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Chapter 233: Luring the Snake out of the Hole

"Hold on," Qi Taiguo stopped Huo Wang, who was about to go out and relay the orders, his lips pursed in thought.

Huo Wang looked at Ma Guangshe, who gestured with a wave of his hand, and he too waited on the side.

"Commander Ma, these tomb-raiding criminals managed to contact Sun Tianlong without revealing their hideout to him, showing how alert and cunning they are. They could also have discipline and the ability to evade tracking. Since Sun Tianlong doesn't know their hideout, even if we were to capture him, we might not get anything out of him and we could even risk alerting the snakes in the grass," Qi Taiguo said slowly.

Ma Guangshe furrowed his brow and said, "Didn't they say they would tie a red scarf when it's time to make contact?"

"That's correct, but that's only when they call us," Qi Taiguo replied. "In my opinion, we might as well turn their ruse against them and feed Sun Tianlong false information about our withdrawal, to execute a feint."

"Let's hear your thoughts," Ma Guangshe said, leaning in to listen as soon as he heard this.

Qi Taiguo slowly laid out his tactical plan, eventually winning Ma Guangshe's agreement.

After lunch, Ma Guangshe gathered all the participants involved in the operation for a meeting, including the police bureau where Sun Tianlong was based.

"...superiors have already dispatched experts in ancient tomb conservation to come here, and they should arrive the day after tomorrow to study the tomb. But these cunning tomb raiders must not be taken lightly, lest they harm more ancient tombs. After extensive investigation, we have reason to believe they are hiding in the mountains. Starting tomorrow, we will split our forces in two and search both Bull Head Mountain and Camel Peak. We must capture these criminals who are undermining national interests," he announced.

Sun Tianlong's eyes flickered as he asked, "Commander Ma, what are the specific departure times and how will personnel be distributed tomorrow?"

Ma Guangshe gave him a deep look and said, "Commander Qi and I will each lead a team up the mountain, leaving only two liaison officers in the safe house in case of emergencies. In order to seize the best time for action, we'll depart early at six o'clock in the morning."

"Chief Sun, do your police officers have the physical stamina for mountain climbing?" Qi Taiguo asked with a deep and probing gaze.

Sun Tianlong thought to himself that he certainly didn't want to climb these godforsaken mountains, who knew what kind of venomous insects and vermin were in there, but he couldn't say no or let himself be suspected.

"Of course, our police department will definitely do its utmost to crack down on criminals," chuckled Sun Tianlong.

Those who knew the truth snickered inwardly at his words.

"Then let's dismiss, assemble at 5:30 a.m. tomorrow," Ma Guangshe said, waving his hand and turning to Qi Taiguo, "Commander Qi, let's discuss what equipment we'll need to carry."

Qi Taiguo nodded and followed him into the safe house.

"Dismissed, everyone stay sharp. We must catch these people tomorrow," Sun Tianlong commanded his team as well.

In the safe house, Qi Taiguo and Ma Guangshe discussed the detailed plans for tomorrow. They even found the most experienced guide in the village to identify the best ambush points, retreat points, trails, dangers, and created a simplified map for strategic deployment.

"Report."

Qi Taiguo and Ma Guangshe looked up.

"Report to Commander Qi, Commander Ma, Sun Tianlong has indeed gone to the town and has tied a red scarf, with Huo Wang following him," Wan Dahe said.

Qi Taiguo and Chairman Ma exchanged glances and said, "Let's hope Sun Tianlong's word is convincing enough to tempt the snake out of its hole."

"By mentioning the arrival of experts for study, they probably won't wait any longer. After all, once the experts arrive and cordon off the ancient tomb, they'll have no more business there!" Ma Guangshe nodded.