

Two Trillion 2401

Chapter 2401 - Breaking Through Psychological Defenses (Part 3)

Old John, Jenny spotted at a glance that the item before them was one of the things they had lost, specifically related to the cooperation with "Green Sky" company.

Their pupils shrank instantly, and their breathing became unintentionally rapid.

Such an important item, yet it wasn't kept secure or sealed, and it was thrown out in the very first sentence!

This is simply...

This damned big guy, doesn't play by the rules, others play small cards first and save the big ones for later.

This bastard, starts off with a King Bomb!

The two were caught off guard and their hearts were thrown into disarray.

Lei Ying continued, "Strange, right? Why just one contract? Let me tell you, right now, there are many other teams that have already gone to all the other related companies, catching them off guard. They are even less prepared than you. The ones we sent are masters of psychological warfare. Believe it or not, before we're done talking, someone will confess. You know the corporation's generous policies; if by the end of our conversation you haven't said anything, fine, the corporation will appoint the best lawyers to prosecute you with the highest charges! Don't blame me for not warning you now!"

These words caused Old John and Jenny, whose minds were already in turmoil, to look upset.

"Actually, I couldn't care less if you talk or not, not my problem. I'll leave once I'm done asking." Lei Ying even mumbled.

"This contract... I don't know!" Jenny gritted her teeth and stubbornly said before Old John could speak.

This made Old John couldn't help but look at Jenny.

She was the most frightened just now, how can a woman be so fickle!

Lei Ying looked at her coldly, "This is pointless."

Jenny was determined, closing her mouth and saying nothing.

The situation had reached its most dangerous point, she had to grit her teeth, only then would Miss Caroline save her, if she opened her mouth, it would all be over.

Lei Ying stared at Jenny for two seconds, admired her, and motioned to the person beside him. That person immediately stood up and walked inside.

Although Jenny was determined to grit her teeth, she still couldn't help but glance inside, unsure of what the person was going to do.

Old John slightly lowered his head, his eyes flickering.

One moment Old John wanted to divert the trouble, making Lei Ying focus more on Jenny rather than himself, another moment he thought about those other companies, eight or nine of them, if any one of them confessed, what situation would he face here.

Old John's forehead shone slightly, but he also made up his mind, as long as the other party didn't have his evidence, and that contract was just something Jenny brought along.

His bag was in his hand, the contract he held was inside, and the people present were not law enforcement officers, they had no right to look through it.

Just as he was thinking, the person who walked inside came out again, holding something in their hand.

"A small recording device, the conversation you just had with Mr. John inside, it's all recorded," Lei Ying said to Jenny.

Hearing this, Jenny froze.

It was like being struck by lightning.

Old John couldn't help but shiver.

There was actually a camera installed inside?!

"This is illegal surveillance!" Jenny's psychological defense began to collapse, she shouted.

This big guy, doesn't play by the usual rules!

Bomb after bomb, making it hard to even breathe, feeling like a fish on the chopping board, ready to be cut.

How could he be so sinister and cunning, what did he do before?!

Facing Jenny's emerging loss of control, Lei Ying immediately sneered.

The person who went inside to retrieve the equipment, while packing stuff, calmly said to Jenny, "Illegal? Then I'll turn myself in tomorrow, I was the one who put it there."

This person instantly took the blame.

Jenny was momentarily dumbfounded, not knowing how to respond, she just opened her mouth, but couldn't utter a sound for a long time.

With them saying that, what more could she say...

Jenny felt a headache, dizzy, an unprecedented uncomfortable feeling, as if being strangled at the neck.

Lei Ying looked at Old John.

"These, these contracts were brought by her, I've never seen them, I'm innocent..." Old John immediately denied three times in a row.

Lei Ying smiled, politely said, "Mr. John, I have a colleague who wants to chat with you."

In confusion, Old John saw Lei Ying clap his hands.

Outside, a person came in, smiled at Old John, and gestured with something in their hand.

"Mr. John, this is a copy of the contract in your bag, I went through a lot of effort to get it."

Old John couldn't care less about the document, he couldn't contain his emotions, and shouted at the person, "Zack, you, you, how... you're, you're one of them!"

Chapter 2402 - The Most Obvious Poisonous Scheme

Old John couldn't believe his eyes when he saw Zack; he would never in a million years have guessed that Zack was with the headquarters' compliance department!

In "Green Sky" company, Zack was truly the second-in-command, and a person Old John absolutely trusted. He would consult Zack on many shady dealings.

Of course, those were all Old John's own schemes for personal gain, involving matters related to the Deputy Executive Vice President of the Africa region. Old John was extremely cautious, handling everything personally. However, he had already decided to introduce his capable confidant to the Deputy Executive Vice President.

And yet this very person turned out to be... an "undercover agent"!

In that moment, Old John collapsed on the sofa, his heart both shattered and filled with fear.

The legend of the all-seeing, "mystical" compliance department had just now made him truly feel what fear was.

Jenny also looked at Zack in disbelief, this man who had shown her significant attentiveness had another side to him.

Thinking about it now, his enthusiasm towards her indeed had ulterior motives.

Jenny broke out in a cold sweat.

"Do you two really think we're here to investigate you?" Lei Ying, sitting across from Jenny and Old John, gave a cold smile, "We don't have the time for that!"

Lei Ying pointed at the person busy downloading videos, "We're here to take away evidence."

Their private conversations and those contract documents were enough to cause significant trouble for Jenny and Old John.

Not to mention all the various evidence Zack had collected.

"We're just here to inform you, get ready to be prosecuted." As Lei Ying spoke, he stood up, "We know you're stubborn, intellectually strong, and won't easily confess anything. We have no interest in forcing you. Following the formal process is more efficient for everyone. That way, the group won't consider leniency or waive the charges on some issues. With the group's legal team's abilities, it's inevitable that you'll be in prison for a dozen years or so."

Jenny and Old John's faces turned extremely ugly, yet they still said nothing.

Lei Ying didn't seem to expect them to respond. Looking at Jenny, he continued easily, "After spending a dozen years in prison and coming out, Miss Jenny, your youthful years will be long gone. You'll come out as someone disconnected from society, disliked by all — an old hag. Your parents might be dead by then, brothers and sisters will have consumed your money, then avoid you like a plague! As for lovers, they'll have long since found a new romance!"

Jenny's face turned ghastly pale, her breathing quickening.

Lei Ying speaking of prison didn't scare her, but the description of life after prison was hard for her to accept.

"As for Old Mr. John, you will likely spend the rest of your days inside, waiting for death to release you. You have sons and grandsons too, but you won't have the chance to enjoy familial happiness with them. In your first years inside, they might visit you for the sake of the inheritance you left behind. Later, when your grandsons grow up, they'll see you as a disgrace. Your whole family will feel that forgetting someone like you is the best way to live. By then, even if you look forward, you won't see a single relative. No matter how much money you made, all it'll buy you in prison is a few packs of instant noodles."

Lei Ying's words filled Old John's eyes with fear.

It sounded like a scene from hell...

Beside him, Zack couldn't help but look at Lei Ying with some secret amazement, with even a touch of reverence, "This man appears burly and rough, but he's unexpectedly skilled in psychological tactics and language. He doesn't use logic or emotions to sway them but instead hits their weak spots hard. Just listening to him gave me chills. What kind of work did he do before, to be so adept at breaking down people's mental defenses!"

"I must learn from this!" Zack couldn't help but silently repeat to himself.

Lei Ying continued to stand there, looming over them, giving off a pressuring presence—

"Ah, right. Are you thinking that if you endure this night, someone will cover up the mess for you, fix things in time?" Lei Ying showed a heavy smile, "Do you even know your position? To get you, how could there be no meticulous preparation? There are already two hundred people, split into twenty teams, conducting operations as we speak, waiting for you to fill the gaps. The moment they catch anything problematic, our people will claim the information came from you two. The people you serve, are they suspicious? If they think you're traitors, will they save you with all efforts or put you to death?"

There was no two-hundred-man team; it was entirely a bluff from Lei Ying.

But to kill the heart, first hit the weaknesses, then block all retreats.

This was entirely forcing the two onto a dead end.

Jenny and Old John's expressions were filled with a genuine fear.

Lei Ying seemed oblivious, continuing, "Are you thinking of sacrificing yourselves, hoping someone will give your family a big lump of money, enough to keep them wealthy, and even provide for you comfortably once you're out? Forget it, we will pursue huge compensations against you, arrange for people to monitor your family's and your own bank accounts, even overseas ones. We'll request the relevant departments to freeze them and restrict your exits. By then, I'm afraid you and your family will only be able to eat air and drink wind, praying to fill your stomachs."

Zack, along with the others in the compliance department present, watched Lei Ying deliver the most horrifying words in the calmest voice, all feeling their hair standing on end, and a chill down their spines.

Chapter 2403 - The Most Obvious Poisonous Plot (Part 2)

How could this Huaxia person make things sound so terrifying!

Even the onlookers felt a sense of collapse.

Jenny and old John looked complex and uneasy.

They finally had the urge to speak, but were equally afraid of those behind them, fearing that speaking up would also lead to a dead end.

Lei Ying observed their reactions and smiled, "We don't need you to confess everything, to reveal all the secrets of those behind you. We know you only know so much. Let's start with this contract, and only discuss this issue, okay? We can count it as a merit for you and reduce the charges on certain matters."

Lei Ying first gave them the chance to speak, then asked them to answer a few questions. These non-lethal questions didn't seem to matter if they spoke, which helped ease their resistance.

However, once people open their mouths, sometimes even if they start with a word, it's like a dam breaking, and it's difficult to stop.

"Go ahead, say something, and you'll spend less time in prison, and have a relatively better life." Lei Ying persuaded gently.

Jenny and old John nodded their heads slightly, almost imperceptibly, in a dejected manner after a long consideration.

They finally agreed!

Zack and the others were instantly invigorated.

Lei Ying gestured to the people beside him, implying "You can ask now."

Then, Lei Ying turned around and walked out.

Zack and the others watched Lei Ying's departing figure with awe and respect, then quickly got to work questioning Jenny and old John.

...

An hour later, having obtained firsthand information, Lei Ying called Bai Xiaosheng.

"Sheng, it's done here. Jenny and old John have started talking. Yes, they said quite a bit, but regarding someone of Caroline's level, they didn't dare to say anything. Of course, there are some clues. What can be confirmed is that behind General Manager John is the Deputy Executive Vice President of the Africa Division. Whether their Executive President or Business President is involved, is unknown..." Lei Ying reported everything in detail.

"I didn't expect you to be so quick with your actions!" On the phone, Bai Xiaosheng was somewhat surprised.

Lei Ying immediately laughed, "Isn't it because I've been learning from you all these years? Even if I have six or seven out of ten of your skills, it's enough to deal with them."

These words carried a hint of flattery.

Bai Xiaosheng laughed at once, "Alright, the matters over there can be handed over to Mr. Wen Yan's people now, you don't need to worry about it, just come join us."

In such a short time, Lei Ying conquered the tough nut. The subsequent matters could be transferred to Wen Yan's people.

With the breakthrough of Jenny and old John, other issues should also be easily resolved. After all, the remaining people weren't as tight-lipped as these two.

Bai Xiaosheng was extremely satisfied with how the issue was resolved so swiftly.

After hanging up the phone, Bai Xiaosheng felt relaxed and took a glass of water to stand on the balcony, admiring the night view.

Reflecting on the entire event, Bai Xiaosheng gradually frowned.

"Since Melanie provided the crucial information, the whole thing went surprisingly smoothly, as if someone was pushing it behind the scenes..." Bai Xiaosheng murmured.

Jenny's visit, carrying important documents, such confidential information, how could it be brought up for discussion, let alone overheard by others.

"It seems someone is using Jenny and old John as pawns!" Bai Xiaosheng pondered.

He suspected from the start that this was Caroline's handiwork.

But the reason behind it was elusive.

Is it to use these people as bait, to attract my attention, and cover up something more important?

But there were no signs of any other anomalies on my end, Caroline's move seemed unnecessary.

Was it to deliberately set up a problem targeting Jenny and old John, making me intervene heavily, then prove that they were innocent, and make me, the new monitoring department vice-chairman, look bad at the headquarters, potentially entangling me in a lawsuit and embarrassing me?

Bai Xiaosheng shook his head even more.

From the moment Lei Ying got hold of solid evidence against Jenny and old John, this theory didn't hold...

What on earth is the reason then?

Caroline, what exactly are you plotting?

Bai Xiaosheng contemplated deeply for a while, but couldn't grasp any method.

But just as Bai Xiaosheng lowered his head to drink, a burst of insight suddenly struck him.

"Caroline is an extremely clever person. Every time I've contended with her, she has always made high-level moves, and I've gotten used to thinking deeply. Would she use my habitual thinking as a pattern, to create a shallow plan this time?"

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but narrow his eyes, murmuring, "I just arrived in the Africa Division and am exercising my new authority vigorously here, dealing with subsidiary companies of the Africa Division, without notifying any of the Africa Division's leaders. If this was in the workplace, coming to a new department and making a big overhaul is a major taboo. The scene has changed to a higher level, but the principle remains the same. My big actions can make the originally neutral Africa Division's Business President think! I've ignored such... shallow scheming!"

Bai Xiaosheng immediately gave a bitter smile.

It seems that Miss Caroline is indeed an extremely cunning woman, using his thinking inertia to set up the simplest of traps.

Sowing discord.

"But the simplest things are often the most effective!" Bai Xiaosheng frowned.

At this time, Bai Xiaosheng obviously couldn't call the Business President of the Africa Division to communicate.

Chapter 2404 - The Most Obvious Poisonous Scheme (Part 3)

Besides, everything has been investigated, what's the point of saying more.

Additionally, in this matter, Bai Xiaosheng will definitely not be lenient, he won't let those with issues go free for anyone's sake.

And also, whether someone of a higher level was involved in these events in the African region remains unknown.

Communicate in advance? Who knows if it would alert those involved!

In my impression, the African region's business president, although always holding a middle ground, seems to have a volatile temper, not easy to deal with, and his health is not very good.

Bai Xiaosheng vaguely heard from Jiang Kuo, the Asia region's business president, that with the current situation, stepping down early wouldn't be surprising one day.

Such people are actually hard to handle, there's little to fear when they have no desires.

"Enough, things have reached this point, thinking about it more is useless, it's better to sleep early and talk about it tomorrow." Bai Xiaosheng muttered to himself.

Putting down the water cup, Bai Xiaosheng went to sleep.

And on this night, a tempest broke among the senior management in the African region.

Five top-tier enterprises were thoroughly investigated overnight by the headquarters monitoring department, their leaders were suspended on the same day, allegedly involved in shady dealings with five equivalent enterprises in North America—an utter scandal.

This incident was reported at dawn and occupied the headlines by early morning.

The North American side also made the front pages, though their focus was still on the African region, naturally orchestrated by Caroline, given her immense media resources.

Early in the morning, a sickly, skeletal old black man burst into Caroline's office, his eyes unusually bright.

Upon entrance, the old man was full of rage, slammed a newspaper onto Caroline's desk, shouting, "Caroline, what's going on here! Your people running amok over there? Are you involved in this?"

This man showed no decorum, fiery by nature.

Caroline, being a woman, is naturally eloquent.

The key is, she was already expecting this person.

Caroline's face was frosty, "Mr. Brown, don't pin the problem on me. Let me ask you, your people were also involved in the incident, so by your line of suspicion, should I also consider you to be the mastermind?"

With that said, Mr. Brown found it hard to refute, and huffed coldly, "I will investigate on my side, and report the findings. Be it the executive president or deputy executive president, I will be lenient to none!"

"I am the same!" Caroline replied swiftly.

Mr. Brown squinted at Caroline, "Caroline, are you truly uninformed?"

"True or false, even if I explain you wouldn't believe it. You've identified me as the mastermind, there's nothing I can do!" Caroline shrugged, "After my election defeat, I'm left with striving within the group, and dare not slacken for a moment. Now this happens! Do you think I find it glorious? My reputation is utterly ruined!"

Caroline's words made Mr. Brown's face turn exceedingly dark.

Caroline's reputation aside, Brown has been there since the era of the old chairman, poised to step down, and now this mess occurs.

Currently, rumors are rife outside, claiming he wants a big score before retiring and even saying the group's African enterprises are rotten to the core.

Words, though intangible, can kill!

That's why Mr. Brown aggressively sought out Caroline, yet recalling these thoughts, he felt enraged and stifled.

Caroline, as though unaware, gritted her teeth and said, "I heard Bai Xiaosheng uncovered this during his visit to Africa, without communicating with either you or me first, and made such a big deal out of it. I had previous grievances with him, but he shouldn't have acted this way! Even if there's an issue, at least warn us! Now it's public knowledge, painting him as wise and mighty!"

With that remark, Mr. Brown's fury was almost palpable.

In this matter, he was most upset not with Caroline, nor even his own staff involved, but with Bai Xiaosheng.

Even if there were issues under his watch requiring investigation, at the very least, give him a heads up.

Yet Bai Xiaosheng sneaked into his "home," loudly proclaimed catching thieves, ruins his reputation, and disregards him entirely.

"Bai Xiaosheng, fine!" Mr. Brown spat before turning and leaving.

"Hey—" Caroline wanted to stop him but couldn't, merely watched Mr. Brown exit her office.

However, afterward, Caroline curved her lips into a wicked smile.

No human is a sage; everyone understands why anger is hard to swallow!

"Today, I gained an ally, and Bai Xiaosheng, you've gained an enemy!"

Chapter 2405 - This Is No Small Matter

Bai Xiaosheng and his team arrived on the second day in Moribido City, and around noon, Lei Ying also returned, just in time for the welcome luncheon hosted by the local city government.

With about an hour left before the luncheon was to start, Bai Xiaosheng quietly left the main banquet hall to meet with the two of them and had a brief discussion about the situation over there.

Bai Xiaosheng learned from Lei Ying about the details and praised Lei Ying's efficiency. Lin Weiwei, however, teased Lei Ying about having a "big mouth," saying that even after getting things done, he wouldn't miss out on a big meal.

"The matter has temporarily been resolved, but it seems like we've fallen into Caroline's scheme," Bai Xiaosheng told the two of them of his speculation.

It turns out Caroline intended to play a high-stakes game of "sow discord", even risking five of her major companies and attracting a lot of trouble.

This is truly an investment of great effort!

"At the time, we couldn't afford to wait and see who would be unhappy. Unless we chose not to intervene, we had to step in even knowing it's a trap."

"It's a plainly obvious trap, yet it's one we couldn't avoid."

Lei Ying and Lin Weiwei both lamented.

After expressing their concerns, Lin Weiwei couldn't help but worry and asked Bai Xiaosheng, "So what do we do now? Should we explain this to the business executive of the Africa Region – Mr. Brown – to minimize... misunderstandings?"

Sometimes, in getting things done, a little consideration for human sentiments is necessary.

Bai Xiaosheng sighed, "I made a call to his office this morning, but he wasn't there. Since then, I've been in meeting after meeting, and now another luncheon is about to start. I'll try contacting him again in the afternoon."

Bai Xiaosheng is not one to act recklessly. In fact, if one phone call can solve many unnecessary troubles, he would be more than willing.

Upon hearing Bai Xiaosheng's words, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying both nodded in agreement.

Just as the three were about to return to their respective banquet halls, Bai Xiaosheng's phone rang.

Immediately, the three of them halted.

Bai Xiaosheng took it out, looked, and said, "It's a call from Mr. Jiang Kuo. I didn't have a chance to inform him about this issue..."

Bai Xiaosheng being the deputy head of the corporate headquarters' inspection department is known by the heads of the seven major regions.

To deal with such a matter quickly, only Wen Yan and Bai Xiaosheng have the power to mobilize a large number of staff under the headquarters' inspection department and almost simultaneously take down ten enterprises across two continents.

Wen Yan has been stationed at headquarters, so it's evident this has to do with Bai Xiaosheng.

Besides, Mr. Jiang Kuo is aware of Bai Xiaosheng's trip to Africa.

"I was just wondering if Mr. Jiang Kuo would call me..." Bai Xiaosheng mumbled as he answered the phone, then smiled and said, "Hello, Mr. Jiang, this is Bai Xiaosheng."

While Bai Xiaosheng had an opening greeting, Jiang Kuo was straightforward, with no small talk, "Sheng, are the investigations into ten companies in the Africa and North America regions your doing!"

This information is already public knowledge; it's no longer a secret.

Bai Xiaosheng straightforwardly replied, "Yes, I happened to encounter some situations here, and with ample evidence, I decided along with Mr. Wen Yan to take them down."

Bai Xiaosheng spoke plainly.

From the other end, Jiang Kuo's voice carried a hint of urgency and frustration, "Sheng, sigh... Exercising your power isn't wrong, but this... is indeed a bit reckless! I was out handling business when I saw the news and thought it might be related to you, so I hurried back to the headquarters to understand the situation. The headquarters is already in a frenzy! Oh, and I encountered Mr. Brown, the business executive of the Africa Region. You've met him, although he is somewhat aloof, he usually at least acknowledges me. But this time, he completely ignored me. I guess you didn't inform him beforehand about this matter, did you?"

Jiang Kuo's rapid-fire words included genuine concern for Bai Xiaosheng.

Bai Xiaosheng, coming from the Greater China Region, is inherently considered one of their own, and additionally, he is now also serving as the acting executive president of the Greater China Region.

How could Jiang Kuo not be concerned about him?

"Indeed, I didn't inform him in advance. However, I called his office this morning trying to communicate but he wasn't there," Bai Xiaosheng straightforwardly replied.

"I figured... now that things have escalated this much, trying to communicate now might be a bit too late." Jiang Kuo said with a bitter smile on the other end.

With things reaching this point, there's no use saying anything now.

Jiang Kuo found it a bit incomprehensible, how someone like Bai Xiaosheng, who usually acts carefully, could be so "reckless" this time.

Sometimes, in the workplace, you need to be contemplative rather than act impulsively when it's time to act.

"I heard that Mr. Brown is soon stepping down," Bai Xiaosheng remarked.

This was information Bai Xiaosheng confirmed earlier this morning.

Usually, he doesn't pay much attention to such news.

After all, Bai Xiaosheng is not someone who schemingly advances, his eyes set more straightforwardly on the chairman's high position, caring little for disputes over lower positions, thus slightly "insulated" from information.

Jiang Kuo thought that Bai Xiaosheng mentioning this means he considers Mr. Brown about to step down and therefore not a concern, so he promptly reminded, "Sheng, if you think Mr. Brown is about to step down and isn't a threat, you're mistaken! Mr. Brown, as long as he is in position, holds immense power over the Africa Region. And he has been in the position for many years. Even deputy directors can't propose removing or forcing him out of it. He's the solid figure among the seven major regional business executives! Unless he himself thinks it's time to step down and rest, no one can shake his position!"

Chapter 2406 - This Is No Small Matter (Part 2)

Jiang Kuo was anxious to remind Bai Xiaosheng to treat Mr. Brown with caution, lest he suffer a major setback, which might even implicate the entire Asian region.

"I didn't mean to underestimate him, that's not what I meant." Bai Xiaosheng knew Jiang Kuo had misunderstood him and said, "I was just saying that this corporate corruption might heavily inflate someone's achievements on paper in the contract, allowing someone undeserving to become the first candidate after Mr. Brown. Even because of outstanding achievements, they might deceive Mr. Brown and obtain his recommendation. If that happens, the problematic person would take over the African region entirely, immediately clearing their name, and it would become difficult to find anything against them. As long as they are patient and forbearing, they can become a deeply embedded corrupt thorn. In the long run, I had no choice but to take action!"

The reasoning in Bai Xiaosheng's words wasn't without merit, leaving Jiang Kuo momentarily unable to refute.

Besides, things had come to such a point that saying more would be useless.

Jiang Kuo sighed and said to Bai Xiaosheng, "That Mr. Brown, he is quite vain. He's also particularly confident, thinking that the African region he has managed for so many years is spotless, and now as he's about to step down, you're exposing a bunch of termites over there for him, which is undoubtedly a slap to his face in front of the entire group. Mr. Brown is... a bit... petty..."

Jiang Kuo truly cared about Bai Xiaosheng, enough to say such things.

Bai Xiaosheng understood Jiang Kuo's intentions and was naturally grateful, so he smiled and said, "You don't need to worry, when it's convenient, I'll call Mr. Brown right away to communicate properly."

Hearing that, Jiang Kuo said, "No need, even if I give you his number, you won't be able to reach his personal phone all afternoon."

"Why?" Bai Xiaosheng was stunned and asked curiously.

"Because he is probably on a plane headed to Africa now, and if all goes well, he will arrive at Naliya International Airport by evening," said Jiang Kuo, "I think you might meet him in Africa!"

Bai Xiaosheng was surprised to hear this.

He hadn't had much interaction with Mr. Brown before, having only met a few times, and didn't really know what kind of person he was.

Even after listening to Jiang Kuo's description, Bai Xiaosheng didn't have much of an impression.

But just based on his anger and the possibility of coming to Africa, even confronting him face-to-face, it seemed that the old man had quite a fiery temper, perhaps quite stubborn and difficult to deal with.

Not only Bai Xiaosheng felt this way, but Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, who were listening nearby, also exchanged surprised glances.

It seems that falling into a trap is not exclusive to them. Mr. Brown is being used as a weapon to cause them trouble?

That indeed was quite troublesome!

While making the call, Bai Xiaosheng glanced at the time. It was getting late when he left, so he had to quickly return for the luncheon, lest it delay important matters.

"Mr. Jiang, I understand everything you've said, and I'll seek an opportunity to communicate honestly with Mr. Brown face-to-face. But right now, I have to hang up because the luncheon with the business delegation is about to start, and I don't have time to chat further." Bai Xiaosheng said into the phone.

Jiang Kuo, knowing that Bai Xiaosheng was not on a personal errand, understood completely and gave a few parting remarks before ending the call.

Bai Xiaosheng put away his phone and said to Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, "What has to come will come; be mentally prepared, but don't worry too much. You both go back to the banquet hall and enjoy the meal; I'll go there as well."

Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying nodded immediately.

The three of them went their separate ways, heading to their assigned banquet halls.

When Bai Xiaosheng returned, the luncheon in the main banquet hall was indeed about to begin. A large number of political figures had arrived and were engaging with Huaxia's diplomats.

Bai Xiaosheng's seat was right next to Hou Yuncheng's, showing how important he was considered.

"You sure took your time in the restroom." Hou Yuncheng joked quietly as Bai Xiaosheng returned.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled, knowing that in such a setting, if Hou Yuncheng took the opportunity to speak to him, something more important was likely to follow.

Sure enough, Hou Yuncheng immediately said, "While you were away, we discussed something with the key figures of Moribido City and reached a preliminary agreement. After the luncheon, come find me; I need to ask for your help!"

Hou Yuncheng even used the word "ask," so polite. Bai Xiaosheng was instantly surprised.

However, before Bai Xiaosheng had time to ask Hou Yuncheng more about it, a few people approached to communicate with Hou Yuncheng.

These were the key figures from other cities in the country of Xisuli.

Bai Xiaosheng watched as Hou Yuncheng, with a smile, conversed with those people, and as more and more people approached, he sighed inwardly.

It seemed there would be no opportunity to speak further with Hou Yuncheng in such a setting.

Bai Xiaosheng had no choice but to let it go, thinking he would find Hou Yuncheng after the banquet to talk.

A long time later, the banquet finally "officially" began.

However, as wave after wave of people took the stage to give speeches, Bai Xiaosheng and the others applauded more than twenty times.

The meal finally began, but Hou Yuncheng and others were frequently disturbed, invited away, and scarcely had a chance to eat before the dishes went cold.

Bai Xiaosheng, on the one hand, felt sympathy for Hou Yuncheng and the others' hard work, and on the other hand, felt fortunate that he was not as renowned as Lu Yun and others, who were also surrounded by the enthusiasm of Xisuli's business community figures.

Bai Xiaosheng just sat there, enjoying the food alone, feeling truly at ease.

Chapter 2407 - This Is No Small Matter_3

They always say being famous is burdensome. Look at this, it truly is quite exhausting...

This meal, referred to as a luncheon banquet, went on for over three hours, nearly four hours, before it finally came to an end.

However, Hou Yuncheng was still busy communicating with local political figures, with no clear time for a break.

Bai Xiaosheng returned to the hotel with the business delegation.

Once back at the hotel, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying also returned.

Bai Xiaosheng shared with them the matter Hou Yuncheng had mentioned, and they were also quite curious.

What could it be that Hou Yuncheng specifically needed to "request" Bai Xiaosheng's help with?

If it was about business collaboration with local companies, it should have been a win-win situation, so why use such formal language?

Moreover, Lu Yun, Jia Chengshan, Dong Tianlu, and Lu Tiandao all held vast resources. If there were any needs, they could be informed directly, as they all ran private enterprises, not like Bai Xiaosheng, who was employed, which should make dealings easier.

Regarding this matter, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying couldn't figure it out either.

"Forget it, let's not overthink it. Let's patiently wait until Director Hou is available, and then I'll talk to him to find out," Bai Xiaosheng said calmly.

Just relying on wild guesses and speculations obviously won't help much and isn't very meaningful.

"When will Director Hou be back? How will we know? Should I wait there?" Lin Weiwei asked.

Bai Xiaosheng shook his head directly, "No need to trouble yourself. Knowing the uncertainty of the timing, Director Hou will likely send someone to find me."

Subsequently, Bai Xiaosheng rested in his room and took the opportunity to make a private call to the business president of the African region.

A short time after Bai Xiaosheng's call, Jiang Kuo sent a message with Mr. Brown's alternate work number, intended only for the highest level of Zhenbei Group.

Jiang Kuo naturally knew about this unpublicized number after so many years, unlike Bai Xiaosheng, who, only recently appointed, could only use the numbers documented on the group's intranet.

Yet, after calling twice, there was no connection, always failing to get through.

Apparently, Mr. Brown was still flying, hadn't turned on his phone, or possibly had a poor signal, Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself.

Given the situation, he decided to let it go for the time being.

An hour later, Hou Yuncheng indeed sent someone to invite Bai Xiaosheng, and Bai Xiaosheng immediately took Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying to Hou's temporary office.

Upon seeing Hou Yuncheng again, Bai Xiaosheng noticed the fatigue on his face, yet his eyes were brimming with enthusiasm.

Someone his age with such vigor is truly admirable!

Bai Xiaosheng was genuinely impressed by Hou Yuncheng's dedication and sense of mission.

Lin Weiwei, Lei Ying, and Hou Yuncheng's secretary all left the room, leaving the space for the two of them.

"Sheng, you're here. Come in, have a seat!" Hou Yuncheng was very pleased to see Bai Xiaosheng and personally poured him a glass of water.

"Director Hou, you mentioned during the banquet that you needed my help with something. What is it?" Bai Xiaosheng asked with curiosity, smiling. "Is it really only something I can handle?"

Bai Xiaosheng had made a light-hearted joke.

"Yes, this matter really requires you!" Hou Yuncheng said, quite seriously with a smile, handing over a freshly signed document to Bai Xiaosheng, joking, "See if to you, this is a minor issue."

Bai Xiaosheng glanced at the bold red text at the top and immediately understood.

However, he then furrowed his brow, looking slightly pained.

"What's wrong? What kind of expression is that?" Hou Yuncheng curiously inquired upon seeing Bai Xiaosheng's expression.

Bai Xiaosheng sighed in frustration, waving the document, his face sincere—

"My dear Director Hou, you probably think it's a breeze for me to handle it, but this time, it's not that straightforward! Why didn't you tell me...even a day earlier? Due to some matters yesterday and today, what you want me to do might be a bit tricky this time!"

Chapter 2408 - Heavy Responsibilities

The document Hou Yuncheng showed to Bai Xiaosheng, although put together, were actually two separate things. The top few pages were formal documents, which included the consent from the Xisuli

Government, stating a comprehensive, full-scale cooperation with the Huaxia side on the extraction and development of "rare earth" minerals.

What exactly are rare earths? Many people have heard of them, but it's often just the name they know.

Many don't even know the name.

With the help of the Red Lotus System, Bai Xiaosheng was able to quickly grasp all the information.

Rare earths are not a single metal, but a collective name for a group of metals, including 17 elements from the periodic table such as lanthanum, cerium, and praseodymium. Known as the "industrial MSG" and the "mother of new materials," the new materials developed using rare earths are indispensable for advanced equipment manufacturing, new energy, and emerging industries, and are also widely used in electronics, petrochemicals, metallurgy, machinery, new energy, light industry, and environmental protection.

There's an expression that if oil is the blood of industry, then rare earths are the vitamins of industry.

Just as people cannot live without vitamins, industry cannot do without rare earths.

Huaxia has always held the top three spots in the rare earth sector: the largest reserves, the largest production scale, and the largest export volume.

In recent years, Huaxia has placed extreme emphasis on the rare earth strategy.

Africa is rich in minerals, with substantial rare earth reserves. Just this year, Xisuli discovered another large rare earth deposit, and combined with the four it already had domestically, its production from five mines now ranks among Africa's top rare earth producers.

Xisuli initiated talks with Huaxia for cooperation because, after all, Huaxia has unparalleled experience in rare earth development.

While Bai Xiaosheng was reviewing the files, Hou Yuncheng also emphasized to him that Huaxia attaches great importance to this cooperation. Just now, he received several calls, with leaders at various levels expressing deep concern, saying this matter must be handled well.

As he said this, Hou Yuncheng's expression was extremely solemn.

However, with a few words, Hou Yuncheng clarified to Bai Xiaosheng.

There's a situation here: among the five rare earth mines in Xisuli, three are state-owned and present no issues for cooperation. The other two require the business group to negotiate on its own, and the Xisuli Government will provide some assistance.

The last two pages in the document that Hou Yuncheng gave to Bai Xiaosheng were introductions of these two companies.

The bottom one, "Xuanjin" company, is affiliated with the Zhenbei Group.

Bai Xiaosheng understood at a glance.

Hou Yuncheng valued his position and connections within the Zhenbei Group and wanted him to facilitate cooperation between the parties.

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

This should have been mentioned earlier, even one or two days sooner would have been better.

Now?

Bai Xiaosheng had just dealt with five enterprises and five senior executives under their jurisdiction, and now he had to propose cooperation?

And who knows what kind of attitude the African Regional Business President, Mr. Brown, would have. It certainly wouldn't be easy to handle.

With a bitter smile, Bai Xiaosheng explained his situation to Hou Yuncheng in detail.

Hou Yuncheng was taken aback, not having anticipated such a situation.

"I had heard about today's business upheaval, but I didn't realize it was your doing!" Hou Yuncheng said, surprised and amazed, "I must say, Sheng, you're quite something. You stayed there a half day longer and stirred up so much commotion!"

Bai Xiaosheng responded with a wry smile.

It's not that he was capable, it was that he was "set up." And from the start, he was utterly oblivious.

Pretty much a failure.

"However, would Mr. Brown really confront you directly over this matter? Would he really be so overt? I've heard of him; he's a renowned businessman with a significant position in your group. By all accounts, he should be quite shrewd and should act prudently in matters pertaining to the group. Moreover, it's not your companies collaborating with him, but other Huaxia enterprises. If he has grievances, he could simply raise the conditions; as long as they're not excessive, we can negotiate. Would he truly give up such a good opportunity?"

Hou Yuncheng performed a rational analysis.

However, Bai Xiaosheng, having learned in advance from Jiang Kuo about Mr. Brown's nature, knew better. Who's to say a successful person must be deep and won't retaliate openly? It takes all sorts to make a world, and especially across such distances, who knows?

Who knows what Mr. Brown's attitude is now...

Bai Xiaosheng kept his thoughts to himself.

There was nothing to be said about Hou Yuncheng's support for him.

Moreover, this was in service to Huaxia, so Bai Xiaosheng genuinely wanted to give it a try.

"Director Hou, actually, I'd very much like to help, but I'm concerned that due to personal factors, the cooperation may fail." Bai Xiaosheng voiced his worries.

Hou Yuncheng, seeing Bai Xiaosheng's willingness to try, immediately smiled, "Sheng, just go for it. At the end of the day, it only involves one rare earth enterprise; we've already reached consensus with three state-owned ones in Xisuli, and the other two aren't must-haves either. If you fail, I'll send someone else to negotiate. They won't target a Huaxia businessman just over this. As for the other company, I'll have someone else communicate with them. I believe there will be progress. Securing four agreements would be above expectations, and the leaders wouldn't say much more."

Hou Yuncheng's words greatly comforted Bai Xiaosheng.

Chapter 2409 - Shouldering Responsibility (Part 2)

"Alright, I'll give it a try," Bai Xiaosheng agreed.

In fact, looking at it from another angle, bringing Mr. Brown a large cooperation deal also implies a slight intention to ease their relationship.

Hou Yuncheng insisting on Bai Xiaosheng taking the lead had some consideration of that aspect as well.

Following that, Hou Yuncheng and Bai Xiaosheng had another chat.

Hou Yuncheng told Bai Xiaosheng that during their stay in Moribido City, inspecting companies was secondary, and facilitating cooperation between the two companies should be the top priority.

Although those two companies were not in Moribido City, they were both in neighboring cities, one to the south, the other to the east, with the farthest being only a three-hour journey, making it possible to go back and forth within a day to discuss matters and travel.

After a long conversation, noticing it was getting late, Hou Yuncheng suggested Bai Xiaosheng go back to rest early, leaving work for tomorrow.

Bai Xiaosheng also took his leave.

After returning to his residence with Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying, Bai Xiaosheng relayed everything Hou Yuncheng had said to the two of them.

"This...will it work? We still don't know Mr. Brown's attitude towards us," Lin Weiwei expressed her concern hesitantly, "What if..."

"Sheng just mentioned, we are merely building a bridge for them, introducing a big business deal, what does it have to do with our conflicts? Besides, this can also be seen as an action to improve relationships," Lei Ying said.

Lin Weiwei still wasn't optimistic.

"Alright, alright, you two stop arguing," Bai Xiaosheng yawned long, "That's it for today, it's getting late, go back to rest, have a good sleep, and talk about it tomorrow."

Only then did Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying stop, bid farewell to Bai Xiaosheng, and left his residence.

After that day's events, Bai Xiaosheng was indeed exhausted, and he quickly fell into bed after a simple wash.

"I heard from Jiang Kuo that Mr. Brown should arrive in Naliya today, and since Naliya isn't far from here, if he's willing, he could arrive in Xisuli tomorrow. If Mr. Brown is indeed coming at me, wanting to confront me face-to-face, that'd actually be better...forget it, I won't think about it anymore, I'll see him tomorrow anyway..."

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't figure out the issue and fell soundly asleep.

He slept well.

However, this time, Bai Xiaosheng was indeed mistaken; Mr. Brown didn't wait until the next day to arrive in Xisuli, he arrived at Kaido City, which neighbors Moribido City, by midnight.

Kaido City, the home of the rare earth company "Xuanjin"!

It wasn't that Mr. Brown was unaware of the Huaxia Business Group being in Moribido City, nor did he mind being in the same city as Bai Xiaosheng, but when he arrived in Naliya, there weren't any suitable flights, so he took a private jet, which could only land at this airport.

As he got off the plane, Mr. Brown's expression wasn't looking good.

Beyond his usual sickness, there was a hint of gloominess.

Outside the tarmac, dozens of people were already waiting. Although it was near midnight, those people had been standing in the cold wind for over an hour, afraid of missing the time or arriving late and displeasing Mr. Brown.

Among those who came to greet, leading them was a round-bodied white man with a constant gentle smile; he was the Executive President for Zhenbei Group's Africa region, named Tike.

Standing next to Tike was a mixed-race black man with a turned-up collar on his trench coat, with drooping eyes, unsmiling - Deputy Executive President Cilio of the Africa region.

The very person privately collaborating with Caroline.

This time, after those illicit collaborations were exposed, Cilio was also in over his head, hating the troublemaking outsider Bai Xiaosheng with a passion.

Although Tike and Cilio had been waiting for a long time, they spoke little, only when Tike initiated a conversation politely would there be a few exchanges, to which Cilio barely responded.

The reason being, Tike had such a good temperament, preferring collective brainstorming for major decisions, leading Cilio and others to perceive him as weak and unfit to be the Executive President.

Now, upon Mr. Brown's appearance, both Tike and Cilio, with a group of subordinates, moved forward to greet him.

Unlike other regional corporate and executive presidents, despite the hierarchies, Mr. Brown was an elder from the group's establishment, once having the chance to become Vice Chairman, so Tike and Cilio treated him with a Vice Chairman's level of reverence.

Once hearing he was coming, they scrambled to welcome him from afar.

Of course, there's a bit of "another reason" here.

Mr. Brown's potential retirement posed a chance for them to move up, making reverence obligatory.

"Mr. Brown, you've arrived; it's really been tough, you should've rested for the night in Naliya, don't overexert yourself," Tike said with a beaming smile and respectful tone.

"We have the hotel room prepared, we'll take you there now," Cilio, disdainful of Tike's shallow flattery, got straight to the point.

Mr. Brown, expressionless, glanced at them, nodded, and casually said, "Thank you both for your efforts."

As he spoke, Mr. Brown, supporting himself with a cane, walked forward, glance lingering on Cilio with a subtle sharpness in his eyes.

Cilio showed no outward reaction, but his throat moved, swallowing secretly.

Having escalated to this point, Mr. Brown couldn't possibly not know; the crucial thing was how to clean up the mess... Cilio was anxious.

Frankly, Mr. Brown appreciated Cilio's decisive nature in doing things, though he hesitated in recommending him for promotion.

Of course, internal hesitations between a second-in-command and a third-tier leader often slightly disadvantage the second-in-command.

However, Cilio believed himself to be the best candidate, rather than the somewhat timid Tike, leading to occasional resentment. Mr. Brown, aware that he turned a blind eye, was lenient, making Cilio more arrogant.

But today's look left Cilio a bit uneasy.

"The situations I asked you to monitor, how are they?" Mr. Brown asked suddenly as he walked forward.

"The Huaxia Business Group is in Moribido City and is said to stay a few days; today there was a welcome banquet that took the whole day," TiKe introduced Mr. Brown as he kept pace.

Cilio, unwilling to be outdone, quickly added, "Today we also received a letter from the Xisuli Government, asking us to have the local 'Xuanjin' Company receive the Huaxia Business Group visit, discussing rare earth mining, urging us to cooperate."

Incidentally, there used to be a small mining site here, where Zhenbei Group bought the fifty-year mining rights at a low price, which ended up uncovering rare earth. According to local laws, they have the right to develop and exploit, but also face supervision and constraints.

For example, the Xisuli Government has the right to provide "guidance" on their external operations when necessary.

"Oh?" Hearing this, Mr. Brown stopped, glanced at Cilio, and said, "You said the Huaxia Business Group is coming here to inspect cooperation?"

Cilio nodded promptly, "Yes."

"We have completed the reception arrangements," Tike chimed in with a smile.

Mr. Brown nodded slightly, the corner of his mouth lifted in a smirk, somehow a smile, but without any warmth, only a hint of coldness.

"I thought I didn't make it to the right place, but it turns out I did. So, I'll just wait here for him to meet me!" Mr. Brown murmured while lightly tapping the ground with his cane.

If Bai Xiaosheng doesn't come, he won't talk.

"What did you say...?" Cilio, right beside, didn't catch Mr. Brown's words clearly and asked reflexively.

Mr. Brown stared at him, making Cilio feel somewhat uneasy.

Mr. Brown patted him on the shoulder, squeezed hard, showing none of the frailty of an old man about to retire, making Cilio wince from the pain.

"I don't know how the group's investigation is going, and I don't care," Mr. Brown spoke slowly to Cilio, "Once I've finished venting my grievances with that person, you better explain everything to me! You better make sure I like what I hear! My good lad!"

Chapter 2410 - Face-to-Face Discussion

After a good night's sleep, Bai Xiaosheng called Mr. Brown's private number after breakfast the next day.

Bai Xiaosheng had two purposes for making this call.

First, he wanted to explain and communicate with Mr. Brown about the investigation of the five companies in the African region, hoping to eliminate any potential displeasure between the parties.

Second, Bai Xiaosheng wanted to establish contact regarding the cooperation between Huaxia enterprises and the "Xuanjin" company.

If Bai Xiaosheng did not make this call and instead relied on his status to directly approach the company, it would be inappropriate, undignified, and would likely disrupt the matter. Even though Bai Xiaosheng is the Executive President of the Greater China Region of Zhenbei Group and the Deputy Head of the Headquarters Inspection Department, Mr. Brown is a veteran figure in the group, who reportedly almost became Vice Chairman, so he could completely ignore Bai Xiaosheng.

Most importantly, if the high-level resolutions within the group were later influenced by these events and Mr. Brown sided with Vice Chairman Morgan and Caroline, it would be problematic.

When Bai Xiaosheng made this first call, he didn't hold much hope of getting through, thinking if it didn't work, he would try again later, or perhaps ask someone else to contact them.

Unexpectedly, to Bai Xiaosheng's surprise, the call connected after just a few rings.

"Hello." Along with a slightly aging yet rich and atmospheric voice devoid of emotion, Bai Xiaosheng quickly became alert.

The owner of this voice should be the President of the African Region of the group, Mr. Brown!

"Mr. Brown, this is..." Bai Xiaosheng instantly came back to his senses, wanting to introduce himself.

Before he could finish speaking, the voice interrupted Bai Xiaosheng's self-introduction, identifying him, "Executive President of the Asian Region and Deputy Head of the Group Headquarters Inspection Department, Mr. Bai Xiaosheng!"

Bai Xiaosheng paused.

The other side chuckled, "Mr. Bai, if you could acquire my phone number, it's not strange I know how to contact you."

This is indeed a straightforward truth.

"Yes." Bai Xiaosheng laughed, then calmly said, "Mr. Brown, I am calling to explain to you about those five companies on your side not long ago. At that time, I..."

"I understand, you're fulfilling your duty." Mr. Brown replied loudly.

Thankfully, the other party is quite understanding.

However, Bai Xiaosheng was not only skilled in microexpression analysis but also possessed excellent insight into people's voice tones.

Mr. Brown's true feelings were likely quite different from his words...

"Mr. Brown, I ought to have communicated with you in advance concerning this matter, but the circumstances didn't allow it back then. I had to act first and report later. To this, I offer you my apologies."

Bai Xiaosheng proactively expressed his apologies.

"I shouldn't accept that, if anyone should apologize, it should be me. After all, it was the scandal from my subordinates' enterprises that went unnoticed by my old eyes, requiring you young, sharp-eyed folks to correct. If apologies are to be made, it should come from me. I should be apologizing to you, the inspection leader."

Mr. Brown's words clearly carried a bit of sarcasm.

Supposedly, this elderly business veteran should conceal his emotions well, yet he directly expressed his dissatisfaction.

It's apparent that if he were younger, his temperament would be fiery...

Bai Xiaosheng intended to offer further explanations and apologies but thought better of it.

If the issue could be resolved with just a few words, it would be simple.

The matter is unlikely to be resolved so easily.

"Mr. Bai, is there anything else? Surely you didn't just call me for this matter?" Mr. Brown subtly expressed.

Bai Xiaosheng calmed his thoughts a bit and said, "Mr. Brown, I indeed have other matters. Our Huaxia Business Group's enterprises wish to discuss cooperation regarding rare earths with a company called 'Xuanjin' under your supervision."

The other side remained silent, prompting Bai Xiaosheng to continue, "This initiative is advocated by the Xisuli Government. Currently, three state-owned enterprises are about to sign. Since I'm from the group, the leadership hoped I would communicate with you."

To prevent his factors from affecting the cooperation, Bai Xiaosheng quickly added, "Regarding this cooperation, companies under my command in the Greater China Region are not involved; I am merely a middleman, a messenger. I am not related to this matter, so you can rest assured. You are aware of Huaxia's strength in the rare earth field. Cooperation will be beneficial to all parties, even to our group. What do you think?"

Bai Xiaosheng was sincere in communication.

This matter would be extremely beneficial for Mr. Brown's African region and the Huaxia enterprises, potentially initiating extensive cooperation and substantially increasing the African region's performance under Mr. Brown.

Bai Xiaosheng believed, even from a rational perspective, if Mr. Brown didn't recognize his goodwill in bridging the cooperation, he would acknowledge the cooperation's prospective benefits.

"Done?" On the other end, a voice from Mr. Brown sounded slow and leisurely.

Bai Xiaosheng was momentarily stunned, then responded, "Done."

While Bai Xiaosheng was speaking with a dry mouth, Mr. Brown's reply was light.

Judging by the tone and meaning, Mr. Brown seemed uninterested?