

Two Trillion 741

Chapter 741: Who are you talking about?!_1

The music concert began. The members of Yegor's orchestra, filled with respect for Bai Xiaosheng, played with extraordinary effort, virtually showcasing their utmost talents within those thirty minutes.

Featuring piano solos and symphonies, some cheerful and others impassioned and surging, the performance was a delight to both body and soul.

In a mere thirty minutes, the audience's applause was like a tidal wave, erupting countless times.

In the end, the orchestra even added a piece, playing the "Happy Birthday" tune together.

Master Song Kai's face bloomed with joy as he laughed.

"Good, very good! Haha, such a unique birthday celebration is truly a first for me," laughed Master Song Kai. He instructed Wei Feng beside him, "In a while, prepare a generous gift for the orchestra! And also, pay them double the highest expense of hiring an orchestra!"

Wei Feng smiled and nodded, "Yes!"

"Sheng, this performance was secured by you, so naturally, you shouldn't have to pay. Besides, they are your friends, and it would seem distant if you were to give them money. But they also performed for this old man, so I will pay them, so as not to let their efforts be in vain," Master Song Kai said with a smile.

"Elder, I appreciate your kindness!" Bai Xiaosheng praised with a smile.

Indeed, even if Master Song Kai didn't pay, Bai Xiaosheng wouldn't have let Yegor and his team go unrewarded later on.

"Alright, I should go meet with my old friends now. Eat well during the birthday feast later!" Master Song Kai said smilingly as he rose to leave.

Bai Xiaosheng and the others immediately saw him off with respect.

After seeing off Master Song Kai, Bai Xiaosheng and his group went to congratulate the orchestra specially.

While they were enjoying themselves, Jiang Zuowei and Shen Yi weren't having such a good time.

As soon as the concert ended, Zhang Yudong brought some men and cornered these two.

Zhang Yudong had a smile on his face but exuded deadly menace, which seemed incredibly frightening when he smiled.

Jiang Zuowei felt spooked.

"Jiang Zuowei, you were kind enough to warn me. Normally, I should thank you! But do you know how much trouble you've caused me!" Zhang Yudong asked while patting his face.

"Brother Dong, what happened? Could you, could you tell me first?" Jiang Zuowei said with a forced smile, his voice slightly unnatural.

"First, let me ask you, how much did you know about Mr. Bai prior to this? Shaking your head? You didn't know anything about him and you dared provoke me to act against him! Do you have any idea, he is not someone we can afford to mess with!" Zhang Yudong said through gritted teeth.

Mr. Bai is someone even Zhang Yudong can't mess with?

Jiang Zuowei was startled and couldn't help but exclaim, "That's impossible! Who is he, exactly?"

"Who he is, you're not worthy of knowing!" Zhang Yudong said fiercely, grabbing Jiang Zuowei by the collar, "I also don't want to make him more famous. I'm here to settle our personal accounts!"

"Jiang Zuowei, listen well, from today onward, you'd better stay far away from me. If I see you once outside the Song Family, I'll deal with you once. If you're not happy with that, I'll take care of your family too!" Zhang Yudong roared, "Understand?"

Jiang Zuowei, seeing the viciousness in Zhang Yudong's eyes, immediately felt weak in the knees and stammered, "Understood, understood."

Zhang Yudong had the ability to do so, and he would not hesitate.

On the side, Shen Yi watched them panicked, then suddenly spoke up, "Brother Dong, I had nothing to do with this, I was forced. Are you still recruiting? I'm willing to serve..."

Shen Yi instantly abandoned Jiang Zuowei.

This shocked and angered Jiang Zuowei, who glowered at him.

"You? Worthy?"

Zhang Yudong snorted contemptuously, called his men, and turned to leave.

"Shen Yi, you bastard, were you thinking of betraying me just now? Then I'll sort you out first!" As soon as Zhang Yudong left, Jiang Zuowei furiously set upon Shen Yi, forcing Shen Yi to flee in panic.

The duo's chase was like that of a pair of clownish acrobats.

At that moment.

In an exquisitely elegant study room of the Song Family, six men in their seventies or eighties were seated.

Some had the appearance of young men despite their white hair, others had a bright spirit; their only common trait was that they each had an incredibly powerful presence.

A single movement, a single glance, all exuded supreme authority.

These were all close friends of Master Song Kai.

At the moment, one was drinking wine, another drinking tea, and the four were leisurely playing mahjong.

In fact, this room had originally held four or five men and women, all beloved grandchildren of theirs.

Now, with the younger generation gone, only they remained.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

The one drinking wine, an old man with a broad forehead and a square face, called out, "Come in!"

The person who entered caused the old man to do a double-take, "Zhao An?"

The newcomer was not young and happened to be his personal servant.

Zhao An looked at the old man and immediately went over to whisper a few words in his ear.

"What! You're telling me my precious grandson was publicly defeated by someone else and was even forced by Song Kai to admit defeat?"

The old gentleman's face instantly turned ugly, he angrily slapped the armrest of the sofa and burst out, "How could Elder Song not take care of his own people!"

"Zhang Xi, what are you getting so worked up for? Others can lose, but your grandson can't?"

A fellow old man, while eating fruit, let out a cold chuckle.

"Elder Xia, what kind of talk is that? Is our own flesh and blood the same as others?" Zhang Xi retorted angrily.

The one Zhang Xi was accusing would surely have surprised Bai Xiaosheng if he were here—Xiahou Qi, CEO of Zhenbei Group in the Greater China Region!

"Look at you, getting all white in the face with anger again. After so many years, you still haven't learned to control that temper," Xiahou Qi scoffed.

"Anyway, what Song Kai did was too much. Later on, you all have to back me up and give him a good talking to!" Zhang Xi demanded forcefully, not caring for propriety.

"Fine, we'll back you up," one of the mahjong players chuckled and responded noncommittally.

The remark was mostly perfunctory.

At their age, were they really supposed to take sides over such a trivial matter?

The others resolved that when Song Kai returned, they would just smooth things over.

"What are you trying to help him with?" The door opened and Master Song Kai walked in with a beam, smiling amiably.

"Help me with what? They're supposed to talk to you about you! Why on earth did you make my grandson concede? Ah! I'd like to know, with those freakish kids from the 'C' Character Hall not around, who else could my grandson possibly lose to? Tell me!"

Zhang Xi was already in a fury, definitely aggressive.

"Even if I tell you, you might not recognize him! He's a young friend of mine," Song Kai said with a chuckle.

"Ha, Old Song, you're getting more and more whimsical. What kind of junior deserves to be called your friend?" Xiahou Qi shook his head with a smile.

"Anyhow, you don't know him. But he brought me some very fine ink, brush, paper, and inkstone, and it just so happened to overlap with what your precious adoptive granddaughter gave me. Also, that orchestra was his doing. If we're talking about quick-wittedness and intelligence, I'm afraid there aren't many among the younger generation in the 'C' Character Hall who can match him!"

Master Song Kai had immense admiration for Bai Xiaosheng.

"Exaggerated! Just say his name," Xiahou Qi asked in a slow and measured manner, lifting a cup of tea to his lips.

"His surname is Bai, called Bai Xiaosheng," Master Song Kai declared.

"Pfft!"

Xiahou Qi spat out a mouthful of water, spraying it all over Zhang Xi's face.

After a stunned second, Zhang Xi realized his face was drenched with spit, and feeling disgusted, he lost his temper, "Elder Xia, what are you doing, are you looking for death?!"

Xiahou Qi, however, paid no attention to him and blurted out with wide eyes, "You said who?!"

Chapter 742 See You in Zhongjing_1

"What does that Bai Xiaosheng look like?" Xiahou Qi asked urgently, pressing Master Song Kai for an answer.

"What does he look like?" Master Song Kai was taken aback and began to describe Bai Xiaosheng's appearance.

"It really is that kid; I thought it was just a coincidence of names!" Xiahou Qi muttered to himself, a smile spreading across his face.

"What, you know him too?" Master Song Kai was somewhat surprised.

Zhang Xi looked at Xiahou Qi with suspicion, "Is this kid a relative of yours?"

Xiahou Qi shook his head.

"Then who is he to you, huh? Dare to mess with my grandson; no matter who he is, I'm going to teach him a lesson," Zhang Xi declared.

"Old Zhang, you're getting more shameless as you age. Just try to lay a finger on him!" Xiahou Qi snorted coldly.

"Old Zhang, I just heard you saying you were going to teach this one a lesson, that one a lesson. I think you're the one who needs a lesson the most! If you try to deal with him, I won't allow it!" Song Kai also snorted coldly.

These two men were actually joining forces because of Bai Xiaosheng, causing Zhang Xi to choke with anger.

"You!" Zhang Xi glared, fuming with rage.

"Alright, alright, knock it off. The three of you together are over two hundred years old. Enough with the bickering!" an elder playing mahjong complained impatiently.

"Song Kai and Xiahou Qi, you too! When has Zhang Xi ever spared anyone with that mouth of his? Always fixing this, fixing that, but when have you ever seen him actually lay a hand on the younger ones? Just treat his words as hot air," someone tried to mediate.

"Who are you calling hot air, you old coot? I think you're asking for it!" Zhang Xi shouted angrily.

The person who spoke just chuckled, purposely ignoring him.

A voice from the side inquired, "That Bai Xiaosheng, what's his background for both Old Xia and Old Song to know him?"

"He's a young friend I met in Tiannan, extremely outstanding. Even your grandsons might not measure up to him!" Song Kai said.

"Oh?"

The few elders playing mahjong looked at each other in surprise.

Unlike Zhang Xi, Song Kai never spoke without reason.

"I've met this kid in Linshen, and he's also part of my corporation. His wit and intelligence surpass ordinary people! I've told you about discovering a calligraphy master; he's the one!" Xiahou Qi said.

"Oh!"

Suddenly, the people playing mahjong stopped their game and looked over with interest.

"Is he the one you showed us on your phone, those pictures, the one who wrote those characters?"

"The writing is good; I like it. It has a master's elegance. How come it's written by a kid!"

"Unbelievable!"

"Truly remarkable!"

All four praised unanimously.

"His calligraphy is that good, and I didn't know!" Song Kai was astonished, then his eyes brightened.

He also had a great love for this art.

"Just some nice-looking brush writing, why the fuss." Zhang Xi snorted dismissively.

"Shut up."

"If you don't understand, then don't talk nonsense!"

"Exactly!"

"You should practice more yourself!"

The mahjong quartet unanimously abandoned their neutral stance to chide Zhang Xi.

Zhang Xi fell silent, disgruntled.

"Hey, Old Song, today is your birthday! Didn't that Bai kid leave you a few words? Bring them out for us to see!" Xiahou Qi said.

Suddenly, this ignited the other elders' interest.

They even stopped playing mahjong, all clamoring to see it.

"This kid, he never even told me he could do calligraphy. He sent the brush, ink, paper, and inkstone, but not a single word!" Song Kai said with a mix of amusement and irritation.

"Then hurry up and have him write something and send it over; we want to take a look!" Xiahou Qi urged.

"Why not just invite him over?" someone proposed.

"Absolutely not! He mustn't know I'm here!" Xiahou Qi strongly objected.

Now was not the right time for them to meet.

The other elders felt the same way.

"Then just have him write something and send it over!" Song Kai laughed and called out, "Wei Feng."

"Yes," Wei Feng responded from outside, pushing the door open and entering.

...

As the concert concluded, everyone followed the servants' directions to the banquet hall.

It was getting late, and the banquet was about to begin.

On the way there, Bai Xiaosheng gained some understanding through Chen Xiaoya's introduction.

Each banquet usually catered to about fifty to sixty tables.

"There are three floors in the banquet hall. The first floor is completely open and is prepared for guests from the 'D' Character Hall. The second floor is semi-enclosed for guests from the 'C' Character Hall, and the third floor consists of private rooms for people from the 'Heaven' and 'Earth' Halls," Chen Xiaoya said with a smile. "I'll invite a few more girlfriends, and we can have a private room all to ourselves; it won't be too noisy."

To this, Bai Xiaosheng nodded in agreement, as he had the same idea.

This time, Zhou Ping could not follow. He bid farewell to Bai Xiaosheng and went to the main hall to find a seat for himself.

Bai Xiaosheng, accompanied by Chen Xiaoya and Lin Ke, went upstairs and found a semi-enclosed private room with a good location. He found it to be quite pleasant; it allowed them to see the lively scene outside while offering some privacy.

Chen Xiaoya called over a few female companions who were all strikingly beautiful and extraordinary in temperament. Two of them were quite familiar with Lin Ke and could chat together amicably.

The group was chatting when Wei Feng came in.

"Finally found you, Brother Bai!" Wei Feng's eyes lit up when he saw Bai Xiaosheng.

A servant followed him, cradling in his arms the writing brushes, ink, paper, and inkstone that Bai Xiaosheng or Lin Ke had purchased.

The group greeted Wei Feng.

Seeing the items the servant was holding, Bai Xiaosheng looked on curiously and chuckled, "Wei Brother, what brings you to me, and why all this...?"

"Master Song Kai heard that you're good at calligraphy! He specially sent me to ask you for a pair of couplets and a longevity character," Wei Feng said with a laugh.

"Of course!" Bai Xiaosheng agreed readily, but he was somewhat surprised, "How does Master Song Kai know that I am good at writing?"

Wei Feng indicated that he wasn't aware of how Master Song Kai knew.

Bai Xiaosheng did not inquire further.

As the writing set was laid out, the women watched with immense curiosity from the side.

Bai Xiaosheng wielded his brush and wrote a pair of couplets celebrating longevity on the fine rice paper, followed by a large character for longevity.

"What beautiful calligraphy!"

"Indeed!"

The women murmured in admiration.

Chen Xiaoya's eyes sparkled as she praised, "Such vigor and boldness, secure and yet daring—truly on par with the great masters of calligraphy!"

Her gaze at Bai Xiaosheng grew increasingly different.

"There we go," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile to Wei Feng.

Wei Feng, delighted, took the written pieces to deliver to Master Song Kai.

The servant tidied away the writing materials.

Bai Xiaosheng and the others continued to wait for the banquet to start.

But before the dishes were served, Wei Feng returned, giving Bai Xiaosheng a smile, "I hate to trouble you again, Brother Bai, but this time I must ask you to write a poem."

"No trouble at all," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile and proceeded to write as requested.

Wei Feng left once more.

The servant again collected the writing materials.

However, before a moment had passed, Wei Feng was back, giving Bai Xiaosheng an embarrassed smile, "I'm really sorry, but you must write another verse..."

Thus, Wei Feng made at least five trips, with sweat beading on his forehead.

The servant got tired of collecting the writing materials and just left them spread out on the table.

The dishes that were served were pushed to one side.

When Wei Feng returned again, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but give an exasperated yet earnest plea, "Wei Brother, what exactly do you want? Why don't you just tell me everything all at once, let me write it all out at once, so none of us has to keep running around, okay?"

"I really don't want to do this either," Wei Feng admitted with a laugh and a shrug.

And so, Bai Xiaosheng's meal was eaten in fits and starts, and he continued to write until his hand ached before he finally stopped.

He was unaware that in Master Song Kai's study, several old men were having a blast, similarly unable to enjoy their meal.

At the end of the night, the banquet over, Bai Xiaosheng felt utterly drained and swiftly made his escape, returning to the hotel from the Song Family's estate.

No sooner had he collapsed onto the bed than he received a text message.

The sender of the message was none other than Lin Ke.

"I had to leave early. Remember, you owe me five delicious meals! See you in Zhongjing!"

Chapter 743

The day after Master Song Kai's birthday, after breakfast, Yegor sought out Bai Xiaosheng to say his goodbyes.

According to their itinerary, it was time for Yegor's band to depart and return to UE Country.

"Yesterday, that butler Wei Feng came to me and gave me this." Yegor pulled out a check with an amount that was significantly larger than what they had made from any performance over the years.

"I cannot accept this money. The concert was my loss to you and also represents our gratitude towards you!" Yegor said to Bai Xiaosheng with a sincere face, very serious, "But yesterday, Mr. Wei Feng left this check and departed. He said he was only responsible for delivering it. If we don't wish to accept, then we should return it to you! So, please take it back!"

There was a hint of stubbornness in Yegor's expression.

Bai Xiaosheng immediately laughed.

He understood the pianist's stubbornness; Yegor did not want to equate the performance, which was meant as a gesture of gratitude, to a commercial act.

"Mr. Yegor, I think you are mistaken. Do you think this is a payment for the performance? No, it's not! This is the host's way of expressing his gratitude and regards, and your performance yesterday was well deserving of it!" Bai Xiaosheng said earnestly, "I believe you should accept it!"

"But..." Yegor still wanted to refuse.

"Money is sometimes a transaction. But at times, it's also a gift to express thanks!" Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile, "A gift from the host—will you refuse it? That's not what a friend should do."

With this, Yegor had nothing more to say.

"By the end of the year, your band will be splitting from the Sharvey Band, and you will need money then!" Bai Xiaosheng added, "If this money can prevent your own band from dispersing and allow every member with a musical dream to keep going, wouldn't that be better?"

These words completely moved Yegor.

He pocketed the check and gave Bai Xiaosheng a bear hug.

"I will always be grateful for everything you've done for us. I hope one day you can come to UE Country! If after this, you need any help from us, me and my band members will spare no effort!"

Bai Xiaosheng just smiled and didn't say much.

When Yegor's band left, Bai Xiaosheng escorted them outside the hotel to see them off in their vehicle.

The members also said their reluctant goodbyes to Bai Xiaosheng.

After seeing them off, Bai Xiaosheng received a message from Chen Xiaoya. She had left Guangyun and told Bai Xiaosheng to come visit Linshen in the future.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and replied with a simple "Okay," then prepared to bid farewell to Master Song Kai and leave Guangyun as well.

But unexpectedly, before he could make the call, Master Song Kai and Wei Feng paid him a visit.

Upon opening the door and seeing the two men, Bai Xiaosheng was taken aback, then smiled and welcomed them in.

"You lad, why did you run off without a word yesterday? Why didn't you stay at my place? This hotel, it looks rather average," Master Song Kai muttered, hands behind his back, glancing around.

Only he would dare to call this five-star luxury suite average.

"I had a bit too much to drink yesterday, so I took off early," Bai Xiaosheng laughed.

This was a white lie.

In truth, at yesterday's birthday banquet, while everyone else was clinking glasses and feasting on the creations of top chefs, enjoying bottles of wine worth thousands, he was miserably tasked with churning out poem after poem every five to ten minutes. Not only did he not eat well, but his wrist also ached—fleeing was the only option.

Of course, Bai Xiaosheng was too polite to say this.

"You lad, your luggage is already packed. Are you leaving?" Master Song Kai spotted Bai Xiaosheng's suitcase by the door and couldn't help but ask.

"After celebrating your birthday, I need to return to Zhongjing. There's a whole pile of things waiting for me there," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

"What's the rush? Stay a couple more days!" Master Song Kai insisted.

Bai Xiaosheng was just about to politely decline.

Then he saw Master Song Kai awkwardly smile, "That is, if you could also write a few more pieces for me..."

Bai Xiaosheng looked at the master in astonishment.

Write more? Wasn't yesterday enough? I really don't know if he came to celebrate, or to get punished, or just to copy some poetry...

Wei Feng coughed and smiled as he explained on behalf of Master Song Kai, "Yesterday, a few of Master Song Kai's old friends who also happen to love your calligraphy came by. When they left, they took all your work with them. The master has been fuming since this morning."

So that's how it is!

Bai Xiaosheng was torn between laughter and helplessness, looking at Master Song Kai with a speechless expression that made the old man's face turn slightly red.

"Wei Feng, aren't you bringing Sheng's luggage? Let's go home first!" Master Song Kai chuckled.

"Okay!" Wei Feng moved efficiently.

And so, Bai Xiaosheng had no choice but to comply and return to the Song Residence.

After staying for two days, Bai Xiaosheng had written many poems and songs, pleasing Master Song Kai so much that he couldn't stop smiling. On the second day, he even started a live stream while Xiaosheng was writing.

As for who was watching, Bai Xiaosheng wasn't sure but could make an educated guess—it must have been Master Song Kai's friends.

What Bai Xiaosheng didn't know was that after the live stream, Master Song Kai was alone in his study, showing off to a bunch of his old friends.

The normally dignified and steady elder was dancing with excitement, supremely "arrogant".

"Haha, did you all see that!"

"These are five poems, six songs, and an entire 'Memorial on the Deployment of Troops'!"

"Envious or not, jealous or not? All you old guys, while I wasn't looking, you stole all those calligraphies. Now you can envy and be jealous!"

"The most infuriating is you, Elder Xia, our relationship is so good! You even rolled up that 'Longevity' character. You have less shame than Zhang Xi!"

After his tirade, Master Song Kai felt exhilarated and extremely pleased.

In Linshen, Xiahou Qi's office.

Elder Xia watched the video of those poems and songs with eager eyes.

"Goodness, this Song Kai is so shameless, keeping Bai Xiaosheng there to write for him! It infuriates me. On my birthday, I'll have this kid come over and have him write even more for me, twice as many, no, three times!"

Xiahou Qi fumed, his eyes rolling, "I can't let Bai Xiaosheng stay in Guangyun any longer!"

With that thought, he made a phone call, "Ah, it's me. When exactly is the second stage of the examination going to begin? We have to hurry up!"

After two sentences, Xiahou Qi was all smiles, "Alright, alright! Uh... you're asking me what's the matter... Nothing's wrong with me!"

On the third day, as soon as Bai Xiaosheng got out of bed, he received a message.

From the Affairs Department.

Just one sentence, "Tomorrow at 8 am, gather in the lecture hall of Zhongjing University. The second stage of the examination begins. Anyone who is fifteen minutes late or does not show up will be considered to have forfeited!"

Bai Xiaosheng stared in shock at the message, suddenly wide awake.

"Oh no, I'm still in Guangyun!"

"The second stage of the examination is so important, I must be well-rested to cope!"

"That means I have to go back now, as soon as possible!"

...

Wei Feng arrived as usual to call for Bai Xiaosheng.

But as he entered, he saw Bai Xiaosheng frantically packing his things, shoving them haphazardly into a suitcase.

Upon seeing Wei Feng, Bai Xiaosheng immediately yelled, "Brother Wei, help me book a ticket, the sooner the better! I need to go back to Zhongjing!"

Chapter 744: The Examiner Still Isn't Here!_1

Ultimately, Bai Xiaosheng didn't even eat his meal; he hastily left the Song Residence before noon and was personally driven to the high-speed rail station by Wei Feng.

Afterward, he was going to take the one o'clock train and would arrive at Zhongjing at seven in the evening.

Just after sending Bai Xiaosheng off, Master Song Kai furrowed his brow, "No, something's not right! The notice that Sheng mentioned, why is it so sudden, so urgent? It's just an examination; is there a need for such hastiness!"

Master Song Kai blinked, suddenly realizing the underlying issue, and he gritted his teeth with resentment, "Oh, I get it! Xiahou Qi, old Xia! Bai Xiaosheng is from your group!"

Master Song Kai huffed into his study, slammed the door shut, and went straight online to blast Xiahou Qi.

"Why are you cursing me? This is an internal affair of my group, what's it to you?" Xiahou Qi replied with a cold smirk emoji.

"Exactly, Old Song, you went too far this time!"

"Right, it's their internal affair, are you going to meddle in that too?"

"I'm with Old Xia!"

In the past couple of days, Master Song Kai had indeed been too complacent, and now his old companions rose to challenge him.

Of course, Bai Xiaosheng was oblivious to their commotion.

At that moment, sitting on the train back to Zhongjing, Bai Xiaosheng let out a long sigh of relief, a smile spread across his face, and he started to move his slightly stiff wrist from the past few days' activities.

"The timing of this second stage examination notice is quite timely. Otherwise, I'd be writing until I vomited!"

Bai Xiaosheng even felt somewhat grateful for the news.

When he left, that sense of urgency, the flurry of hastiness, was partly for show.

"I'm about to return to Zhongjing. It's been several days; I wonder whether Lin Ke, the little girl, has visited the company. Speaking of which, I still owe her five meals!" Bai Xiaosheng also remembered Lin Ke's words, "See you in Zhongjing," and he touched his nose.

"I can't drag out paying this debt; otherwise, who knows what she might do! That girl, there's nothing she dares not to do, nothing she can't pull off!"

Bai Xiaosheng was indeed somewhat wary of her.

The return trip to Zhongjing was unlike the journey there, rather uneventful, and without much to speak about.

On the way, although Bai Xiaosheng had left in a rush, just before leaving, Master Song Kai had packed for him an ample supply of snacks and fruits, preventing any chance of hunger on the trip.

Furthermore, Master Song Kai stated that he would mail over some local specialties to share with his friends and family.

"Actually, this old man isn't so bad!"

Upon reflection, Bai Xiaosheng also felt the warmth of Master Song Kai's care.

At seven in the evening, Bai Xiaosheng arrived at Zhongjing, descended from the high-speed rail, and Feng was already waiting outside to take him to his lodgings.

On the way, Bai Xiaosheng called Song Yiming to first inquire about the past couple of days, learning that everything was normal and there were no issues. He then asked whether any young girl had been looking for him.

Song Yiming's answer was no.

After hanging up, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but shake his head with a smile, musing to himself, "Never mind, let's wait until Lin Ke decides to come by then. No need for me to rush to 'repay the debt'."

Once he returned to his residence in Zhongjing, Bai Xiaosheng washed up and went to bed early.

After all, tomorrow was the important moment!

The next morning, Bai Xiaosheng got up early, washed and dressed, and Feng came to pick him up, bringing breakfast—a pancake and sweet soymilk.

Bai Xiaosheng hastily ate breakfast in the car.

When he arrived at Zhongjing University and entered the classroom, he still had time to spare, with a quarter of an hour left until eight o'clock.

Inside the classroom, there were already a dozen or so people, including Zhao Qianze.

The rest of the people arrived one after another within five minutes.

"Hey! The examiner this time is really strict. Being late by fifteen minutes is treated the same as not coming at all, with only one punishment—considered as a withdrawal, disqualification!"

"Yeah, it's so tough. It's got me all tied up in knots!"

"I'm so nervous right now; it's been many years since I've felt this way!"

"This Affairs Officer must be very strict; we need to be extra careful!"

People around were chattering about it.

The tense atmosphere began to spread, and even Bai Xiaosheng's face unconsciously grew more solemn.

Zhao Qianze was also a bit nervous and asked Bai, "Brother Bai, what do you think? How many stages will this examination have, and what kind of format might it take?"

Bai Xiaosheng heard the words and offered a wry smile as he shook his head.

Even if Feng Li were assessing, he still would not have guessed it.

These Affairs Officers, none were ordinary people.

Bai Xiaosheng looked around the classroom, where only twenty people remained.

And in the second stage, ten more would be eliminated—a nearly fifty percent elimination rate awaited them!

"Just watch, it'll be soon, we'll get to see the true face of this examiner any moment now!" Bai Xiaosheng said, glancing at the time.

His words resonated with everyone.

All were clutching their phones, incessantly checking the time and looking toward the door, enduring each second.

In the blink of an eye, it was eight o'clock.

But the door to the lecture hall remained quietly closed, with no one coming in.

The candidates exchanged glances.

Logically, the second phase should have an Affairs Officer to act as the examiner, and one of the tenets of Affairs Officers is "strict with oneself," harsh towards one's own conduct.

Being late or missing an appointment, such things simply had nothing to do with Affairs Officers.

Bai Xiaosheng, along with everyone else, believed this.

However, another half hour passed, ticking by second by second, and the door remained firmly shut, with no sign of movement.

Suddenly, the room exploded into a buzz.

"The notice I received said it was eight in the morning, what about you?"

"Same here, at eight sharp, and now it's half past eight!"

"What's going on! The Affairs Officer is actually late?"

"And half an hour late at that! The notice stated that being fifteen minutes late was equivalent to giving up, so what does being half an hour late count as?!"

"Exactly, this is a complete disregard for punctuality!"

"Shush, keep it down, you can't spout nonsense. If the examiner hears what you're saying when they come in, do you think you still stand a chance?"

...

After a heated discussion, all eyes turned eagerly towards the door, and another half hour passed like this!

Many were literally seeing stars, and they kept rubbing their eyes.

"Still not here!"

"Exactly, still not here!"

"This is outrageous, absolutely outrageous!"

"An hour late compared to the notice!"

"I think we need to lodge a protest with the Office of Affairs!"

"With such disregard for the rules, how can we see them in the right light!"

The candidates grew increasingly angry, and the classroom with twenty people somehow gave the impression of uproar from thirty or fifty.

Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen also had their brows tightly furrowed, a look of dissatisfaction on their faces.

Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Qianze exchanged a glance and smiled helplessly at each other.

Until nine o'clock.

As the hour hand and the minute hand overlapped, the door to the lecture hall finally opened.

That sound silenced everyone in an instant, and all eyes fixated collectively on the door.

Into the room stepped a figure, walking with brisk strides straight to the lectern.

As they looked at the figure, everyone was stunned, exchanging puzzled looks.

This was the examiner for the second stage of the examination? You must be joking!

Among all, Bai Xiaosheng was the most astonished.

Chapter 745 I Am Fairness!_1

Standing on the lecture podium was a little girl who was less than one meter sixty, with a sweet appearance and a smile that held a hint of captivating potential—

Officer Lin Ke!

Bai Xiaosheng had thought that this girl would come looking for him, perhaps at his company, maybe at his residence.

But despite all his calculations, he had never imagined their reunion would be here!

And why was she up on the podium?!

As Officer Lin Ke looked around at everyone, the slight smile on her lips and the composed look in her eyes were not something one would expect from her age.

Bai Xiaosheng had a vaguely incredible and ominous feeling.

When Officer Lin Ke saw Bai Xiaosheng, her smile broadened, but she didn't linger on him, instead, her gaze swept across everyone's face.

"Little girl, what are you doing here? You've come to the wrong place, right?" someone regained his senses and couldn't help asking.

"That's right, our place isn't just some ordinary classroom, it's not for lessons."

"Little miss, hurry down, this isn't the time for you to be messing around."

"Exactly, the uncles are waiting for a teacher to come, he'll be here soon, and he's pretty fierce..."

"If he sees you standing in his spot, even we uncles can't help you, you better go quickly."

The crowd also began to persuade her, but Officer Lin Ke seemed to not hear them, unmoved.

Then, with a smile, Officer Lin Ke picked up the blackboard eraser from the table and raised it high.

And then—

"Thud!"

The eraser fell heavily onto the podium with a frightening sound, causing the noisy classroom to instantly fall silent.

The "soft, cute, and sweet" look on Officer Lin Ke's face instantly vanished, replaced by an expression that was fierce and domineering, "All of you keep quiet for this lady, shut your mouths!"

The crowd was stunned.

Suddenly, someone became furious. How could this little girl talk like that, so commanding!

"You little brat, what mess are you causing up here!"

"Telling us to shut up, get out of here right now!"

The once quiet classroom became noisy again.

Of course, those who were making noise didn't include Bai Xiaosheng, Zheng Qinghong, Mu Beichen, Zhao Qianze.

Bai Xiaosheng knew the score, while Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen were suspicious, and Zhao Qianze had been stopped by Bai Xiaosheng.

With an arrogant face, Officer Lin Ke lifted a slender arm and slowly extended a finger as white as a scallion, pointing at those who had been yelling the loudest.

"Han Yinnian, ranked fourth in the first stage of the assessment, your score is now deducted by ten percent!"

"Qian Feiyu, ranked ninth in the first stage of the assessment, your score is now deducted by ten percent!"

"Zhao Dong, ranked fifteenth in the first stage of the assessment..."

Without stopping for a breath, Officer Lin Ke pointed out four or five people, not only stating their names but also their rankings from the last stage, and then announcing point deductions!

Suddenly, the crowd was so shocked they couldn't help but shut their mouths.

"Go on, why don't you speak now?" Officer Lin Ke cocked her head and sneered as she looked around at everyone.

Finally, someone swallowed hard and asked in astonishment, "Who, who are you exactly?!"

Knowing everyone's names, the standings from the last stage, and even claiming the right to deduct points, who else could it be!

The answer was on the verge of spilling out!

"I am your second stage examiner, Officer Lin Ke!" Officer Lin Ke declared in a cold voice.

The crowd was left in shocked silence.

Guessing and hearing Officer Lin Ke's personal admission were two entirely different concepts.

Someone couldn't help but exclaim, "How is this possible, how could the Group Affairs Department let a little girl assess us..."

"I'm thirty years old this year, not much younger than you!" Lin Ke huffed coldly.

The person who had spoken was stunned, and the others' eyes widened even further in shock.

This loli claims she's thirty!

Bai Xiaosheng looked astonished; even he hadn't seen this coming!

He had originally thought Lin Ke was just mature for her age, but it turned out she was a peer!

"No wonder Chen Xiaoya could be friends with her, I had thought their ages didn't match!" The realization startled Bai Xiaosheng.

"No wonder when I ruffled her hair that time, the expressions of the others were off!" Bai Xiaosheng then started in fright.

All the odd feelings he had sensed before, now everything seemed clear!

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but feel a mixture of amusement and embarrassment and really wanted to show off to the people beside him—"You guys might not believe this, but I've ruffled the assessor's hair before..."

Lin Ke glanced at Bai Xiaosheng with an ambiguous smile.

When she first met Bai Xiaosheng, she had not recognized him as a member of this training camp, having only heard his name from Xiahou Qi.

Only by going through the materials thoroughly in the last two days, was she able to match faces to names.

"So she really is the assessor!"

"Unbelievable!"

"I never expected such an Affairs Officer!"

As they stared at Lin Ke's youthful face, the crowd had no choice but to believe.

"Officer Lin, did you have someone send out this notice? Why did you ask us to come at eight, specifying that being fifteen minutes late or not showing up at all would be considered forfeiting the exam, yet you only arrive now. This isn't the time management one would expect from an Affairs Officer!" someone couldn't resist asking.

This question had been bothering many people since earlier.

"Why, are you all fixated on this issue?" Lin Ke scoffed coldly.

Many people said nothing, but their eyes clearly agreed.

"As an Affairs Officer, one should be impartial and self-restrained. If you don't even have the most basic sense of time, how can we trust the assessment?" a bold person spoke out.

"This notice was sent to you all, informing you of your arrival time. Was there ever a single word mentioned that it was the examination time, or that I, the assessor, was also supposed to come at that time?" Lin Ke asked coldly.

With one sentence, the person who had asked was left speechless.

Indeed, the message was only to notify them, and it never mentioned anything about the examiner or whether it was the official assessment.

Bai Xiaosheng looked around at the people who had been rendered speechless by the retort and couldn't help but laugh.

"Are you only now realizing how formidable she is? I've had a taste of it long ago!" Bai Xiaosheng sighed inwardly.

"Does anyone else have questions? Feel free to ask. Consider this interaction time. If there are no more questions, then I need to start getting down to business," Lin Ke surveyed the crowd.

The crowd exchanged looks and eventually shook their heads one after another.

"No more, huh? Good, the next moments are mine," Lin Ke said with a smile.

For some reason, her smile, though sweet and delightful, sent shivers down everyone's spines.

"The Affairs Department has put me in charge of the second phase of the assessment, lasting a month, with the aim of eliminating ten people! So, during this month, whether I assess you once or thirty times, I make the rules! The content of the assessment, I decide!"

Excitement flickered across Lin Ke's face.

"Now, let me announce the first rule," Lin Ke said with a grin, "Those of you who ranked in the top five of the previous phase, you've done very well, you're exceptional. Since you're so exceptional, you won't mind if I add a bit more difficulty for you! The difficulty of the entire next phase for you will be greater than for the others, and the scores you receive will be reduced as I see fit!"

This statement stunned the crowd.

The top five ranked individuals went into a frenzy.

"Officer Lin Ke, on what basis, what basis is this? This isn't fair!" Mu Beichen couldn't contain himself and challenged loudly.

"Fair?" Lin Ke sneered, "What is that?"

Lin Ke pointed at herself, her presence commanding, "Since I am the examiner, I am fairness!"

Chapter 746: Such an Exam_1

Officer Lin Ke declared with an almost overbearing demeanor that in this assessment phase, she was the one wielding absolute authority.

So arrogant, so domineering, yet such an attitude somehow failed to provoke anger or resistance among the people.

Because in everyone's eyes, no matter her true age, Lin Ke looked to be just a lolita.

Getting angry with such a "little beauty," no one was willing. Anger would rise only to inexplicably dissipate into nothingness.

"Is this what they call the 'Lolita effect'?" Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but sigh deeply after realizing it, "I suddenly think the President of the Greater China Region is a real talent!"

They needed to conduct the most rigorous, most brutal selection process, a trial by fire, without causing these people to harbor complaints and adversely affect their moods, without them constantly appealing or protesting to the Affairs Department.

That is to say, find an examiner "before whom they couldn't even muster up the anger."

Lin Ke was just such a presence.

At this moment, she surveyed the crowd.

"Of course, I'm not completely autocratic, you do have choices," she said with a smile to the people below.

"Choose what?" someone couldn't help asking.

"To obey, or to give up," Lin Ke said seriously.

The person who retorted was momentarily speechless. Not just him, but there was a moment of silence throughout the venue.

At this point, who would lightly speak of giving up!

Seeing that everyone "had no objections," Lin Ke nodded with satisfaction and said with a smile, "Actually, according to my initial intentions, it would have been sufficient to just meet all of you and then send you each back home. However, I've been looking through Officer Feng Li's reports these past

two days and found the concept of the training program quite interesting! Therefore, for the second phase, I've decided to retain this form!"

In other words, the training program would continue!

Among those present, quite a few wanted to go back and were now somewhat reluctant.

However, when Lin Ke looked over, they all quickly lowered their heads, remaining silent and unprotesting.

"Now, I will tell you about the rules of this stage's assessment, which will not change until it ends," Lin Ke said with a smile.

Upon hearing this, everyone immediately perked up.

Officer Feng Li's numerous assessments had always caught them off guard, and now, at last, there was someone who would state the rules in advance.

However, people like Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen were extremely vigilant in their gaze.

Even though Officer Feng Li's methods of assessment were sudden, there were still limits and a baseline.

"Only fear that Lin Ke's thinking is too unconventional!" Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but voice their concerns.

At this moment, Lin Ke had already begun speaking.

"From now on, you are to remain in Zhongjing. Every Saturday morning, your mailbox will receive a briefing!"

"What does it contain?"

"Major affairs that need resolution, which have arisen within the week in the twenty companies each of you belongs to!"

"We have specialized personnel responsible for collecting and organizing the affairs, and then sending them to all of you in the form of a briefing, one for each person!"

"You need to handle all the affairs by the end of the day and send back your disposal suggestions!"

"Afterwards, our people will conduct a professional evaluation of your decisions, award scores, and finally, send the most suitable disposal plan to the company."

"Of course, if the company originally fell under your management, then even if your disposal is the best and is ultimately adopted, it still won't count towards your score!"

"That is to say, for the next three weeks, you will be managing twenty companies!"

"This is my test, the trial post for regional industry heads!"

Lin Ke's words left everyone surprised.

Bai Xiaosheng was also a bit shocked.

He had assumed there would be some bizarre form of assessment, but didn't expect it to feel so orthodox!

Feng Li had let them fantasize about "a new official setting a fire when first taking office" during the assessment, and in the final assessment, they were to step into the role, pretending to be the regional industry heads, doing situation simulations.

But all that, it was fake!

What Lin Ke was playing, was the real deal!

"This loli examiner, she really dares to go for it!"

"No kidding, just organizing people to work with twenty companies is no small feat!"

"Such an exercise, even if we don't ultimately win, is a huge boost to our personal capabilities!"

Everyone couldn't help but whisper among themselves, a buzz of varied opinions.

However, someone couldn't help but ask, "Officer Lin Ke, this assessment is done via email, transmitting documents, and it doesn't seem to matter where we are, so do we still need to stay in Zhongjing?"

"Right, then we don't have to be here," someone chimed in.

"You guys want to leave?" Lin Ke said with a smile, "Then go ahead."

Being so readily permitted, the one who asked was now hesitant to take her word for it.

Sure enough—

"However, during the three consecutive weeks of assessments, starting from the second week, I will announce the advancement list. If you're not here by then, don't blame me for ruling it as a forfeiture!" Lin Ke's smile faded as she let out a cold snort, "As to when I'll come here to announce it, that depends on my mood, the timing is uncertain!"

Seeing her obstinate expression, everyone was speechless.

They thought she was reliable just moments ago, now they felt she was anything but!

"Forget it, just one more month here, it's not that bad."

"Yeah, I've kind of got used to it."

"Speaking of which, the food and scenery in Zhongjing are pretty good."

The group murmured quietly among themselves.

"Hey! What are you few whispering about!" Lin Ke frowned and called out.

The ones speaking were startled, thinking that talking about food and fun wasn't appropriate for the occasion and they had transgressed some taboo. They thought about explaining themselves.

"Come on, tell me, what's good to eat and fun to do around here?" In the next second, Lin Ke went from being a stern examiner to a cute little girl.

The turn was so abrupt, many were left disoriented, struggling to come to terms with the change...

"Alright, alright, enough chit-chat. That's it for today, class is dismissed!" Lin Ke announced to everyone and then dashed off in a flash.

This meeting, starting at eight and ending at ten, was finally over.

Once she left, the classroom immediately came to life, everyone buzzing with conversation.

"Speaking of which, the day after tomorrow is Saturday, right?"

"Yeah, doesn't that mean the first batch of business briefings is coming up?!"

"Without a grasp of the business context, haphazard handling won't lead to victory! Seems like we need to get a head start on preparations!"

"Twenty companies, to get to know each one, what a huge project!"

"Enough talk, let's hurry and do our homework, that's the priority!"

The crowd rushed off, each on their way.

Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen did the same.

"Brother Bai, we should also hurry and prepare. This time, the task is truly formidable!"

Zhao Qianze also looked somewhat grave as he greeted Bai Xiaosheng and departed.

While others were rushing to prepare, Bai Xiaosheng was not in a hurry.

With but a thought, all sorts of information and news about those companies could be at his disposal, ready for him to use at will.

So, it was only Bai Xiaosheng who left leisurely.

Upon reaching the school gate, Bai Xiaosheng found his car and just as he opened the door, he saw a sweet little loli in the back seat hum at him, "You're so slow, do you have a problem with your legs, mister? I've been waiting for you for ages!"

Chapter 747 Banquet for the Loli_1

"Why are you in my car?" Bai Xiaosheng looked at Lin Ke in the car with complete surprise.

He thought that after her classes, this girl had gone to Zhongjing.

Lin Ke giggled, yet before she could answer, Feng who was in the driver's seat couldn't help but glance at her, and then at Bai Xiaosheng, "Mr. Bai, this girl claimed to be your relative, reciting your name, phone number, and even your company position without a single mistake, so I let her in. Is there a problem?"

It wasn't strange for Lin Ke to know all these details, having the information on everyone in the training class.

Bai Xiaosheng waved his hand at Feng, "No problem, it's all good."

Only then did Feng relax, though suspicion still lingered in his gaze.

Where did Mr. Bai's relative come from? He'd never heard of her before...

Bai Xiaosheng got into the car, sat next to Lin Ke, instructed Feng to drive, then turned to look at her, "It's almost noon, do you want me to make something tasty for you, to settle the debt for one meal?"

"That's exactly what I came for!" Lin Ke laughed, snapping her fingers.

"Back to my place," instructed Bai Xiaosheng to Feng.

When they got near his residence, Bai Xiaosheng got out with Lin Ke, told Feng to go back to the company, and then took Lin Ke to a nearby market.

"Do you have any dietary restrictions?" Bai Xiaosheng asked at the entrance of the market.

"I can't handle spicy food very well, but other than that, I'm good with anything!" Lin Ke said with a smile.

"Then wait here for a while, I'll be back in at most ten minutes," Bai Xiaosheng replied with a smile and turned to enter the market.

Lin Ke was obedient, amusing herself with her phone outside, and soon saw Bai Xiaosheng coming out with a bag of stuff.

What it was, she didn't know, and she didn't ask.

She was looking forward to the surprise.

However, on the way back, Lin Ke couldn't help but say to Bai Xiaosheng, "Are you going to make meatballs for lunch? I've heard from Xiaoya that your meatballs are exceptional! So tasty they make people want to cry!"

That sounded so exaggerated. Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but feel a mixture of amusement and frustration.

Only a true foodie could say something like that.

"We're not having meatballs in the middle of the day, I'll cook a few dishes for you to try," said Bai Xiaosheng.

Lin Ke nodded.

After a moment of silence, Bai Xiaosheng suddenly looked at her and asked, "Do you think this counts as bribing the examiner?"

"No, no," Lin Ke reassured him, "If you feel uneasy, when the results are out, I can just deduct some points from your score."

Bai Xiaosheng's face darkened. What was he after?

"If you want to be 'fair' like that, then I'm not cooking this meal!"

"You wouldn't dare!" Lin Ke glared, "Hmph, Bai Xiaosheng, don't think I don't know that in the first phase, you were first three times in a row and only slipped in the last round, falling out of the top five. There must be something fishy there! Perhaps Feng Li helped you too! I'm letting that go, but if you dare not make me something delicious, I'll trip you up!"

Lin Ke was even threatening him now.

Bai Xiaosheng shrugged helplessly, at a loss with her.

Back at his place, Bai Xiaosheng busied himself in the kitchen. When he went to the living room to fetch something, he saw that Lin Ke had already taken off her boots and was nestled comfortably on the couch watching TV. Her legs, clad in white tights, were crossed, and she was twirling the tips of her twin ponytails with her hands, looking both cute and beguiling.

"This girl, she's going to be trouble when she grows up," Bai Xiaosheng muttered to himself, then chuckled, "What am I saying, she's grown up—she's already thirty!"

If age was taken into account, she was probably even older than him...

Bai Xiaosheng shook his head and returned to the kitchen.

He busily prepared the dishes one by one and carried them out to place on the coffee table.

Lin Ke couldn't take her eyes off them, and she even felt like she was about to drool.

"Golden Fried Shrimp Balls, Scallion-Braised Sea Cucumber, Crispy Meat with Radish, and Cold Mixed Juliennes."

Two people, four dishes, and a pot of fragrant rice.

As Bai Xiaosheng came back with the bowls and chopsticks, he saw Lin Ke had already started, picking up a Golden Fried Shrimp Ball and tossing it into her mouth. Her eyes sparkled as she ate and nodded in

praise, "The coating is crispy, the shrimp meat is sweet, and you've added banana and spices, which is ingenious!"

As she spoke, she snatched the chopsticks from Bai Xiaosheng's hand, picked up a piece of scallion from the Scallion-Braised Sea Cucumber, and tasted it, "Rich and strongly flavored, absolutely delicious! To cook the scallion to this level, that's the ultimate!"

The young girl heaped praise without any reservation as she wholeheartedly enjoyed the meal.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled, served himself a bowl of rice, and ate with her.

In the end, most of the dishes ended up in Lin Ke's stomach. She put down her bowl and chopsticks, her face showing complete satisfaction.

"The dishes are not exotic, but you indeed have the standard of a top chef! Xiaoya didn't lie to me!" Lin Ke said with a smile.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and cleared away the dishes.

"Bai Xiaosheng, are you married?" Lin Ke suddenly asked as he returned.

"Not yet," Bai Xiaosheng replied casually, then curiously asked, "Why do you ask?"

"How about I marry you then!" Lin Ke asked with big, charming eyes.

Bai Xiaosheng rolled his eyes.

They say to capture a man's heart, you must first capture his stomach. It seems this saying applies to women too, especially to foodies.

"Let's talk about that when you're older," Bai Xiaosheng muttered, careful not to speak too loudly for fear of an outburst from Lin Ke.

Finally, Lin Ke took an afternoon nap at Bai Xiaosheng's place, had a cup of tea, and then leisurely left.

That afternoon, Bai Xiaosheng did not go to the company, but instead stayed at home to do his "homework."

Even with Red Lotus's assistance, which allowed him to master comprehensive information about nineteen enterprises excluding Zhongjing Media in a very short time, he knew that making strategic business decisions required a lot of effort!

Bai Xiaosheng was very clear about this.

So he focused his mind and put in the same, if not more, effort to refine and perfect his "homework."

"Lin Ke's idea is excellent! If I really become the provincial industrial manager, I'll inevitably have to deal with these enterprises! Getting accustomed to this in advance is all gain with no loss!" Bai Xiaosheng, while laying the groundwork, also found it very interesting.

He spent an afternoon analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each enterprise, typing every word into a document, and even drafted a vision and development plan for each company considering their current situations.

"If others reach ten, I aim to reach a hundred. Only by doing so can I stay one step ahead and outpace them!" Bai Xiaosheng silently recited to himself.

This was a laborious project, and even with Red Lotus's assistance, it was like climbing a mountain, requiring one to progress step by step.

However, once Bai Xiaosheng genuinely completed this task, dealing with affairs of each enterprise would become extremely simple later on, and his decisions would be highly practical and applicable!

In the following time, Bai Xiaosheng prepared wholeheartedly, pouring in several times more effort than others.

He could feel his mental reserves gradually becoming richer, a sensation that was immensely fulfilling.

Bai Xiaosheng also looked forward to the arrival of the first brief on the affairs!

Chapter 748: Bai Xiaosheng? What's special about him?_1

In the waiting period, everyone, not just Bai Xiaosheng alone, sought to research the twenty companies, excluding their own, and gather information to prepare.

However, the quality and depth of information everyone could find varied.

The sources of information were nothing more than internet searches or obtaining it through connections and various channels.

The nineteen enterprises, not counting one's own, were scattered across Tiannan and the north and even abroad.

Internet searching was a daunting task for an individual, and even if a team was organized to assist, it still required a lot of time. Moreover, the reliability of searches conducted by others and whether they were complete and trustworthy remained unknown. The final users had to go through the data bit by bit, memorizing it; the workload was incredibly tiring just to think about.

Then there was the gathering of data through connections and various channels. While it seemed more direct and accurate, it carried its own drawbacks!

The twenty enterprises, already in competition, were in an "adversarial" relationship. Could one really expect the most accurate and thorough information from them? The information they provided might well be laced with traps! The users had to continuously stay alert and cautious, cross-referencing the data to avoid pitfalls. Just reviewing the data was akin to a strategic and shrewd mental battle.

It was genuinely exhausting.

But no matter how exhausting it was, one had to buck up and work hard. Otherwise, they would fall behind others.

To row against the current; to not advance was to fall back. Everyone knew this.

Bai Xiaosheng had thought about these things and even sighed—

"Lin Ke isn't just testing our ability to handle affairs, but through this challenging task, he's testing each person's capacity to gather and process information! This assessment, just by looking at the rules, seems simple, but in reality, it's utterly draining and far more complex than the first phase!"

Of course, Bai Xiaosheng was the quickest and most comprehensive among everyone in mastering the data of the nineteen companies.

After Lin Ke left, by six o'clock in the evening, Bai Xiaosheng had reviewed all the data, getting a good grasp of it.

Of course, he would spend the following time to conduct even more meticulous analysis.

Just as Bai Xiaosheng completed his initial review, a knock sounded at the door of Zheng Qinghong's hotel room where he stayed.

Standing outside was Bai Xiaocheng.

Although Bai Xiaocheng had been eliminated, he had not left. He had been assisting Zheng Qinghong all along.

Zheng Qinghong had brought three elite assistants with him and Bai Xiaocheng had brought two. These six people constituted Zheng Qinghong's brain trust.

"How's it going, have you finished?" Zheng Qinghong let Bai Xiaocheng in and asked eagerly.

"I've finished a large part!" Bai Xiaocheng looked a bit weary, but his eyes shone with excitement. He handed over a stack of printed documents and a USB drive to Zheng Qinghong, "Here's the first batch of data, gathered from a full internet search by the six of us. We also requested information through various channels. We've preliminarily screened it, bringing only the most reliable parts to you!"

Zheng Qinghong took the items with great satisfaction and quickly walked towards the open computer at the desk, plugged in the USB, reviewed the data, and nodded continuously, quite pleased with what he saw.

"Bai ah, you've really worked hard this time!" Zheng Qinghong said.

"Not at all, not at all! It's only right!" Bai Xiaocheng humbly replied with a smile.

"Getting this data so quickly puts us one step ahead! You guys will have to work hard to bring me the rest of the data as soon as possible." Zheng Qinghong rolled up his sleeves, sat down full of energy, and started reading the data, "I'm not sleeping tonight, aiming to grasp the situation of all the enterprises before anyone else!"

"You're really pushing yourself! Take care of your health. I think our speed is already number one!" Bai Xiaocheng said.

"No room for complacency! This time, I want to outdo everyone! Hmph, I'll show them what a genius truly is!" Zheng Qinghong's eyes seemed to burrow into the computer screen as he scoffed, "Especially that Bai fellow, I want him to see that being shrewd and cunning can't accomplish great things! Success requires resources and diligence! What does he have!"

"I'll get going then, I have to supervise and get you the follow-up data!" Bai Xiaocheng said.

Zheng Qinghong didn't look back, waving his hand, and Bai Xiaocheng tiptoed away.

Almost simultaneously, at Chen Jiuzheng's place, Mu Beichen also received a substantial set of data, one third more extensive than Zheng Qinghong's, and even more detailed, even more precise.

Even Chen Jiuzheng couldn't help but exclaim.

"Tian brought you the data, yet instead of looking at it right away, you handed it over to your 'secretarial department.' Is this what they've sorted out? How did it increase so much?"

"There's also some stuff found online," Mu Beichen said, smiling.

"Is it reliable?" asked Chen Jiuzheng.

"If my 'secretarial department' can't even handle this much, why bother keeping them?" said Mu Beichen, brimming with confidence.

He had at his disposal a top-tier think tank!

"Good, very good! This time, the Bai fellow is bound to be far behind you!" Chen Jiuzheng nodded and laughed heartily.

"Bai Xiaosheng?" Mu Beichen snorted derisively, "This time, I didn't even consider him a rival, didn't even pay him any attention! What's needed for this kind of thing—manpower, resources—what does he have? Didn't Changqing say, even his most reliable female assistant has gone to Chang Networking? Mr. Bai is probably still mindlessly scouring the internet!"

With a smile on his face, Chen Jiuzheng seemed to envision Bai Xiaosheng's weary state, his smile growing even broader.

"In my eyes, the only one who could possibly keep pace with me at this stage, is probably just Zheng Qinghong. And this time, he too will be behind me!"

Mu Beichen spoke with absolute confidence, his eyes even shining with brilliance.

Having fallen behind by a slight margin in the first phase, now he was set to take it back!

As for the Bai surname? Not worth a sneer!

"Alright, now, I am going to study the data, to prepare for Saturday!" said Mu Beichen before heading straight for the study.

Chen Jiuzheng summoned a servant and instructed, "Do not disturb Mr. Mu! Also, have someone on standby 24 hours a day, to cater to his needs immediately!"

The servant went to carry out the orders.

In the next two days, everyone was on full alert, preparing for battle with all their might.

Relatively speaking, Bai Xiaosheng might have been the most relaxed of all, eating on time, sleeping regularly, never staying up late, nor speculating about others.

In these two days, Lin Ke had visited once more. Bai Xiaosheng cooked her delicious food, which was also a form of relaxation for himself.

Finally, Saturday arrived.

Early in the morning, Bai Xiaosheng received a notification on his phone, a briefing from the corporate affairs department, sent out!

"Now, it's time to test the results of the past two days!" Upon seeing it, Bai Xiaosheng took a deep breath and opened the document.

After briefly scanning the content, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but gasp.

"Didn't expect that in the first wave, as many as twelve companies would run into problems!"

"Next, it's my turn to shine!"

Chapter 749: Perfect Answer_1

Bai Xiaosheng reviewed the briefings: twelve enterprises each had issues that required the approval of the top leader, including matters related to finance, personnel, and contracts, among others, totaling five categories.

The details varied widely.

After all, these enterprises belonged to different industries and varied in scale.

For instance, financial issues involved capital injections for product research and development, project development, final approval of the company's periodic profit and loss statements, and the lending and borrowing of funds with external companies, to name a few.

Personnel issues, on the other hand, covered the appointment or dismissal of senior executives, layoffs among mid- and lower-level employees, as well as recruitment and training, among other things.

In summary, the issues were numerous and diverse.

Bai Xiaosheng, having reviewed everything, couldn't help but feel emotional.

Becoming the head of provincial industry is indeed busy work! And the businesses to manage would certainly not be limited to these twenty companies!

To become a regional head or someone like the president of the Greater China Region Headquarters, the workload, I believe, would multiply.

By then, if one were to attend to everything personally, it would probably take years off one's life!

"High positions are just like that; they seem glorious to outsiders, but the hardships are known only to the person involved," Bai Xiaosheng exclaimed, but then chuckled at his own needless worries. "If that time really comes, the number of assistants and secretaries at my disposal would probably equal a reinforced platoon. Take our president of the Greater China Region, for example, who established a department for such affairs; he doesn't need to work too hard."

After reflecting, Bai Xiaosheng began responding to the document.

"Sifeng Entertainment needs a vice president; three general managers have been nominated. Hmm, Zhang Dayu is forward-looking and has a sharp eye. He's the one!"

"Hai Ming International is borrowing one and a half billion from a financial company, which is demanding an additional fifty million and wants the land on the outskirts of the city owned by Hai Ming International as collateral? Dream on! That land will be valued at three billion in the commercial market in three years. I can't agree to that!"

"Daxing Insurance is requesting to launch a new product? I remember several professional articles that have analyzed the pros and cons. Red Lotus has also assessed it. The risk is too high, and for the company, this product is not urgent; further evidence is needed. Postpone it to the beginning of next year!"

"Wantian Maritime has reported that the relevant department has tasked them with safety inspections for three vessels? No, all vessels should be inspected, and it must be reported to the relevant department. Additionally, the media should be contacted to show a proactive attitude. This is not crisis PR but an opportunity for PR!"

...

Bai Xiaosheng responded to one enterprise after another, each time offering a brief explanation for his decision. After all, it was necessary for the people in the Group Affairs Department to see this.

For two whole hours, Bai Xiaosheng was glued to the computer, focusing solely on this task, even holding back the urge to use the restroom.

It's true, making decisions can be addictive.

When you know that each of your decisions will affect the futures of many people, and every approval involves hundreds of millions in funds, the feeling of controlling fate can be hard to suppress.

"This must be the allure of holding a high position," Bai Xiaosheng remarked, stretching lazily.

Finally, he was done.

He quickly checked for any typos, then sent the responses back to the email address from which the files had come.

At that moment.

Lin Ke was in the Affairs Department, holding an oversized cup of milk tea, chatting with everyone in the office area.

In this area, there were twenty people—all temporarily assigned to assist her.

These twenty were responsible for liaising with the twenty enterprises, each person delving deeply into the assigned enterprise. They were required to share their research with others every week after sending the briefings and during downtime, like now.

This ensured the quality of each person's research and an overall understanding of each enterprise among the team.

Right now, everyone had been reporting continuously for two hours.

Under Lin Ke's leadership, it resembled more of a chat.

Different from her domineering and overbearing attitude toward candidates, Lin Ke never lost her temper with her fellow "insiders" from the Affairs Department, always emphasizing the importance of listening to opinions.

While they were talking, someone's computer beeped—a notification sound.

Everyone couldn't help but look over.

The owner of the computer rolled back to their desk, opened the message, and was immediately taken aback.

"Someone has sent back a response report!" the person said incredulously.

Everyone was startled, then a buzz of surprise spread through the room.

"No way, so fast? It's only been two hours!"

"Based on our original estimate, it would take at least five or six hours at the fastest!"

"Who could it be? So eager to send it back, could it be that someone's trying to score some impression points?"

"What's the use of impression points if the decision-making is all over the place? That person will be the first to go!"

"Let's see the content, check if someone's causing trouble!"

Under the surprise of everyone, the scene became somewhat chaotic.

"Quiet down!" Lin Ke stopped their clamor and nodded towards the person who received the information, commanding, "Open it!"

The completed processing report was opened and enlarged.

Everyone crowded around, looking over it item by item.

In just a few minutes, there was silence at first, only the sound of breathing could be heard, and many couldn't help but widen their eyes.

Then there was a buzz of astonishment.

"The handling is straightforward and very decisive!"

"Although the reasons seem simple, they hit the nail on the head, right to the core!"

"I wanted to handle it this way too, I didn't expect him to think the same!"

"It's too unbelievable! He completed it all in just two hours and still achieved such a standard!"

"Is this even humanly possible? Too strong!"

Exclamations and praise poured out like a breach in a dam, unstoppable once it began.

"Amazing!" Even Lin Ke couldn't help exclaiming, then urged, "Check who sent back the file!"

The person in front of the computer immediately operated and then read out the sender's name letter by letter— "Bai, Xiao, Sheng!"

"Bai Xiaosheng!"

Lin Ke repeated the name and after a moment of astonishment, her eyes brightened with a smile forming at the corner of her mouth.

"Stop the amazement, everyone back to your seats! You, send a copy of this file to each person. I want you to complete the assessment within a quarter of an hour!" Lin Ke ordered.

In her free time, she could be extremely friendly with everyone, but the moment she faced work, she transformed into a completely different person.

Swift and decisive!

"Yes!" everyone responded in unison.

That was precisely what they admired about Lin Ke!

Twenty minutes later, at the Zhenbei Group Greater China Region Headquarters, Mr. Xiahou Qi's office.

The door was knocked on urgently.

"Come in!" Xiahou Qi, the President of the Greater China Region, was discussing matters with Feng Li when he heard the commotion and quickly stopped talking, shouting aloud.

Feng Li stood up, looking towards the door.

As soon as the door opened, Lin Ke hurried in.

"Yo, you're in quite a rush, what's the matter?" Xiahou Qi was taken aback and then smiled.

Feng Li was his half-student, Lin Ke his goddaughter; neither were strangers to him.

"I've come to report to you that someone has completed the first job trial in two hours, with a performance that can only be described as perfect!" Lin Ke said soberly.

"Oh? Who is it?" Xiahou Qi asked, both surprised and pleased.

Lin Ke glanced at Feng Li and smiled.

"Bai Xiaosheng!"

Chapter 750: Be More Careful Next Time_1

Hearing that it was Bai Xiaosheng's name, Xiahou Qi and Feng Li were both taken aback.

"So it's him! Yes, to reach such a level, in my view, only he could. Even Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen would probably fall short," Xiahou Qi laughed heartily and sighed, "Such a young talent, almost devilishly so!"

"It seems that teacher, you have great confidence in him, and this isn't surprising?" Feng Li said with a smile.

Lin Ke glanced at Feng Li and said with a chuckle, "Sister Feng Li, I see you're not surprised either!"

"Naturally, this Bai Xiaosheng took first place three times in a row during my assessment period. His approach is unconventional, but he always manages to achieve unexpectedly outstanding results. Elder Xia knows all this."

Feng Li was still unaware of Lin Ke's attitude towards Bai Xiaosheng and spoke cautiously.

Lin Ke gave her a deep look, smiling without exposing her true thoughts.

On the other hand, Xiahou Qi, glancing between them, felt that since everyone clearly admired Bai Xiaosheng, it was quite tiresome to keep it hidden.

One was a student he valued; the other was like his own granddaughter. There was no need for such pretense.

"Forget it, I might as well be upfront about it," Xiahou Qi said.

Be upfront, be upfront about what? Both Feng Li and Lin Ke were startled, looking at the elder.

"Feng Li, you've mentioned this Bai Xiaosheng to me many times, praising his talents! I think you also appreciate his gift and want to help him, right? There might also be a bit of personal relationship involved," Xiahou Qi said.

As he spoke, Feng Li felt somewhat embarrassed, "Elder Xia, I..."

"Alright, no need to say more. You are not one to disregard fairness. If Bai Xiaosheng were a mediocrity, even if he were your relative, you wouldn't necessarily recommend him or help him!" Xiahou Qi continued, "During that last assessment of yours, you helped him, didn't you? Otherwise, how could he have suddenly ranked sixth or seventh?"

Feng Li's face turned red, wanting to explain.

"Enough, no more explanations. I'm not a stickler, what you did wasn't wrong! And the fact that Bai Xiaosheng took your advice, concealing his edge, made me think even higher of him," Xiahou Qi stated.

Feng Li gave a wry smile.

It seemed her cleverness in front of the elder had been seen through completely.

"Elder Xia is wise!" Feng Li said.

Xiahou Qi quite enjoyed the praise from his half-student and, noticing Lin Ke snickering, pointed a finger at her.

"Little Feng Li, let me tell you something you don't know. A few days ago, I went to wish an old friend a happy birthday, and this girl was there too," Xiahou Qi said, "What I didn't expect was that Bai Xiaosheng was also a young friend of that old friend of mine. This girl met this Mr. Bai by chance. She thinks as highly of him as you do!"

"What!" Feng Li looked at Lin Ke in shock.

Such are the marvelous workings of fate!

To think that someone with Lin Ke's discerning eye and unpredictable disposition would also be charmed by Bai Xiaosheng!

Bai Xiaosheng, Bai Xiaosheng, how did you manage that? I must concede and give you a 'respect,' Feng Li thought to herself.

"Sister Feng Li, don't blame me for not telling you; you were also keeping things from me," Lin Ke said with a grin, "Bai Xiaosheng is quite interesting; his cooking is delicious, and of course, his talent is remarkable!"

"I had no idea he was good at cooking!" Feng Li said, surprised.

"Then let's go mooch a meal from him someday!" Lin Ke laughed.

"Sure!" Feng Li laughed as well.

"Ahem, ahem!" Xiahou Qi coughed twice and put on a stern face, "Listen, as remarkable as Bai Xiaosheng is, and as much as you appreciate him, you must remember your roles and maintain your integrity while doing things. You can't show favoritism, and you definitely cannot directly interfere to help him through this selection!"

Xiahou Qi's seriousness made Feng Li and Lin Ke solemn.

"Don't worry, Elder Xia, Feng Li won't!"

"Old man, don't you know me by now, I'm all about the rules!"

Their statements like these pleased Xiahou Qi.

"Actually, when we were selecting people and had to choose a provincial industrial leader from among them, some said that a young person like Bai Xiaosheng should not be given the qualification. Could it really be that such a young person would occupy a high position? I said at the time, a hero does not have to come from a noble origin nor does he need to be of a certain age. As long as the capability is there, my Greater China Region is vast enough to provide ample space for them to soar high and roam freely like eagles and dragons!" said Xiahou Qi, "But at the very least, we must be just and fair!"

Such teaching made the two women nod again, their expressions very serious.

Xiahou Qi nodded with satisfaction and then said to Lin Ke with a chuckle, "Next time you go to Bai Xiaosheng's house for a meal, remember to ask for some calligraphy works, but remember, never mention me! Just say you like them yourself!"

One moment he was the embodiment of justice, as if sitting high above the clouds; the next moment, he transformed into a common old man with mundane concerns.

Feng Li was startled, suddenly with a bitter smile; she was still a bit out of sync with the rhythm.

Lin Ke, however, already seemed accustomed to this and chuckled, "No problem!"

After the small talk was over.

Xiahou Qi gestured with a pursed mouth towards the item in Lin Ke's hand, "Let's talk about serious matters. You have already evaluated Bai Xiaosheng's answers, haven't you? If it were just about speed, that would be surprising but not enough to have you come over. You said the answers were 'perfect'; 'perfect' is not a word to be used lightly! Let's hear it, let me listen too!" said Xiahou Qi.

As Xiahou Qi said this, Feng Li also became interested, looking at Lin Ke.

Lin Ke smiled, split the printed document she held in half, and handed it to Xiahou Qi and Feng Li.

"These solutions may seem simple and unadorned, yet they are the most accurate, and the accompanying explanations are concise and clear! After my people reviewed them, they believed that Bai Xiaosheng's understanding of these enterprises even far surpassed theirs!"

Lin Ke exclaimed in admiration, "A twenty-person team, yet their final research results are not as good as a single person! I, Lin Ke, have not admired many people, but this time, I really do admire him!"

Xiahou Qi and Feng Li flipped through the documents, both nodding continuously.

"Don't think that I'm giving him any special treatment. What he has done alone is comparable to my entire team; I'm not capable of such favoritism!"

"This guy is truly exceptional!" murmured Lin Ke.

Xiahou Qi and Feng Li nodded, tacitly agreeing with this assessment.

"Good, very good! If my Greater China Region has such an individual, we should unearth him sooner rather than later!" Xiahou Qi said with a laugh.

Even so, the old master would not disregard rules and promote him directly.

He would wait and see Bai Xiaosheng earn that position with his own strength.

In his view, Bai Xiaosheng would be capable of achieving it!

Suddenly, as if struck by a thought, Lin Ke's lips curled up into a smile, "Elder Xia, Feng Li, I've just thought of an interesting possibility."

Xiahou Qi and Feng Li immediately looked at her.

"Do you think, this Bai Xiaosheng, in the next assessment, might deliberately perform terribly?"

Meanwhile.

Bai Xiaosheng slapped his forehead, extremely vexed, "Darn it, I couldn't restrain myself! Stay low-key, low-key is key!"

"Well, I'll pay attention next time."