

Two Trillion 761

Chapter 761: Resolving the Conflict_1

Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun, upon hearing Mr. Wang say that they would be used to vent his anger on this man surnamed Bai, had extremely unsightly expressions on their faces.

In their little domain, they could act high and mighty, respected as "Manager Wu, Mr. Zhao." But once in the eyes of those higher up, they were nothing!

And through Mr. Wang's words, they were absolutely certain that this young man with the surname Bai held a status equal to, if not slightly superior to, Mr. Wang, but definitely above their own!

If they were to wait for Bai Xiaosheng to speak up, then they would be far too passive!

"Mr. Bai, I misspoke just now! It was my fault for not recognizing a great man! I beg your forgiveness; a generous person doesn't dwell on the faults of others!", Wu Ping was quick to react, with a good attitude and a full-face smile, he begged for mercy.

In this room, aside from the bodyguards, Bai Fei, and Liu Dahu, he was of the lowest status. Used to observing words and expressions and ingratiating himself with his superiors, his words came smoothly and naturally.

"Me too, me too, Mr. Bai! I truly didn't know about your relationship with Mr. Wang. I spoke without thinking, please, please don't hold it against me!", Zhao Wanyun also immediately reacted, pleading.

Bai Xiaosheng glanced at Bai Fei, his eyes holding an inquiring look.

"That's enough, Sheng! That's enough!", Bai Fei hurriedly said.

He didn't know what else to say.

This scene, if it were ten minutes earlier, he wouldn't have believed it even if he was beaten to death!

Now, however, it was unfolding right before his eyes!

Liu Dahu watched the conduct of Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun, recalling his own sarcastic behavior just moments ago, he horribly regretted it to the point of feeling green in the gut!

He even wanted to ask for forgiveness as well!

Unfortunately, even if he now sought forgiveness, he didn't have the standing to do so alongside Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun.

Bai Xiaosheng, seeing Bai Fei's demeanor, turned to Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun, "The offense was not against me, but against my cousin here. Since he has decided not to pursue it, let's leave it at that."

"Thank you, Mr. Bai, thank you, Mr. Bai!"

Like men reprieved, they were profoundly grateful to Bai Xiaosheng and Bai Fei, thanking them profusely.

"Alright, you may all leave now.", Wang Dong said with a smile, making a welcoming gesture to Bai Xiaosheng, "Bai, please!"

"Please!", Bai Xiaosheng responded with a smile.

With Wang Dong giving him so much face, he naturally reciprocated with kindness and amiable demeanor.

The two walked towards the sofa area.

Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun, very perceptive, had the bodyguards leave, took Bai Fei and Liu Dahu to another room, called for tea, brought over fruit, and after tending to these tasks, they also tiptoed out, closing the door behind them carefully.

Bai Fei and Liu Dahu were taken to an adjoining room, Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun came over after they finished their tasks there, chatting with Bai Fei with smiles and extreme eagerness, acting like brothers.

Bai Fei of course knew that this was all because of the face given by Bai Xiaosheng; he didn't become arrogant or rude by relying on his support. On the contrary, he became more humble, making a good impression on the two men.

They had chatted for no more than five minutes when someone knocked on the door. A man with glasses brought in a check, Zhao Wanyun signed it swiftly and handed it to Bai Fei with a bright smile.

"This is from Mr. Wang, for your emotional distress, please kindly accept it!", Zhao Wanyun said with a smile.

"How can this be appropriate! No, absolutely not!", Bai Fei refused.

"If you don't accept it, then you will find it too little! Otherwise, let me add a bit more!", Zhao Wanyun said.

"No, that's not what I meant!", Bai Fei hurriedly explained.

One shouldn't accept rewards without merit, he couldn't just take tens of thousands from someone for no reason!

Even in consideration of Bai Xiaosheng's face, he couldn't agree to it.

Favors and face, these things are debts, the more used, the less is left.

Bai Fei didn't want to burden Bai Xiaosheng with more debts of gratitude.

"Little brother Bai, just accept it! Since Mr. Wang has spoken, we must follow through! Don't make things difficult for us, consider it a favor to us!", Wu Ping said with a smile, chiming in.

Beside him, Liu Dahu was truly filled with envy.

Insisting on giving money, even refusing was not an option!

He wondered why he had never encountered such good fortune!

In the end, Bai Fei couldn't resist the two of them and reluctantly accepted the check, planning to give it to Bai Xiaosheng when he got out, to let him decide what to do.

Seeing Bai Fei accept the check, Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun finally nodded in satisfaction.

After chatting for a while, Wu Ping and Zhao Wanyun left one after the other.

"Bai Fei, that Mr. Bai, did he come from Zhongjing? Do you know where he is employed?" Liu Dahu found an opening and cautiously asked.

Bai Fei glanced at him and said with a calm smile, "He is the General Manager of Zhongjing Media."

Liu Dahu didn't expect to know, but to his surprise, his eyes bulged out and he said in shock, "Zhongjing Media General Manager Bai Xiaosheng! I knew that name sounded so familiar when I heard it earlier! I just couldn't believe it!"

"You've heard of him?" Bai Fei asked skeptically.

Zhongjing Media was one of the top corporations in Zhongjing, but his cousin maintained an exceptionally low profile, with many people still unaware of him.

"I've heard, I've heard! He, a great figure!" Liu Dahu couldn't help but stare at Bai Fei wide-eyed, surprised, and said, "Bai Xiaosheng, Bai Fei, so you two are family!"

As it turned out, there was a reason Liu Dahu knew of Bai Xiaosheng.

One of his brothers worked as a servant for the Mou Family in Zhongjing and loved to drink and boast. He would show off the remarkable stories he heard to his brothers over drinks.

Liu Dahu learned that Zhongjing Media had a young General Manager who, though he looked unremarkable, had a powerful influence over the Mou and Zhang families, dominating Zhongjing!

"Why have you never mentioned it before! With a brother like that, what are you still doing at our little shabby company!" Liu Dahu was incredulous.

"He is him, I am me. Workwise, they don't relate!" Bai Fei said with a smile.

Liu Dahu was momentarily speechless.

Bai Fei had considered it, but he simply didn't want to bother Bai Xiaosheng...

"Look, Brother Bai Fei, I was the one who didn't see your worth before, it was wrong of me to target you! From now on, let's be friends. If anyone dares to cross you again, I'll be the first to take care of them for you!"

Liu Dahu thumped his chest, starting to address Bai Fei as a brother.

Bai Fei smiled. He knew what kind of person Liu Dahu was, and he humored him, going along with it.

...

Bai Xiaosheng and Wang Dong had a chat for a couple of hours.

Although they didn't discuss anything substantial, they both enjoyed the meeting thoroughly.

Eventually, Bai Xiaosheng politely declined Wang Dong's invitation to stay longer and earnestly invited Wang Dong to visit Zhongjing, before taking his leave.

Wang Dong arranged for a car to take Bai Xiaosheng and Bai Fei to the high-speed rail station.

As for Liu Dahu, naturally, he didn't have the privilege to enjoy such treatment. How he left was of no concern to anyone else.

On the way, Bai Fei found an opportunity to give the check to Bai Xiaosheng.

"Keep the money for yourself; consider it compensation for your emotional distress this time," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

After Bai Fei persistently refused and could not prevail, he had no choice but to accept it.

The brothers boarded the train and returned to Zhongjing.

Bai Fei's unjust calamity was turned into a blessing, thanks to Bai Xiaosheng's intervention.

"The Wang Family!"

On the train, Bai Xiaosheng reminisced about his conversation with Wang Dong and suddenly smiled. He appreciated this show of goodwill!

Chapter 762: The Final Examiner_1

For several days, all was calm and tranquil.

Since Lin Weiwei returned to the company, Bai Xiaosheng had been living the pleasant and comfortable life he used to enjoy once again.

He had three exquisite meals a day, accompanied by tea and coffee that suited the time and mood.

When he was tired, Lin Weiwei would even help massage his shoulders.

However, the good times didn't last long. Several days later, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying gathered their materials and set off again to visit Chen Changluo's company.

The "good days" were over, but Bai Xiaosheng had no time for regret.

Because Saturday had arrived again!

The final batch of affair briefings was distributed, and the companies of those who had been eliminated had not disappeared from the briefings.

The last briefing, covering the affairs of twenty companies, was much more challenging and required more work than the previous two.

This time, Bai Xiaosheng processed everything at normal speed, checked it thoroughly, and then sent it back without any delay.

He wanted to keep a low profile, that was true.

But the so-called low profile also had its limits; being too unobtrusive to the point of affecting the selection was pointless.

This time, his report, whether in terms of speed or quality, once again amazed the staff at the affairs department.

By three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, the scores of everyone in the training class were out.

Lin Ke had prepared a summary and compiled a list of those advancing and those being eliminated, which she was about to present to Xiahou Qi for review.

On her way to Xiahou Qi's office, Lin Ke saw a figure from afar walking out, closing the door, and then coming towards her.

The usually unruly Lin Ke frowned upon spotting this person and muttered under her breath, "Why is it him!"

Elder Xia had said that this afternoon, he would meet with the final stage examiners!

It couldn't be him, right?

Lin Ke's heart sank for a moment, but she didn't believe it!

How could this person be the final examiner!

It must be that I'm overthinking it; he's probably just reporting something to Elder Xia.

Lin Ke didn't believe it.

Her momentary shock swiftly turned into an innocent, cheerful smile of a harmless young girl.

"Yo, Officer Lin, long time no see!"

The person opposite noticed her, his face brimming with boundless enthusiasm, and he walked over with a grin.

This man was around fifty years old, with a short crop of thick black hair that showed no signs of graying, likely dyed. His smile was honest and enthusiastic, yet his eyes shone with shrewdness.

Smiling Tiger!

Lin Ke inwardly scoffed, but outwardly she responded with a sweet smile, "Officer Yang, long time no see."

Yang Chengtian, one of the oldest among the affairs officers, but not old at heart, still keen on forming factions and siding with certain individuals.

"You must be going to report this stage's assessment results to Elder Xia, aren't you? I wonder who the first place is this stage?" Yang Chengtian asked with a chuckle.

"It's confidential. I regret that I can't disclose that!" Lin Ke replied with a mock smile, firmly refusing.

"Oh, I understand, I understand!" Yang Chengtian chuckled and nodded repeatedly.

The two exchanged only brief pleasantries before passing by each other.

Yet as she passed by him, Lin Ke heard Yang Chengtian mumble, "It's a secret now, but in a few days, that might not be the case anymore."

Lin Ke frowned slightly and glanced back, only to see Yang Chengtian humming a tune, strolling away at a leisurely pace.

"What do you mean?!" Lin Ke frowned and muttered.

Then, she rushed to Xiahou Qi's office.

She knocked, heard a response, and pushed the door open.

Xiahou Qi was behind his desk reading a document. He looked up, took off his reading glasses, and smiled at Lin Ke, "The final results are out, huh? Don't tell me just yet, let me guess—"

"Bai Xiaosheng first, Mu Beichen second, Zheng Qinghong third, am I right?" Xiahou Qi said with a smile.

It wasn't difficult to guess; the order of these three had been determined during the previous rounds, and as long as everyone performed normally, this was the expected outcome.

Lin Ke walked over, "Slap!" She threw the file onto the old man's desk, her face expressionless as she raised her hand and gave a dry clap, showing a one-second smile of "admiration," "Impressive."

After that, Lin Ke's smile faded, and she directly took a seat on the couch.

"Little girl, what's the matter, are you upset?" Xiahou Qi asked curiously.

"What's the matter?" Lin Ke scoffed coldly, "What's the deal with Yang Chengtian, old man? You better not tell me his visit was a coincidence! I just spoke to him, and his last words made me very uneasy!"

"Oh, what did he say? Let's hear it," Xiahou Qi said with a smile.

"He asked about the current rankings, and if I could tell him! He said 'It's a secret for now, but in a couple of days, that might not be the case,'" Lin Ke couldn't help saying, "Even after a month, such matters won't be publicized, let alone in a few days? Unless—he is the examiner for the next stage!"

"Old man, I know how you operate, you're impossible to predict. But surely, you wouldn't really put Yang Chengtian in charge of the next phase! You don't have dementia, do you? Don't you know that he is—"

"Aligned with Zheng Honghu!"

Zheng Honghu.

At that name, Xiahou Qi's eyes narrowed sharply.

Zheng Honghu was one of the ten Senior Affairs Officers!

He was also the half-brother of Zheng Qinghong!

Outsiders speculated that the brothers, who were ten years apart in age, had a cold relationship.

However, Xiahou Qi knew through his own channels that this wasn't the case!

Lin Ke knew some of this too.

"Accusing me of senility? Little girl, you're getting more and more disrespectful! Believe it or not, I'll have you on duty in the Affairs Office for the whole next year and not let you go out!" Xiahou Qi snorted coldly, threatening.

Lin Ke's temper flared, and she cocked her head and stiffened her neck defiantly, "Then you better explain it clearly to me first! Is this Yang Chengtian the final round's examiner or not!"

"Yes!" Xiahou Qi nodded, answering succinctly.

"Old man, you..." Lin Ke said, annoyed.

But Xiahou Qi's expression softened, and he gestured for her to calm down.

"You clever little imp, when you're smart, you're smarter than anyone, but sometimes you can be so dumb!" Xiahou Qi huffed, "If Feng Li knew about this, she would have figured it out before even asking! Can't you just calm down and think this through properly?"

Xiahou Qi's rebuke left Lin Ke startled.

She looked at Xiahou Qi's grinning face, blinked her eyes, and quickly went through the incident again from the beginning.

Just now, she had been too agitated!

Now, thinking calmly—

Would the old man be unaware of Yang Chengtian's loyalties? Would he not know the true relationship between the Zheng siblings? Could he fail to see the signs of Zheng Honghu's eagerness to act? The answer was a definite yes! He knew everything!

For the old man to become the president of the Greater China Region, his vision had to be exceedingly sharp, his nature exceedingly profound.

This was done on purpose!

Lin Ke suddenly understood, her eyes blazing, she exclaimed.

"You are bringing what's hidden in the dark into the light for Zheng Honghu to see, daring him to make a move! If he dares, you'll deal with him! You're warning him by striking the mountain to scare the tiger! You're warning him as well as others!"

Chapter 763: It's All a Game!_1

"Hmph, girl, not too dumb after all! If you couldn't see through that, what use would you be as an Affairs Officer? Might as well go back and start over as an assistant to Feng Li," Xiahou Qi snorted coldly, and chuckled.

Afterward, as if talking to himself while looking into the distance, his gaze became distant.

"Last time we spoke, you indeed gave me a heads-up. Those people, aside from Bai Xiaosheng, which one doesn't have a complicated background! They might not dare to do much during the initial stages, but when it really comes down to the wire, they might all dance with abandon!"

"In front of this old man, if any of them dares to reach out their claws, I'll chop them off!"

"So what if it's a Senior Affairs Officer? I've dealt with one before. Didn't Xiao Lizhi take up the Senior Affairs Officer's position, and that Wang Xincheng under him, becoming the new Affairs Officer? If I can remove one, I can surely remove a second!"

"Zheng Honghu is getting restless; I'll give him an overt chance. I believe he's clever enough to know what to do! If he persists, then he's clearly not taking me seriously, and there's no need for me to be polite anymore!"

"In the end, to strike the mountain to shock the tiger. If I can stun, I can stay; if I can't, then this is the opportunity to rid of them!"

The words of Xiahou Qi sent a chill down Lin Ke's spine.

"Old fox."

Lin Ke muttered under her breath in an extremely soft voice.

"I heard that!" Xiahou Qi glanced at her obliquely, and said in a cold voice.

But there was no anger in his eyes.

"Anyway, my work here is done. After I've reported to you, I'll announce the results tomorrow and then I'm out. As for how you want to handle things, I don't care," Lin Ke said.

"You really don't care anymore, not even about Bai Xiaosheng?" Xiahou Qi asked with a teasing smile.

Lin Ke shrugged indifferently, "What's the use of me caring? In the end, it's up to you, isn't it!"

After a pause, Lin Ke continued, "Bai Xiaosheng, in terms of talent, is second to none. In terms of age... you said it yourself, you don't look at that. In terms of connections, he's actually quite lacking."

"Even though Chen Jiutian was the one who nominated Bai Xiaosheng, he must have ulterior motives. Bai Xiaosheng doesn't owe much to the Chen Family; in fact, there are some old resentments. I estimate that Chen Jiutian wants to use this as an opportunity to display his magnanimity, with Bai Xiaosheng merely a front, and their real intention is to support that Mu Beichen!"

"However, if you want to get involved, Mr. Mu may not be wholeheartedly loyal to the Chen Family, after all, Mu and Chen are not the same family."

"I guess you have high expectations for both Bai Xiaosheng and Mu Beichen," Lin Ke said.

Xiahou Qi listened with a smile, neither confirming nor denying.

"That's my thought. I'm saying it just because I want to. I'm probably wrong about a lot, in front of you, a thousand-year-old fox, I, a little fox, still have much to learn," Lin Ke muttered, "Guessing what you think is exhausting! That's why I don't bother to meddle."

Xiahou Qi laughed heartily, "Girl, you really know how to berate me in so many ways. Right, I'll look at this document now, and have someone send it back to you later. Tomorrow, when you go to announce the list of those eliminated, take Yang Chengtian with you for an introduction. Once this matter is concluded, I'll arrange for you to go on an inspection tour to the south... ahem, which is actually just a pleasure trip. Consider it a perk I've planned for you."

Upon hearing this, Lin Ke became delighted and expressed her thanks before standing up to leave.

Watching her go and the office door close, Xiahou Qi's eyes fell on the roster and the results. He picked up the pen and began to murmur unconsciously.

"It's all a game of strategy! Sometimes I truly detest it. Zheng Qinghong is talented but cannot be used fully! Mu Beichen is talented, but needs to be pried away! Bai Xiaosheng..."

Xiahou Qi fell into a brooding silence.

...

After leaving Xiahou Qi's office, Lin Ke returned to her own. She had been there less than half an hour when she heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," Lin Ke said.

The visitor was one of Xiahou Qi's assistants, returning the list and results before taking their leave.

Lin Ke looked at it, and it just read two words, "Agreed!"

Lin Ke's gaze fell upon the name "Bai Xiaosheng" and she smiled, murmuring to herself, "Next, you have to work hard. I hope, when I return from inspection, to see you become the provincial industrial director..."

Lin Ke paused, then continued, "But what I hope even more is for you to come to the Affairs Department!"

...

That night, Bai Xiaosheng and the others all received a notice from the Affairs Department.

Tomorrow morning at ten o'clock, assemble at Zhongjing University, where the names of those eliminated will be announced!

Moreover, the final stage examiners would also meet them!

With this news, many would probably have insomnia tonight.

Fifteen would be whittled down to five once more!

At the end, only ten would enter the final round!

Bai Xiaosheng too went to sleep later than usual, before bedtime, he poured a glass of milk, stood on the balcony, soaking in the night breeze, and overlooked the dimly lit scenery.

"Entering the final stage! It's not just ability that will be contested, but power!"

Bai Xiaosheng thought calmly to himself.

"My shortcoming is that I appear to have no backing or background."

"Yet, my greatest advantage is also this point!"

"The President of the Greater China Region, although I haven't met him, I know that he must be concerned about this assessment! Surely, he has also gained some understanding of me!"

"In recent days, I've also gleaned some amusing stories about the President of the Greater China Region from Lin Ke. Based on my intuition, this President is skilled at managing below and understands balance! Currently, in the Greater China Region, there are many factions, even within the Affairs Department! In light of this, he needs someone without roots or sources yet capable, to act as fresh blood to counterbalance the situation!"

"That's where my opportunity lies!" A smile curled up at the corner of Bai Xiaosheng's mouth.

"However, I mustn't be overconfident!"

"Even if I don't emerge victorious in the end, I must become the one who benefits the most. After all, becoming 'the ultimate winner or the ultimate beneficiary' is the condition for me to complete my promotion task!" Bai Xiaosheng's eyes gleamed.

As long as he completed the task, he, Bai Xiaosheng, would be promoted!

By then, whether the unseen President of the Greater China Region wishes it or not, he would have to comply with the will of the conglomerate!

Thinking this, Bai Xiaosheng smiled faintly, drained the entire glass of milk in one gulp, and turned to go back inside.

The night passed without incident.

The next day, Bai Xiaosheng arrived at the Zhongjing University lecture hall a quarter of an hour early.

When he got there, he realized he was the last to arrive. Everyone was present, and their expressions were grave.

It was clear that even Mu Beichen and Zheng Qinghong appeared somewhat solemn.

Zhao Qianze's smile seemed a tad uneasy when she saw him, and Bai Xiaosheng reassured her with a comforting smile.

Amidst the tension, as the time approached, the door to the lecture hall opened and Lin Ke appeared, striding towards the podium.

Unlike before, a group of people followed her this time, led by a man in his fifties with a warm and enthusiastic smile.

Bai Xiaosheng gazed at the man, thinking to himself—"So this is the final stage examiner!"

Chapter 764: Three Limits!_1

Lin Ke stood on the podium, looking around at everyone, and when her gaze passed over Bai Xiaosheng, she smiled.

Then, her eyes shifted to the faces of the others.

"I believe that some of you definitely had a restless night yesterday, wondering about the elimination list for today, am I right? Well, tonight, all of you can sleep soundly. Those who advance can rest easy for now, and those who are eliminated can finally stop worrying and exerting themselves, congratulations!" Lin Ke said cheerily.

The crowd managed to crack a smile, but their eyes were anxious as they awaited the "verdict."

Many, like Bai Xiaosheng, looked towards Yang Chengtian.

The text message notification had mentioned that the final stage examiner would also be present.

It must be this man!

Among those present, Zheng Qinghong's eyes shone with a faint light, looking at Yang Chengtian with barely concealed eagerness!

He knew that this man had made his stance clear multiple times to his half-brother, Zheng Honghu!

One of our own!

Zheng Qinghong savored these three words in his mind, feeling an unprecedented sense of exhilaration.

The examiner for the final stage was one of their own!

"However, even without Yang Chengtian's help, with my ability, Zheng Qinghong, I am fully capable of suppressing everyone, especially that annoying Bai Xiaosheng!" Zheng Qinghong was confident in himself.

On the stage, Lin Ke began to speak.

"Now, I will announce the list of those eliminated!" Lin Ke's expression was serious as she took out a sheet of paper, glanced at it, and read aloud, "Wang Shuangying, Hong Yuhao, Mu Lin, Zhang Qingyu, Chu Dalei!"

True to Lin Ke's style, there was no hesitation, no pause, she read out five names in one breath.

As each name was called, there was always someone in the crowd whose expression dimmed.

However, afterwards, there was a sense of relief and liberation in their expressions.

Just as Lin Ke had said, their journey ending here had its "benefits" – they no longer had to worry and could finally get a good night's sleep.

"The aforementioned individuals!" Lin Ke paused in her speech, then continued, "Please, follow me out!"

Afterwards, Lin Ke extended her hand to invite Yang Chengtian to introduce him to those advancing, "This is the final stage examiner, Affairs Officer Yang Chengtian! From here on, I leave it in his hands!"

Lin Ke finished speaking, picked up her things, stepped down from the podium in Yang Chengtian's direction, nodded to him as a greeting, and then left silently for the door.

From the moment she entered to when she read the list and left, Lin Ke didn't even use ten minutes.

Utter simplicity.

Her failure to stay and listen to Yang Chengtian's speech may seem impolite, but it could also be interpreted as a decisive handover of duties. Plus, with her appearance like that of a cute, harmless young girl, even acting this way, no one would find it inappropriate.

The people who were announced as eliminated began to leave.

They had no reason to stay, nor did they wish to hear what Yang Chengtian had to say.

Yang Chengtian smiled as he watched Lin Ke go and bid farewell to these individuals, without any discomfort, making no attempt to stop them, and showing no desire to have them stay and listen to his speech.

After those individuals had left, Yang Chengtian took his time walking up to the podium, smiled at the people below, and gestured with a wave of his hand.

In the vast amphitheater classroom, there were only ten lonely people left below, their applause sparse and monotonous.

Yang Chengtian, however, did not mind in the least; his eyes were bright as torches.

Though there were only ten people below, within a month, one of them would become a Provincial Industrial Manager, and four would be Assistant Affairs Officers!

"I'm very happy to meet all of you!" Yang Chengtian surveyed the crowd, smiling and speaking in an unhurried voice, "My name is Yang Chengtian, and I am your final stage examiner!"

"To witness the birth of a Provincial Industrial Manager is a great honor for me!"

"In addition, to see four Assistant Affairs Officers emerge brings me great joy!"

"This time, I just wanted to meet with you all briefly and have a chat. After this meeting, you can all leave Zhongjing! Because the next stage of the assessment will take place at everyone's own position!"

The previous sentences were all meaningless formalities, only the last one touched everyone's heart.

Having stayed in Zhongjing for nearly two months, they could finally return home.

"Officer Yang, may I ask what the detailed rules of our next assessment are and how many rounds we will go through?" someone couldn't help but ask.

This was the crucial point.

Everyone focused intently, looking towards Yang Chengtian, waiting for his answer.

Yang Chengtian glanced at that person and smiled, "Next, that's exactly what I am going to discuss!"

"In this month, there's only one thing you need to do, which will also be the final assessment!" Yang Chengtian said, his expression serious as his gaze swept over each person's face.

Everyone listened with bated breath, not daring to miss a word, fearing it might affect their future.

"You will need to cooperate with other enterprises in the group. The number of cooperations and the results of these cooperations will determine your final scoring stage!" Yang Chengtian proclaimed.

The audience exchanged astonished glances.

So... simple?!

Knowing that each of them had the backing of significant figures, they could signal and easily gather a dozen or two fraternal units for cooperation within minutes.

"It absolutely won't be that simple!" Bai Xiaosheng stared at Yang Chengtian on the stage.

Instinctively, he believed that the Affairs Officer still had some conditions that he hadn't mentioned!

On the day that he took Lin Ke out for a meal, he also gathered quite a lot of information.

For example, no matter which Affairs Officer was responsible for the assessment, their questions had to be sent for approval to the President of the Greater China Region before being used!

This rule was actually a result of Feng Li's first selection of questions leading to a comical mishap.

Alike Bai Xiaosheng in caution, there were three or four others.

Mu Beichen and Zheng Qinghong were notably among them!

Their happiness lasted only a moment before they understood there was no way it could be that simple!

The examiner wouldn't allow them to compete over "common advantages" so openly—there must be a catch!

"Gentlemen, perhaps it's best not to celebrate too soon."

Indeed, Yang Chengtian smiled and spoke again, "I have yet to mention the conditions."

Below the stage, everyone was startled and looked towards him once more.

Yang Chengtian continued, "The enterprises you are going to negotiate cooperation with must meet three stipulations—"

"Firstly, they must be group enterprises!"

"Secondly, the cooperation must be truly beneficial for both parties and withstand verification and scrutiny!"

"Thirdly, they must be 'extra-territorial' enterprises!"

With these three demands, everyone below the stage was taken aback.

The first two points were understandable, but what was this 'extra-territorial' all about?

"Don't tell me Officer Yang is asking us to negotiate cooperation with extraterrestrials, also 'extra-territorial'?" someone chuckled involuntarily.

Everyone else couldn't help but laugh as well.

"This 'extra-territorial' doesn't mean outside of Earth; it means outside of the region!"

Yang Chengtian explained with good humor and a smile, "To give an analogy. If your enterprise is in East China, then cooperation with other group enterprises in East China will be considered invalid!"

Chapter 765: The Scheming of a Superior_1

Yang Chengtian's "three major restrictions" left the room in utter silence, with everyone's complexion changing.

It should be known that among those remaining, aside from Bai Xiaosheng, there were few without a background!

Behind them, whether they were regional representatives or senior affairs officers, at the final stage, the last moment, driven by self-interest, how many could really stay out of it? They would inevitably act in the shadows to support their own!

However, in the final stages, the affairs department would also be like a pack of hyenas, closely watching them, preventing them from going too far!

In such a situation, they could only take action within their own absolute control.

But with the type of restrictive rules Yang Chengtian had set, it was very awkward for them!

Zheng Qinghong frowned slightly, staring at Yang Chengtian, suddenly realizing that even if Yang Chengtian was the final examiner, he couldn't take any advantage!

I was happy too early...

"I heard that the questions set by the affairs officer would be reviewed by Mr. Xiahou Qi, president of the Greater China Region, for final amendments! Perhaps this was not Yang Chengtian's original intention... or maybe, Yang Chengtian was simply a puppet examiner!"

Zheng Qinghong suddenly felt a wave of inexplicable trepidation; he had a terrifying thought—

"The one who is truly assessing us in the end might be the president of the Greater China Region himself!"

Mu Beichen had the same hunch!

"Indeed, to become the president of the Greater China Region, one must be a cunning old fox!" Bai Xiaosheng also felt deeply moved.

Bai Xiaosheng's gaze swept over the remaining people, his eyebrows slightly furrowed; the more he looked, the more something seemed off!

Were these people left at the end truly just a result of their scores?

Perhaps not all of it!

Bai Xiaosheng, having attended so many lessons with everyone, knew everyone's names and their companies like the back of his hand!

The internal division of the group's industries was based on the seven major geographical regions.

Of the ten people left now, aside from him and Mu Beichen, who were exceptions, all belonged to outside of East China—the other six regions each still had one representative left! In addition, two individuals, whose companies were abroad, each belonged to different countries!

Could this be just a coincidence?

Bai Xiaosheng suddenly recalled a phrase he had heard from Lin Ke.

Lin Ke had said that when the final results were out, she would do the ranking to be reviewed by the president of the Greater China Region!

If staying or leaving was really entirely based on scores...

Then what was the need for reviewing a list!

This could only imply one thing: the competition selection, seemingly based entirely on scores,

In reality, had human intervention!

"Let every region become competitors, to reduce the possibility of favoritism to the greatest extent!"
Bai Xiaosheng guessed.

Of course, even so, it was impossible to completely eliminate the exchange of interests.

But under such circumstances, as long as the affairs department paid closer attention, it could maximize the containment of external factors' involvement!

This had to be the planning and calculation of the president of the Greater China Region! Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself.

Having reached such an extent, if the bigwigs behind these candidates still went for interest exchanges, they would be touching a dangerous bottom line, possibly losing more than they would gain!

The least they could do was to be wary of each other, making them restrained.

"If we think deeper, on the level of conspiracy, it's not impossible that the president of the Greater China Region is using this assessment to take down some positions... otherwise, where would the new provincial industry leaders be assigned to work!" Bai Xiaosheng's heart trembled, "Impressive, truly impressive!"

"It seems that I have a long way to go to reach the level of conniving and scheming of the president of the Greater China Region. I have a long road ahead of me to aspire to that position," Bai Xiaosheng felt profoundly.

Little did he know that the fact he could even consider these possibilities—unthought of by Mu Beichen, Zheng Qinghong at first—meant he was already far ahead of his peers!

Instead of feeling discouraged about the gap in cunning between him and the president of the Greater China Region, Bai Xiaosheng felt thrilled.

He wasn't sure where this excitement came from, but he felt it, deeply and genuinely!

"Maybe, I was born to love this kind of challenge!" Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself.

To challenge the higher, to challenge the stronger!

Ten years, to make a bid for the position of president at Zhenbei Group, a world-class financial consortium!

Such an endeavor, regardless of success or failure, would be unparalleled in history, worthy of lifelong acclaim!

It filled Bai Xiaosheng with passion and a heart daring enough to enter the fray!

On the stage, Yang Chengtian smiled as he looked at the crowd and continued, "Now, does anyone still think it's easy?"

Suddenly, no one spoke up.

Others might not be as quick as Bai Xiaosheng to consider so many aspects, but they all faintly sensed its distinctiveness, and the more they pondered, the more alarming it seemed!

This time, it was a competition for the position of a provincial industry leader!

To command an entire province's group industries, in the developed regions of East China, even control dozens, or even a hundred small and large enterprises! A true second only to one, but above tens of thousands!

How could such a position be easily secured!

"Anyway, you all have only one month, thirty days to compete, so give it your all!" Yang Chengtian cheerfully told everyone, "If anyone has any questions, feel free to ask, and I will answer them in detail."

After this statement, there was a long silence at the venue, until finally, someone asked some questions.

They were all tentatively probing certain details.

Yang Chengtian explained patiently and amiably to everyone.

Time flew by, and two hours passed in the blink of an eye.

In the end, no more questions were asked.

"Since no one has any more questions, good, then this meeting is hereby concluded. Everyone is free to leave!" Yang Chengtian said with a smile.

Some hurried to leave, while others were in no rush, communicating with those next to them.

Yang Chengtian on the stage glanced over and descended from the lectern.

Those who remained all greeted him.

Officer Yang was approachable, smiling and chatting with the crowd.

"Mr. Zheng Qinghong, I've long admired you!" Approaching Zheng Qinghong, Yang Chengtian said with a smile.

"Officer Yang, you flatter me!" Zheng Qinghong replied politely, a smile on his face and a hint of surprise in his eyes.

He didn't understand why Yang Chengtian would greet him in such a public manner.

In fact, he'd only heard about Yang Chengtian's goodwill toward his half-brother from others, having never witnessed it himself.

While Zheng Qinghong was puzzled, Yang Chengtian smiled at him and then approached Mu Beichen, "Mr. Mu Beichen, I've long admired you!"

"Officer Yang, that's too much praise!" Mu Beichen smiled, surprise lurking deep in his eyes, too.

He and the Chen Family had little to do with this man.

Why would Yang Chengtian also greet him?

Amidst Mu Beichen's bemusement, he saw Yang Chengtian approach Bai Xiaosheng, "Mr. Bai Xiaosheng, I've long admired you... immensely!"

"I dare not accept such honor." Bai Xiaosheng smiled.

Yang Chengtian chuckled, his face full of satisfaction, "There's nothing to dare not accept! Just a greeting for the third-ranked, the second-ranked, and you, the top one, you all deserve it!"

At this statement, all the eyes looking his way suddenly narrowed!

Chapter 766: Because I am Bai Xiaosheng!_1

Yang Chengtian's words took Bai Xiaosheng, Mu Beichen, and Zheng Qinghong by surprise.

They stunned everyone else who hadn't left as well.

Yang Chengtian claimed that he was greeting the top three rankers.

Based on his sequence, was Bai Xiaosheng first again this time?!

All eyes converged on the three of them, but most were fixated on Bai Xiaosheng.

Even including Mu Beichen and Zheng Qinghong, they all turned their attention to Bai Xiaosheng!

Lin Ke only announced the list of those eliminated, without ever mentioning the top ranks.

People like Mu Beichen and Zheng Qinghong would have channels and means to clarify this matter, but it would take time.

And the longer it took, the less valuable this information would become, to the point where it wasn't worth investing resources to find out.

Thus, the ranking in the second phase was akin to a tasteless meal for them, unenjoyable, yet a pity to discard.

But now it was different, as Yang Chengtian had proactively revealed this free piece of information.

It left them shocked, struggling to accept it!

"I had an entire small team led by Bai Xiaocheng helping me, obtaining detailed and accurate information, yet I ended up only third, behind Mu Beichen, and even below Bai Xiaosheng?"

Zheng Qinghong's gaze couldn't help but show some shock and anger.

"How is this possible! My 'Secretary Department' has been established for many years, full of talents, with the best analysts and information collectors, my data is the most complete and accurate! It's not beyond me to exceed Zheng Qinghong's results. Why then do I still rank below Bai Xiaosheng!"

Mu Beichen's eyes betrayed a hint of incomprehension and confusion.

After all, both were thinking about how excellent their information gathering was, not realizing that the data they prided themselves on was considered insignificant by Bai Xiaosheng.

The examination wasn't a competition about who collected more or finer data, but about application!

In this regard, they still hadn't realized—

Bai Xiaosheng was also above them!

"Bai Xiaosheng dominated the first stage of the examination, coming first in all three events, a truly terrifying individual!"

"The loss in the last assessment of the first phase did not signify his weakness! And yet we overlooked him!"

"Unexpectedly, Bai Xiaosheng is still the top ranker in the second phase of the examination!"

"It's really surprising that he has taken the lead again!"

"From now on, we must treat him as a formidable opponent!"

Those who hadn't left looked at Bai Xiaosheng with various expressions, murmurs of discussion endlessly filling the air.

This time, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't avoid attention even if he wanted to keep a low profile!

Zhao Qianze looked at Bai Xiaosheng with admiration shining in her eyes.

She knew, she believed in Bai Xiaosheng's ability to reclaim first place!

Indeed, this belief was now confirmed!

Far from feeling threatened, Zhao Qianze was beaming with happiness.

Bai Xiaosheng gave Yang Chengtian a deep look, his eyes carrying a smile that was not quite a smile.

This Affairs Officer Yang seemed to be stirring up trouble, openly inviting hostility toward him.

"Thank you for the information, Officer Yang," said Bai Xiaosheng, smiling at Yang Chengtian. "However, the second phase has ended, and high or low scores won't affect the third phase, right?"

"Yes, that's right, it won't have any effect," Yang Chengtian responded cheerfully.

"Then I hope that next time, I'll hear Officer Yang announcing in person that I'm the first in this stage!" Bai Xiaosheng gave him a smile, gathered his things, and nodded to him, "Excuse me."

Yang Chengtian smiled, stepped aside to give him room, and let Bai Xiaosheng pass.

Zhao Qianze, without a word, nodded and smiled at Yang Chengtian, following Bai Xiaosheng out.

Yang Chengtian watched Bai Xiaosheng leave, his eyes flickering uncertainly.

As Bai Xiaosheng left, the others lingered no longer, each taking their belongings and withdrawing.

What came next was their greatest test.

One month, thirty days.

To venture into other regions and negotiate partnerships with conglomerate enterprises, even if there were those behind the scenes providing some assistance, was an incredibly arduous challenge!

They needed to use their own abilities, to prove to the Affairs Department and to the President of the Greater China Region their competence and their qualifications to become the person in charge of provincial industry!

Zheng Qinghong and Mu Beichen also left one after another.

Yang Chengtian summoned the few people he brought with him, his voice unflinchingly steady, "Let's go, back to the Affairs Department!"

Meanwhile, outside.

Zhao Qianze caught up with Bai Xiaosheng, walking side by side with him along the tree-lined paths of Zhongjing University.

"In a blink, it's been two months since we arrived in Zhongjing," Zhao Qianze began, her voice gentle, and her gaze at Bai Xiaosheng even more tender, "I've gotten used to it here, but now we have to leave."

"All good things come to an end," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

Zhao Qianze's eyes wandered to their surroundings, watching the sunlight scatter through the leaves onto the ground, mottled and speckled, "That saying... it's quite melancholic..."

Bai Xiaosheng shrugged his shoulders, remaining silent.

The two continued walking in silence for a while.

Zhao Qianze's mood lightened a bit, and smiling at Bai Xiaosheng, she said, "Anyway, it's been a time to remember, all because I met you... Otherwise, we might not have gotten through those difficulties! The world of fragrances would also lack one scent! Thank you!"

"See you at the Affairs Department," Bai Xiaosheng suddenly said with a smile.

"What?" Zhao Qianze was startled.

"I said, see you at the Affairs Department," Bai Xiaosheng repeated with a grin, "I believe you can make it to the end, and I believe in myself too. Sister Zhao, although it's true that all good things must come to an end, there's also 'meeting an old friend in a foreign land'."

Zhao Qianze fixed her gaze on him, her lips slowly curling into a sweet smile.

"See you at the Affairs Department!"

After parting with Zhao Qianze, Bai Xiaosheng took a car back to Zhongjing Media. On the way, he rested with his eyes closed and a slight furrow in his brow.

"Mr. Bai, you... seem troubled?" Feng couldn't help but glance at him through the rearview mirror, tentatively asking.

Bai Xiaosheng opened his eyes and gave him a smile, "Mm, there's a bit of a challenge from the group, not an easy one! I'm thinking about ways to deal with it."

"You'll definitely have a way!" Feng said without hesitation, confidently.

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but laugh, "Why do I feel like you are more confident than I am?"

"I just believe in you," Feng also chuckled.

"Why?" Bai Xiaosheng was curious about the source of his unwavering trust.

"Why?" Feng repeated the question, then answered decisively, "Because you are Bai Xiaosheng, our Mr. Bai!"

Could this be considered a reason? Could it or couldn't it? No it couldn't!

There was no why—Bai Xiaosheng was simply the source of Feng's trust!

In half a year, Bai Xiaosheng had revitalized Zhongjing Media with vigorous life force, turning it into a provincial benchmark enterprise, the largest in Zhongjing, leading the media industry!

He blazed through one unbelievable feat after another!

There was no why!

"Because you are Bai Xiaosheng!"

Bai Xiaosheng was momentarily astonished, then he laughed.

"Perhaps you're right, I'll definitely find a way... not for any reason, but because I am Bai Xiaosheng!"

Bai Xiaosheng said with utmost certainty, to Feng and more to himself!

In his eyes erupted an unprecedented confidence and glory.

No matter the circumstances, he had to believe in himself—resolutely and without doubt!

Chapter 767: Plan First, Move Later_1

After returning to Zhongjing Media, Bai Xiaosheng dove into his office and called Song Yiming to let him know:

Today, he was closing his doors to all visitors and would not deal with any company matters!

Once the door was closed, Bai Xiaosheng sat in front of his computer and began organizing the presentable partnership resources of Zhongjing Media.

When looking to discuss partnerships with other businesses, even those within the group, one had to target precisely: what kind of resources you have determines what kind of cooperation others will discuss with you.

As for whether the competition for positions would cause other regional heads to secretly instruct not to cooperate,

Bai Xiaosheng believed there was absolutely no need to worry about this.

Those who could occupy regional head positions normally wouldn't be so petty, and more importantly, their methods wouldn't be so clumsy. Such an "overt compliance with covert opposition" attitude is very easy to detect, and once the administrative department gets a hold of concrete evidence, that would truly be a loss greater than the gain.

Bai Xiaosheng was convinced that no one would be that foolish!

"At present, Zhongjing Media relies on Zhongjing's media lineup, whose influence is now second to none in Anjiang Province and even enjoys a certain level of national fame!"

"Zhongjing Media is developing multiple platforms and forms of media with great foresight and innovation, leading the competition index in the industry!"

"In the field of media, Zhongjing Media's number of patents owned is absolutely among the top tier!"

"Zhongjing Media's investment in developing annual blockbuster dramas, as well as several movies and TV series, also holds a powerful advantage in this respect!"

"Zhongjing Media and Europe's Kelson Group are strategic partners, possessing vast resources in the European market!"

...

The business department had promotional materials, but Bai Xiaosheng reorganized them all over again, re-evaluating the strengths and resources of Zhongjing Media, which was also a process that allowed him to clear his mind.

"After reading this, even I want to cooperate with myself." Once he finished sorting these out, Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but smile narcissistically.

Of course, just this was far from enough!

Someone needed to take these documents to potential partners and persuade them.

"Zhongjing Media is a media entity, but using media channels for this matter has too broad a target, and we're likely to get a multitude of non-group enterprises seeking partnership, which would keep us busy for half a day and have no significance for the assessment!"

Bai Xiaosheng twisted his chin in his hand and couldn't help talking to himself, "Why did Yang Chengtian specify that we must cooperate with enterprises within the group?"

"Is it considered an internal group assessment?"

"Or is he thinking of not letting the 'water flow into outsiders' fields,' promoting resource sharing?"

"Or perhaps, he aims to use it as a starting point to stimulate the activity of the enterprises across the Greater China Region?"

"Or is it all of the above..."

Bai Xiaosheng thought for a moment, then shook his head with a smile, "No need to think about it any longer! This isn't something I should be considering at this stage."

"This task, when put into action, still requires people to go out and do it!" Bai Xiaosheng found a national map online and studied it carefully.

"We can't proceed without a clear purpose, otherwise with the country being so vast, no number of salespeople would be enough, and running around everywhere aimlessly could waste time and risk missing the best partnership opportunities!"

"Excluding our East China region and provinces too far from Anjiang Province—the time cost is too high—and economically underdeveloped provinces are also not the first choices!"

After pondering for a moment, Bai Xiaosheng selected three provinces as the primary targets.

These three provinces, each located in different regions, were all developed areas with more and stronger group companies than the average province! If partnerships were reached, the outcomes would naturally be better!

"There are two criteria for evaluation: quantity and quality, whether to win by numbers or by quality are two different approaches,"

"After narrowing down the scope, it's time for target selection!"

For anyone else, even if it were Zheng Qinghong or Mu Beichen, gathering information on group enterprises from other regions would be a time-consuming and laborious task! To meet Bai Xiaosheng's requirements would take at least a week!

For Bai Xiaosheng, however, it only required—a single thought.

Red Lotus had already completed the search.

"In the three developed eastern provinces, there are a total of 185 group enterprises. The information is as follows!" When Red Lotus's voice sounded, the information flooded into Bai Xiaosheng's mind incessantly.

"Enough, enough! Pause!" Bai Xiaosheng quickly intervened.

Good grief, if such a deluge of corporate information rushed into his brain all at once, it would surely crash.

Besides, it was entirely unnecessary.

These enterprises varied in size, and in Bai Xiaosheng's view, cooperating with large enterprises would achieve a better effect than collaborating with a swarm of small enterprises. Moreover, with limited time, one month, thirty days, it was simply too short!

It was imperative to choose quality targets!

"I choose to prevail through quality while also considering quantity, Red Lotus, carry out the filtering for me..."

Bai Xiaosheng began to slowly and methodically strip away those unimportant and unsuitable enterprises, starting from their nature, operating scale, and annual performance.

The number of 185 enterprises gradually whittled down, ultimately leaving only forty!

Still unsatisfied, Bai Xiaosheng further reduced the number until there were only thirty.

"That's enough!" Bai Xiaosheng said in his mind, addressing Red Lotus, "Pull up the detailed information, recent activities, and news related to the general managers of these thirty enterprises for me!"

Bai Xiaosheng pressed down on his fingers and a smile curled up at the corners of his mouth, "Time to get knocking and tapping again, huh? I remember back in Tiannan, when I was just a junior employee, I had done data collection and organization once before. Who would have thought that even as a general manager, I would reminisce about it once more!"

After talking to himself, Bai Xiaosheng opened a document and his hands fell on the keyboard, like a pianist, his fingers moving in unison, at a speed so fast it dazzled the onlooker.

The sound produced by typing on the keyboard was like pearls small and large on a jade plate, beautiful to the extreme.

About three hours later, Bai Xiaosheng stopped, exhaling a long breath.

It would take a team of others several days to reach the level he had just accomplished, and they might still not be able to achieve it!

He had completed it in three hours!

After sitting continuously for several hours, Bai Xiaosheng was tired. He got up to stretch, poured himself a cup of tea, and truly missed Lin Weiwei's knack for massage and bone loosening—it was extremely enjoyable.

"If they don't yield any results at Chen Changluo's end, then so be it," Bai Xiaosheng sipped his tea, thinking to himself, "If all goes well, in one month, I will leave Zhongjing Media. When the time comes, I'll take Weiwei and Lei Ying with me, and there'll be no reason to pursue this line of inquiry any further!"

Bai Xiaosheng's gaze became distant, "Once I make further progress, I'll have the capital to stand up to them. Then, I can think of another strategy!"

"But can one really achieve ultimate victory just by sheer effort?" Bai Xiaosheng fell silent for a moment before shaking his head, "Stop thinking, focus on the task at hand!"

With that, he picked up the receiver and made a call.

"Song Yiming? Notify the business director and all managers to assemble in Conference Room Three. I have an assignment to give!"

(PS: Going home for the New Year, which is quite busy, so updates will be a bit late. I hope everyone understands! It's cold back home... freezing my hands... I wish everyone a Happy New Year!)

Chapter 768: The Business Department Goes Crazy_1

Zhongjing Media's Business Department, having undergone adjustments along the way, now had a director and five managers.

Originally, the number of business personnel was large, with a bloated team.

Under Bai Xiaosheng's reforms, the implementation of the "partnership system" left only eighty elite business employees on the payroll.

The business director, Chen Shen, was an extremely talented person with a spirit of practical action.

At the moment, Chen Shen and the five others were already seated in the third conference room, waiting.

"Director Chen, this time, what task does Mr. Bai have for us?" someone asked.

Chen Shen had not yet replied when the others also started discussing.

"I think it's to praise us; we've achieved no small feat recently, and he's going to give us bonuses!"

"You, how much have you already taken this month? Your bowl is brimming; you're still thinking about money — you're never satisfied!"

"Who would ever complain about money to the point that it bites their hand?"

Everyone was chatting happily.

Ever since Bai Xiaosheng became general manager, with sweeping reforms, system innovations, and team adjustments,

they had stood out, replacing some managers who were merely warming their chairs.

However, having a more streamlined team meant fewer subordinates for them, and they did voice some concerns; they worried that with fewer people, they wouldn't complete tasks and their performance-related pay and overall income would be affected.

But as time went by, the new system proved its strength with astonishing results.

The new commission settlement system featured flexibility and incremental increases — the more capable and diligent you were, the more you could earn without worrying about anyone's approval!

Now, the salespeople were virtually going insane, every single one becoming a workaholic, focusing solely on improving their business skills. Their initiative astounded their leaders!

Currently, with staff members earning more, these leaders also enjoyed more profit shares, exuding energy and determination every day.

"The best is to have a task. I'll give it my all for any task from Mr. Bai!" Chen Shen said earnestly.

He too had been promoted from manager and was grateful for Bai Xiaosheng's mentorship.

As everyone was talking, the door to the third conference room opened, and Bai Xiaosheng strode in.

"Mr. Bai!"

Chen Shen led the way as everyone stood up.

"No need to stand up, everyone, please, take a seat!" Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile as he headed to his own spot, his arms still full of a stack of documents.

With Lin Weiwei absent and Song Yiming busy, Bai Xiaosheng personally attended to these trivial matters, just like when he first arrived, without any airs or graces.

Seeing this, everyone felt even more respect for him.

Bai Xiaosheng slapped down his things, watched as everyone took their seats, and smiled at them, "This time, I need your business department to cooperate to secure these thirty enterprises!"

Bai Xiaosheng distributed a briefing he had created, with a single page listing a brief introduction of the thirty enterprises as well as a couple of sentences of supplemental information — simple yet direct and clear at a glance.

Chen Shen quickly scanned it, then looked up at Bai Xiaosheng with surprise, "It covers three provinces, twenty cities, and these are all large enterprises!"

"And they're all corporate groups!" Bai Xiaosheng added, "Within this month, I want you to focus on these thirty enterprises and secure partnerships!"

This statement surprised all the managers present.

Why suddenly negotiate with so many corporate groups?

"It's also a test for me personally by the conglomerate!" Bai Xiaosheng stated candidly, calmly looking at everyone, "And I, can only rely on all of you!"

In Bai Xiaosheng's expression, there was profound trust.

Chen Shen's demeanor became solemn, "Mr. Bai, you're overestimating us! Negotiating partnerships with enterprises is our duty; for the public interest and our own, we should indeed give it our all."

All the managers present nodded in agreement.

Chen Shen continued, "For these thirty enterprises, each manager will take responsibility for six. Each enterprise will be assigned two elite salespeople, and furthermore, all internal and external company resources are at everyone's disposal! I'll also join the fray! Within one month, we will ensure results!"

At the moment, he had complete confidence in his department!

The managers all nodded, brimming with self-assuredness.

Bai Xiaosheng was extremely satisfied with their state of mind, and he had only one thing to add: "This time, for all successful partnerships, the company will increase the commission for everyone by 20 percent on the existing basis!"

This statement caused Chen Shen, along with everyone else, to be filled with shock, and then fervor shone in their eyes!

Both publicly and privately, for Mr. Bai, for themselves.

It was worth fighting for!

Bai Xiaosheng saw the battle spirit ignited in everyone's eyes and smiled with satisfaction.

Emotions could bring everyone together, and a sufficient reward would ignite their fighting spirit!

"This month, it's all up to you!" Bai Xiaosheng said.

"Mr. Bai has said so, what should we do?" Chen Shen asked, looking at the others.

Without waiting for the crowd to answer, he gave the answer himself, "Fight!"

"Fight!" The crowd responded with high fighting spirit.

This scene brought a smile to Bai Xiaosheng's face.

His confidence also surged to the extreme at this moment!

"I have a plan! I have Red Lotus! I have them! What worries of defeat? The regional industrial manager position is mine to claim!" Bai Xiaosheng exclaimed in his heart.

Next, the group divided up the thirty companies.

Bai Xiaosheng distributed the project information to everyone.

Looking over the materials, everyone's eyes widened in shock!

"The information is so detailed, how was this achieved!"

"Every needed content is included, no, it's exhaustive!"

"Some of it we hadn't even thought of, it's so meticulous!"

"And there's the analysis of those companies' general managers, which is so crucial for us in sales!"

The crowd chattered noisily, praising without ceasing, and in their hearts they were thoroughly impressed with Mr. Bai for obtaining all this information.

"With such support, how can we speak of defeat? One month is more than enough to take them down!"
Chen Shen even became excited.

Everyone responded in agreement.

The meeting continued until just before closing time, only then did it end, and when everyone left, they were in a rush, nearly running.

"What's with the managers of the sales department? They're like chickens with their blood up!"

"No idea, maybe they have some big moves in store!"

"Isn't that the sales department director Chen Shen? Why is he running too!"

The employees were extremely surprised to witness this scene.

That night, all the sales staff received a notification.

After reading the notification, all the sales people went crazy, and those who were out of town rushed back overnight!

For the following two days, the sales department seemed very strange to the rest of the company, starting with frequent meetings all day long, all kinds of meetings.

And then, administration and logistics were asked to book tickets and arrange transportation.

As administration and logistics were surprised, they received a notice issued by Bai Xiaosheng: all requests from the sales department were to be fully supported without delay!

The sales department staff, as if given a special privilege, had the green light all the way through the company, inducing astonishment and envy from others!

And the salespeople were in such a hurry, they didn't even have time to brag or show off, as if they were rushing to do something.

Within two days, the entire sales department, from the director to the staff, had all left the premises!

By the third day, some people noticed the empty sales department offices, the large office space was devoid of people!

A battle without gunpowder was unfolding!

Chapter 769: Dare Not Act Rashly_1

As soon as the content of the final stage assessment was announced, all candidates except Bai Xiaosheng left Zhongjing at top speed to return to their companies.

One month's time is indeed too short for this assessment.

Right now, it's a race against the clock!

Many even began to contact their companies while on the road to arrange work.

Meanwhile, they were also in touch with their backers to report in.

Little did they know that their backers were at headquarters, attending an important two-day event—a class!

The course content was "Contemporary Leaders' Ethical Development," taught by a university professor.

During the course, communication devices had to be turned off and complete silence maintained.

Xiahou Qi sat at the front listening intently, holding a notebook and taking notes with a solemn expression.

It wasn't until that evening that the Senior Affairs Officers and regional leaders received the news.

"What did you say... it's that kind of assessment!"

That night, when Chen Jiutian received a call from Mu Beichen, his brow furrowed with irritation, and he was speechless for a long while.

The content of the assessment was beyond his imagination!

He had hoped to make a strong push in the final stage, but was not expecting such a thorny restriction.

"This kind of assessment is also full of difficulties for Zheng Honghu's side. Yang Chengtian has made public overtures to Zheng Honghu multiple times. I thought he would find a way to bypass the old man's restrictions and propose an assessment that benefits Zheng Qinghong," Chen Jiutian said into the phone, unable to help a cold sneer, "It seems I overestimated him. But I suppose he can't avoid the old patriarch's watchful eye."

After his scornful remark, Chen Jiutian seemed to remember something important, his eyebrows knitting tighter and his eyes shifting from surprise to alarm.

"Beichen, you've investigated the people from the training class, now tell me immediately which regions the rest of them belong to! Quick!" Chen Jiutian said urgently.

Unintentionally, he had thought of a horrifying possibility.

On the phone, Mu Beichen named each person's corporate region one by one.

With each name, Chen Jiutian's expression grew colder.

"Beichen!" Chen Jiutian's voice became extremely deep, startling Mu Beichen on the other end of the phone.

"The nominators of these people, who are backing them, are currently at the headquarters, which is us!"

It was as if Chen Jiutian was speaking in a trance, his voice chilling.

"We are attending a class! 'Contemporary Leaders' Ethical Development'? It seems the old patriarch is reminding us!"

"No, that's not right!" Chen Jiutian suddenly exclaimed in shock. "The list for the assessment only came out these past two days, but this course was scheduled half a month ago! Otherwise, with us flying in and out of the country, we wouldn't be able to gather on such short notice!"

"That means the people who made it to the final round were actually pre-determined!"

Chen Jiutian fell silent for a brief moment before saying in a low tone, "The old patriarch must have been planning to use this selection process to chasten us all along!"

Such cunning, such terror!

At a juncture like this, if one were to act too blatantly, the consequences would be unpredictable!

"Tian, don't worry, with my arrangements, even without your help, I won't lose to Zheng Qinghong or Bai Xiaosheng!" Mu Beichen reassured over the phone, "Wait another ten days or half a month, when things have calmed down a bit, and then see if you can help!"

"Hmm, that's all we can do!" Chen Jiutian sighed.

Not just Chen Jiutian, but all the others realized this sooner than later.

All the Senior Affairs Officers and regional leaders didn't dare to make any rash moves!

Consequently, those they supported had to enter the fray unaided and find their own solutions.

While Bai Xiaosheng was proceeding orderly and making swift progress, many were panicking, frantically sending people out to haphazardly seek partnerships.

Even Zheng Qinghong was somewhat at a loss.

Mu Beichen started to surpass Zheng Qinghong, since all these years, Mu Beichen had been expanding and had an elite team of advisors adept at negotiating with companies in other regions.

It was just that this time it wasn't inter-city, but inter-province, still, there was experience to count on.

Two days later, Mu Beichen visited Chen Jiuzheng's home, seeking his help.

"My company, after transferring assets, is now just an empty shell, needing more resource support!"

Even a clever wife cannot cook without rice! This was indeed his biggest problem.

"This matter is simple!" Chen Jiuzheng laughed, "If you're talking about cross-province, helping out across regions, I can't do that, and besides, it would cause a big stir and attract the attention of the Affairs Department. But when it comes to our own backyard, these are small issues!"

"Your company is considered part of the group anyway. Whatever resources you need, we can inject them through other subsidiaries, which is perfectly normal behavior. Even if the Affairs Department finds out, there won't be any objections!"

Mu Beichen nodded.

The better for it!

"However, even when reallocating resources among enterprises within the province, we should be selective, choosing the reliable ones, preferably those managed by our own people. This way, at least the resources can be mobilized the fastest and most smoothly!" Mu Beichen suggested.

Chen Jiuzheng agreed with this as well.

"Among the dozens of enterprises under my jurisdiction, you know which are managed by our people. Make a list of the ones you want help from, and I'll notify them," Chen Jiuzheng stated willingly.

Mu Beichen didn't hesitate and immediately drafted a list of seven or eight companies, including those managed by Chen family members and some confidants.

Chen Changluo's company was also notably on the list and was a key company with at least thirty percent of resources to be reallocated from there!

"Alright, I'll send a 'messenger' to talk to Changluo," said Chen Jiuzheng.

The "messenger" could be said to be a contact used by the Chen family only for significant matters.

Modern communication was advanced, but sending a person to make contact was indispensable and also implied supervision.

"Okay, then let's send the 'messenger'," Mu Beichen agreed with a nod.

While Chen Jiuzheng and Mu Beichen were plotting, Lin Weiwei and Lei Ying were in a café.

Two cups of coffee hadn't been touched!

Both had long been silent.

"This won't do, if it continues like this, be it two weeks, two months, or even two years, we might just be waiting in vain, achieving nothing," Lin Weiwei said with a frown, somewhat dispirited.

For the first time, she felt a deep sense of frustration.

She had made absolutely no progress with the task Bai Xiaosheng had assigned.

She was not content!

"Indeed! Continuing like this isn't going to work! Chen Changluo is often absent from the company, and he has only recently started coming. You've been investigating starting with the people around him, but how much information can those people access? With such little time, and you being somewhat impatient, how could you possibly get useful information?" Lei Ying sighed.

Lin Weiwei gave a wry smile.

Indeed, she was feeling somewhat flustered, a result of long-term emotional buildup; she knew it herself but couldn't control it.

"As partners, you take care of the intelligence, and I handle the action. You can't afford to be shaken; you need to remain calm," Lei Ying said.

"I know all that, but still..." Lin Weiwei nodded, then sighed again, picked up her coffee and muttered, "Can't heaven just look after us a bit, give us a small sign, or make them slip up and reveal some flaws!"

"It will," Lei Ying reassured with a smile, "maybe heaven is listening to your request, sending someone over right now to deliver a clue to you!"

Lin Weiwei gave a disbelieving smile and shook her head.

Would someone really come forward to "deliver" them a clue?

How could that be possible!

Chapter 770: The Big Fish Appears!_1

Zhongjing Media's Business Department headed out en masse, and although the travel involved crossing regions and provinces, Bai Xiaosheng gave special permission for longer distances to be covered by plane and shorter ones by high-speed rail, significantly reducing the time lost to transit.

The day after the Business Department set out, Bai Xiaosheng received a report call from Chen Shen before the close of business.

This was as per the arrangement they had made: once they had reached their destination and settled in, every evening the business team was to report to the manager, the manager to the director, and the director to Bai Xiaosheng.

This tiered reporting system was unlike that of other companies.

Their business team only needed to orally report the progress, state difficulties, request permissions, or ask for assistance to the manager over the phone.

The manager was then tasked with handling matters within their purview and compiling everything into a digital format to send to the director.

Finally, the director would summarize and report to Bai Xiaosheng based on the urgency and importance of the issues at hand.

The subordinates exerted effort, while the superiors exerted thought.

Everyone had a role to play and duties to fulfill.

After listening to Chen Shen's report, Bai Xiaosheng felt satisfied.

"Be careful out there," Bai Xiaosheng cautioned Chen Shen over the phone, "Our business at Zhongjing Media has been through rigorous selection, the ones who remain are battle-hardened business elite. Let them decide autonomously how and when to engage with the target companies; don't rush them!"

"Rest assured, Mr. Bai," Chen Shen said with a laugh on the line, "Just wait for the good news!"

"Alright, I won't babble on. If there's anything you need, give me a call!" Bai Xiaosheng replied with a chuckle.

He hung up the phone.

Bai Xiaosheng sat at his desk, musing silently, a faint glint flickering in his dark eyes.

"Am I to just wait for news, merely acting as support?!"

Bai Xiaosheng felt somewhat unwilling to accept this.

"Or perhaps, I could make contact with... those provincial industry heads!"

"There's no rule against us doing so!"

"Nor is there a rule against provincial industry heads contacting us and helping us... no restrictions there either!"

"If the President of the Greater China Region were to make an issue out of this, it's likely that they would only take issue with the regional heads and the Senior Affairs Officers! It wouldn't be the provincial industry heads, as making a move against someone overstepping their level is completely unnecessary!"

"Even though provincial industry heads are subordinates to regional heads, they do not necessarily follow their every command! They also wouldn't be easily subject to punishment or dismissal by the regional heads—such actions require reasons, and the President of the Greater China Region probably wouldn't want the regional heads to have absolute control!"

The provincial industry heads could be involved!

After analyzing the situation, Bai Xiaosheng felt tempted, but he quickly calmed himself.

"Feasibility doesn't mean action. For provincial industry heads, the risk ultimately outweighs the benefits. There's the risk of offending their superiors, the risk of being suspected of swapping benefits, and the risk of being investigated and pursued by the Affairs Department. Who would be willing?" Bai Xiaosheng sighed internally.

"It seems I might be overthinking it!" Bai Xiaosheng sneered at himself and discarded the notion.

Bai Xiaosheng glanced at the time; it was now six o'clock in the evening. He packed up and left the office.

...

At Chen Changluo's company, Lin Weiwei had just finished up her work and was also preparing to leave.

Even though she had complained to Lei Ying the day before that their methods were flawed and there had been no progress, she continued her duties as usual until new directions were set.

On one hand, she was busy with her work, and on the other, she was engaging with people she had chosen in secret, looking for a breakthrough. This dual approach was incredibly exhausting.

As a result, Lin Weiwei appeared somewhat worn out.

In the lobby on the first floor, as she stepped out of the elevator, Lin Weiwei accidentally bumped into someone.

"I'm sorry, excuse me!"

Since it was her fault, Lin Weiwei quickly apologized.

"It's okay!"

The other person's voice was deep and untroubled. After saying this, they quickly stepped into the elevator.

Lin Weiwei looked at the person curiously.

They were dressed in a jacket with a hood, obscuring their face.

Seemingly aware that Lin Weiwei was sizing him up, the man slightly bowed his head and quickly pressed the button for his desired floor.

The elevator doors closed.

Lin Weiwei, however, furrowed her brows.

"With that getup, he's not from the company. A visitor? Who is he looking for at this hour? And the floor he pressed..."

A chime from the adjacent elevator interrupted Lin Weiwei's train of thought.

The floor that the man had ascended to—was where Chen Changluo's office was located!

Feeling uneasy and sensing that something was amiss, Lin Weiwei hurried onto the elevator and pressed the button for that floor.

Instinctively, she felt she should go and see for herself!

The elevator ascended, unobstructed by anyone, until it reached that floor.

As soon as the elevator doors opened, Lin Weiwei stepped out swiftly, heading straight towards Chen Changluo's office.

At that moment, the "messenger" wearing the cloak was hastening towards Chen Changluo's office as well.

Midway, he seemed to sense something and suddenly turned around.

The empty corridor stretched out before him, with no one else in sight.

"Am I being too paranoid?" the "messenger" muttered to himself before turning back and continuing towards Chen Changluo's office.

After a few steps, he abruptly turned around again without warning.

The hallway remained barren.

Reassured, the "messenger" finally proceeded to Chen Changluo's office, not even knocking and just pushing the door open.

Around the corner of the hallway.

Lin Weiwei was hiding there, her eyes filled with suspicion and surprise.

She had nearly been discovered just now!

Fortunately, she had learned a bit about tailing from Lei Ying when she had nothing else to do. She had also used her phone's camera to scout just moments before.

With only less than half an inch of the camera lens exposed, it was very easy to overlook from a distance, yet the screen clearly captured every move of the other party.

The man just went directly into Chen Changluo's office.

Entering without knocking, his identity must be significant!

"Chen Changluo is such a high-profile person. Could he have an acquaintance with such attire? And so surreptitiously!" Lin Weiwei thought to herself, "There's something fishy here! That person is suspicious!"

Yesterday, she was still complaining about the lack of clues. Today, a clue had presented itself!

Lin Weiwei was thrilled.

She decided to wait here and follow that person to see what he was up to.

It was fortunate that at this time, most people in the company had already left. Otherwise, her hiding here might have been discovered. Lin Weiwei secretly rejoiced.

Little did she know, the real reason this floor was deserted was that Chen Changluo had given orders in advance. He had cleared the area in anticipation of the "messenger's" arrival.

Just as Lin Weiwei finished feeling relieved, someone lightly tapped her shoulder.

She was so startled she almost screamed.

"Don't make a sound, it's me!" Lei Ying's voice came softly.

Lin Weiwei's scream was still in her throat when she forcefully stifled it and, to prevent any slips, even covered her own mouth with her hand.

Turning her wide eyes, she saw it was indeed Lei Ying.

Lin Weiwei lowered her hand and whispered in an annoyed tone, "You almost scared me to death!"

Lei Ying sheepishly smiled, then quickly became serious and inquired in a hushed voice, "What's happening?!"

Lin Weiwei muted her phone's video and showed it to him, her eyes sparkling with excitement, "The big fish has taken the bait!"