

Two Trillion 771

Chapter 771: Stealth Operative Lei Ying_1

Lei Ying, having watched the video recorded by Lin Weiwei, also had a glimmer in his eyes. He discreetly handed the phone back to Lin Weiwei, "You go back and wait, leave this to me!"

"I can stay and help you, at least by keeping watch," Lin Weiwei said.

"No need!" Lei Ying replied with only three words, his expression cold, keeping her at arm's length.

This was a look Lin Weiwei had never seen before.

"Sorry... I'm used to operating alone," Lei Ying, noticing the change in Lin Weiwei's expression and realizing his own attitude, immediately offered a smile.

"Don't worry. I was a sniper on the battlefield for two years. If I can't even handle this little situation, I wouldn't deserve to be here!" Lei Ying whispered, "One extra person here might lead to exposure. We can't miss such a good opportunity! You should go back first, I will come to find you later!"

With that said, Lin Weiwei could only nod and prepare to leave, "Then, take care!"

After speaking, Lin Weiwei didn't fuss or dawdle; she lightened her footsteps and quickly departed.

Lei Ying watched her leaving with an approving smile.

Then, he turned serious again, his gaze becoming like that of a stalking cheetah—stealthy, sharp.

"Prey!"

Lei Ying revealed a smile that neither Lin Weiwei nor Bai Xiaosheng had ever seen, cunning and elusive.

The war specter who once dominated the battlefield seemed to be reviving in him!

In Chen Changluo's office.

Chen Changluo was sitting opposite "the Courier."

In a previous phone call, Chen Jiuzheng had already explained the situation to Chen Changluo.

Chen Changluo received further details from "the Courier."

"That Mu Beichen, is he our man?! Can he be trusted? This time, we are going to move nearly half of my company's resources to him through collaboration and loans! I'm still a bit uneasy," Chen Changluo couldn't help but say.

Even now, he didn't know about Mu Beichen's identity as a Chen Family Member.

He thought Mu Beichen was just one of Uncle's trusted aides.

"Reliable! Rest assured on that account!"

"The Courier" confirmed, "All you need to know is that the eldest master and the second master trust him just as much as they trust you!"

The eldest master naturally referred to Chen Jiutian, and the second master was Chen Jiuzheng.

"How can I be compared with him? I am a member of the Chen family, and among the second generation, I am the most outstanding one!" Chen Changluo was somewhat dissatisfied.

He didn't see that under "the Courier's" hood, his eyes held a hint of hidden mockery.

However, since Chen Changluo had said as much, "the Courier" didn't wish to argue with him further. It would be utterly pointless.

"In any case, this man can be trusted!" "The Courier" emphasized and at the same time, pulled out a stack of documents from the bag he was carrying.

"These are several contracts that have been prepared. Once signed, the funding and personnel exchanges between the two companies will be legal and compliant. You know better than me what to do afterward!" "The Courier" stressed, "All of these matters must be settled as soon as possible; however, don't move everything in one day, that would be too conspicuous. Initially, only a portion can be transferred..."

"I don't need you to teach me that!" Chen Changluo huffed, interrupting him and began to review the documents one by one.

"The Courier" fell silent.

"Is there anything else?" asked Chen Changluo.

"The Courier" shook his head, then said, "I have a train at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon. I'm now at Wandong Hotel. If there's anything else, you can contact me there."

"Got it," Chen Changluo replied, a trace of impatience in his voice.

"I take my leave!" "The Courier" stood up.

"No need to see you out!" Chen Changluo casually remarked, not bothering to stand up.

But "the Courier" didn't care. His indifference to Chen Changluo's arrogance was not something he'd only come to know over a day or two.

After exiting the door, the messenger glanced left and right, returning the same way he came.

As he passed the corner where Lin Weiwei had previously hidden and was now replaced by Lei Ying, his steps subconsciously slowed, and he turned suddenly, only to find no one there.

"What's going on with me today? Always so suspicious and tense," the "messenger" muttered to himself, slightly shaking his head as he headed towards the elevator.

Near Chen Changluo's office, at a corner, Lei Ying stepped out, his eyes flickering slightly.

"Not leaving until four o'clock tomorrow afternoon, Wandong Hotel!" Lei Ying sneered coldly.

As a well-trained infiltrator, his hearing had undergone specialized training.

"Don't worry, if Chen Changluo doesn't come looking for you, I will!" Lei Ying thought to himself.

Soon after, the office door of Chen Changluo sounded, and he walked out, locking the door, and humming a tune as he left work.

Even if it was an urgent matter brought by the "messenger," he did not plan on working overtime to finish it.

And the reason the "messenger" was leaving only tomorrow was probably that he knew about his procrastinating nature, preparing to prompt him again the next day.

Once Chen Changluo left, Lei Ying darted out from the corner, moved silently over, straightened out a bent paperclip, bent one end again, and inserted it into the keyhole.

In less than two seconds, the office door was open.

Lei Ying glanced around and slipped in.

Easily, Lei Ying found the documents the messenger had brought.

Afterward, he made a round and took down a painting hanging on the wall.

"The products of this security company are always like this. On the gifts they provide as cover, they never forget to stamp their own LOGO, as if they're afraid others won't recognize it," Lei Ying sighed.

On the frame's edge, there was a subtle LOGO, difficult for others to discover, but trivial for Lei Ying.

As for some alarm mechanisms, while effective against ordinary people or thieves, to a top expert like him, they were like child's play.

Lei Ying took out some documents from a hidden compartment.

He first looked at the ones the "messenger" brought, briefly flipped through them, and then inspected the documents he found in the secret compartment.

After looking through them, Lei Ying was somewhat surprised. With Lin Weiwei's help, he had learned a lot about contracts and accounts. These were evidence of Chen Changluo's abuse of power for personal gain, as he was lining his pockets behind the back of the Chen Family!

"Not bad, this guy!" Lei Ying directly used his phone to "take photos for keepsake" of the evidence.

"So the good stuff was all here, I should have come earlier!"

The evidence of Chen Changluo's personal scheming, although unable to corroborate the Chen Family's problems, could be used to blackmail Chen Changluo!

Because once made public, Chen Changluo faced the prospect of prison, and the Chen Family would neither protect him nor be able to!

"How many years of prison can these tack on, ten years, eight years?!" Lei Ying chuckled coldly.

After taking photos of everything for evidence, Lei Ying put things back exactly as they were. In total, it took him ten minutes before he left swiftly and silently.

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Lin Weiwei anxiously waited at her place. It was not until nine in the evening that the door was softly knocked.

She opened the door and Lei Ying flashed inside.

"Did you find anything?" Lin Weiwei couldn't help asking excitedly.

"Beyond your imagination!" Lei Ying smiled.

Caught between excitement and curiosity, Lin Weiwei couldn't help but ask, "What delayed you at Chen Changluo's until this late?"

It had been three hours since they parted.

"Of course not! I just took a trip back to the hotel with the messenger," Lei Ying shook his phone, smiling, "Do you want to know what I found out? This is really a big catch!"

Chapter 772 Temporary Inaction_1

Lei Ying took out her phone to show Lin Weiwei, inside there were photos and videos, all exceptionally clear.

"No wonder you said you could skimp on clothes and food, but the phone must be good, especially the camera and recording functions!" Lin Weiwei couldn't help but say.

Lei Ying had prepared early, using her phone as a piece of equipment.

Lei Ying laughed and said nothing.

Lin Weiwei sat down and carefully examined the materials.

"These contracts are all cooperation between Chen Changluo's company and Mu Beichen's company, signed and completely legal. Such a large batch of contracts... clearly indicates the misappropriation of resources!" Lin Weiwei commented as she looked, "That Mu Beichen really is a trusted confidant of the Chen Family! Xiaosheng's conjecture was spot on! Such support, is truly from the inner circle of confidants!"

Lin Weiwei looked at the evidence with a startled heart.

"Don't be shocked just yet, what comes next will amaze you even more!" Lei Ying said with a smile.

There was something even more surprising? That statement alone astonished Lin Weiwei.

As Lin Weiwei continued to look, she came across evidence of Chen Changluo's fraud and embezzlement and was instantly shocked, "This Chen Changluo, what audacity, to dare to embezzle assets of such magnitude!"

"Must have done it without the Chen Family's knowledge!" Lin Weiwei added.

Lei Ying nodded in complete agreement.

"However, these are all his personal actions, they don't pose a threat to the Chen Family!" Lin Weiwei said frustratedly.

"Just threatening him personally is enough!" Lei Ying replied with a smile, "Embezzling such a large amount, even if he got a reduced sentence, it would be enough for him to spend ten or eight years in prison! When that time comes, will the Chen Family save him? Sacrificing the pawn to save the chariot is the true strategy! We can use this to blackmail Chen Changluo, would he dare to refuse whatever we ask him to do?"

Lin Weiwei nodded and continued viewing.

The following photos were of some documents, wherein the names of some companies appeared.

"What's this?" Lin Weiwei asked curiously.

"Those documents weren't only for Chen Changluo! There was a lot more in his bag, mostly similar content but with different company names," Lei Ying explained, "It was meant to move resources to Mu Beichen's company! I only took photos of these company names."

"I think for the Chen Family, these companies should be 'trustworthy' just like Chen Changluo, meaning their general managers are all direct descendants of the Chen Family!" Lei Ying exclaimed.

Lin Weiwei nodded seriously and continued looking through, even counting, "A total of seven, all of them large corporations!"

"Able to obey and directly sign these contracts agreeing to the transfer of resources! They must be direct descendants of the Chen Family! The names you captured are the direct forces of the Chen Family in Anjiang!"

Having said that, Lin Weiwei suddenly looked at Lei Ying with curiosity.

"You got all this, did you face off with the courier? You didn't, like, knock him out, did you?"

Otherwise, how could she have possibly obtained photos of such secret documents.

"Don't underestimate my professionalism. I didn't alert the target; it was candid photography, and the other party is still unaware," Lei Ying explained.

"Impressive," Lin Weiwei praised, continuing to look through, and was immediately surprised.

She saw various angled photos of a young man, his face visible and even the wariness in his eyes could be seen.

"Is this the courier?" Lin Weiwei asked incredulously, "You even got photos of his appearance?!"

"Chen Changhe, male, currently twenty-seven years old, from the same generation as Chen Changluo and Chen Changqing, once worked in security, naturally vigilant and suspicious," Lei Ying began, "I didn't have much time, but I managed to get some information. Besides, I planted a tracking virus in his phone. Unless he tosses or changes his phone, whether he reboots or turns it off, I can still find his location. Now that we know both his face and name, he can't escape!"

Having finished, Lei Ying noticed that Lin Weiwei was looking at her strangely.

"He had no idea, and you scoped him out completely, you're terrifying!" Lin Weiwei muttered.

Lei Ying smiled naively, "I take it as a compliment!"

Without much time for reflection, Lin Weiwei organized the information using her own laptop and sent the package to Bai Xiaosheng.

Then, she directly made a phone call.

At this moment, Bai Xiaosheng had just lain down in bed to sleep when he received the call from Lin Weiwei.

Over the phone, Lin Weiwei narrated everything.

"What?!" Bai Xiaosheng was also shocked.

He thought that this lead would come to nothing, but unexpectedly they had caught a big fish without even trying!

"Okay, I'll go check out the stuff first!" Bai Xiaosheng hung up the phone, hurriedly climbed out of bed, and rushed to his computer.

He turned on his computer, found the email, and downloaded the attachment.

He reviewed the images and videos one by one, and surprise was written all over Bai Xiaosheng's face.

"The Chen Family is gathering resources to help Mu Beichen?"

"These can indeed prove to the corporate affairs department that their relationship is far from ordinary! It can also prove that they are suspected of cheating in this competition!"

"However, this could at most disqualify Mu Beichen and hold Chen Jiuzheng accountable, but the Chen Family won't be fundamentally affected!"

"Those direct descendants, they are Chen Jiuzheng's! Even if they are all caught, Chen Jiutian won't be hit!"

"Chen Changluo is indeed in trouble, but this is only his personal action. His time in prison will likewise not shake the Chen Family to its core!"

Facing these pieces of evidence, Bai Xiaosheng pondered.

"Using these now would deal them a fierce blow and even cause severe trauma, yet it would not be fatal, only making them more frantic, which is not what I desire!"

Bai Xiaosheng touched his chin, talking to himself, "Weiwei said that the Chen Family Member who delivered the message has already been controlled by Lei Ying... Perhaps it's better not to act rashly and startle them."

"Right now, the most crucial thing is this selection! I also don't have the luxury of being distracted!"

"Let the Chen Family feel secure for a while longer, and let Mu Beichen jump around for a few more days. However, no matter what tricks he plays this time, I will ultimately hold his fate in my hands!"

Bai Xiaosheng decided to hold off on this trump card and use it at the most critical moment.

"Lei Ying can keep an eye on that messenger, and Weiwei can come back!" the corners of Bai Xiaosheng's mouth couldn't help but reveal a smile, "Maybe by sitting tight, within a month, we will reap even more!"

"By then, I want to completely eliminate these parasites from the group! My corporation will not tolerate the existence of such worms!"

Bai Xiaosheng made up his mind, called Lin Weiwei, and explained his intentions.

Before finishing work the next day, Lin Weiwei found Chen Changluo and said her goodbyes.

"Mr. Chen, our company is overwhelmed with work, we need to go back and help. Once you have the results here, you can just send them to us."

That's what Lin Weiwei said.

In fact, Chen Changluo didn't really care about this matter, offered a few words of token insistence, and casually asked, "What about the Mr. Lei who came with you? Is he leaving too? I haven't seen him around."

"Him?" Lin Weiwei's smile carried a trace of inscrutable amusement, "He has other pressing business and has left already!"

Chapter 773: Zheng Qinghong's Strategy

The final assessment stage, on the sixth day after the task was announced, Lin Weiwei returned to Zhongjing Media.

From the release of the task, Bai Xiaosheng organized data, studied strategies, and got the business department ready to set off until today, a week had passed in the blink of an eye.

Bai Xiaosheng had many feelings about the statement that "time flies like a shuttle, as swiftly as a steed racing past a gap".

One month, thirty days, was truly too short for this assessment. So short that a quarter of the time had passed, and there was still no sign of movement.

However, Bai Xiaosheng hadn't urged the business department.

One who achieves great things must have the patience required!

After Lin Weiwei came back and learned of Bai Xiaosheng's arrangements, she was full of praise.

"Xiaosheng, your arrangements are truly the best! In a fair competition, you are stronger than any of them! No one could have planned better than you!"

As she spoke, Lin Weiwei placed a cup of warm, soothing red tea next to Bai Xiaosheng's hand.

Then she smiled again, "Besides, with Mu Beichen's 'handle' in our hands, what are you still worried about?"

Upon hearing her words, Bai Xiaosheng instantly smiled.

Did this girl already feel like she had the situation well in hand?

"Weiwei, do you think that with the evidence in hand, Mu Beichen is no cause for concern? I actually feel that, with someone like him, one can't relax their vigilance for a second! At this moment, we may have clinched his vital point, but perhaps in the next moment, he will have patched up his own vulnerabilities, rendering that evidence against him useless. He can do it!"

Bai Xiaosheng was very cautious about Mu Beichen and held a degree of admiration for his methods of operation.

While speaking, Bai Xiaosheng took the teacup, carefully blew on it, and took a small sip, "In this contest, everyone will battle with all their might, using any means necessary. I cannot underestimate anyone!"

Bai Xiaosheng's sage calmness, not underestimating any adversary, made Lin Weiwei look at him with even more respect and admiration.

While Bai Xiaosheng and Lin Weiwei were talking, Zheng Qinghong was in a car, hustling on the road.

As Bai Xiaosheng had foreseen, everyone was giving it their all, even to the point of madness!

Zheng Qinghong was one of them!

He even took it upon himself to visit companies in other provinces, personally negotiating partnerships!

Moreover, in these six days, he had secured contracts with two companies!

But, racing non-stop between cities for several days, Zheng Qinghong also showed signs of fatigue, his face bearing traces of hardship.

At present, he wasn't just running around himself; he had also sent all the company's senior executives out. He was focusing on "high-level visits" to promote inter-provincial collaboration between businesses.

"My executives visiting signifies our sincerity! The effect should be better than ordinary employees seeking partnerships!" Zheng Qinghong thought to himself.

His idea was sound, but so far, apart from his achievements as the general manager, the others had yet to close any deals.

Even his deputies were included!

As for the directors and managers, they were even less fortunate, with nothing to show for their efforts but exhaustion.

In truth, the enterprises they were targeting, even the nearest ones, were across provinces, with little understanding between them on a regular basis. To come over and discuss partnership outright, sent by someone who is either a manager or a director, could seem peculiar.

In the past two days, the most frequent question Zheng Qinghong's managers and directors encountered was, "Don't you have any business personnel?"

High-level visits, if the rank is not high enough, can backfire and lead to being underestimated.

In the end, while Zheng Qinghong had a good idea, he overlooked that the middle management does not count as upper echelon. Senior executives could easily get caught up by the opposition, mired in negotiation quagmires.

As a result, Zheng Qinghong had a delightful start, but each step forward from then on was exceedingly difficult.

In fact, Zheng Qinghong didn't just send out his executives, he also dispatched business personnel.

However, he didn't value the importance of the business staff, nor did he plan and position as precisely as Bai Xiaosheng. Instead, he cast his business network far and wide, allowing them to run around aimlessly.

At this moment, Zheng Qinghong was in the car, still psyching himself up, "I, Zheng Qinghong, have already achieved considerable success. Just persist for three more weeks, maintain this pace, and after three weeks, I will be the ultimate winner!"

With these thoughts, he even reached out to rub his face, making himself more alert.

A few days without proper rest, a pale complexion is just an external sign; the real killer is mental exhaustion.

Seeing him like this, the accompanying assistant couldn't help but worry and advised, "Mr. Zheng, why don't you take a break today? With so much back-to-back work, I'm afraid your health won't hold up. Your condition doesn't look too good..."

"Quit the nonsense and give me the documents!" Zheng Qinghong dropped his hand, frowning and snapping at the assistant.

"Heaven lays great responsibility on those who have the capacity, but first, it tries their minds and strains their muscles. What's this bit of hardship?!" Zheng Qinghong snorted lightly.

At the moment, his brother Zheng Honghu was in a delicate situation, and he could only go into battle shirtless, waiting to see if his brother could provide some assistance later on.

The assistant immediately didn't dare to make a sound.

Zheng Qinghong stayed silent for a moment, then pulled out his phone and made a call to his vice president.

"Liu, how are things on your end?"

"What? Still negotiating? Talk, talk, talk! Can you achieve a result within a month?"

"Tell them, if they don't want to cooperate, forget it!"

"By the way, have the others achieved any results..."

"None? What are all those people there for? With our company's name, they can't even secure a single deal?!"

"What about sales? Some people are still on their way, after so many days, do they want to go to the frontier provinces to hammer out what?!"

The more Zheng Qinghong talked, the more agitated he became, his expression turning angry and fierce.

In the end, he even bared his teeth and grimaced, continuously massaging his temples.

"Anyway, you tell them this from me, they have one week, I'm giving them one more week. If they still can't produce results, I'll dock their bonuses, I'll dock their salaries, I'll have them all fired!"

"Useless, a bunch of useless people!"

"To think I pay them such high salaries!"

After a bout of roaring, Zheng Qinghong hung up the phone, panting slightly, his gaze fierce.

"Mr. Zheng, please calm down," the assistant couldn't help saying.

"Enough talking, the documents, hurry up!" Zheng Qinghong barked angrily.

The assistant trembled with fear, thoroughly silenced.

Zheng Qinghong's phone rang, and he glanced at it—it was a message from Zheng Honghu, inquiring for information.

"The progress on my side is very good!" Zheng Qinghong replied.

Yet, after hesitating for a moment, he added another line, "If possible, give me some help soon!"

For someone as obstinately proud as Zheng Qinghong to be asking for help...

It was clear that he was beginning to panic inside.

"Still, I don't believe Bai Xiaosheng and Mu Beichen are doing better than me; they must be anxious too!" Zheng Qinghong stubbornly believed this.

His guess was half right and half wrong.

The right part was that Bai Xiaosheng indeed hadn't "opened for business" and had no partnerships yet.

The wrong part was that at this moment, the achievements of Mu Beichen were far beyond his!

Chapter 774: Mu Beichen's Calculations _1

Bai Xiaosheng believes in letting professionals handle professional matters; he is responsible for steering the direction and providing logistical support.

Zheng Qinghong plays the "upper echelon visit" track, while having all employees strike out on their own, firmly believing in the rewards of hard work.

Mu Beichen is different from them.

With Chen Jiuzheng's help, Mu Beichen taps into funding and resources that Bai Xiaosheng and Zheng Qinghong couldn't reach. He goes directly to cities in other provinces. Once arriving, he convenes a large group of local corporate enterprises to lead cooperation efforts, giving off the impression of "I'm paying, I'm putting in the effort, you all follow along and have fun."

This bears a strong resemblance to a "business version of a scattergun approach"!

Such cooperation naturally comes easier and produces quicker results!

Within six days, Mu Beichen's company struck deals in two places with seven enterprises.

In terms of the number of collaborations, they indeed have the most!

With such results, even Mu Beichen's personal assistant, Liu Yue, couldn't contain her excitement while reporting the latest developments, "President Mu, we are assured victory this time! Look at these contracts, who can match us! The provincial industry leader position is undeniably yours!"

Liu Yue had begun to extend her congratulations in advance.

Mu Beichen felt a wave of satisfaction listening to her.

However, he too is a person of both wisdom and caution.

"Liu Yue, this way of cooperating easily gives us an advantage in terms of quantity. But all of this is based on our side investing a large amount of funds and resources, and we have even made many concessions!" Mu Beichen clearly knew the downside of this approach.

"This leads to a problem: the overall quality of our cooperation is very poor! When the Department of Affairs converts these into scores, they don't look as good as they seem!"

Mu Beichen continued, "Moreover, once the investment of funds and resources exceeds a certain degree, it brings exponential risks to us! Those people at the Department of Affairs won't be blind to that!"

Liu Yue became solemn.

After finishing this, Mu Beichen's eyes narrowed thoughtfully, and he added, "After securing cooperation with three more cities, let's not continue at this pace! Slow down, and find some high-quality partners!"

"Also, allocate the remaining funds and resources in batches, using them in these existing cooperations."

"We need to show the Department of Affairs that we are not cooperating for the sake of cooperation, but are genuinely pursuing long-term partnerships!"

"Besides..."

As Mu Beichen spoke, he suddenly stopped.

Liu Yue saw a hint of wariness flash in his eyes.

What is President Mu thinking about? Such an expression is rare! Liu Yue couldn't help but wonder internally. It seemed President Mu was concerned about something, or possibly making a significant decision.

What decision could it be?

With mere guesses, Liu Yue naturally couldn't fathom what Mu Beichen was thinking.

What Mu Beichen was worried about was precisely what Lin Weiwei believed could restrain him!

"I had Chen Jiuzheng gather resources from seven or eight companies for my use. Even if done covertly, the books won't deceive the Department of Affairs... Even if it does deceive them momentarily, it likely won't forever!"

"This issue is like a fishbone stuck in my throat, always a knot in my heart!"

Mu Beichen's eyes glimmered faintly.

"This problem cannot be delayed; I must quickly find a way to completely eliminate this hidden danger, lest it affects my chance to secure the position of provincial industry leader!"

Mu Beichen, just as Bai Xiaosheng had predicted, began to strategize how to tie up loose ends.

He is an adversary never to be underestimated!

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Two days later, at Bai Xiaosheng's office in Zhongjing Media.

Bai Xiaosheng, holding a cup of tea in his hands, was chatting with Lin Weiwei.

Ever since Lin Weiwei returned from Chen Changluo's, Bai Xiaosheng did not have her pick back up her work. Instead, he had completely handed over her duties to Song Yiming and others.

On the surface, it was because Lin Weiwei had been tired recently, and he wanted her to rest.

Actually, Bai Xiaosheng was preparing to leave.

Lin Weiwei understood, so she had already started to "tactfully" hand over her work.

These past few days, Bai Xiaosheng would occasionally sit down with Lin Weiwei, have some tea, and chat.

What Bai Xiaosheng talked about were the selection trials he had been through and some amusing incidents during the process.

Weiwei knew some, but not much; she was now listening with great interest, especially curious about Lin Ke.

"When I get the chance, I'll introduce you to him," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

Afterwards, they moved on to talk about the people in the training camp.

Suddenly very curious, Lin Weiwei asked Bai Xiaosheng who he thought was his biggest rival.

"The one with the highest reputation is Zheng Qinghong, the one with the deepest background is Zheng Qinghong, and the one with the strongest demonstrated ability is still Zheng Qinghong,"

Bai Xiaosheng said, "So, I think my biggest rival is Mu Beichen!"

This kind of logic really was unmatched!

Lin Weiwei was stunned, then couldn't help but chuckle, "Xiaosheng, you really have a sense of humor! But why do I feel like Zheng Qinghong seems to be the tougher challenge."

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and made a rather inappropriate analogy.

"Don't you know? Barking dogs don't bite!"

Lin Weiwei couldn't help but roll her eyes.

If Mu Beichen heard this, being compared to a sneaky dog, he would definitely curse up a storm.

"I really didn't mean to insult him!"

Bai Xiaosheng sighed, "The thing with Zheng Qinghong is that his capabilities are out in the open. He doesn't understand subtlety; he's like a spear in broad daylight, easy to dodge. And it's very easy to target him and take measures! As an opponent, I think he's much easier to handle!"

"Mu Beichen is different, he's not inferior to Zheng Qinghong in any aspect, yet he excels at hiding and keeps his moves varied, not shying away from any tactics, like a hidden arrow, hard to defend against!"

"Actually, there's another animal that could describe him," Bai Xiaosheng continued, "A hidden venomous snake, silent and deadly, and do you know how to seize a snake by its vital spot? He's very slippery! That's why there's only talk of striking snakes at their vital points, don't think about controlling it!"

Lin Weiwei nodded repeatedly.

Bai Xiaosheng laughed again, "But actually, I really enjoy competing with this kind of rival."

"Why?" Lin Weiwei asked curiously.

"It's thrilling!"

Bai Xiaosheng laughed heartily, "It helps me grow and prepares me to face even stronger enemies in the future!"

While they were chatting, Bai Xiaosheng's phone rang, and he answered the call.

"Sister Zhao? Are you looking for me for something?" Bai Xiaosheng said cheerfully to the person on the other end.

Zhao Qianze?

Lin Weiwei felt a stir of interest. She had heard Bai Xiaosheng mention this woman before, a real beauty.

"Oh? The negotiations aren't going smoothly? Tell me about it, let me help you come up with some ideas!" Bai Xiaosheng offered.

This Zhao Qianze was strictly a competitor too, wasn't she? Just because she was beautiful, Xiaosheng was willing to help her. Lin Weiwei couldn't help but give him a sidelong glance.

Bai Xiaosheng talked to Zhao Qianze for over ten minutes, genuinely trying to think of a solution, and it seemed the person on the other end was immensely grateful.

After hanging up, Bai Xiaosheng noticed Lin Weiwei's amused and playful gaze on him, and he felt somewhat embarrassed.

"We're just friends," Bai Xiaosheng chuckled.

Lin Weiwei couldn't help but burst into a restrained chuckle.

When someone is pleasing to the eye, and not a threat, even a rival will get help.

This sort of willfulness was really so "Bai Xiaosheng"!

Chapter 775: Mu Beichen's Calculations _1

Another week passed, and starting from Friday, Bai Xiaosheng began to receive good news.

On Friday, a company signed a contract for a two-year promotion in the East China region, with Zhongjing Media being fully responsible for the agency rights, a rather large deal! The one who facilitated this was not a manager, nor a director, but an ordinary salesperson.

On the same day, three enterprises in two locations showed their intention to cooperate, with further negotiations in progress!

On Saturday, two companies respectively signed three-year contracts for advertising promotion and film and television cooperation, each surpassing the previous day's deals.

In addition, four enterprises in two locations were in the process of being approached.

On Sunday, a major enterprise formally agreed to sign a comprehensive strategic cooperation contract. Director of the business department, Chen Shen, personally rushed to sign the contract, with the scale of cooperation exceeding the total of the first three deals.

The number of prospective negotiation clients increased to six!

"This is incredible, at this growth rate! We can create a miracle!" Lin Weiwei said to Bai Xiaosheng with immense excitement upon seeing the report.

"Don't get too excited, stay calm," Bai Xiaosheng said to her with a smile.

In truth, Bai Xiaosheng was very happy! Even overjoyed!

These results were both within his expectations and beyond them.

It must be said that the group of sales elites were extremely capable!

As long as they are given enough trust, enough freedom, enough support, and sufficient rewards,

they can continually create one miracle after another!

"Although we only secured four cooperations in half a month, the quality of these deals definitely surpasses ten or eight ordinary ones. If we continue like this, I believe we can leave Mu Beichen and Zheng Qinghong far behind," Lin Weiwei confidently proclaimed.

Bai Xiaosheng gave a restrained smile.

While Bai Xiaosheng and his team were receiving continuous good news, Zheng Qinghong found himself in an awkward position. He had secured cooperation from five companies, four of which were his own achievements, and one was negotiated by the vice president.

However, these five companies' cooperation didn't measure up to the four that Bai Xiaosheng had amassed.

The most fatal issue was that Zheng Qinghong now had deep-set eyes and bloodshot eyeballs, his whole person appearing sickly and languid.

Excessive fatigue, anxious emotions, and an accumulation of various negative sentiments had even made him feel very unwell.

But he dared not stop because once he did, he might not be able to continue running around as he had in the previous two weeks!

"Perhaps, my initial strategy was wrong!" Zheng Qinghong realized, but felt somewhat hopeless.

It was too late to adjust.

"Even if it's the wrong method, I have to give it a try. There are two more weeks left, I absolutely can't stop; only by persisting is there a chance of winning!"

Under this train of thought, Zheng Qinghong once again phoned the vice president and other managers, dictating with severe words and urging them to keep working desperately.

This kind of talk, which pushed for effort without discussing money, only garnered a bunch of yes-men, fearful and eager to please, but as for improvements, probably none at all.

Zheng Qinghong, unlike Bai Xiaosheng, had never spent time at the grassroots level. He adhered to the belief that "if you put in the effort, I will naturally see it, and you won't be shortchanged at year-end," completely unaware that "maintaining relationships with compassion and driving action with incentives" was what most people's mindset actually conformed to.

Currently, Mu Beichen's actions had significantly slowed down, now prioritizing quality.

However, to date, Mu Beichen was still in the lead.

But today, Mu Beichen wasn't at the company "overseeing the battle." Instead, he went to Zhongjing, to the home of Chen Jiuzheng.

He came to ask Chen Jiuzheng to do something.

"What? Beichen, have you lost your mind!"

"This matter, in my opinion, must be kept from others at all costs! And you're telling me to go report to the operations department now?! What on earth are you thinking!"

"Speaking of it now will inevitably affect your assessment, and even I might be investigated by the operations department!" Chen Jiuzheng said, visibly agitated, "No, absolutely not!"

At the beginning of the year, Chen Jiuzheng had submitted a "Super Corporation" plan to the operations department, which envisaged consolidating superior resources to create several highly competitive companies, and in turn, boosting the development of the entire provincial industry under his jurisdiction.

The plan was pioneering and innovative, and it even received commendation from the operations department.

Of course, there has been no concrete action taken as of yet.

That was because Chen Jiuzheng was still plotting the details, figuring out how to enhance the competitiveness of the group's enterprises while siphoning resources for his own profit without getting caught.

The difficulty of this task was self-evident; a single small flaw could lead to big trouble.

Therefore, Chen Jiuzheng had no choice but to be extremely cautious.

But now, Mu Beichen was asking him to inform the group that the plan had already been initiated.

Mu Beichen's company was to be the pilot company!

"Only by doing this can we explain why resources are flowing into my company at this time! If we do not resolve this issue in advance, it will be a ticking time bomb. Once it explodes, that will be a real problem!" Mu Beichen insisted.

"I'm not saying we shouldn't resolve it, but does it have to be now?" Chen Jiuzheng frowned, "What time is it now? This is a critical period for you, and you said it yourself, in the current situation, you are bound to be the best developing one. So why seek trouble for yourself at this time? Can't we wait until after the assessment is over?"

"No!" Mu Beichen said resolutely, "It is precisely because this period is the most favorable for me. By raising it now, when it appears to be to my disadvantage, that's exactly what will make the operations department believe that you are fair! This is also a strategy to protect you!"

"From Tian, we know that the President of the Greater China Region is taking the opportunity to crack down on them! However, there has been no action taken against the heads of provincial industries! Moreover, I've analyzed the rules of the assessment; there is no prohibition on participation by your level! What you're doing is not against the rules, and the operations department has no reason to blame you!"

"Plus, the 'Super Corporation' plan was proposed before this assessment, proving it was not a spur-of-the-moment idea! Even if the operations department is a bit dissatisfied, they won't have anything substantial to criticize."

"At present, we have signed a large number of partnerships on our side; the operations department will not be able to forcibly order us to cancel them, they will only have to acknowledge them," Mu Beichen concluded, "Therefore, now is the best time!"

After his speech, Chen Jiuzheng was left with nothing to say.

"Alright, I'll ask Tian about it," Chen Jiuzheng said.

Afterward, he dialed Chen Jiutian's private number and relayed Mu Beichen's words to him verbatim.

There was silence on the other end of the phone for a while, and then Chen Jiutian finally spoke, "I think, Beichen is right! Jiuzheng, you go ahead and follow his suggestion."

Chen Jiutian agreed!

After hanging up the phone, Chen Jiuzheng sighed, "Fine, I'll start preparing the report now. Tell me how to write it, and I'll send it to the operations department tonight!"

"Good!" A smile appeared on Mu Beichen's face.

This issue, unresolved, had always been a heavy stone on his heart.

With it resolved, he would have no more worries!

"After this, no one will be able to make trouble for me over this matter!"

"Bai Xiaosheng, before you discovered anything, I've already perfectly filled the loophole. Now, I am without any flaw!"

Chapter 776 This Kind of Ruling!_1

At ten o'clock in the morning, Affairs Department of the Greater China Region, Office No. 9.

Officer Lin Ke pushed open the door and entered.

"Officer Lin!" "Officer Lin!"

In the office, the assistants of the affairs officers who were dealing with affairs greeted her one after another upon seeing her.

These people were all subordinates of the various affairs officers, who needed to rotate through different offices each month to perform duty.

"Good, good!" Officer Lin Ke nodded and greeted everyone in turn.

The Affairs Department of the Greater China Region had set up an office for each province in the country, and a strengthened office for all the municipalities directly under the central government. Even for the foreign countries within the Greater China Region, a strengthened office was established per country, to ensure timely and effective handling of various major affairs.

The duty officers in each office were there on a rotational basis.

Originally, Xiahou Qi had arranged an overseas assignment for Officer Lin Ke, but unexpectedly, due to changes in circumstances, it had been postponed until next month.

Officer Lin Ke also wanted to see the final selection results for Bai Xiaosheng and the others, so she stayed behind and requested to be responsible for this office.

Office No. 9 corresponded to Anjiang Province.

"Is there anything important?" Officer Lin Ke walked to her desk and asked casually.

This month, the affairs submitted to the Affairs Department weren't many, and even fewer were worth her, as an affairs officer, to review. There had only been two in half a month, and there were no new ones this week.

"There is!" replied a female affairs officer assistant.

Immediately, she walked over and handed Officer Lin Ke a printed document.

"This is the petition report submitted by Chen Jiuzheng, the person in charge of the provincial industry in Anjiang Province."

"Chen Jiuzheng?" Officer Lin Ke raised her eyebrows and took the report to look through it.

Chen Jiuzheng was the younger brother of Chen Jiutian, the regional head of East China.

In this selection, Chen Jiutian had nominated two people: one was Bai Xiaosheng, and the other was Mu Beichen.

Both of these people were highly regarded by the old man.

However, from the information collected by the Affairs Department, Officer Lin Ke knew and had also mentioned to Xiahou Qi that there seemed to be some conflict between the Chen Family and Bai Xiaosheng. Chen Jiutian's nomination of Bai Xiaosheng appeared more like a proof of his open-mindedness and magnanimity.

"But actually, Bai Xiaosheng also told me that there are significant conflicts between him and the Chen Family!" Officer Lin Ke thought to herself, "Does this report by Chen Jiuzheng have anything to do with Bai Xiaosheng?"

While looking through the report, Officer Lin Ke asked the assistant, "What's the main point here?"

"Before the new year, Chen Jiuzheng submitted a plan to the Affairs Department for creating a 'super enterprise', which was implemented not long ago," said the assistant.

"What trivial matter is this." Officer Lin Ke frowned and muttered to herself.

"The report says that the enterprise used as the pilot is a media company—Tianzheng Media. Its general manager, Mu Beichen, is one of the candidates in this selection for the provincial industrial leader, so some explanations are being made to the Affairs Department," the assistant continued.

"What!" Hearing this news, Officer Lin Ke's eyes widened as her voice rose sharply.

All of a sudden, she attracted the attention of others.

"It's nothing, carry on with your work!" Officer Lin Ke scolded with widened eyes.

Everyone immediately bowed their heads and busied themselves with their work.

Officer Lin Ke scrutinized the report, her gaze flickering.

Officer Lin Ke saw that the report mentioned a lot of funds and resources being injected into Mu Beichen's company, used in external strategies, and that the company had facilitated many large-scale cooperations in provinces outside Anjiang and had established strategic alliances with many group enterprises in other provinces.

The report affirmed Mu Beichen's success on the one hand, while on the other hand, it made a plea stating that the plans made two months before the final stage of the assessment were now found to be in conflict, and thus it was being reported.

"This is clearly deliberate!" Officer Lin Ke snorted coldly, "Such a pretense of ignorance! They really dare to lie with their eyes wide open!"

This matter had to be reported!

However, she was currently an on-duty Affairs Officer and could not directly approach the elder statesman. According to procedure, she needed to first report to the Senior Affairs Officer.

And this time, the Senior Affairs Officer responsible for her area of work—

was Zheng Honghu!

Zheng Honghu, the half-brother and supporter of Zheng Qinghong!

She believed that Zheng Honghu would certainly not ignore this "coincidence" involving the Chen Family!

Officer Lin Ke's eyes flickered slightly, and she couldn't help but curl her lips into a cold sneer.

The Chen Family members had to pay for their brazen actions!

"You may leave now. I will take this report to Great Official Zheng Honghu immediately," Officer Lin Ke told the officer assistant before her.

"Yes," the assistant nodded and turned to leave.

Officer Lin Ke stood up, took the report, and hurried off directly to the Senior Affairs Officer's duty office.

Upon reaching the door, she steadied her breathing and knocked.

"Come in."

From inside the office, a voice responded, incredibly gentle and quite magnetic.

Officer Lin Ke pushed the door open and entered.

This office, though used by the Senior Affairs Officers in turn and considered temporary,

was subjected to a relatively long period of use by whoever was in rotation. They would also have it adjusted—details and decor would be altered according to each person's preferences.

At the moment, the office was simple and elegant. The floor was polished to shine, spotless. The desktop was arranged, not a single item out of place. There were also several pots of orchids, emitting bursts of refreshing fragrance.

The person behind the desk smiled warmly at her as Officer Lin Ke came in.

This man seemed to be under forty years of age but was actually much older.

His gaze was gentle, his smile friendly, inducing an involuntary sense of closeness in one's heart. Especially his eyes—they were beautiful and profound, capable of making one feel a sense of submission with just a look.

Zheng Honghu, one of the ten Senior Affairs Officers.

"Officer Lin Ke, what can I do for you?" Zheng Honghu asked with a smile.

"Mr. Zheng, here is a report for you to take a look at first," Officer Lin Ke stepped forward and handed Chen Jiuzheng's report to Zheng Honghu.

"Hmm, take a seat for a while," Zheng Honghu said with a smile, gesturing towards the sofa beside him.

"Okay," Officer Lin Ke went to sit down.

No matter what Officer Lin Ke might criticize in private, no matter how much she disliked this Great Official Zheng Honghu, she would not show the slightest impropriety to his face.

After sitting down, she watched as Zheng Honghu flipped through the report.

Zheng Honghu did not read quickly, but his pace felt rhythmic, turning the pages of the report at a uniform speed.

Ten minutes later, Zheng Honghu put down the report, glanced at Officer Lin Ke, and smiled as he asked, "Officer Lin Ke, how do you think this should be handled?"

"It's a violation!" Officer Lin Ke said bluntly. "At the very least, deduct the corresponding points from Mu Beichen. At most, consider disqualifying him. As for Chen Jiuzheng, the head of Anjiang Province's regional industry, his responsibility should also be pursued!"

Zheng Honghu neither agreed nor disagreed, pondered for a moment, and then smiled, "I actually think—"

"It's not so serious, no need for punishment!" Zheng Honghu stated his opinion.

"What?!"

This judgement was unbelievable to Officer Lin Ke, who stood up abruptly.

Chapter 777: Not to be Punished!_1

Officer Lin Ke handed the report submitted by Chen Jiuzheng to Great Official Zheng Honghu.

She had thought this Senior Affairs Officer would seize the opportunity to make things difficult for the Chen Family.

What a perfect chance it was! To righteously punish the Chen Family, righteously deal with Mu Beichen!

As far as Officer Lin Ke knew, Zheng Honghu and Chen Jiutian didn't share any affection for each other; on the contrary, due to differing opinions, they had had several minor conflicts.

In Officer Lin Ke's view, even for the sake of Zheng Qinghong, Zheng Honghu wouldn't miss the opportunity.

And on this matter, she had initially maintained a neutral position, settling things objectively.

Only, because of Bai Xiaosheng, her own inclinations had grown somewhat, and she was also interested in watching the excitement unfold.

But what she never expected was that Zheng Honghu actually found Chen Jiuzheng's actions to be unobjectionable—no punishment necessary!

Surprised, Officer Lin Ke frowned slightly and spoke frankly to Zheng Honghu, "Great Official Zheng Honghu, regarding this matter, I have some differing opinions from you!"

In the Affairs Department, Officer Lin Ke was recognized for her straightforwardness and her young girl appearance, which naturally made her unafraid.

Furthermore, her relationship with Mr. Xiahou Qi of the Greater China Region was well-known. Even the Senior Affairs Officer would give her some leeway.

"If Officer Lin Ke believes this matter is serious, then let's report it to Mr. Xia." Zheng Honghu said with a smile.

It seemed he had been waiting for Officer Lin Ke to say just that.

So be it!

Officer Lin Ke was fed up with their kind of calculative scheming that plotted three steps ahead. She nodded at once, expressionless, and said, "Fine, let the old man decide!"

With the conversation reaching this point, Zheng Honghu stood up calmly, took the report, and walked out.

Officer Lin Ke followed behind.

Leaving the office, they went straight to look for Xiahou Qi.

Along the way, Zheng Honghu's expression was calm, but his eyes twinkled subtly.

At this moment, Xiahou Qi was reprimanding and warning him, so it wasn't the time to make more formidable enemies.

However, the situation was also an opportunity!

"Lucky it was Officer Lin Ke on duty who found this report, saving me a lot of trouble! Otherwise, I would have had to work out a way to show this document to Xiahou Qi," Zheng Honghu mused to himself, a hint of a smile in his eyes.

A Senior Affairs Officer and an Affairs Officer together proceeded to Xiahou Qi's office. Along the way, everyone they passed greeted the two officials.

Behind the scenes, everyone's gazes were filled with curiosity.

"What's going on? These two are seeking Mr. Xia; is there an issue?"

"Great Official Zheng Honghu, Officer Lin Ke... both are extremely special figures! Their going together could very well mean that something big is about to happen!"

Many speculated privately, with countless eyes following them.

Zheng Honghu and Officer Lin Ke arrived outside Xiahou Qi's office, where Zheng Honghu knocked on the door.

Soon, a deep voice from inside said, "Come in."

Zheng Honghu and Officer Lin Ke entered one after the other; behind the desk, Mr. Xia looked up to see them and immediately smiled, "Honghu, Lin Ke, what brings you here to see me?"

Elder Xia's attitude toward Zheng Honghu was exceedingly amiable, unlike the rumors that circulated outside.

His tone was also warm, devoid of any targeting.

"Elder Xia, just now Officer Lin Ke brought me a report. It's from Chen Jiuzheng, the head of industry for Anjiang Province. We have differing opinions on how to handle this report, so we came to seek your guidance."

Zheng Honghu stepped forward quickly, smiling as he laid out the situation, and handed the report across to Mr. Xia's desk.

Zheng Honghu, before Mr. Xiahou Qi, behaved just like a student, his words and actions utterly respectful.

"Oh, what report that you cannot handle? And there has been a difference of opinion?" Mr. Xiahou Qi smiled, took the document, and glanced at Officer Lin Ke.

"The general content of this report is..." Officer Lin Ke briefly recounted.

Mr. Xiahou Qi put on his reading glasses, nodded slightly as he listened to Officer Lin Ke's account, and flipped through the pages of the report.

About a quarter of an hour later, Mr. Xiahou Qi put down the report, took off his reading glasses, folded them, and placed them on the desk.

"Regarding this report, what are your opinions?" Mr. Xiahou Qi asked with a smile.

Zheng Honghu smiled.

"I suppose that this matter is too much of a coincidence, but then again, it could just be a momentary oversight by Chen Jiuzheng."

"The regulations for this assessment, regarding whether the person in charge of the provincial industry may intervene, indeed do not explicitly state any restriction."

"That Chen Jiuzheng can make a report and explain, seems to represent an attitude of openness."

"As for whether Mr. Chen Jiutian is aware, I can't say..."

The more Officer Lin Ke listened, the more she frowned. Zheng Honghu was plainly playing both sides, letting both positives and negatives work in his favor.

So in the end, should they punish Chen Jiuzheng and others or not!

"Elder Xia, I think we should issue a warning to Chen Jiuzheng, and deduct corresponding points from Mu Beichen!" Officer Lin Ke couldn't help but say, "Great Official Zheng Honghu simply feels there might be a misunderstanding, and innocent parties could be wrongly punished. Well then, we focus on the issue, not the individuals. This approach can't be wrong, can it?"

Officer Lin Ke's words were forceful.

Zheng Honghu first chuckled, "Officer Lin, indeed young and capable."

With this praise, he seemed to agree with Officer Lin Ke's approach.

Mr. Xiahou Qi pondered for a moment, then slowly said, "Chen Jiuzheng's report is logical, well-founded, and gives us a sufficient reason. He does not mind reporting at such a moment and is not worried about damaging Mu Beichen's assessment. This forthrightness is comforting. Why should we speculate wildly? Mu Beichen took advantage of this opportunity, decisively employed strategy, and achieved commendable results. His decisiveness and directness are precisely what we wish to see in the leaders of provincial industries."

Mr. Xiahou Qi actually expressed a positive attitude.

Just as Officer Lin Ke was about to argue, Mr. Xiahou Qi raised his hand to stop her.

"Just now, Honghu mentioned you had differing opinions. Officer Lin Ke advocates for punishment, and Honghu seems to lean towards not imposing it. Then, I will make a unified decision," Mr. Xiahou Qi said cheerfully, "How about this: you may reply that 'the situation is acknowledged, and in light of the timely and honest report, no punishment will be administered to Chen Jiuzheng or Mu Beichen'."

Officer Lin Ke was stunned and speechless.

Elder Xia, though not speaking golden words, definitely made a conclusive decision on this matter.

Officer Lin Ke, unable to vocalize her thoughts, silently shot him a disapproving glance.

Elder Xia seemed not to notice.

"Since Elder Xia has made a decision, I will go and handle it," Zheng Honghu smiled, gave Officer Lin Ke a look, and left on his own.

Once outside, Zheng Honghu returned to his own office, his gaze flickering uncertainly.

"It seems my thoughts are correct. Elder Xia will not act rashly before it's time to move against the Chen Family!"

"In terms of cunning, patience, and scheming, this old man always commands my utmost admiration!"

"Right now, he's targeting me; I must be even more careful, not make a single misstep, and avoid making powerful enemies!"

"However, this is actually an opportunity. If I stand together with the Chen Family, how would Elder Xia react then?"

Zheng Honghu whispered with a smile, "This is a risky move!"

"But, I like it!"

Chapter 778 Cunning and Sly_1

"Old man, are you getting senile? Don't Chen Jiuzheng and his group break the rules at all? Don't they have to take any responsibility? Hmph, even if you don't give them a major penalty, a minor punishment should be possible, right? And yet you have none! You, you, you really are past it!"

After Zheng Honghu left, Lin Ke's anger swelled up, and she indignantly said to Xiahou Qi.

Anyone else wouldn't dare speak to Xiahou Qi in this way.

"You little girl, what kind of way is this to speak, are you rebelling against me!" Xiahou Qi scolded in anger.

Of course, this anger was ninety-nine percent feigned.

Lin Ke saw right through it instantly, and couldn't help but scoff.

"You, you're too straightforward, with a temperament like this, if I weren't around, Zheng Honghu and the others would bury you alive," Xiahou Qi muttered under his breath, seeing that Lin Ke was still not convinced, he suddenly asked, "Let me ask you, about today's incident, even if we did as you wish and punished Chen Jiuzheng and Mu Beichen, then what?"

"What do you mean 'then what'? If they did something wrong, they get punished, and it's settled!" Lin Ke couldn't help but say.

"Punishment is not the goal, it never is!"

Xiahou Qi shook his head, "Punishment is just a means, not punishing is also a means, the key is about the effect it achieves, what the purpose is!... Sigh, I'm telling you all this, but you're not listening! Hmph, don't think I don't know, you're hoping to punish Mu Beichen, deduct his points, also for the sake of Bai Xiaosheng."

"I'm doing it for fairness," Lin Ke said, with a hint of urgency in her voice.

Xiahou Qi pointed out Lin Ke's little scheming, which made her a bit annoyed.

"Fine, you're doing it for fairness," Xiahou Qi said, "Mu Beichen can use extreme measures within the rules without crossing the line, it shows his prowess. He can persuade Chen Jiuzheng to cooperate, it shows his ability! You think it's unfair and want to punish him, is that fairness to him?"

Lin Ke found herself at a loss for words.

"All methods not expressly prohibited by law are permissible. What kind of people do you think these candidates are? Do you think we hadn't anticipated that they might use all kinds of methods when we established the rules? Child! This is part of the assessment! A provincial industry leader has to use all means within the rules to achieve the goal, this is the real assessment! Tell me, from this perspective, is Mu Beichen at fault? Huh!"

These words from Xiahou Qi left Lin Ke completely without a comeback.

After a while, Lin Ke finally sighed, "Working with you all is truly exhausting!"

Xiahou Qi chuckled, "Furthermore, you're rushing to find fairness for Bai Xiaosheng, do you have so little faith in him? I think! Bai Xiaosheng may not be as incapable as you think, I think you should have a little more confidence in him!"

Having said this, Xiahou Qi's gaze became distant; thinking of Bai Xiaosheng, he couldn't help revealing a sly smile.

"This crafty monkey, he's slippery too! For now, I don't think he needs you worrying over him!"

In the end, Lin Ke left, no longer feeling indignant.

In the office, with only Xiahou Qi left, he gazed at the report on the desk and fell into deep thought.

What he had said to Lin Ke was only part of his reasoning, and a very small part at that.

Things that ran much deeper had nothing to do with Lin Ke or Bai Xiaosheng, so naturally, Xiahou Qi didn't mention them.

"Zheng Honghu seems to be making concessions, but he's actually probing continuously, leading trouble to Chen Jiutian."

"Seeing that I don't punish Chen Jiuzheng, he'll definitely think I'm reluctant to move against Chen Jiutian easily."

"Right, and wrong."

"Indeed, Chen Jiutian is someone I currently prefer not to disturb. That reluctance, however, differs somewhat from what Zheng Honghu envisions."

"Chen Jiutian's issues are far more serious than Zheng Honghu's, knuckles can't resolve it!"

Xiahou Qi couldn't help muttering, "That little guy Mu Beichen, I don't know how close he is to the Chen Family, whether he can be won over. This person is shrewd, has abilities, and before he can be won over, I don't want to ruin one good seedling for the sake of another!"

Xiahou Qi still had expectations for Mu Beichen.

Now, Lin Ke, having left Xiahou Qi's office, although she agreed with what the old man said, still felt it was a bit unfair to Bai Xiaosheng.

"The results of this matter will soon be public, it's not really a secret. But if you don't pay attention, naturally you won't notice," Lin Ke mused to himself, "Then I'll just give Bai Xiaosheng a heads up. This shouldn't be considered breaking the rules."

Thinking this, Lin Ke took out his phone, quickly typed up a message with a brief and clear description of the events, and sent it to Bai Xiaosheng.

After finishing, Lin Ke put away his phone and muttered, "Bai Xiaosheng, this is all the help I can give you! You have to work hard, you can't lose to those people!"

...

Bai Xiaosheng was reviewing the performance data sent back by the business department with Lin Weiwei.

"Amazing! Just like a snowball effect, at this rate, we are sure to win by the end of the month!" Lin Weiwei was full of confidence.

Just then, Bai Xiaosheng's phone rang.

He pulled it out and glanced at it, his brow immediately furrowing as he began to read carefully.

"What's wrong?" Lin Weiwei asked.

Bai Xiaosheng handed her the phone, and after Lin Weiwei read the message, she was first taken aback, then anger and shock mingled on her face.

"How could they do this! The Affairs Department, not imposing a penalty! How can this be fair!" Lin Weiwei was livid.

Bai Xiaosheng was silent, thoughtful.

"Red Lotus, search for recent news on 'Tianzheng Media'!"

No matter what major moves Mu Beichen made, even if he didn't promote them, third parties would, and nothing could be completely covered up!

"Yes, Master!" Red Lotus responded immediately.

In Bai Xiaosheng's mind, a flood of information about Mu Beichen's major moves was added.

"I underestimated him!" Bai Xiaosheng exclaimed in admiration.

He was actually very interested in Mu Beichen's maneuvers.

"However! His strategy is not flawless; it even has significant drawbacks," Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself, "That's right, Mu Beichen's company must have become a shell company when it joined the group, pouring in so much resource but still not stronger than my Zhongjing Media by much! Moreover, it's all show and no substance!"

"Even if the Affairs Department approves, he is not necessarily better than me," Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself, "Moreover, the reasons behind this lack of punishment are quite intriguing..."

Lin Weiwei was still seething with indignation.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and comforted her.

"The Affairs Department has set a precedent here!" Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile, "The intervention of provincial industry leaders sets a precedent for exoneration!"

"What good does that do us, where are we going to find a provincial industry leader to help us?" Lin Weiwei couldn't help but grumble.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled, not saying anything more.

In the Senior Affairs Officer's office.

Zheng Honghu sat in his seat, his gaze distant.

The notification had been sent out.

He still had to think about what would come next. Should he call Chen Jiutian to claim credit himself, or was it better to have someone else pass the word along? This was the question.

Just as he pondered this, Zheng Honghu's phone rang.

After answering, his expression dramatically changed, and he even exclaimed, "What did you say?!"

"Qinghong has collapsed, he's been rushed to the hospital!"

Chapter 779: Zheng Qinghong, Out of the Game_1

"What did you say? Stroke! Bai Xiaocheng, say that again!" Hearing this news, Zheng Honghu suddenly stood, slamming his palm on the table, so forcefully that the lid of the teacup jumped.

The piercing voice through the phone truly gave Bai Xiaocheng a shudder.

Zheng Honghu's previous calm and detached demeanor was swept away, replaced by shock and urgency.

Although they were half-brothers, Zheng Qinghong was his blood brother after all!

"Mr. Zheng, don't be too anxious, don't get too excited. The doctor said it's a mild, mild stroke! It was just induced by excessive fatigue, and it was detected very promptly! It's not difficult to recover!" Bai Xiaocheng quickly explained over the phone.

If he didn't clarify quickly, who knows how Zheng Honghu might explode in anger, and even he, the bearer of the news, might be affected.

"Mild, and he can recover?!"

Hearing this, Zheng Honghu's furious breath halted abruptly, his voice urgent, "Good! Bai Xiaocheng, you stay there and keep an eye on him for me, make them use the best medicine, the best experts... No, transfer him to another hospital immediately after he's stabilized! Money is not an issue!"

For brothers not of the same mother, to do this much was really not easy. Even Bai Xiaocheng was moved.

"Yes, I will keep watch! But..." Over the phone, Bai Xiaocheng's tone suddenly became hesitant.

"Speak!" Zheng Honghu barked.

"Mr. Zheng, even in his coma, there was a time he could speak and he was still rambling about work. And, the doctor said the stroke was caused by excessive overwork, I'm afraid his state of mind might affect the treatment," Bai Xiaocheng said.

"How could he be so reckless!" Zheng Honghu's voice was filled with unstoppable distress, then confusion followed, "How could it be overwork? Everything was smooth sailing in the past two months, and this month has only just begun, not even twenty days in. How could he have a stroke from work-related overwork? Tell me, what exactly happened?!"

Zheng Qinghong knew his brother's situation was delicate, he had asked for help only once and then fought on his own, without even reporting back.

Bai Xiaocheng dared not conceal the truth and immediately recounted the approach Zheng Qinghong adopted in the final stage.

"In the past twenty days, Mr. Zheng has been on the road non-stop, without any good sleep, eating very little, often suffering from headaches, shortness of breath, prone to irritability, and he has also lost a lot of weight. The key issue is that the psychological pressure on him was immense."

After finishing, Bai Xiaocheng added another sentence.

The actual circumstances were more than ten times worse than what Bai Xiaocheng had described.

Imagine, Zheng Qinghong, a proud son of heaven, competing against others, only to discover halfway that he had made a foolish move, so foolish that he didn't even need someone else's hand to be brought to the brink of self-destruction.

That anger, despair, unwillingness, and anxiety tormented him every day, every hour, every minute, every second.

Under such an accumulation of negative emotions like a rolling snowball, how could one not collapse?

Excessive fatigue was perhaps just a medical explanation.

"How could Qinghong be so foolish, why didn't he discuss it with me!"

Zheng Honghu knew there were problems with that strategy as soon as he heard it; he was both angry and heartbroken.

"Wait! Mr. Zheng, the results are out!" Bai Xiaocheng suddenly said.

There was a flurry of noise over the phone, then Bai Xiaocheng's voice came through again, tinged with relief, "Nothing serious! The doctor says all the conditions are the best they could be, recovery will also be the best!"

Zheng Honghu let out a breath, his expression easing.

More noise from the phone, and then Bai Xiaocheng's wry voice, "Mr. Zheng, Mr. Zheng... is asking about work again..."

"Work, work, does he not care about his life!" Zheng Honghu roared, "You tell him, I'm stopping his selection process, tell him to give up on that idea!"

Doing so would certainly agitate the patient, but it was better than torturing him continuously. Another ten days of this torment, and his brother would truly be finished!

"Ah, stop, stop the..." Bai Xiaocheng exclaimed in shock.

"You coordinate with the doctors, and under the influence of sedatives, tell him this news. Then, say one more thing—" Zheng Honghu said, "You tell him, I said, 'The positions of ten provincial industry heads are not worth my brother's life!'"

...

After ending the call with Bai Xiaocheng, Zheng Honghu sat down, his gaze fixed on one spot, lost in thought.

"This selection lacks the right time, the advantage of location, and the support of people! Perhaps giving up is the best choice!"

"However, if we give up the selection, we can't let the benefits slip away!" Zheng Honghu's eyes suddenly lit up with a glint as he raised his head again.

In Zhongjing, at the villa district by Moon Lake, at the home of Chen Jiuzheng.

Mu Beichen had just arrived and was called into the study by Chen Jiuzheng, where he sat down on the sofa.

Chen Jiuzheng personally went to pour him tea, smiling from the corners of his eyes and brows.

"Jiuzheng, your rush to find me must mean there is some good news?" Mu Beichen couldn't help but smile seeing Chen Jiuzheng's demeanor.

"Not just one piece of good news, but two!" Chen Jiuzheng held up two fingers and then paused, thinking, "Or perhaps three!"

"Oh?" Mu Beichen's expression showed curiosity, "Then go on, I'm all ears."

Chen Jiuzheng settled himself and smiled at Mu Beichen.

"First off, I reported to the Affairs Department exactly as you advised, word for word. As you expected, the Affairs Department has decided not to hold you accountable and has recognized your current achievements!"

Mu Beichen smiled.

This was within his expectations.

But indeed, it was also a cause for celebration!

"Secondly, your strongest competitor Zheng Qinghong has been hospitalized, they say he suffered a stroke!"

"What!"

Chen Jiuzheng's second piece of news took Mu Beichen by surprise, and he was somewhat in disbelief.

"Zheng Qinghong being hospitalized due to a stroke, is this information reliable?"

"Reliable! The news has already spread throughout the Affairs Department, and moreover, there's someone who has confirmed it for us!" Chen Jiuzheng said with a mysterious smile.

Who? Mu Beichen looked at Chen Jiuzheng doubtfully.

Chen Jiuzheng seldom spoke in such an enigmatic manner when conversing with him, as he was usually very direct and straightforward.

Unless, this person was extraordinary...

"Zheng Honghu!" Chen Jiuzheng revealed the answer.

"Zheng Honghu!" Mu Beichen exclaimed in shock.

Isn't that the Senior Affairs Officer, someone with the same rank as Chen Jiutian, but with even slightly more authority!

And more so, he is Zheng Qinghong's own brother, how could he possibly confirm such news to the Chen Family!

There was something unusual here...

Mu Beichen immediately looked at Chen Jiuzheng.

With a knowing smile, Chen Jiuzheng continued, "Well then, let's move on to the third matter!"

While he spoke, Chen Jiuzheng leaned forward, even lowering his voice.

This was his study, a place for discussing secrets, and yet now, he involuntarily adopted such a posture.

That indicated that what he was about to disclose might be something of great significance.

Mu Beichen also couldn't help but become serious, leaning in to listen.

"Tonight, Zheng Honghu is hosting a banquet for Tian and has matters to discuss! Tian said there might be a surprise!"

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"Zheng Honghu has invited Tian to dinner!" Mu Beichen was taken aback when he heard this.

At the level of Zheng Honghu and Chen Jiutian, dining was no longer just about eating, nor was meeting merely about seeing each other.

Any contact carried its meaning. Even if it didn't, in the eyes of others, it did.

Moreover, in this eventful autumn, if Zheng Honghu could invite, and Chen Jiutian could attend, it was certainly not just about eating!

Chen Jiutian also left a message, "There might be a surprise!"

"The President of the Greater China Region has long been dissatisfied with Zheng Honghu, and it's no secret. He has openly reprimanded him multiple times! Life isn't easy for Mr. Zheng now," Chen Jiuzheng sneered, "I even suspect that if Zheng Qinghong doesn't have a stroke, he might not last until the end... You know the reason!"

Mu Beichen silently nodded his head in agreement.

"Zheng Honghu is in a precarious situation, and with his brother Zheng Qinghong being in such a state, I think he's looking for a strong ally," Chen Jiuzheng said.

"So, he found Tian, he found us!" Mu Beichen continued.

"Exactly!" Chen Jiuzheng affirmed with a proud smile, "Tian is the regional manager, I am the provincial industrial manager, and in this selection process, you're the inevitable winner. Though people don't know you're a Chen, they know who nominated you and who you will side with. With such strong backing, it's only natural for Zheng Honghu to seek an alliance with us!"

Mu Beichen nodded slightly, validating Chen Jiuzheng's words.

If it were him, he would probably also choose the Chen Family.

"So, in this report we submitted, Zheng Honghu has made quite an effort, which can be seen as casting peaches in order to receive plums," Chen Jiuzheng said with a smile.

The result of the report "not to punish" involved "merits" that Zheng Honghu unabashedly claimed. He informed them personally, and it was "confirmed" through the word of others.

"Despite the President of the Greater China Region still having reservations about him, Zheng Honghu managed to achieve this result. Firstly, he is showing goodwill to our Chen Family, and secondly, he might also be demonstrating his own strength!"

Mu Beichen pondered for a moment and analyzed, "Perhaps, Zheng Honghu is showing us that as long as the Senior Affairs Officer hasn't stepped down, he possesses energy that others cannot reach!"

Chen Jiuzheng nodded vigorously, "Exactly, that's what I think too!"

"Now, with Zheng Honghu actively seeking cooperation with Tian, it's beneficial for us. We can take more initiative!" Mu Beichen said with a smile, "Let him help us first. As for how much we can help him in the end... it will depend on whether we can do it without harming our interests! If it's detrimental to us, then I'm sorry!"

Upon hearing this, Chen Jiuzheng laughed heartily, "You think just like me!"

The Chen Family has always taken advantage, never taken a loss!

"In this selection, apart from Zheng Qinghong, the others pose no threat to me," Mu Beichen said with a smile, then narrowed his eyes, "However, as for Bai Xiaosheng, it's unknown how far he can go! Right now, my fear is if he breaks into the top five, and gets into the Affairs Department, then we will lose our chance to discipline him!"

Chen Jiuzheng, however, dismissed Mu Beichen's concern with a smile, "You need not worry about Bai Xiaosheng. Just focus on your own tasks. Even if he makes it to the top five, even if he enters the Affairs Department, so what?"

Mu Beichen couldn't help but glance at him.

"Don't forget, after today, the Senior Affairs Officer is our ally. A mere assistant officer can die exactly how we want him to die, and even then, without us lifting a finger!" Chen Jiuzheng said with a laugh.

With that said, a smile also spread across Mu Beichen's face.

That's right!

If Zheng Honghu formed an alliance with them, a mere Bai Xiaosheng, inconsequential as chaff, was at their mercy for life or death, to steam or to boil, all at their bidding!

Mu Beichen laughed as well, "Indeed, we must look at issues dynamically!"

...

At eight o'clock in the evening, in a Michelin three-star restaurant in Linshen City.

Within a private room that was simply decorated and discreetly luxurious, only two people sat facing each other.

Zheng Honghu, Chen Jiutian.

Both men wore smiles, elegantly cutting the food on their plates with knife and fork.

"In my opinion, this grain-fed Angus beef is perfect medium-rare, moderately oily and juicy, exquisitely flavorful." Zheng Honghu recommended.

"I, on the other hand, prefer medium-well, which considers both color and texture, probably more suited to the palate of Asians." Chen Jiutian said with a smile.

"Mr. Chen's dining habits are quite exquisite. I've also benefited greatly; I will try your way next time." Smiling, Zheng Qinghong wiped the corner of his mouth with a napkin.

"Have you finished your meal, Mr. Zheng?" Chen Jiutian asked while cutting his meat, smiling, "The world is wonderful, many things are edible, food, interests. If Mr. Zheng doesn't plan to eat anymore, then the rest is all mine, surely you won't mind anymore."

Chen Jiutian's words were laden with double meaning.

Speaking overtly of steak, they were actually discussing the position of the regional industry head!

Zheng Honghu chuckled and pushed over the pepper shaker a bit, "Lately, I've had some stomach issues and can't eat much; feel free to help yourself. I would be happy to make others happy!"

These words were even more direct.

Chen Jiutian put a piece of meat in his mouth and, smiling, chewed while observing Zheng Honghu.

Zheng Honghu was also smiling at him.

"That's great! Mr. Zheng showing such magnanimity, the gentlemanly spirit, then I must regard you as a true friend! I, Chen Jiutian, dare not boast, but I value loyalty the most—friends in need, I'm always ready to draw my sword to help!"

With that, the two men looked at each other and laughed heartily.

...

After they finished eating and a pot of tea was brought in, Zheng Honghu and Chen Jiutian sipped their tea.

This time, there was no need for verbal sparring, just straightforward talk.

"I've heard about it, Brother Zheng helped with that report, sincerely appreciated!" Chen Jiutian's smile was genuine.

"It was nothing, just a small effort on my part." Zheng Honghu said with a dismissive smile.

Just as Mu Beichen had mentioned, he was both offering favors and showcasing his own capabilities.

"I also heard about your younger brother's issue. It's heartbreaking!" Chen Jiutian exclaimed, "I've chartered a plane to go there, bringing the best experts and equipment, hoping to offer what little help I can!"

"I appreciate it!" Zheng Honghu's face revealed considerable emotion.

Forming an alliance, they exchanged "gifts".

Now, it was time for serious talk!

"This time, since Brother Zheng has decided not to vie for the position of the regional industry head, I'll have to take up the mantle!" Chen Jiutian said with a laugh.

"It's not just that I won't compete; I also want to lend you my support!" Zheng Honghu said with a smile, "Elder Chen's recommendation, Mu Beichen, indeed has impressive achievements! Currently, he's among the top!"

Chen Jiutian's face broke into a pleased smile.

"However, there's one person who might surpass him in two to three days!"

At that statement, Chen Jiutian's smile froze, and he couldn't help blurting out, "Who?!"

Zheng Honghu gave him a deep look, smiled, took out a document from his bag, and pushed it over, "Take a look at this, you'll find it interesting!"