transaction too. If you're willing, let's discuss with Old Ye about temporarily mortgaging the diamond mine in South Africa, it could potentially bring in 300 million USD..."

"For the remaining shortfall... you have a good relationship with that person from the Fu Family, right? I suggest you ask if they're interested; with their scale, raising 30 or 40 billion wouldn't be a problem," President Bi offered another perspective.

This kind of commercial operation is common in the market; after all, the transaction amounts are vast, and strong alliances are essential for mutual success.

"Pop~"

Qi Yun picked up a cigarette from the table, lit it, and took a deep puff before slowly speaking: "Hmm, I'll ponder on it, money isn't the issue. There's just a temporary shortfall, but I can figure out how to gather it."

"As for the diamond mine... you can discuss with Ye Hanwen, if both you and him want to get involved, you can also consider it a share."

President Bi's eyes lit up: "That's great! I'll ask Old Ye later, I reckon he thinks the same as I do."

"Everlasting Marine's stock and annual dividends are very stable, and I believe buying these shares is worthwhile, and even if there's a need to cash out in the future, these shares will be very much sought after in the capital market."

Qi Yun nodded: "Hmm, I think so too."

"Let's settle this then, you'll attend the negotiation the day after tomorrow."

"No problem!" President Bi agreed immediately.

...

After leaving the jewelry company, Qi Yun sat in the car, contemplating the funding issue.

He had 3.2 billion in hand, the diamond mine could be mortgaged for 300 million USD, roughly 2.1 billion; that 12% equity transaction price would be between 31.1 billion to 32.5 billion.

Still about 2.7 billion short...

First, ask Tian Yaosheng about how much could be procured and what the interest rate would be. If it wasn't suitable, then approach Fu Wentao, or the father-in-law.

The latter controls a private equity firm with assets also in the hundreds of billions, also quite powerful.

Having sorted this out in his mind, Qi Yun immediately returned to the company, instructing Xiang Xiaoyue to prepare a detailed financial report and future revenue projection, as these were essential materials for applying for a loan.

Xiang Xiaoyue was very efficient, placing a thick stack of materials on Qi Yun's desk in under an hour.

"Boss..."

Qi Yun was going through the documents and noticed her hesitance, as if she had something to say:
"What's up? Speak freely."

Chapter 688: Some Things Are Beyond Your Control (2)

Xiang Xiaoyue pursed her lips and mustered up the courage, "Actually, if you're looking to raise funds, I suggest we use the method of backdoor listing; relatively speaking, the risk is much lower."

"With our company's profitability and market prospects, if we go for a backdoor listing, the market valuation could very likely exceed one hundred billion. This way, you could easily raise the required funds while retaining controlling interest."

Qi Yun shook her head slightly; listing is indeed a good way to raise funds quickly, but it requires time.

She could also understand Xiang Xiaoyue's concerns; after all, the company's development is going well, and there's no need to risk using collateral.

But these risks are only visible from her perspective. Xi Yun has many cards that she doesn't know about; political resources and connections are Qi Yun's greatest strengths. Raising funds is not a difficult task.

"Hmm, your suggestion is good, don't worry, I won't risk your future."

Qi Yun comforted her with a couple of words, took the documents, and prepared to find Tian Yaosheng.

....

Provincial branch of the Bank.

Tian Yaosheng learned that Qi Yun was coming to see him and, as always, personally waited at the parking lot entrance. When he saw Qi Yun's Maybach drive in, he quickly stepped forward to open the car door himself.

"Qi... President Qi, welcome! Welcome!" Tian Yaosheng beamed.

He was eager to cozy up to Qi Yun, to cling tightly to this golden opportunity, yet he never found the right reason.

"Haha, you're too kind, President Tian." Qi Yun patted his arm after getting out of the car, joking, "You seem in good spirits; work must be going smoothly for you lately?"

Tian Yaosheng led Qi Yun upstairs to the office, responding humbly, "It's all thanks to your guidance, President Qi. Without you, where would I be today?"

Qi Yun laughed heartily, "President Tian, that's incorrect. Your success is due to your hard work, and has nothing to do with others."

"Yes, yes, look at me." Tian Yaosheng patted his mouth, pretending to have misspoken.

Once they were seated in the office, Tian Yaosheng respectfully placed a cup of tea in front of Qi Yun.

"President Tian, let's get straight to the point. I've already told you my plan over the phone. Here are the materials I prepared; take a look and help me calculate how much we can borrow and what the interest rate will be." Qi Yun spoke as she handed over the documents.

Tian Yaosheng accepted the file with both hands and began to flip through it carefully.

When he saw Yunqing Technology's revenue data, a look of surprise flashed in his eyes, "President Qi, your company's profitability is truly astonishing!"

"At this rate, breaking ten billion in revenue this year is entirely possible."

"However... The sample size for these data is too small. According to the head office's policy, a loan like this requires at least three months of complete financial statements."

Qi Yun nodded slightly, just about to ask if there's a way to maneuver around this, when Tian Yaosheng proactively changed his tone, "But since it's you personally requesting, President Qi, we can certainly make an exception. I'll communicate with the higher-ups to help you apply."

Qi Yun smiled knowingly, understanding why some people can advance.

"Alright, I thank President Tian in advance. How much can you help me apply for regarding the amount and interest rate?"

Tian Yaosheng leaned forward slightly and lowered his voice, "President Qi, considering your company's current revenue performance, I'll try my best to help secure an amount between 1.5 and 1.8 billion."

"The interest rate will be the most favorable LPR, and if it's a three-year term, the annualized rate will be about 4.2%."

After saying this, he added a sentence, "This is the maximum extent of my authority; anyone else would start at a minimum of 5.5%."

Upon hearing this, Qi Yun frowned.

Although the interest is affordable, a maximum loan of only 1.8 billion is far from her expected amount, and can't really satisfy her needs.

Tian Yaosheng observed the situation and hurriedly explained, "President Qi, it's not that I don't want to apply for you for more, it's just that this financial report... really puts us in a bind. With any higher amount, the head office over there..."

Qi Yun waved her hand, understanding the difficulty the other party faces, "Hmm, I understand."

"Fine, 1.8 billion it is, let's go ahead with it, and the paperwork will trouble President Tian."

Seeing Qi Yun not insisting further, Tian Yaosheng breathed a sigh of relief and assured, "Rest assured, President Qi, I will have everything settled within three days."

...

Leaving the bank, Qi Yun began planning her next move.

1.8 billion is still far from enough, better call her big brother first and see what he thinks.

Once the phone was connected, Qi Yun got straight to the point, "Big brother, I'm thinking of borrowing some money from you."

"How much do you need? I'm not in the country; you can just let Yaohua organize it for you," Fu Wentao replied quickly.

Qi Yun chuckled awkwardly, "The amount is quite large... it's roughly 25 billion."

"25... cough... 25 billion!?" Fu Wentao didn't react immediately, almost choking, "Do I look like 250 to you?"

"Haha, why are you in such a hurry? Just listen to me about what I plan to do with that money..." Qi Yun coaxed, explaining the deal she would discuss the day after tomorrow.

Fu Wentao listened, and when he spoke again, his tone had become serious, "12% equity in Evergreen Shipping? Wei Zhe personally lined this up for you?"

"Yes, they're coming to J Province the day after tomorrow for face-to-face talks."

"If that's the case... then this deal sounds indeed promising..."

After a moment of silence on the other end, Fu Wentao suddenly spoke with a sinister tone, "You're crazy about the big bite, still want more?"

Qi Yun didn't mind, immediately smiling and responding, "Big brother, isn't that why I'm coming to you for help? With you here, why should I fear anything?"

"Haha, I appreciate your flattery abilities, kid."

"Money is not the problem; once you've determined the final amount on your end, I'll have finance set it up for you. But the 12% equity in your hands won't be useful; take 2% instead."

As soon as Fu Wentao said this, the smile on Qi Yun's face froze.

He realized, Fu Wentao also has his sights on this piece.

"Big brother, isn't 2% a bit too little?"

"Little?" Fu Wentao chuckled lightly, "2% is enough for you to have a seat on the board; if you want dividends, I could let you have half."

"Believe it or not, if I let you take the full 12%, as soon as it gets announced, someone will approach you."

"There are things you can't handle alone; you'll still need your big brother steering."

Qi Yun looked speechless, thinking that he still sees him as a rookie?

With you backing me, and Xiao Hanguang and Wendong around, am I afraid of anyone approaching me?

Grabbing the piece so logically...

But he's her beloved big brother, after all already planned to let him join, just not like this.

"Big brother, you're right; for big matters, naturally, it's better for you to steer, but I have two good friends. They want to join too..."

Qi Yun then mentioned President Bi's situation.

Weighing things up briefly, Fu Wentao spoke again, "The 2% I offered was meant to be given to you for free. If you want to involve others, then let them invest accordingly."

"I'll take 8%, and you can distribute the rest as you see fit. It's enough for you to digest."

"But beforehand, discuss clearly with them, including your shares to be handed over to me when necessary."

"Alright." Qi Yun agreed without much hesitation, "I understand what you're saying, they're trusted insiders, otherwise I wouldn't involve them."

Qi Yun had confidence in President Bi and the others.

Back when Old Li got involved, all those problematic industries were handed off to President Bi, and the prices offered were far above market rate.

Because they helped when friends were in trouble, Qi Yun would let him join in cooperation with Farmers Three Punch.

As for shares... 4% would work, though it's a bit low, but from Fu Wentao's tone it was clear he plans to make big moves; following him won't be a loss.

After hanging up, Qi Yun relayed the results to President Bi, then, spurred by Tao Ziming's urging once more, headed to the new factory district of Dawn Technology.

Chapter 689: Wei Zhe Has Arrived

Outside the suburbs, under the blessing of superpowers, the new factory of Dawn Technology rose at an astonishing speed.

In just a few weeks, the once barren plot of land now stood with several steel-structured factory buildings and research centers.

Qi Yun stood by the window, looking at the industrial park that had begun to take shape, feeling an indescribable sense of achievement surge within him.

"President Qi, this time we purchased a total of four production lines from Germany, all matching the Denning Era standard. The equipment in Workshop No. 3 has already been installed. Let me show you." Tao Ziming excitedly showcased his achievements to Qi Yun.

Qi Yun nodded and followed Tao Ziming towards the workshop. When they pushed open the heavy dust-proof door, a mechanical scent greeted them, with some protective films not even removed yet.

"Our production equipment is currently the most advanced model in the world, reaching an automation level of 90%."

"All precision operations are completed by the central control system, with an estimated production capacity of 800 battery modules per hour, which is highly efficient in the industry..."

Qi Yun looked at the mechanical arms stretching like tentacles; indeed, they were very advanced. It seemed the money was spent wisely.

"I saw on the news that Tesla's newly developed solid-state battery has a range of over 700 kilometers. Do our products have an advantage?"

Qi Yun was most worried that just after starting production, their technology would be surpassed by others.

Tao Ziming showed a confident smile: "President Qi, don't worry. When we started the research, I promised you that our new materials would be technologically leading."

"Before applying for a patent, I had the technical team conduct multiple rounds of testing. In normal conditions, new energy vehicles equipped with our battery can go beyond 1,000 kilometers."

"Hmm."

Seeing Tao Ziming's confidence, Qi Yun satisfactorily nodded, "Have all the production procedures been completed?"

"Yes, everything is done. The district and city authorities are very supportive."

"Given the current progress, I think we can start mass production by the end of the month. In a couple of days, I'm planning to reach out to some car companies to discuss cooperation. Then we can hold a press conference and have the media report on our product..." Tao Ziming seamlessly outlined the plan.

"I almost forgot about that." Qi Yun patted his forehead, took out his phone, and walked outside, "You don't need to find the customers, just wait for my call."

...

More than an hour later, under Tao Ziming's astonished gaze, Guanghui Group's boss Liu Guangxin stepped out of the car.

"Little Qi, what do you want to show me?" Liu Guangxin asked Qi Yun curiously.

He was in a good mood recently. Not only had the Pakistani businessman Qi Yun introduced to him placed another order, but the quantity had doubled since the last time. If this keeps up, he wouldn't have to worry about the batch of zero-mileage used cars anymore.

"Let me introduce you; this is my partner, Tao Ziming." Qi Yun didn't answer directly, pointing to Tao Ziming beside him, "Old Tao, I guess there's no need for me to introduce Director Liu to you, right?"

Tao Ziming snapped out of his surprise, quickly stepped forward, and extended his hand in greeting: "Director Liu, it's a pleasure to finally meet you."

Liu Guangxin smiled and shook his hand: "Haha, hello."

"Old Tao, why don't you take Director Liu around our workshop and introduce the situation to him?" Qi Yun said with a smile.

Upon hearing this, Tao Ziming immediately understood his intention.

Guanghui Group was once the largest car dealership in the country, with abundant car enterprise resources at their disposal. There was no need for him to talk to them one by one, and they carried much more weight than their unknown little company.

"Sure, sure, Director Liu, this way, please..."

With a look of curiosity, Liu Guangxin was led by Tao Ziming to tour the production and research workshops.

When the two came out again, Liu Guangxin's face was full of amazement.

"So, Director Liu, how do you find our products?" Qi Yun asked, smiling at Liu Guangxin in the reception room.

Liu Guangxin took a deep breath, his tone full of astonishment: "Little Qi, I didn't expect you to quietly achieve such a significant outcome. Now I understand why you invited me here."

"Tell me, what do you need me to do?"

Qi Yun and Tao Ziming exchanged a glance and smiled: "Director Liu is a wise man."

"We want to ask you to connect us with a few mainstream car enterprises to recommend our batteries."

"That's all talk; no problem. I'll have the head of the automotive business connect with you shortly." Liu Guangxin agreed readily.

"Alright, thank you in advance, Director Liu. There's also another matter... Do you remember the topic of new energy vehicles we discussed last time?"

"Do you think, with the battery technology we currently hold, we have competitiveness if we build cars ourselves?"

The main reason Qi Yun asked Liu Guangxin to come over was not just to sell batteries; he wanted to show him his capability and discuss the possibility of car manufacturing.

This question left Liu Guangxin stunned.

He put down his teacup, and his expression turned serious: "Little Qi, are you serious?"

"Very serious!" Qi Yun's voice was firm, "The battery is the core of new energy vehicles, and we've mastered the most critical technology. If we only act as suppliers, we'll always be dressing others for marriage."

"You know, the profit from selling batteries is far less than selling cars."

Liu Guangxin pondered for a long while, slowly saying: "I admit your product does have a significant technological advantage, but building cars isn't that simple."

"Complete vehicle manufacturing involves thousands of components and requires a vast supply chain system, not to mention brand building, sales channels, after-sales services... all these require heavy asset investment."

Chapter 690: Wei Zhe Arrives (Part 2)

Qi Yun nodded: "Yes, what you said is true."

"However... the supply chain can be integrated, and we can start from mid-to-high-end models. As for the sales channels..."

He paused and looked at Liu Guangxin meaningfully: "Isn't this Guanghui's expertise?"

Liu Guangxin was initially stunned, then suddenly realized and pointed at Qi Yun, jokingly scolding: "You rascal, so you've been waiting for me here! Took such a big detour, but your real aim is to pull me into car manufacturing?"

"A win-win partnership, isn't it?"

Qi Yun replied with a smile, "Guanghui is seeking transformation, the traditional car sales business is facing a bottleneck. If we join forces, I think there is a great chance we can make it happen."

These words evidently struck a chord with Liu Guangxin.

He stood up and paced the conference room, seemingly in intense inner conflict.

Next to him, Tao Ziming also felt a vague anticipation. When the sample was just produced, Qi Yun had talked to him about car manufacturing, but the conditions were not mature enough at the time, so they did not delve deeper.

If at this moment, this Liu the Rich is willing to join, with his resources, starting would become very easy.

After two minutes, Liu Guangxin stopped walking and turned to Qi Yun: "How do you plan to collaborate?"

"The entire Dawn Technology will be merged into the new company. You provide resources and the majority of the funding, and I will also inject some funds later. As for the equity distribution, we can discuss it gradually," Qi Yun shared his thoughts.

Liu Guangxin nodded slightly: "Car manufacturing requires huge investments, easily costing tens of billions. I need to think it over carefully before giving you a reply."

"Of course, no problem." Qi Yun knew this wasn't urgent and checked the time before saying, "I'll host dinner tonight to thank Director Liu for your help."

....

Two days later at noon, a private jet landed at the New District Airport.

First off the plane were four burly bodyguards, followed by Wei Zhe and a man in his fifties, who seemed to be Zhang Wei, a major stockholder of Changrong.

"Welcome to both of you! It's been a long journey." Qi Yun quickly stepped forward to greet them.

Wei Zhe smiled and shook hands with Qi Yun: "President Qi, you're being too kind. Let me introduce you, this is Mr. Zhang Wei."

"Hello, President Zhang."

Despite being over fifty, Zhang Wei was full of energy. He gave Qi Yun a once-over and said smoothly: "President Qi is even younger than I imagined, very talented."

"Haha, President Zhang flatters me. This way, please, it's windy here, let's get in the car first," Qi Yun gestured towards the path.

Everyone got into several business cars separately, with Qi Yun, Wei Zhe, and Zhang Wei sharing a vehicle.

"I've arranged a hotel for you, we'll first head there for you to rest a bit, then tonight I'll take you to taste J Province's local delicacies."

"Thank you for your trouble." Wei Zhe nodded with a smile, examining the view outside the car window, "I didn't expect J Province to be this well-developed, it's completely different from my imagination."

"Yes, before coming here, I thought it would be quite backward, but the facilities here are comparable to places like Peng City," Zhang Wei also sighed.

"Indeed, J Province's infrastructure development has been very rapid over the past decade. If you have time in your schedule, I'll arrange for you to experience the desert grasslands..."

Meanwhile, inside the S Prefecture building.

Old Hou just came out of the conference room, followed closely by someone who approached him and whispered: "Leader, I just got the news that the CEO of T Base Electronics, Wei Zhe, has arrived in Bird City."

Old Hou paused immediately upon hearing this, turned around in surprise, and after two seconds asked: "Is the information accurate?"

The person nodded: "Accurate, I just verified with the airport, indeed a private jet from Treasure Island landed, and the immigration office has his entry records to match."

Old Hou was silent for a moment, then lifted his chin: "Come to my office to discuss."

The two went to the office and after closing the door, Old Hou eagerly asked again: "Do you know why he came here?"

"This is currently unclear... but I've already had people investigating."

Old Hou paced around the room: "Find out where he is, I want to visit him personally."

"Okay, I'll arrange it right away."

...

Dusk was settling as Qi Yun led Wei Zhe and Zhang Wei to a local restaurant to taste specialty dishes. Both were visiting the northwest for the first time and found the food here quite novel.

After the meal, the three went to the tea room upstairs at the hotel, and Qi Yun invited President Bi, where the four began discussing the equity of Changrong Shipping.

Amid the scent of tea, Zhang Wei was the first to broach the subject: "Gentlemen, I agree in principle to the transfer of 12% equity."

"To be honest, many consortiums have approached me wanting to purchase these shares, but I'm not fond of dealing with strangers. That's why Wei introduced President Qi to me."

"After today's interaction, I find President Qi to be a trustworthy partner."

Qi Yun smiled knowingly, proving that they understand human nature well; the opening remarks are quite fitting.

"President Zhang overpraises us; we also cherish this opportunity to collaborate."

Zhang Wei nodded and then shifted the topic: "But in business, let's discuss the valuation you offer for these shares?"

Qi Yun exchanged a glance with President Bi before calmly speaking: "President Zhang, we've conducted detailed calculations. The current market value of Changrong Shipping is approximately 35 billion US Dollars, and the 12% equity corresponds to 4.2 billion US Dollars."

"Considering equity premiums and Changrong's future growth potential, we are willing to offer 4.4 billion US Dollars. What do you think of this price?"

After discussing with President Bi a few days ago, Qi Yun also consulted Li Yaohua's opinion, who suggested similarly, falling between 4.4 to 4.6 billion US Dollars.

In transactions of this caliber, industry estimates are typically close unless there's an acquisition with strong motives or multiple parties competing, which can affect the price.

This offer is clearly within Zhang Wei's expectations. He didn't rush to reply but instead turned to Wei Zhe: "Wei, what do you think of this price?"

Wei Zhe smiled slightly, calmly tasting his tea: "I believe President Qi's offer is quite sincere, but this is a transaction between the two of you, and you need to decide for yourself."

Zhang Wei understood, nodded, and toyed with the teacup in his hands, seemingly contemplating.

After two minutes, seeing there's still no response, Qi Yun gave President Bi a signal who cleared his throat, breaking the silence: "President Zhang, is there anything you'd like to discuss? Feel free to share so we can explore it together."

"Not particularly, just suddenly thought about my brothers," Zhang Wei replied.

Beside him, Wei's eyebrows moved slightly, indicating he knew some inside stories, and comforted, "Don't worry too much, you don't like handling company affairs anyway. As long as the equity is in Huaxia people's hands, it's better than giving it to those Zhongdong Consortiums."

Zhang Wei sighed briefly and then without hesitation said: "President Qi, your offered price is very reasonable, I'm willing to proceed with the equity transaction with you."

Qi Yun showed a hint of surprise in his eyes; given the previous hint, he thought Zhang Wei was trying to haggle, unexpectedly it was his own narrow-mindedness; Zhang Wei agreed so straightforwardly.

"Great, thank you, President Zhang!" Qi Yun stood up and shook hands solemnly with Zhang Wei, "Wishing us a pleasant collaboration."

"Regarding the funds, you needn't worry, once the agreement is signed, I will arrange payment immediately."

Qi Yun spoke with great confidence, which made Zhang Wei take another look at him, thinking that being able to mobilize tens of billions of US Dollars in a short time, this young man's capability is indeed remarkable.

"Someone Wei introduced, I naturally have no concerns," Zhang Wei replied with a smile, "But the equity transfer still needs board approval, which will take about two weeks."

While they were conversing, there was suddenly a knock at the door of the private room, and Brother Quan walked in quickly and whispered a few words in Qi Yun's ear.

Qi Yun furrowed his brows tightly upon hearing it: "How did they find us here..."