

Two Trillion 1191

Chapter 1191 - Who Loses, Who Wins

Zhenbei Group Greater China Region Headquarters, Conference Room One.

The so-called Conference Room One is just a small meeting room located next to Mr. Xiahou Qi's office. Its decoration is simple and unadorned, with even more basic hardware, truly warranting the label "spartan" in the otherwise wealthy headquarters—it barely compares to other meeting rooms.

Yet this conference room carries significant importance.

Inside, there are only eleven single-person leather sofas, designated for the use of Mr. Xiahou Qi and the ten Senior Affairs Officers!

From this detail alone, Conference Room One is undeniably a "vital area" here.

And today, the conference room has been in use for an entire day.

A meeting that lasted the whole day.

Mr. Xiahou Qi, along with all the Senior Affairs Officers present at the headquarters, were in Conference Room One for a closed-door meeting—even lunch was delivered to them.

As is customary, all the Senior Affairs Officers had their mobile phones switched off.

Mr. Xiahou Qi himself was the only exception, but he too had to keep it on silent mode.

This meeting was for the mid-year review of the business operations and to discuss issues.

The topics to be discussed were unlimited.

During the meeting, the younger generation of Senior Affairs Officers such as Zheng Honghu and Li Haofeng raised many serious issues and constructive opinions for everyone to ponder over.

It was after 8 p.m. that this closed-door meeting finally adjourned.

When the Senior Affairs Officers came out, they were all exhausted, thinking about taking a break in their own offices regardless of the time, before heading home.

After a full day of meetings, even the "young" people like Zheng Honghu and Li Haofeng appeared somewhat weary as they left the conference room.

Some of the older Senior Affairs Officers were even more pale-faced, their steps slightly unsteady.

Even merely sitting through a whole day's meeting was physically draining.

The last ones to leave were Shen Peishen and Xiahou Qi.

These two had been colleagues for many years, weathering storms together.

To ordinary people, they showed great mutual respect and courtesy towards each other.

Currently, Shen Peishen was still discussing follow-up topics with Xiahou Qi, and as they exited, Shen assisted Xiahou by offering his hand.

Xiahou returned the gesture with a smile and a word of thanks.

This scene, observed by others, was indeed a sight to reflect upon.

The President of the Greater China Region and the Chief Senior Affairs Officer showing such sincere unity and mutual respect is certainly a boon for the group.

"Mr. Xia, our meeting today was indeed quite lengthy. When you get back, before going to sleep, you might want to take a hot bath to relax your muscles; it's good for your health," Shen Peishen said with a smile, still keeping a genial tone despite his own advancing years. Among all the senior officers, he was the eldest.

Yet, he always paid attention to health preservation and regular exercise; indeed, his vitality seemed to even surpass that of others.

Xiahou Qi smiled in response, nodding, "Peishen, you could also try soaking your feet in medicinal liquor, it's good for the body."

Compared to Shen Peishen, Xiahou Qi's lips were already somewhat pale, the fatigue on his face hardly concealable.

After exchanging their recommendations, they shared a smile and, accompanied by their respective assistants, parted ways in different directions.

Once out of sight of the other Senior Affairs Officers, Xiahou Qi's brows slightly furrowed, and the corners of his mouth revealed a hint of barely perceptible pain.

"Mubei, give me a hand!" Xiahou Qi said in a low voice to Wang Mubei, who was following closely.

Upon hearing this, Wang Mubei quickly supported Xiahou Qi's arm.

Fortunately, they were only a few steps away from Xiahou Qi's office.

Wang Mubei hurried Xiahou Qi into the office.

The old man was now alarmingly weak, his breathing somewhat rapid.

In fact, by the end of the meeting, his illness had flared up again.

"Bai Xiaosheng had urged me before he left, insisting that you must not overexert yourself. After a whole day of meetings, how can you endure it!" Wang Mubei expressed his vexation, seeming to feel a deep sense of guilt for not being able to dissuade Xiahou Qi.

After helping Xiahou Qi sit down, Wang Mubei quickly fetched the traditional Chinese medicine pills prescribed by Bai Xiaosheng, which greatly alleviated pain and were incredibly effective.

Xiahou Qi's hand trembled as he took the pill and held it in his mouth. After resting his eyes for a moment, he opened them and let out a faint breath, thanking Wang Mubei with a smile, "This meeting was my insistence; the fault does not lie with you, you need not blame yourself."

Afterwards, Xiahou Qi sighed softly.

"Shen Peishen making a move against Lin Ke, how could I ignore that! Targeting Bai Xiaosheng, I absolutely cannot sit idly by!"

"Fortunately, after all this hard work, there's finally some gain. Bai Xiaosheng has already reversed the situation and begun his counterattack."

Xiahou Qi held up his mobile phone with a smile to Wang Mubei.

As the President of the Greater China Region Headquarters, he was the only one who could check his phone at the meeting.

Lin Ke was reporting the situation there at any time, so he naturally had a firm grasp of the developments.

This piece of good news invigorated Xiahou Qi.

"This time is fine, I only hope there won't be a next time. Otherwise, even if I resign, I will have to stop you!"

Seeing the old man's happiness, Wang Mubei couldn't bear to say more but still couldn't help adding a word in the end.

"Yes, next time, I will definitely heed Assistant Wang's advice," said Xiahou Qi with a big laugh, even making a joke about it.

...

Meanwhile, Shen Peishen returned straight to his office with his assistant.

The assistant by his side wasn't Cheng Liu, for Cheng Liu was in the office monitoring the situation in Nandu and Qinggang, handling matters on his behalf.

The moment Shen Peishen returned to his office and entered the door, Lin Yu and Cheng Liu came up to meet him, both with faces that were difficult to conceal their gravity.

During Shen Peishen's meeting time, the situation had dramatically shifted!

In Nandu and Qinggang, the Wu Family was faced with siege from many corporate conglomerates and had repeatedly sought help in vain.

Online, the articles from Wu Media Group significantly decreased, and when calling to inquire, Wu Dazun was also vague in his responses.

According to their people there, Bai Xiaosheng took several measures, quickly containing the worsening situation, and it showed signs of turning around.

Just now, the latest developments on the internet indicated that the direction of public opinion had changed!

It's unknown how Bai Xiaosheng did it, but many influencers and major media have joined in, beginning to boost their side!

...

To them, this was definitely not good news.

Could it be, after such a fierce struggle, Bai Xiaosheng could still turn the tables, and they couldn't even keep Lin Ke?!

Both Lin Yu and Cheng Liu were very upset.

Now, as soon as Shen Peishen came back, the two greeted their teacher to sit down, watching him drink tea while they succinctly reported the situation.

"The teacher will surely be furious, angry. Such a layout, all undone by Bai Xiaosheng and his people, it's really infuriating!"

"Hopefully, the teacher can be more open-minded. This plan, in my view, was swift and fierce enough... It's just that Bai Xiaosheng, this man, really cannot be judged by ordinary standards."

As the two reported, they were also considering how to comfort Shen Peishen once he became angry.

Unexpectedly, Shen Peishen remained expressionless, finishing a cup of tea and then pouring another.

While listening, Shen Peishen seemed deep in thought, as if pondering something else.

"The teacher's restraint... truly puts us to shame!"

"Anger arises in the heart, but does not show on the surface, having this kind of composure, only then can one achieve great things!"

The two of them sighed inwardly.

After hearing the report, Shen Peishen put down his teacup; the cup's bottom made a slight sound upon contact with the table, making Lin Yu and Cheng Liu tense up, on guard.

"Alright, I know now." Shen Peishen's calm and unaffected words left Lin Yu and Cheng Liu stunned.

The teacher, not angry?

"Unless there's a surprise, that Wu Family in Nandu will betray us. You should be mentally prepared, and moreover, our people in Nandu and Qinggang, I'm afraid they're all done for." Shen Peishen even showed a hint of a smile, speaking in a casual manner.

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu were dumbfounded.

Teacher, he couldn't have gone mad with rage, could he?

How could he speak such defeatist words, and so... matter-of-factly?!

"After all, it's Bai Xiaosheng, with the support of Xiahou Qi, Zheng Honghu, and Li Haofeng, him achieving all this doesn't surprise me in the least," Shen Peishen said with a smile, "But what does that matter!"

"In the end, my goal has already been achieved!"

Shen Peishen, having been adept in scheming for decades.

How could he let a cunning little fox outsmart him time and time again!

Chapter 1192 - The True Scheme

"Teacher, what do you mean by this?" Lin Yu couldn't help but exclaim in astonishment, "Are you so certain that Bai Xiaosheng will win?"

Lin Yu glanced at Cheng Liu and continued, "Then are we, who have been so busy and putting so much effort into arranging this scheme, not doing it to take down Bai Xiaosheng?"

Lin Yu was very puzzled, and he wasn't the only one; Cheng Liu felt the same.

Could it be that the teacher's arrangement of this deadly scheme was not intended to trap and kill Bai Xiaosheng?

How could that be possible!

Lin Yu didn't believe it.

Neither did Cheng Liu.

They both could be considered direct members within Shen Peishen's closest circle, having gone through countless "evaluations."

To them, Shen Peishen had no need to hide anything.

"When did I say that this scheme would definitely take down Bai Xiaosheng?"

Facing the doubts of Lin Yu and others, Shen Peishen smiled seriously, "That is a Senior Affairs Officer! Plus, Xiahou Qi as the president, and the support from Zheng Honghu and Li Haofeng, two Senior Affairs Officers and higher, as well as Chen Yucheng and a large number of Affairs Officers."

"Do you think, just with this public opinion deathtrap, you can definitely doom him? Do you believe it yourselves?"

Shen Peishen's counter-question left Lin Yu and Cheng Liu speechless.

To be honest, when things looked very favorable, they truly thought that Bai Xiaosheng was finished this time!

His reputation would stink, ruined!

Such a significant Senior Affairs Officer, even if Xiahou Qi dared to employ and protect him, the headquarters of Zhenbei Group would not turn a blind eye!

They could also take the opportunity to criticize Xiahou Qi!

But Teacher Shen Peishen said that this scheme was not really to take down Bai Xiaosheng.

Then what was the reason for such a big investment, such a "sacrifice"?

Just to cause some trouble for Bai Xiaosheng?

What for?

The two of them couldn't understand.

"Do you really want to know what I truly want in all of this?!" This time, Shen Peishen chuckled and took the initiative to speak.

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu nodded eagerly.

"This is yet another time Bai Xiaosheng has outmaneuvered me, Shen Peishen; it's another great achievement for him."

"People, no matter how well-controlled their mindset, still have desires and emotions! It's sainthood to truly achieve a state of neither joy nor sorrow."

"Even Bai Xiaosheng, after winning against me time and again, will grow careless, exultant, and pursue further victories!"

"Then let him chase victories. In the future, I have prepared an even bigger victory for him to achieve!"

Shen Peishen spoke with a calm and collected demeanor, but this nearly 'feeding' strategy left Lin Yu and Cheng Liu even more astonished.

Feeding Lin Yu achievements to help him seize the position of Senior Affairs Officer, that's understandable.

But what about handing over victories to an enemy, an opponent...

"I do actually have some respect for Bai Xiaosheng, call it caution if you will."

"So, before doing something truly significant, I need to keep this guy busy far from headquarters, busy with what he thinks is significant."

"Not only that, I need to keep the attention of Zheng Honghu, Li Haofeng, and Chen Yucheng all on Bai Xiaosheng."

"Outside, not inside!"

Shen Peishen laughed, "Of course, these are just one of the goals, not the most important!"

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu listened intently.

"Actually, the reason I caused such a big trouble for Bai Xiaosheng this time is to make him seek help! To have someone sideline me, Shen Peishen."

"After all, with or without me mediating in it, the results are completely different!"

Shen Peishen said this naturally.

This was not self-praise.

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu had previously lamented that the teacher hadn't been stationed here to mediate.

Otherwise, Bai Xiaosheng would never have had, at least not so easily, a chance to turn the tables.

And the Wu Family might have been more firm, not so easily swayed.

To blame, it's that all-day-long meeting that tied up Teacher Shen Peishen.

But as Lin Yu thought about it, a sudden insight flashed through his mind, and his eyes couldn't help but narrow slightly.

Even though the teacher was tied up with the meeting, the possibility of consulting here or giving some guidance was not out of the question.

In the conference room, there's only one toilet; if the teacher took a bathroom break midway, it was entirely possible to establish contact with them.

However, the teacher didn't do anything—it was as if he didn't care about the dynamics on this side at all.

The teacher isn't a person of negligence, but this time, he chose not to inquire or ask...

"Could it be, Teacher, that even this meeting was part of your calculations, with something to gain?!" Lin Yu suddenly couldn't help but exclaim.

Cheng Liu looked at Lin Yu in surprise, startled by this suggestion.

To be able to deduce the necessity and duration of this meeting from another matter, what a brilliant mind one must have!

Shen Peishen smiled admiringly at Lin Yu.

Truly worthy of being the student he picked, such a quick response. Given time, surpassing himself was entirely within reach!

However, when compared to that young lad named Bai, he always felt something was slightly amiss...

Despite verbally insisting on eliminating Bai Xiaosheng, deep inside, Shen Peishen still felt regretful.

Truth be told, Bai Xiaosheng was the most perfect disciple in his heart!

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaosheng insisted on being irreconcilable!

Such a pity!

Each time Shen Peishen thought of Bai Xiaosheng, he felt a pang of heartache.

Now, he patiently explained his thoughts to Lin Yu.

"Bai Xiaosheng seeking help and countering, no matter how I think about it, I am the biggest trouble they face! Whether they can tie me up for the entirety of this day and distract me from matters concerning Nandu and Qinggang, becomes extremely crucial!"

"But in the matter of tying me up, neither Zheng Honghu nor Li Haofeng can manage it, not even any Senior Affairs Officer or several of them!"

A confident smile played on Shen Peishen's lips, "Only Xiahou Qi has the capability and the qualification!"

"Recognizing this, Xiahou Qi definitely counts as one! To save Lin Ke, to save Bai Xiaosheng, Xiahou Qi will tie me down. As for how, there are only a few methods after all calculations! The most reasonable one is to hold a meeting!"

"And I, also want to see, just what the physical condition of our Elder Xia is like! Whether he can endure this whole day of meetings!"

...

A content smile appeared on Shen Peishen's lips as he looked down at his palm.

Recalling the time he supported Xiahou Qi, he felt, through his palm, Xiahou Qi's thin and trembling arms, as frail as leaves trembling in the autumn wind.

This sense of weakness and frailty brought him immense pleasure!

"Xiahou Qi, Elder Xia, after all, you age faster than I do, your body isn't as healthy as it appears!"

"I wonder if after this time, you might collapse from exhaustion or illness."

"If not this time... what about the next time? Or the time after next?"

"Like the silkworm exhausting itself spinning silk until death, like the candle burning itself out until tears dry. Elder Xia, you are the kind who sacrifices oneself to light the way for others. Then I shall give you the opportunity to sacrifice yourself!"

"Of course, relying on chance and taking this indirect path, I wouldn't place all my hopes on it."

"The path I choose will be more reliable. When the time comes, if all these support pillars beside you are on Bai Xiaosheng's side instead of yours, you'll truly be left alone."

These thoughts remained unspoken by Shen Peishen.

After pondering for a moment, Shen Peishen looked up, smiled at Lin Yu and Cheng Liu, and said only one thing—

"Actually, the key to taking down Bai Xiaosheng isn't on him, it lies with Xiahou Qi!"

Without protection, Bai Xiaosheng is at everyone's mercy!

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu couldn't help but nod, their eyes bright as torches.

...

A night without words.

The next morning, a shocking news from Wu Media Group set the whole internet abuzz—

The "Lin Ke Incident," which had been the hot topic online these past two days, was revealed to be deliberately fabricated by a chief editor of Wu Media Group to create a media sensation and advance his career.

Now, the editor has fled, his whereabouts a mystery, and the company has reported this to the police.

Wu Media Group noticed the issue promptly, held themselves accountable, and immediately apologized to Lin Ke and to the Greater China Region of Zhenbei Group, declaring their willingness to accept all penalties and to compensate Ms. Lin Ke with millions in damages for defamation and emotional distress.

Suddenly, the whole internet was in an uproar!

Major media outlets and influencers rapidly followed up.

Those who had criticized Lin Ke a few days earlier subtly shifted their stance, now condemning the media violence brought by fake news and loudly calling for legislative control.

The news continued to simmer, keeping everyone talking endlessly.

Compared to the truth, people were far more interested in this surprising twist...

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaosheng and Lin Ke quickly extricated themselves from this hot issue and started a thorough investigation of the Nandu and Qinggang Group-related enterprises.

With the support of the local influencer Wu Family, partial "plans" known by Wu Dazun of Shen Peishen's faction, and deductions made by Bai Xiaosheng and others, many of Shen Peishen's people were investigated and dealt with.

Great achievements were promptly reported to the headquarters.

Suddenly, the headquarters buzzed again because of Bai Xiaosheng.

"I always said that allegations against Senior Affairs Officer Sheng regarding corruption and abuse of power were groundless. Look, the news has clarified, and Officer Lin Ke has even received compensation!"

"We really shouldn't have speculated about Senior Affairs Officer Sheng; he truly is a role model for our Affairs Department!"

"Look, Senior Affairs Officer Sheng has again sent a list of local problematic figures!"

"It must be them, banding together, bribing unscrupulous media people to frame Senior Affairs Officer Sheng!"

...

For a while, Bai Xiaosheng's reputation soared spectacularly once again!

Chapter 1193 - High-Spirited

For three consecutive days, Bai Xiaosheng, Lin Ke, and others were fully immersed in the investigation of local corporate groups, barely taking off their clothes.

The day after Bai Xiaosheng initiated the counterattack, the first batch of "supporters" had already arrived in Qinggang.

Four Affairs Officers and six Assistant Affairs Officers!

These were the "helpers" sent over by Chen Yucheng.

Seeing these people, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but marvel at Chen's support—it was truly effective!

Despite being just an Affairs Officer himself, he was able to command his peers.

Personal charisma is indeed powerful!

Bai Xiaosheng didn't know that these people came because of Chen Yucheng's influence and were willing to come because they were captivated by his own charm.

These people had quickly become Bai Xiaosheng's "admirers."

The female Affairs Officers and assistants looked at Bai Xiaosheng with a fervent gleam in their eyes.

On the second and third day, more and more helpers arrived in Nandu and Qinggang.

These people were arranged by Chen Yucheng, Zheng Honghu, and Li Haofeng.

Feng Li even came personally to support.

In just three days, the number of Affairs Officers gathered in Qinggang and Nandu had reached thirty-two, with forty-three Assistant Affairs Officers!

Of course, Bai Xiaosheng also knew that these people could come because they had the tacit support of one important person—Mr. Xiahou Qi.

Without Xiahou Qi's silent approval, gathering so many Affairs Officers and assistants in one place would have been utterly impossible.

Having these people at his command, Bai Xiaosheng felt as if he had wings added to a tiger, and his work progressed incredibly swiftly.

Of course, as the leading person, Bai Xiaosheng's workload only increased, and he was exhausted more than anyone else.

With Bai Xiaosheng's overarching control, the cooperative effort of numerous Affairs Officers and assistants, and the Wu Family's absolute local connections and financial support:

It took just three days!

The corporate groups of three provinces and seven cities were thoroughly investigated!

This pace and efficiency had broken the historical record at headquarters!

Reports came waves by waves, continuously submitted to the headquarters like sheets of snow.

There, the headquarters was completely boiling over.

Bai Xiaosheng swept through like a hurricane, swift, efficient, and forceful.

Especially in harvesting performances, it was irresistibly astonishing.

"In these three days, in places like Nandu and Qinggang, seven key enterprise leaders, three directly subordinate enterprise leaders, eleven company leaders were completely investigated! My god, the colleagues on duty were exhausted from processing the reports!"

"It's simply insane!"

"Not just insane, wherever Senior Affairs Officer Sheng stepped in, it was like a typhoon passing through, leaving the problematic ones with nothing left."

"I heard that many Affairs Officers and assistants went over to help."

"One of my friends was among them; you don't know, all the results from those investigations, Senior Affairs Officer Sheng didn't take a dime, and distributed it all to those people!"

"Wow, they must have made a fortune then!"

"Absolutely made a fortune, my goodness, such a big wave of performance! Distributed among them, everyone earned a fortune, at least this year's assessment, they won't worry about being excellent!"

"I really want to go too!"

"Who doesn't? It just shows that following Senior Affairs Officer Sheng, you wouldn't worry about having meat to eat!"

...

Countless exclamations, admiration, and reflections filled the headquarters every day.

In the following four days, more victorious news kept arriving.

Nandu and other regions had been cleared of problematic corporate figures. Bai Xiaosheng started targeting the external companies supported by Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng, one by one—terminating cooperation, seeking financial reparation, filing lawsuits—all measures relentlessly applied successively.

After all, Bai Xiaosheng currently had a robust force on his side, utilizing channels for investigating external enterprises owned by the Wu Family, making everything proceed without a hitch.

It can be said that, almost overnight, all of Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng's efforts in these areas might have been completely obliterated by Bai Xiaosheng, resulting in total loss.

It was said that these days, Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng seemed to be in a rather poor mood.

During a recent high-level meeting, Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng openly criticized Senior Affairs Officer Sheng for being overly aggressive, arguing it was not right to be so harsh on external businesses cooperating with their corporation as it set a bad precedent and made things difficult for other businesses...

In response, Senior Affairs Officers Zheng Honghu and Li Haofeng disagreed and countered on the spot...

The debate between the two sides was intensely fierce, making the atmosphere awkward for a while.

This issue, though it should not have been spread, inadvertently leaked due to the large number of attendees.

When Bai Xiaosheng heard about it, he just smiled.

In his view, Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng must be extremely frustrated these days.

Conversely, Bai Xiaosheng was in a great mood.

The power and manpower that Shen Peisheng possessed were enormous, accumulated over decades.

But no matter how numerous, they could not withstand his relentless investigations.

"At this point, Old Shen must already be badly crippled! I've realized that his choice in placing people is quite insightful. After several decades, Nandu has developed to be on par with any top-tier city. Placing people here has its benefits later on. Places where Guo Yunxin, Sun Youhe, Wang Ziyu and others have stayed are also areas of potential."

"And Nanyu City too!"

The thought of where he would "raid" next automatically brought a smile to Bai Xiaosheng's face.

Actually, things here could have been settled faster, but Bai Xiaosheng slowed down the pace in the later stages.

Over this week, particularly the last two days, he had totally relaxed, allowing himself to rest thoroughly.

Then, taking advantage of the unresolved turmoil, he would quietly set his sights on his original target—Nanyu City.

Additionally, what made Bai Xiaosheng happy was the scores he had earned this time.

Although he had conceded all the performance scores to the assisting Affairs Officers and assistants, the scores determined by Red Lotus remained unchanged. He had confirmed this beforehand; otherwise, he wouldn't have been so generous without any regret.

For every report sent to headquarters, it wasn't long before Bai Xiaosheng received points from Red Lotus.

Although each time the points were not many, it was the frequency that accumulated substantially.

"Investigating a key corporate leader, problem degree 'moderate,' demotion and cancellation of annual bonuses as punishment, gain of 0.5 points."

"Investigating a key corporate leader, problem degree 'extreme,' referred to the judiciary, gain of one point."

"Investigating a direct subordinate business leader, problem degree 'severe,' resulting in dismissal, gain of 0.8 points."

...

Every time Red Lotus spoke, it was wonderfully pleasant.

Yet, these fragmented scores made Bai Xiaosheng repeatedly speechless.

The highest was 1.5 points and the lowest was only 0.1 points.

Crucially, Red Lotus specifically 'kindly' reminded Bai Xiaosheng that the earned points would be rounded down to whole numbers in the end, even if it was 0.9 points, it would be erased...

This was somewhat too unfair!

This led Bai Xiaosheng to argue based on principles with Red Lotus for a long time, but no matter how eloquently Bai Xiaosheng spoke, Red Lotus still strictly adhered to the principles.

In the end, it was Bai Xiaosheng who had to come to a realization.

Arguing with artificial intelligence, wasn't that foolish...

Bai Xiaosheng, whose actions had caused a huge stir in places like Nandu, Qinggang, and others, was actually being watched by many forces.

The most recent one must be Wen Yan, who lives in the same city.

While Bai Xiaosheng was enjoying the satisfaction of scoring points, Wen Yan was sipping freshly brewed coffee, casually flipping through a thick stack of reports in front of him, smiling.

"So this is, all the detailed information about this turmoil!"

Chapter 1194 - Life is Like a Game of Chess

"Yes, these are all the details regarding this turmoil, completed with the cooperation of our investigators deployed in these areas, as well as the investigators from the Greater China Region Headquarters. As per your request, regarding Bai Xiaosheng's performance, everything collected is here, unrefined and uncut, all in meticulous detail!"

Ruan Yu respectfully answered Wen Yan's questions, then added some coffee for him.

The headquarters inspection team, according to some agreement, deliberately downplays their presence in the Greater China Region, but that doesn't mean there are no people here!

On the contrary, those hidden ones are even more covert.

They might be people from Shen Peishen's side, or from Chen Yucheng's side, or maybe from Zheng Honghu and Li Haofeng's side.

Or perhaps they are insignificant characters in various corporate enterprises.

Wen Yan wanted to understand this turmoil; numerous confidential reports, like snowflakes, came from all over and were finally summarized by Ruan Yu and Huang, becoming the report on Wen Yan's desk.

"Then, I really must take a good look," Wen Yan said with a smile.

He was particularly concerned and attentive towards Bai Xiaosheng.

Then Wen Yan couldn't help but continue talking to himself, "Three days, it only took three days to turn the tables, followed by days of expanding territory like...

Wen Yan exclaimed, "He is more capable than I imagined!"

Then, Wen Yan looked up and smiled at Ruan Yu, "However, that Shen Peishen is really difficult to deal with. I am extremely interested in him and have even specifically studied this person. You see, this time at the headquarters he was furious, but I understand this man..."

"It's not good, he is acting."

Wen Yan seemed to speak teasingly.

Ruan Yu smiled but didn't say anything.

It seemed like whatever Wen Yan said, it was just so; no need to doubt, no need to refute.

At this moment, Huang came over, "Young master, how much longer do you plan to stay here? That person might have noticed you."

When that person was mentioned, Wen Yan also felt helpless.

"I'm leaving now; I'll leave today. These, I'll read on the way," Wen Yan said cheerfully, lightly patting the thick stack of documents, instructing Ruan Yu to pack them up.

Then Wen Yan, with a burst of enthusiasm, picked up his coffee and drank it all in one gulp.

He was muttering to himself.

"This cup of coffee, Bai Xiaosheng, I'll treat it as a toast to you!"

"I hope you come to the headquarters soon, we share similar temperaments, we'll need to become much closer!"

"Otherwise, I can't handle that person by myself!"

Bai Xiaosheng might not have expected that someone who was very interested in him had quietly left Qinggang and went to other places in the Greater China Region to "observe" and visit friends.

In the future, they will eventually meet again.

Wen Yan, Ruan Yu, and Huang.

Surely, by the time they meet again, their impressions of each other will still be profound.

Wen Yan and Ruan Yu, they left by car that afternoon.

They did not know, Bai Xiaosheng left Qinggang at night, only a few hours apart, their destination—Nanyu City.

Actually, at this time, the aftermath in Nandu, Qinggang and these places had not subsided.

Some estimated that it would take at least four to five more days to completely wrap up.

However, after handing over the affairs here to Lin Ke and Feng Li, Bai Xiaosheng left quietly without notifying anyone.

This time, he was heading to Nanyu to catch Shen Peishen's side off guard again.

But what Bai Xiaosheng did not anticipate...

As soon as they left, Shen Peishen's side was informed.

It was simple; people positioned by Shen Peishen kept close watch on the hotel, reporting as soon as Bai Xiaosheng and his party checked out.

When Shen Peishen received the news, he was playing chess with Lin Yu.

The black and white chess pieces intermingled.

On Shen Peishen's side, although appearing to be pushed back step by step, the situation was perilous, yet he remained as composed as ever.

Lin Yu achieved "small victory," "big victory," and "continuous victories," pressing forward step by step, filled with high spirits for the moment.

Lin Yu felt that with one more push, he could win against his teacher and was immediately overjoyed.

In the past, winning once out of ten times, and only with the teacher giving him handicap, had always exhilarated him.

Not to mention this time, there was no handicap given!

Cheng Liu came in to report some news. Shen Peishen, with a joyful smile, threw the chess piece onto the chessboard and casually pointed at the board, smiling at Lin Yu, "Next, you will play here. And I, will place here. You will win big once again, pushing me into a tight spot, predicting that I will play here, and I just need to place one piece here at this step. You, then, will lose."

Lin Yu stared wide-eyed, following the teacher's guidance, and saw the entire game, ending up utterly dumbstruck.

It seemed like he was continuously triumphing, forcing the teacher into difficulty, every move bearing the risk of defeat.

But the last two moves, like the hand of a deity, amazingly turned the tables!

The one who lost was actually himself!

"Teacher's chess skills are unparalleled; I'm no match at all," Lin Yu said, ashamed.

"In playing chess, you are playing the human heart," Shen Peishen laughed heartily, "You should thoroughly understand the opponent's temperament, not let wins or losses disturb your own mental state, concede to the opponent, and guide their mindset. That is what a true master does!"

Lin Yu bitterly smiled.

How difficult it is!

Perhaps only a teacher who has refined his mind over decades could achieve this.

"Where has Bai Xiaosheng gone, can you guess?" Shen Peishen finally shifted from the chess game to reality.

At this question, Lin Yu and Cheng Liu looked at each other.

In the past, they would never dare to speculate.

Bai Xiaosheng, a living breathing person with feet of his own, who knew where he could have gone.

But after these days under Shen Peishen's "enlightenment," Lin Yu confidently said, "He has gone to Nanyu!"

There was activity brewing in Qinggang, Nandu, and Bai Xiaosheng discreetly left in the evening. It couldn't be just a feint; it was more likely a direct aim at Nanyu to catch them off guard.

"Exactly, Nanyu is the place, it holds even greater importance than Nandu," Shen Peishen smiled, "Calculating it, the small fortune I've accumulated over the years has partially vanished due to Bai Xiaosheng's maneuvers."

Shen Peishen both laughed and felt a sense of poignancy.

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu dared not interject.

Although Teacher Shen Peishen spoke lightly, it wasn't possible for him to be genuinely at ease.

After all, that was the culmination of the teacher's many years of hard work!

If Teacher could climb even higher, then it represented a tremendous resource and support.

This Bai Xiaosheng, if they tolerated him further, could truly threaten their very foundation.

Seeing Lin Yu and Cheng Liu's expressions, Shen Peishen smiled lightly, "I know what you guys are worried about, don't worry, I've got everything prepared."

Hearing this, both of them breathed a slight sigh of relief.

"A big group of people, all ready to be served up to Bai Xiaosheng," Shen Peishen continued with a smile.

Lin Yu and Cheng Liu were both startled.

"Teacher, you've mentioned before about preparing a 'big surprise' for Bai Xiaosheng, could it possibly be that..." Lin Yu exclaimed.

Shen Peishen didn't deny it, merely gestured towards the chessboard, "Lin Yu, after playing so many games, do you still not see my intentions? Don't focus too much on trivial gains or losses; look at the big picture!"

"This time, is also our chance!" Shen Peishen's eyes sparked with a dazzling intensity.

Seeing this, Lin Yu and Cheng Liu instantly became solemn.

...

Arriving in Nanyu City at six in the morning, Bai Xiaosheng and his group left the train station and saw the city skyline lit up by the morning sun.

"Another beautiful day!" Bai Xiaosheng smiled towards the sunrise, "Nanyu, could this be our blessed land?"

When leaving Qinggang, his score was seventy points at the Senior Affairs Officer level, still thirty points away from becoming a top Regional President!

Promotion, soon within reach!

Chapter 1195 - No Clues, Can Buy

Nanyu City, a rising new city in the country, ranks among the top ten in the list of potential in young cities.

Walking through this city, one feels most intensely its dynamic pulse.

The phrase "changing every day" is not enough to describe it.

The official slogan, however, is quite fitting—

"One day a Nanyu, ten years a new face!"

From 2008 to now, in just a mere decade, Nanyu has become a strong economic city, a new suitable place for living, with rapid development that is astounding and has become a top choice for many Asia-Pacific international conferences.

Enterprises in Nanyu, over these years, have all found their own big or small opportunities.

Early in the morning.

Bai Xiaosheng and the other two who had just arrived in Nanyu didn't rush to find a hotel to stay, instead, they dragged their luggage to a clean and tidy breakfast spot by the road to eat.

Firstly, they were hungry.

Secondly, they wanted to experience the morning light of Nanyu.

Even if you read many materials, the best way to truly understand a city is to experience it in person.

Bai Xiaosheng and his companions arrived early, and when they entered, there were only a few other diners.

They picked a quiet table by the window so they could eat while chatting and look out at the city through the window.

The breakfast was rich.

The restaurant offered a variety of foods. From hot noodles to tofu pudding, from various sweet and salty porridges to soups, everything was available; including baked goods, shaomai, pancakes, rolled pancakes, soup dumplings, reflecting a mixture of culinary styles from the north and south, and each snack was very tasty.

"Speaking of which, our Senior Affairs Officer Shen really has a good eye. Look at the cities he chooses, they all are places with potential and room for development. Places like these have bright prospects and many opportunities. Whether it is supporting trusted followers or utilizing resources for external enterprises, profits are enormous. Also, as these places develop quickly, the enterprises perform well, leading to fast promotions, essentially a direct pipeline to send his own people to the headquarters. Naturally, his associates tend to cluster together."

Bai Xiaosheng looked at Nanyu bathed in the morning light through the window, feeling somewhat moved.

Shen Peishen was not an ordinary person, others may scatter their subordinates, but his formed clusters.

Initially, Bai Xiaosheng found it strange, but then realized it was quite reasonable.

From this perspective, Bai Xiaosheng actually admired Shen Peishen.

Just as Shen Peishen had always admired him.

Unfortunately, the two held different ideals, destined to walk different paths, destined not to be friends.

"How good Shen Peishen's foresight may be, or how many people he may have, in the end, he is just delivering performance quotas to us. I heard that our major inspection in Nandu and Qinggang has particularly upset Shen Peishen, it seems we really hit where it hurts."

Lin Weiwei said with a cheerful smile, delicately nibbling a small soup dumpling, gently sipping the broth first, then taking a small bite, chewing and savoring.

While eating, she continued, "This time we've taken the battle to Nanyu, launching a surprise attack, making a big move, it's bound to make Shen Peishen cry! Probably, he's truly been severely weakened, and from now on he might just honestly keep a low profile."

Lin Weiwei was quite excited and optimistic.

Lei Ying was engrossed in eating his noodles.

Large chunks of beef with fresh tender greens, mixed with a big spoonful of bright red chili, made it fragrant and spicy, the soup and meat both delightful, causing him to perspire finely on his forehead.

"Do not underestimate your enemy's intelligence!" Lei Ying reminded amidst his busy eating, "Especially someone who can manage such a large operation, isn't simple!"

Along their journey, they had come to know just how many "subordinates" Shen Peishen actually had; the numbers they uncovered were astonishing. These were all "clustered" together, as for those scattered elsewhere, they probably exist but are hard to trace.

Lei Ying was just stating a calm fact.

Lin Weiwei felt somewhat unconvinced.

She thought, having won a great victory, shouldn't one be inspired and uplifted, filled with fighting spirit? Being too cautious was excessive.

Also, who underestimated the enemy's intelligence!

Those who need attention, naturally still require attention!

Hearing Lei Ying's words, Bai Xiaosheng paused with his chopsticks, thought for a moment, and then nodded seriously, "Now that you mention it, I also feel, being cautious as an opponent to Shen Peisheng is better! I myself... seem to have been a bit too hasty!"

Bai Xiaosheng's hastiness was indeed explainable.

He longed for scores, for more and more scores.

He thought that in the next four months, by securing the last thirty points needed for promotion, he could rise to a role comparable to that of the President of the Greater China Region, making it the perfect opportunity to visit the Wei Family.

Just a few days ago, he had achieved another victorious fruit.

Bai Xiaosheng was also thinking about seizing the momentum and striking while the iron is hot, but now, having calmed down, he wondered: Could rushing lead to problems?!

Early this morning, Bai Xiaosheng chewed slowly and pondered over his breakfast, questioning his own heart.

He was not an impulsive person; even if there were justifiable reasons, he couldn't be like this, he needed to suppress his desires.

Bai Xiaosheng questioned himself in his heart and also scrutinized others.

The irritability Shen Peishen displayed at headquarters, that must have been intentional, right?

A person like him, with profound cultivation, surely had a purpose in showing emotions.

Feigning demeanor?

Who was it for?

For Elder Xia, or for those associated with him?

After all, his subordinates had been overturned several times; if he didn't make a stance now, wouldn't that dishearten people?

Before Bai Xiaosheng could think it through or determine if it was related to him, his thoughts were interrupted by a shadow flickering before his eyes.

Bai Xiaosheng looked up and saw Lin Weiwei waving her hand in front of him.

Lei Ying was also sipping soup while watching him.

"What's wrong?" Bai Xiaosheng asked in surprise as he looked at the two of them.

Why were they staring at him like that?

"Hmm, Weiwei, you were right, Sheng was distracted, he really didn't hear your question," Lei Ying muttered and continued eating.

Lin Weiwei gave Bai Xiaosheng a somewhat resentful glance.

"What... did you say? Say it again, I'll listen carefully this time," Bai Xiaosheng quickly said with a smile, "Sorry about just now, Weiwei!"

"Actually, it was nothing much." Bai Xiaosheng apologized, and Lin Weiwei immediately stopped being angry, even giving him a smile, "I just wanted to ask. Xiaosheng, regarding this place, do we only have the clues from Guo Yunxin and Sun Youhe? Even though you deduced from Lin Yu that there's an issue here, once we really get here, where should we start our investigation?"

That was a question. They couldn't just operate without a clue, blundering around like headless flies.

"In Nandu and Qinggang, if you don't show up, in just three to five days, our absence there will be exposed. By then, Shen Peishen and the others will definitely be searching for us," Lin Weiwei hesitated, but still said, "Although, we had released news early on about going here, stopping by Guangyun and then Nandu, with Xu Huang firing two shots, this is still ultimately our destination, also one of their real 'bases'. Once they realize, they will arrange and be on guard against us here, and then it will get even more troublesome."

At most four to five days, maybe even shorter.

That was the longest duration Bai Xiaosheng and the others could conceal their tracks, to seize the initiative.

If a point of entry existed, initiating quick action would be feasible, but the fear was if none existed...

Then their advance arrival these past few days would be meaningless.

"Regarding the clues about this place, I don't know more than you do," Bai Xiaosheng honestly said.

Afterwards, he explained, "By hiding our tracks and coming here first, on one hand, it's to investigate and see if we can find anything."

"On the other hand, it's also to make them lose track of us. When they suddenly discover we're here, they are bound to react."

"As soon as they make a move, then the clues and entry points will come!"

So, that was Bai Xiaosheng's plan!

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying suddenly understood.

"One more thing, we may not have clues, but others do," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile, "We can buy them!"

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying exchanged a glance, both immediately thought of that woman, "Yu Ying!"

"But by doing so, isn't it highly likely that our presence in Nanyu City would be prematurely exposed? That woman is very cunning! And there's no guarantee she won't sell this information to Shen Peishen!"

Yu Ying, ever since she revealed her true nature, was very much disliked by Lin Weiwei.

Especially because that woman was particularly frivolous with Bai Xiaosheng!

Hearing Lin Weiwei's cautious words, Bai Xiaosheng smiled, "We just made a big deal with her, asking for just three to five days of confidentiality, I believe she will agree. As for after three to five days, if she sells our whereabouts to Shen Peishen, even better!"

"Let her, be the one to strike the grass and startle the snake!"

Chapter 1196 - What a Cunning Merchant!

Bai Xiaosheng finished his breakfast, and with a clang of his chopsticks, made a call to Yu Ying from the restaurant.

"Hello, Xiaosheng, calling me so early in the morning? Miss me that much?"

A lazy and coy female voice answered the phone.

"Are you still sleeping?" Bai Xiaosheng was surprised.

Although it was early in the morning, it was already past seven. Even if someone loved to sleep in, as a woman, shouldn't Yu Ying be getting up, spending an hour or so to groom and put on makeup before going out or heading to work?

"Didn't you check what day it is? It's Saturday, big brother, and I'm not on duty, so no work for me," the voice on the other end complained but coquettishly added, "However, since it's you who's disturbing my sleep, I won't be mad. After all, you gave me quite the honor, didn't you?"

"It's not about honor, not about friendship; it's business!" Bai Xiaosheng emphasized.

He couldn't let this woman wheedle out of the deal.

During his last couple of days in Nandu Qinggang, Bai Xiaosheng realized that the Affairs Officers and the Senior Affairs Officers who rushed over were not associated with Chen Yucheng, Zheng Honghu, or Li Haofeng, but still, they came to offer their support.

They weren't there just to fulfill their duties; they were chasing performance goals.

At that time, Yu Ying also called Bai Xiaosheng, asking him to help and to place a few individuals desperately in need of performance points.

Those individuals were Yu Ying's "clients."

"As an Information Trafficker, you're also involved in scrubbing performance points?" Bai Xiaosheng was genuinely shocked.

"Just a little side business, Xiaosheng, help me with this 'big order,' and I owe you one. We can go for a meal, and I'll dress sexy and appealing, wherever you want to go," she said.

Yu Ying also cooed in a way that would make any man's imagination run wild.

Bai Xiaosheng, with Wei Xuelian in his heart, was as unmoved as an old monk in meditation, embodying the spirit of a faithful man, entirely undisturbed, and immediately saw through her offer, "So, I do you a favor and I also have to take you out to dinner?"

"Listen to you talk, we're all friends here..." Yu Ying replied with sweetness oozing from her voice.

"I can keep these people here, and I can arrange for them to participate in work and thereafter assign them the performance points they need. However, I'm not helping you for nothing; in return, whenever I need intel, you have to get it for me at all costs! Otherwise, I won't trouble you; I'll simply explain to headquarters and have all performance points of those fellas wiped clean..." Bai Xiaosheng had made his terms clear at the time.

"That heartless, huh? Fine, deal!" Yu Ying agreed readily back then.

Thus, Bai Xiaosheng could be said to have shown some favoritism.

Now, Bai Xiaosheng was coming to Yu Ying to reclaim his "reward."

Upon grasping Bai Xiaosheng's intent, Yu Ying sounded somewhat resentful over the phone.

"Do we really have to calculate everything between us so clearly, so meticulously? I thought we had a good rapport, only to realize it's just another transaction. Ha, men are so heartless, tallying every little thing so precisely."

Unaffected, Bai Xiaosheng continued on his own track, "I've heard there are people from Shen Peisheng around in Nanyu. I want all the intel you have on them, everything!"

"Wow, you're really opening your mouth like a lion here. Do you know how much that would cost to sell, and you want it all for free?!"

Yu Ying's voice turned sharp on the phone, as if Bai Xiaosheng's request was outrageously overboard.

"And..."

Yu Ying involuntarily lowered her voice and spoke seriously, "That's intel on Grand Affairs Officer Shen Peisheng, a high and lofty figure who could easily crush a little ant like me!"

"Xiaosheng, you're asking me to risk not just my career but my life for you. You have to consider that for me, sister, it's just impossible!"

"No matter what you say, even threats won't work. Even if you take back the performance points I sent over, it still won't be okay. This is too risky; while I do love money, I also know what's dangerous, and I won't cross the line!"

Yu Ying made it clear she wouldn't be swayed.

"I'll buy that information, not asking you to give it as a favor; name your price, even if it's three or five times what you have in mind, I'll accept it," Bai Xiaosheng didn't want the conversation to drag on.

...

After a moment of pensiveness on the phone, Yu Ying's voice suddenly warmed up, "My dear customer, shall I send it to the same email as before?"

Bai Xiaosheng, "..."

After chatting for a while longer.

After hanging up the phone, Bai Xiaosheng briefly informed Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying of the content of his conversation with Yu Ying.

In fact, the two were right beside him, Bai Xiaosheng didn't intentionally avoid them, they naturally heard some of it, putting it together, they could also grasp some of the situation.

"That woman is really obsessed with money, really don't know how such trash exists at the Greater China Region Headquarters of Zhenbei Group, she doesn't even know to be grateful." Lin Weiwei huffed, "I think in the future, when we have the time, we must thoroughly investigate this, we can't let the headquarters continue to harbour filth! Especially this Yu Ying!"

Weiwei was growing increasingly displeased with Yu Ying.

"However, this woman really does have the makings of an Information Trafficker." Lei Ying stroked his chin, smiling, and asked Bai Xiaosheng, "Did you get her to keep the secret for a few days?"

Bai Xiaosheng nodded and sighed, "That's the part she claims is her 'gift', saying it's to thank me for helping her 'clients' achieve their performance... Truly a shrewd businessperson to the extreme, I am impressed, truly impressed!"

Lei Ying also smiled.

At this point, Bai Xiaosheng lowered his voice, leaned in, and whispered to the two, "Yu Ying also said, the information she's going to send over will involve many people, but in her eyes, those are all small fish and shrimp, the one truly worth paying attention to is actually only one person..."

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying listened intently, but found that Bai Xiaosheng's voice suddenly stopped, the leaning posture also returned to normal, his gaze looking behind them.

Lei Ying, with his sharp hearing, turned his head first and saw a middle-aged man in a suit and leather shoes walking past the store entrance, carrying a briefcase.

That man just glanced at Bai Xiaosheng and the others, then sat at another window-side seat nearby.

A ringtone of a mobile phone rang out.

The man took out his mobile from the bag and answered the call.

He looked refined and spoke on the phone in public, his voice quite loud, without any intention of speaking softly.

"I know, I've already arrived here, it's not even eight o'clock, I will go over at nine-thirty. Can't be too early, nor too late. Going early looks unimpressive, too late isn't good either, what if it gets crowded?"

The middle-aged man spoke to himself, completely ignoring the glances shot his way.

Bai Xiaosheng and his two companions, adhering to the principle that it's better to mind one's own business, glanced over and continued to sip tea and eat.

During this time, Lin Weiwei received an email, sent by Yu Ying, she was busy forwarding a copy each to Bai Xiaosheng and Lei Ying.

The man at the next table was still talking loudly, "I know, this opportunity is rare! Speaking of which, I have to thank you, after things are settled, I will take you out for a meal! A big feast, go for a big... wellness treatment, full service, truly satisfying!"

Big... wellness treatment?

This man, who looked cultured and dressed professionally, actually had quite a few tricks up his sleeve, especially saying so uncovered in public, was really something else.

Lin Weiwei peeked over with sheer disgust.

Lei Ying didn't make a sound.

Bai Xiaosheng didn't care too much, until he heard the man mention a name, then he suddenly startled, lifting his head to look at the man on the phone.

Who did he say was hiring an assistant?

Han Hefei?!

That's the same name Yu Ying mentioned!

It can't be a coincidence, after all, in the entirety of Nanyu, there probably is only one celebrity with the name Han Hefei.

Bai Xiaosheng put his chopsticks down and smiled at Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, "Let's find a place to settle down first, then rest for a while, we finally have something to get busy with!"

"What are we going to do?" Lin Weiwei asked curiously.

"Apply for a job!"

Chapter 1197 - Your Face is Really Big

Bai Xiaosheng gave them their first "action instruction" after arriving in Nanyu, which left both Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying completely dumbfounded.

Go... to a job interview?

The two looked at each other in confusion and then turned to Bai Xiaosheng, hoping for a clearer explanation.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and signaled that this wasn't the place to talk.

Then, he stood up, picked up his things, and walked out.

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying had no choice but to follow.

As they passed a nearby table, a man in his thirties or forties was still speaking loudly on his phone.

When Bai Xiaosheng walked by, the man looked up and made brief eye contact with him.

"Thank you!" Bai Xiaosheng said with a pleasant mood, a gentle smile on his face, and even greeted the man.

The man was suddenly taken aback.

Thank you?

Thank him?

Why?

Do I know this person?

And, did I do anything just now?

After a few more steps, Bai Xiaosheng stopped, turned back to look at the man, pointed to his own ear, and added with a smile, "Keep your voice down when on the phone in public places!"

The man was stunned as he watched Bai Xiaosheng walk away.

Then, a very beautiful, elegant, and well-shaped young woman passed by and sternly reminded him—

"Keep it down on the phone!"

Next, a muscular, burly man walked past, giving him a look that was dark and profound, intimidating.

"Quiet down!" The big man's words carried the weight of ten, and the frightened man quickly nodded in agreement.

The man kept nervously watching the trio until they disappeared outside the door, and then he couldn't help but mutter, "Are they all nuts?"

"Hey, what are you talking about?!"

A voice of surprise questioned from the phone.

The man was jolted back to reality, hastily putting on a smile and explaining on the phone, "Not you, it was just now... a bunch of lunatics passed by!"

...

Bai Xiaosheng stood outside the snack shop.

On the wide street bathed in the bright morning light, pedestrians rushed by and vehicles flowed like a stream.

A city full of vigor.

A morning full of vigor.

Bai Xiaosheng closed his eyes, appearing to take a deep breath.

The title of "livable city" that Nanyu carried was not in vain. Despite the large population and traffic, the morning air was very fresh, thanks to the dense urban greenery and the city's support and promotion of new energy vehicles.

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying thought that Bai Xiaosheng was simply taking in the fresh air and reflecting quietly, so they stood by his side, not wanting to disturb him.

Little did they know that Bai Xiaosheng's mind was rapidly flashing through information like a carousel of slides.

It was all about a person named "Han Hefei" and news regarding his recruitment for an assistant.

Han Hefei was the General Manager of Nanyu's largest enterprise—the Shenhe Group. Shenhe Group, a direct subsidiary of a conglomerate, ranked among the top thirty strong in its category. It operated in a wide array of business fields, from real estate to the food industry, with a breadth and cross-sectoral involvement that was astonishing.

Bai Xiaosheng compared Shenhe Group's performance reported last year, which was already two to three times that of Zhongjing Media!

Such a large company truly deserved the designation "Group."

Han Hefei's former primary assistant had been involved in a car accident a month earlier, making it impossible for them to continue, hence the public recruitment for an assistant.

It was said that "exceptionally outstanding" talents could directly be promoted to the position of the first assistant, but the common speculation was that even if one got the job, they could only start as the third assistant, and the current second and third assistants would move up the ranks. After all, considering who Han Hefei was, there was no shortage of talented and remarkable people he had come across; recognition of "exceptionally outstanding" was not so simple!

This recruitment was receiving widespread attention.

Since it's about choosing his own assistant, Han Hefei will personally conduct the interviews, bypassing HR's preliminary selection.

Having the chance to meet the well-known Mr. Han and possibly being chosen to rocket to success, naturally, many "talents" and "elites" want to give it a shot.

But Shenhe Group isn't foolish either; they set strict requirements and numerous restrictions.

Just the conditions of having "at least three years of experience at the managerial level or above in a domestic top 100 or international Fortune 500 company" and "at least three years of experience as a senior assistant or secretary" as well as "knowledge of aristocratic and business etiquette," already eliminated over ninety percent of the candidates.

Even so, this interview has been held twice already, and this time is the third and final one.

Bai Xiaosheng silently took note of all the information and then searched for Shenhe Group's address along with nearby five-star hotels. A virtual model of the city immediately appeared in his mind, along with an extensive map, pinpointing the locations he was looking for, making it "clear at a glance".

When Bai Xiaosheng opened his eyes again, he smiled slightly.

Others might just think he was deep in thought for a dozen seconds or so, but little did they know, Bai Xiaosheng had completed all the research on the content he was interested in and committed it to memory.

With Red Lotus, he is a human-computer on the go.

"Let's go, I'll choose our accommodation this time." Bai Xiaosheng saw Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying standing beside him and immediately said with a smile.

Lin Weiwei and the others naturally had no objections, it was just that when Bai Xiaosheng flagged down a taxi and expertly reported their destination, they were all somewhat curious.

In the car, Bai Xiaosheng made a call to Lu Qingfeng.

That number was Lu Qingfeng's private one and was quickly answered.

"Lu, I need to ask a favor of you this time."

"What's up, why so courteous?"

On the other end of the phone, Lu Qingfeng was also a bit curious.

"I need you to forge a document for me." Without mincing words, Bai Xiaosheng spoke up, glanced at Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying beside him, and then added, "Make it three copies."

At this moment, Lu Qingfeng was in his own office.

While on the phone, he was approving documents, but when he heard Bai Xiaosheng's request, his pen paused, and his expression became somewhat astonished.

Bai Xiaosheng asking him for a favor, to forge documents?

"Forging documents can be a big or small matter, what do you need! Just to be clear, I might not help you! I would even try to stop you!" Although Lu Qingfeng was around the same age as Bai Xiaosheng, he had inherited his father's wisdom and was firm in his stance on serious matters.

"Look at you, getting all serious, it's not as severe as you think," Bai Xiaosheng laughed, "I just want to borrow the renowned name of Tengyun Group!"

"You better not be setting me up, tell me first," Lu Qingfeng grumbled.

"Make me and my two assistants a work history of having been employed by Tengyun, the higher the position the better," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile. "Also, there needs to be experience as a senior assistant, at least three years minimum."

Didn't Han Hefei require the experience of "at least three years at the managerial level or above in a domestic top 100 or international Fortune 500 company" and "at least three years of experience as a senior assistant or secretary"?

Having worked at Tengyun, is that impactful enough, commanding enough to dominate the competition?

"What are you up to?" Lu Qingfeng was immediately surprised upon hearing this.

He thought Bai Xiaosheng was asking him to forge something else, but a resume?

Wasn't Bai Xiaosheng's title as Senior Affairs Officer of Zhenbei Group in the Greater China Region intimidating enough that he needed his creds from Tengyun Group?

"I'm applying for a job, and this company is one of ours," Bai Xiaosheng said. "What I do, what I need this for, now you understand, right?"

Lu Qingfeng was no fool.

The Senior Affairs Officer of Zhenbei Group's Greater China Region, an executive of supervisory nature, applying for a job within his own company while presenting an external work history...

It was clear that this was an undercover investigation.

He just didn't know which unlucky person had caught Bai Xiaosheng's attention.

In private, Lu Qingfeng felt some sympathy for that person.

He had heard about Bai Xiaosheng's affairs over the past two years and had directly heard from Bai Xiaosheng about many of his investigations.

To be honest, sometimes Bai Xiaosheng was really ruthless; those who fell into his hands probably "died with their eyes wide open."

"Send me your address, as long as it's in a first-tier or second-tier city, I'll have someone deliver it to you," Lu Qingfeng said, then cursed with a laugh, "You know what I'm doing right now?"

"I guess you're on the toilet."

"Get lost! I'm reviewing a multi-billion cooperation proposal, got interrupted by your silly business in the middle of it, and have to re-read it! Also, you should show some appreciation for the favor I'm doing for you!"

"Lu, look at you, talking about that again, we're brothers, aren't we!"

"..." Lu Qingfeng let out a light sigh, and said earnestly, "Bai Xiaosheng, you sure have a lot of face! And a thick skin to match!"

Chapter 1198 - "Victory Not Yet Achieved"

After his conversation with Lu Qingfeng, Bai Xiaosheng sent over some necessary materials such as the digital version of the photos and aliases through WeChat, and mentioned the hotel, promising to send the specific address later.

Lu Qingfeng replied with an "OK" emoji.

Tengyun Group's operations were extensive with many companies; as long as the resume was properly handled, it could be printed locally and stamped for use. Stamping it with a local company's seal would make it easy for Han Hefei's company to verify its authenticity.

Bai Xiaosheng didn't concern himself further with these details.

He was sure that Lu Qingfeng would arrange everything properly.

After taking care of these things, Bai Xiaosheng was in quite a good mood.

During the taxi ride, Bai Xiaosheng found it inappropriate to explain things to Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, considering he already mentioned fake resumes over the phone, and revealing that they were heading to Han Hefei's Shenhe Group would risk exposing their plan.

Upon Bai Xiaosheng's indication, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying did not ask further questions.

The ride was silent.

Upon arriving at the hotel, after checking in, the trio returned to their room, where Bai Xiaosheng disclosed everything to Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying.

"Yu Ying mentioned that the key figure here is Han Hefei! There are numerous rumors about her, yet no concrete evidence to show she's really something special," Bai Xiaosheng reflected before laughing, "However, it just so happened that the man making a call next to us during breakfast gave us a timely piece of information, just like timely rain! That's why I even thanked him before I left."

So that's it, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying nodded in understanding.

"So, Xiaosheng, you were aiming to apply as Han Hefei's assistant," Lin Weiwei shared a glance with Lei Ying.

Indeed, it was too coincidental.

"Correct, an opportunity falling from the sky! Becoming Han Hefei's assistant, regardless of whether it's as the primary assistant or not, provides an opportunity to infiltrate the inner workings! This makes our investigation much easier!" Bai Xiaosheng laughed, "Not a bad plan, huh?"

A Senior Affairs Officer of the Greater China Region applying to be an assistant at an affiliate company...

Is that really a good plan?

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying neither agreed nor disagreed, but it certainly sounded interesting.

"Wait, Xiaosheng, when you were in the taxi talking to Mr. Lu Qingfeng, you mentioned needing three sets of forged documents. Does that mean Lei Ying and I also have to apply individually?" Lin Weiwei asked.

Lei Ying also looked at Bai Xiaosheng.

"Three people will increase our chances," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying thought it over, and it made sense.

Besides, although Bai Xiaosheng was formidable in many aspects, he was admittedly "not a professional" when it came to assistant duties.

"So now, the three of us are competitors, and whoever gets eliminated will have to treat the others to a meal," Lin Weiwei laughed.

The winner doesn't treat, the loser does. Not very reasonable.

But from another perspective, it makes sense, as the "winner" will have a lot more on their plate, while the loser gets to relax and provide support.

So, it should be the loser who treats.

"I'm entering the competition; just get ready to pay for a meal," Bai Xiaosheng joked.

It seemed he had more advantages than the other two.

"Then I, should prepare the money," Lei Ying muttered.

He's at the biggest disadvantage; tall and strongly built, with a body honed from physical fitness.

Besides Bai Xiaosheng asking him to be an assistant, who else would?

His physique and presence, clearly more suitable as a bodyguard!

Thus, Lei Ying didn't hold much hope for himself.

Bai Xiaosheng and Lin Weiwei exchanged a glance and laughed together.

The three sat down, and Bai Xiaosheng detailed everything about Han Hefei and the recruitment to them.

"This is additional info sent by Yu Ying, I read it in the taxi. I won't send it digitally; make sure you remember everything well," Bai Xiaosheng instructed.

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying nodded without doubt.

At that moment, there was a knock at the door.

Lin Weiwei got up to answer it and found a dignified middle-aged man around fifty standing outside, holding a kraft paper document envelope.

"Excuse me, is Mr. Bai Xiaosheng here?" the middle-aged man asked with a cordial smile, "I am the person in charge of Tengyun Group's subsidiary in Nanyu. I've prepared the materials and have brought them over."

Bai Xiaosheng, hearing this conversation from inside, immediately smiled and stood up to greet him.

Quick!

This was handled incredibly fast; from the phone call in the taxi to now, it had only been an hour. Not only was the task completed, but it was also delivered personally by the head of a subsidiary, showcasing remarkable efficiency.

It was Bai Xiaosheng who specially urged Lu Qingfeng to speed things up.

"I am Bai Xiaosheng." Bai Xiaosheng smiled at the middle-aged man, "Just hand over the things to me."

The middle-aged man sized up Bai Xiaosheng, feeling that he matched exactly how Lu Yun had described him over the phone, then handed over the items with a smile.

Afterwards, the middle-aged man did not stay long, only politely leaving a business card, saying that they could call him for anything.

Such humility gave Bai Xiaosheng a very good impression of him.

After the man left, Bai Xiaosheng looked at the business card and then exclaimed in surprise, "He's actually an Executive Vice President!"

To think that an Executive Vice President from Tengyun, who holds authority over a region, personally delivered a "faked" resume; it all felt somewhat comically absurd.

Bai Xiaosheng walked back to the sofa area and took out the documents from the kraft paper bag.

Those resumes were crafted meticulously, even the paper was high-quality, and there was a Tengyun exclusive LOGO watermark on them.

Just these documents alone, it's hard for outsiders to fake them. Moreover, faking them requires a high level of skill but the actual significance isn't that great.

Bai Xiaosheng handed over the resumes belonging to Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying to the two of them.

They both exclaimed in admiration.

"Mr. Lu Qingfeng is really efficient; even this document is made so meticulously."

"Yes, the stuff Xiaosheng asked for couldn't possibly be wrong."

Bai Xiaosheng, with a smile on his face, started browsing through his own resume.

After a few seconds, the smile on Bai Xiaosheng's face froze and then his brow gradually furrowed.

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying were still chatting and laughing, but Bai Xiaosheng suddenly slammed the resume onto the table, exclaiming angrily, "Nice one, Lu Qingfeng, are you playing with me!"

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying were taken aback, staring at Bai Xiaosheng in astonishment.

Lin Weiwei picked up the document to look at it, and Lei Ying also leaned in closer.

"I asked him to elevate my position a bit, and what did he fill in? Seven years as Executive Vice President, three years as President Secretary!" Bai Xiaosheng raged, "Why not just make me the President of Tengyun!"

That was Lu Yun's father, Lu Yun's position...

"At my age, having been an Executive Vice President for seven years and a President Secretary for three years? What was he thinking! Is there no need for a promotion process? Am I Lu Yun's illegitimate son..." Bai Xiaosheng felt on the verge of tears.

An allegory goes, "Qin Genglo became a chancellor at twelve, Zhou Yu was appointed as Water Army Commander at thirteen..."

Those were legends from ancient times.

Bai Xiaosheng, looking not even thirty, to reach the milestones mentioned in the resume, he might have had to join Tengyun right after high school without even attending college...

Actually, this whole situation wasn't really Lu Qingfeng's fault. At his age, Bai Xiaosheng had already made it to Senior Affairs Officer of Zhenbei Group's Greater China Region.

Who could he even complain to...

It was only natural for Lu Qingfeng to offer Bai Xiaosheng a parallel position...

It's just that there was a problem with the duration, making an exaggerated thing even more exaggerated, overly exaggerated to the point of being unbelievable.

In fact, Bai Xiaosheng had not provided much content for this resume; they had to fill it in themselves.

For example, the age.

Although these are minor details, they can lead to major misunderstandings.

Lu Qingfeng had actively arranged for someone to take care of this, only specifying over three years of experience for each position. The person handling it assumed that this "Lin Sheng" must be quite old since he was already a vice president, hence adding a few more years wouldn't hurt...

But after Lu Qingfeng reviewed the documents, he rushed to a meeting and didn't scrutinize them long enough before sending them out.

Little did he know, big problem!

"It's done, mine can't be used now," Bai Xiaosheng said dejectedly.

If he were to scribble and modify it, its credibility would greatly decrease, not to mention the damned seal just happened to be pressed over some words.

It couldn't even be altered!

"Xiaosheng, although our documents are a bit exaggerated, they can still be used," Lin Weiwei comforted him, "Besides, you as the Senior Affairs Officer have repeatedly destroyed Shen Peishen's dens; maybe they've already distributed a photo of you. I'm afraid your personal attendance might mess things up."

Bai Xiaosheng looked at Lin Weiwei, then at Lei Ying, who also nodded in agreement with Weiwei's opinion.

Bai Xiaosheng sighed and slowly tore up his own "resume," "Then it's all up to you guys!"

"Just remember to treat us to a meal!" Lin Weiwei said cheerfully.

Bai Xiaosheng felt like crying.

He thought he would win, but unexpectedly, he was eliminated before even applying...

This is really a sad story.

"However, even if I don't go myself, with my support, I send you to apply, and you'll have a smooth journey!"

Chapter 1199 - A Complete Makeover

Since it's already been decided to apply for the position as Han Hefei's assistant, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying in their current state are obviously not up to par.

They are dressed too casually, and Lin Weiwei even removed her makeup.

Who is Han Hefei?

He's considered second-to-none in Nanyu, topping the charts both in business and high society.

To be his assistant, capability is certainly the first requirement, but knowledge and temperament are also essential.

Fortunately, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying are both already assistants to Senior Affairs Officers, with undisputed abilities and extensive worldly experience. What kind of grand scenes haven't they witnessed? Sometimes at a reception, individuals with net worths in the tens or hundreds of billions are mere side characters.

After having seen the great rivers and seas, would they be intimidated by a small lake in Nanyu?

The professional attire they carry with them is tailored by an Italian designer, custom-fitted for each person. They also possess impeccable etiquette, taught by an internationally acclaimed etiquette instructor hired by the headquarters.

Clothes make the person; with ability plus temperament, and a solid resume to boot, it would be hard for this endeavor not to succeed!

Lei Ying made a slight adjustment, changed into a new suit, and the rough man transformed into an elite professional in an instant.

Lin Weiwei put her hair up to reveal her fair, slender neck. A change into a little blazer and skirt accentuated her long, straight, fair legs. Her demeanor was both beautiful and maturely competent, with a hint of martial valor, utterly enchanting.

Bai Xiaosheng lazed in a chair, watching these two primping themselves in front of the mirror.

At first, Bai Xiaosheng thought that even if he couldn't go to the frontline, he could still be a good support.

But seeing the two of them so spirited and full of confidence, combined with their presence and demeanor...

It seemed that his role as support might be no more useful than passing water...

Suddenly, Bai Xiaosheng lost his enthusiasm.

"Xiaosheng, if you find it dull to wait outside, why not come with me? Just fill in any resume, and when the time comes, let them give Tengyun's Executive Vice-President a call to check, and that'll do," Lin Weiwei said as she applied her makeup, without the heart to watch Bai Xiaosheng looking so dejected.

Bai Xiaosheng thought about it for a moment, then sat up straight, his eyes brightening a bit, "Right, that might actually work!"

"Are you not afraid that Shen Peishen has already distributed your photo to the people below, and you'll be recognized as soon as you get there?" Suddenly, Lei Ying said, dousing Bai Xiaosheng with cold water, and the words that followed also made Lin Weiwei pause in her movements, "Even for us, there's a chance that photos have been distributed. We don't have full-body shots, but Shenhe Group has our one-inch bareheaded ID photos, and it's not a big deal for Shen Peishen to get hold of them."

The reminder startled even Lin Weiwei, "What should we do then!"

It wasn't anything else, but Shen Peishen had been troubled by them so many times; how could he not be prepared!

Bai Xiaosheng also frowned, stroking his chin, murmuring to himself, "What should we do, we can't just change faces, as much as I'd like to..."

Without meaning to, Bai Xiaosheng glanced at Lin Weiwei, and suddenly, a spark of inspiration flashed in his eyes, pointing at Lin Weiwei, "I've got it!"

His sudden cry of joy surprised both Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying.

"BenZhou is home to four nefarious arts, one of which can be used—makeup art!" Bai Xiaosheng burst out laughing, clapping his hands.

The transformational prowess on live streaming platforms, those beauty bloggers who change their appearance dramatically—truly miraculous!

Even foreigners would exclaim in surprise after watching.

"Uh, my makeup skills are... not quite at that level..." Lin Weiwei said with a blush upon hearing his plan.

Although she had a full array of makeup products, took many with her when traveling, and oftentimes studied...

Her career had ultimately "held her back," and she hadn't taken it any further.

Lei Ying immediately shrugged and threw up his hands, as if to say there was nothing he could do.

"I might not be good at it, but I'm an expert!" Bai Xiaosheng laughed shamelessly, "Even if I'm not skilled, Red Lotus can search for the techniques of those maestros. With some assistance from me, what's so difficult about it!"

Suddenly, Bai Xiaosheng had found his purpose.

"No way, Xiaosheng, you—you know how to do makeup?" Lin Weiwei was somewhat incredulous.

Lei Ying was also skeptical.

"Bring over all those cosmetics. I can do more than makeup; I can give you a whole new look," Bai Xiaosheng said earnestly.

There wasn't much time left, but with Bai Xiaosheng saying this, Lin Weiwei went with the flow and fetched her things.

She laid out a plethora of cosmetics, bottles and jars spread out, and Lei Ying couldn't help but stare.

He seldom paid attention to these things, but today he had a chance to get a closer look, and he even tried to count them.

There must be over twenty types!

"Out on a business trip, I probably didn't bring everything complete," Lin Weiwei murmured.

Lei Ying, "..."

"That's enough," Bai Xiaosheng said with a bottle in each hand, smiling, "You can be the first to try it then."

...

As Bai Xiaosheng was doing Lin Weiwei's makeup, she slightly closed her eyes, her eyelashes trembling lightly. She could feel Bai Xiaosheng's movements were incredibly skilled and unbelievably fast: drawing the eyebrows, applying eyeshadow, shaping the facial contours, smearing highlighter—executing a series of actions in one go without needing to redo any.

Lin Weiwei felt a mixture of shyness and nervousness.

Although she trusted Bai Xiaosheng's abilities in various matters, makeup was different—Bai Xiaosheng wasn't a woman. Even if he had some understanding, how many chances could he have to actually practice? This is something hard to master without practice...

Lin Weiwei thought back to her own initial attempts, the mess she made when applying makeup to herself, and the thought that this might be Bai Xiaosheng's first "practice" inevitably increased her nervousness.

"I don't ask for it to look superb—mediocre is fine, and even if it doesn't reach mediocre, as long as it's presentable that's fine, and if all else fails, it can't be too ugly..." Lin Weiwei silently prayed in her heart.

Her requirements kept lowering.

In less than ten minutes, Bai Xiaosheng finished with a flourish, standing up to redo Lin Weiwei's previously pinned-up hair into a loose style, then he smiled and said, "All done."

When Lin Weiwei opened her eyes, she saw Bai Xiaosheng's smile and the indescribable expression on Lei Ying's face beside him, and her heart sank.

Could it be she had been made up to look ugly?

"Take a look, how is it?" Bai Xiaosheng took a mirror and handed it to Lin Weiwei with a smile.

Before looking, Lin Weiwei was incredibly tense, afraid that she would meet the soap opera stereotype of the female lead at the beginning, disheveled and unattractive.

However, after just one glance, Lin Weiwei was stunned.

In the mirror was a delicate beauty.

Very pleasing to the eye, the sort of face that grows on you the more you look at it.

Lin Weiwei, not being a narcissist, couldn't help but gaze steadily at herself for a long while.

Yet, the beauty in the mirror felt somewhat unfamiliar to her.

There were no false eyelashes, no colored contacts; it looked so natural, as if only light makeup had been applied.

"Is this really me?" Lin Weiwei couldn't help but exclaim in surprise.

The person in the mirror showed the same surprised expression and lip shape.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled.

What Red Lotus could help him achieve wasn't just makeup, but a "remodeling" of the face—changes through highlights and shadow, changing hair styles to conceal facial shapes...

So many details could make a person look like another entirely.

Perhaps the ancient art of disguise really existed, Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself.

"Xiaosheng, when you're normally not with us... I mean, you don't perhaps have any hobbies, do you?" Lin Weiwei carefully looked at Bai Xiaosheng and murmured the question.

This was no longer just skilled artistry, it was godlike technique—they say there are no shortcuts to makeup, how long did this take to master, and how would one practice...

Bai Xiaosheng was taken aback, noticing that Lei Ying also held such an inquisitive gaze towards him, as if looking at someone with a psychological issue.

Bai Xiaosheng was momentarily speechless, and after a while, he managed to say something.

"Don't misunderstand, I am not a pervert; I am male, I like women!"

In fact, during makeup, Red Lotus had told Bai Xiaosheng about a new "support feature" that could be activated, allowing Bai Xiaosheng to be unrecognizable to others when interacting with them. The principle was both complex and simple: Red Lotus would assist Bai Xiaosheng in adjusting his micro-expressions while speaking to be "dissimilar to the past," and also emit a small range of special waves. Unless someone was especially familiar with him, they would experience a cognitive bias towards his appearance.

Of course, it came with a "fee."

Bai Xiaosheng declined and even complained about Red Lotus not mentioning it earlier.

Had he known about it earlier, he wouldn't have torn up that resume and exposed his makeup skills.

And he was almost mistaken for a pervert...

Finally, the three individuals who walked out of the hotel, "Lin Sheng," "Bai Ying," and "Fang Cheng," each had a distinct appearance from before.

As for Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, the photos on their resumes were significantly different from the identification photos provided to the group, so there was no need to worry.

Bai Xiaosheng had also notified the executive vice president of Tengyun, who would specially arrange for someone to deal with Shenhe Group's investigations.

Just like that, the three transformed individuals confidently headed straight for Shenhe Building.

Chapter 1200 - Reencountering the Eccentric Man

Shenhe Group's Shenhe Building, in Nanyu City, is a truly iconic structure.

Although many buildings in various places claim to be local landmarks, including the twin towers of Zhongjing Media, many of them are, to some extent, self-aggrandizing.

To be called a landmark building, first of all, it must be situated in a great location, with significant architectural volume.

It must also be distinctive without falling into cliché, avoiding homogenization and vulgarity.

The Shenhe Building is precisely such a structure, with its steel frame high-rise, smooth lines, modern design, and a blend of both technological and contemporary flair.

Even Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but sincerely exclaim when he stood in the plaza outside Shenhe Building.

This landmark is truly worthy of its name!

Even the promotional materials for Nanyu City from the municipal government feature it as a city landmark.

Below the Shenhe Building is a plaza, divided into an inner and outer sections.

By the time Bai Xiaosheng and his group arrived, the outer plaza was already crowded with tourists and sightseers, with security guards and police maintaining order.

The inner plaza, it is said, can only be entered with an access pass, but there was already a long line of several dozen people at the entrance.

Lin Weiwei asked around and learned that they were all there to interview for the position of Mr. Han Hefei's assistant.

"It seems we really do have quite a number of 'competitors'!" Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but laugh.

"With so many people going in for an interview, can Mr. Han Hefei really meet them all if he does nothing else all day?!" Lin Weiwei couldn't help but wonder.

Lei Ying thought the same.

"It's not that simple. I'm afraid getting inside will require passing a preliminary selection!" As Bai Xiaosheng observed inside the entrance, he saw a row of five large barricades, vaguely noticing the presence of tables and chairs behind them. Probably, those who entered were starting their first round of interviews right there!

"They talk about not going through HR pre-screening and interviewing in person, but isn't it still the first round of filtering by the staff?" Bai Xiaosheng chuckled lightly and then said to Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, "In a while, this line will inevitably turn into five lines. We should spread out, otherwise being together will be too conspicuous."

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying nodded at the same time.

The three walked over and casually joined the end of the line, knowing they would have to change queues soon anyway.

As expected, with fifteen minutes to go before the official interview time announced by Shenhe Group, a group of people emerged from the inner plaza. They were a team of security guards in uniform, with the leader holding a megaphone and loudly instructing those in the long line, "This interview is different from previous ones. Please form five lines and queue up in an orderly manner. Shortly, you will move in turn behind the barricades to undergo identity verification."

They didn't say preliminary selection but "identity verification."

However, in Bai Xiaosheng's view, the meaning was more or less the same.

Security came out to maintain order, and under their direction, the long line was split into five columns.

The number of people in each small team was about the same, with seven or eight people.

Bai Xiaosheng's line was next to Lin Weiwei's, and the two also happened to stand side by side.

However, to "avoid suspicion," Bai Xiaosheng and Lin Weiwei did not communicate or even make eye contact, treating each other like strangers.

Bai Xiaosheng looked ahead into the distance. The people in the front row had already entered the inner plaza and went behind the five barricades.

About every one or two minutes, someone was escorted back out by the security.

Bai Xiaosheng quietly observed a couple of groups and estimated that only about one-third of the people could get through, with others leaving dejected and some quite unwilling, persistently arguing with the security.

Of course, no matter how much they complained, it was useless.

After all, the security guards were not concerned with how much talent they had yet to show or why they were eliminated.

"I wonder what trick they're using for this first round of mass selection. Identity verification? Interesting, I really want to see how they conduct it," Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself, genuinely intrigued.

Just then, Bai Xiaosheng suddenly heard someone striking up a conversation behind him.

"Miss, you look very familiar. Let's get acquainted. I'm Chu Wei, also here to apply. May I know how to address you?"

Since he was nearby, Bai Xiaosheng turned his head to look, but he was taken aback.

Someone was hitting on Lin Weiwei.

The key point is that person, he still "recognizes" him, and moreover, the other party had been helpful toward them—

It was that man who was noisily making phone calls in the breakfast shop!

That man named Chu Wei, well-dressed and smiling like a gentleman, looked at Lin Weiwei with bright eyes.

Familiar?

Of course, he's familiar; they had just met that morning.

However, the fact that Chu Wei didn't recognize Lin Weiwei also proves that Bai Xiaosheng's makeup was quite effective.

Lin Weiwei simply nodded faintly out of courtesy, as a way of greeting.

Chu Wei, close to middle age, was even more energized seeing Lin Weiwei respond.

Seeing Lin Weiwei's beautiful face and elegant demeanor, his eyes shone with admiration.

"Are you also here for the interview, miss?"

"Uh huh."

"Mr. Han's Shenhe Group is renowned across several provinces. Being his assistant is indeed our fortune, isn't it?"

"Mm-hmm."

"Moreover, Shenhe Group is affiliated with Zhenbei Group. Have you heard of Zhenbei Group? I'm very familiar with it! It's an international financial conglomerate with endless prospects. For industry elites like us, we should aim for such big enterprises!"

"Oh."

"This time Shenhe Group, with the salary Mr. Han is offering, has very high requirements. Let's talk about educational background... Where did you graduate from? You look very young. I have dual degrees in business administration and finance from the American Sagemonte University. Although Sagemonte may not be well known, it is a historical institution located in the beautiful..."

Chu Wei really can talk nonstop.

Lin Weiwei has gone from being nonchalant to completely ignoring him.

He kept on talking about that unknown third-rate university.

Even Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but feel sympathy for Lin Weiwei, who couldn't resist glancing at him.

Up ahead, someone being escorted out by security was shouting, "Why am I eliminated? This isn't fair! I want to see Mr. Han; this is unfair!"

That shouting attracted attention from all around.

Finally, Chu Wei stopped showing off to Lin Weiwei and looked forward, shaking his head and sighing, "Look at that, we're all civilized people, this is a public place. Making such a ruckus, don't they have any decency! How are such people fit to join Shenhe Group!"

Chu Wei had a look of 'morals going down the drain' as he kept criticizing.

Lin Weiwei couldn't help but look back at him seriously, "Right, those who are loud in public, regardless of others' feelings, such people don't deserve to be here. Don't you think, do such people lack a sense of self-awareness!"

Seeing Lin Weiwei as if "agreeing" with his perspective, Chu Wei was overjoyed and quickly agreed, "Absolutely! Such people will never change their bad habits, stepping into this plaza they just dirty the ground of Shenhe Group!"

"..." Lin Weiwei, "Haha."

Chu Wei truly does not remember who was being noisy in the breakfast shop that morning.

Indeed, how could such a person have any self-awareness.

The commotion up front had just affected Lin Weiwei's line, naturally delaying their progress a bit.

Bai Xiaosheng glanced at Lin Weiwei, and she looked back at him. They both pretended to be meeting for the first time and nodded to each other.

Then, Bai Xiaosheng took a step forward.

Seeing this, Chu Wei got jealous and drew close to Lin Weiwei, "Beauty, I see you're looking at that pretty boy. Be careful, I can tell at first glance he's no good. Look at his pretentious walking style. So young, what depth, experiences, or abilities can he have? Probably just scraped by in some third-rate university and came here to try his luck, probably superficial and has never been in a company as big as Shenhe in his life!"

Had it been any other time, Lin Weiwei would have gotten angry at someone mocking Bai Xiaosheng, but at that moment, she didn't even feel like getting angry with Chu Wei.

Lin Weiwei remained silent and walked forward; their group was advancing, too.

"Beauty, don't rush off, we're destined to talk a bit more!"

The middle-aged, lascivious uncle ogled Lin Weiwei's departing figure and followed her step by step.