

Godfather Of Champions

Chapter 13: Newsworthy Twain Part 1

Upon getting up in the morning, there was some pain around Tang En's temple area. He drank quite a lot with Walker last night at Burns' Forest Bar because they were in a cheerful mood. He still remembered how the people at the bar congratulated them. Burns must have been very happy too, because almost all the drinks yesterday were on him.

The only downside was that Tang En did not see Michael and the others. Maybe they felt embarrassed and changed to another bar for their get-together.

After sitting in bed for a while, Tang En got up to wash and get dress. Then he saw that red note again on the fridge door when he was looking for breakfast in the kitchen.

Looking at the "must win" pledge, he sighed.

Tang En had already accepted the fact that he'd become the manager for the Forest team and that he had turned from Chinese to British. He laid out a simple breakfast on the table, then went out of the door to retrieve today's newspaper from the mailbox and began to browse through it.

As an ordinary Chinese man, he was not in the habit of reading the newspaper while having breakfast. This was completely the body's British genes at work. It seemed that this body of his required a lot of time to adapt to this kind of split in daily habits.

Turning the newspaper directly to page nine, the sports page, he saw many articles about yesterday's match. Because this was Nottingham's local newspaper, the Nottingham Evening Post, much of the space was naturally news about the Nottingham Forest team. Tang En scanned through it. Basically, it described yesterday's thrilling match. Tang En was already familiar with the course of the match, but when described in other people's words, it gave him another perspective. After reading those reporters describe him as handsome, Tang En was in a pretty good mood.

However, the next thing was not so good. He did not know how the reporters found those fans who had entered the locker room. The media had mixed opinions about this matter. Some said that this was no big deal, that special circumstances required special treatment, that Tony Twain did it for the team's score, to motivate the players' will to fight, and the result was very good. Another part of the media criticized Tony Twain's irresponsible approach. They thought that the locker room was a sacred place and not a place that any Tom, Dick or Harry could enter. Whatever the reason was, such an approach was not praiseworthy and to be encouraged.

Tang En scoffed at it. He did not feel that the locker room was so sacred. The media only felt that it was sacred because they could not enter, therefore leaving them full of guesswork and whitewash. If he had let them see the halftime Forest team locker room yesterday, none of those fools would have thought that place was sacred.

He threw the newspaper aside and went on with his breakfast. Unexpectedly, he noticed a shocking newspaper headline.

“We were raped!”

The word “raped” was in enlarged font, in black and bold.

Huh? These words ring a bell... Isn't that what I said at the press conference yesterday? Let me take another look at the photograph below these words... it does seem like I said those things at the press conference.

Ha! I became a cover story. Tang En laughed and picked up the newspaper to read it carefully. There was no substance to the content, just a report of the referee's ruling on the two goals yesterday.

“... Tony Twain had good reason to think his team had been raped by the referees and the Football Association...”

Hey, I didn't say anything bad about the FA!

“Judging from the post-match video, those two offences were somewhat questionable. Even if the last offside ball could barely pass as one, Dawson's goal being whistled as an offensive foul, was a bit outrageous.”

Tang En nodded. I like this tone. It's indeed an outrage, completely outrageous.

“... Our reporter queried John Baker, an official from the Football Association who specializes in refereeing affairs. He stated that the Football Association is currently reviewing this matter and the recording of the match and is unable to provide any answers at the present time. But he considered the word 'rape' as clearly inappropriate. Soon after we interviewed the referee, Winter, from the match, and he insisted there was no problem with his judgment on the offenses...”

With a yawn, Tang En tossed the newspaper aside. He remembered he had something important to do this morning. It was a waste of time sitting here reading the newspaper.

Forty minutes later, he stood at the entrance of the Royal Hospital of Nottingham University. This was a six-level building made from huge limestone, with two stone gargoyle statues erected on both sides of the gate, making him feel that this was not like a hospital, but rather like a dark monastery in medieval Europe.

The important thing that Tang En had to do was to have a brain checkup at a reputable hospital. Since the day he took possession of this body, he was worried about aftereffects and so on. Also, it would help prevent any speculative talk in the future, so he chose to come to the most respected hospital for the checkup.

The Royal Hospital of Nottingham University served the England national team and Football Association, and Tang En believed in its standard.

After giving way to a wailing ambulance, Tang En walked around the flowerbeds, up the steps, and entered the hall.

Standing at the registration area, he said to the older, plump receptionist engrossed in her work, "I would like to take a number for the neurology department. You have the best neurologists here ..." He did not know whom exactly he should ask for, so he simply used the general "neurosurgery" term.

"Do you have an appointment, sir?"

"Uh, no." Tang En did not know that an appointment was required to do a brain examination. He seldom went to hospitals because he hated the atmosphere.

The receptionist looked up and froze. Then she picked up the phone. "Professor Constantine. There's a patient here who needs you." After that, Tang En could not hear clearly. The receptionist muffled her voice, so he simply turned his gaze outwards to mindlessly watch people passing through the hall.

"Sir, please go to room number 415 on the fourth floor. Professor Constantine will be there for you." She handed over a note with a printed number.

"Thanks." Tang En took the note and turned away. The receptionist picked up a newspaper on the table and carefully compared the photo. That was the exact newspaper Tang En had read during breakfast. Underneath the phrase "We were raped!", there was a large photo of his face.

He took the elevator to the fourth floor and easily found room 415, according to the door number plate. He knocked on the door, and a sharp voice rang out, "Please come in."

Tang En pushed open the door to see a messy office desk facing the door, and behind the computer was a man about 50 years old hard at work. When he heard the door open, he peered up with narrowed eyes behind a pair of glasses.

"Mr. Tony Twain?"

"How do you know?" Tang En was a little surprised, he did not remember stating his name.

The older man took out a newspaper from beside his computer with his big photo and the already familiar words.

Tang En rolled his eyes. The older man laughed, “Ms. Lilith just told me there was a patient seeking medical examination who looked very much like the Forest manager, and, frankly, I thought she was mistaken because she never watched the Forest team matches.”

Tang En nodded his head to show his understanding, “Women ...”

“No, she is a loyal Notts County fan.” The older man came out from behind the desk and pulled out a disposable paper cup, “Please have a seat. Want some hot coffee?”

“Thank you.” Tang En did want to find a chair to sit on, but there were piles of data almost everywhere. He felt that even standing was a problem, not to mention sitting.

Professor Constantine realized Tang En’s predicament as he put the paper cups on the desk. Then picked up a pile of messy paper on the couch and placed it casually on another couch. Tang En felt that all those papers could crush that poor couch.

The older man smiled sheepishly, “Sorry, it’s so messy.”

Tang En nodded in understanding. “I just have one question. How do you quickly find the information you need from these piles of papers?”

“They’re all here.” Constantine pointed to his head. “Those papers... Well, actually, I use them as placemats for the cups.”

That’s when Tang En discovered the piece of paper underneath the coffee cup placed in front of him was filled with formulas and numbers. He had no other words for the older man.

“In fact, I can probably guess the reason you came to me, Manager Twain.”

“Oh?”

Constantine once again pulled out a newspaper from the heap of waste paper with a photograph of Twain falling to the ground. Tang En rolled his eyes again.

“Yes, I was struck here ...,” said Tang En, touching the back of his head. “I found myself completely changed from my former self, as if I were a different man.”

Constantine sat on the corner of the desk, looked at Tang En with interest, and beckoned him to go on.

“Well ... in my former self, I did not smoke nor drink. I lived a life of discipline without any nightlife. I was reticent and not particularly sociable,” Tang En described the Tony Twain’s character and habits from his memory. “You would not see me loudly directing the match on the sidelines or coming to you to talk much. Kenny Burns said I was like a Puritan. Though I know I’m not, I was very much like one.”

‘And now you are passionate and lively, outgoing, lots of body language, and have a fiery impetuous temper. Your life is not so disciplined, you also curse and swear, you’re impulsive, disregard consequences... In short, take all that you’ve described just now and completely reverse it, and that represents the you now.’ Constantine helped to add on for Tang En.

“Precisely, how did you know?”

“These conclusions can be easily drawn from your words and actions. Well, the situation you had just described, I’ve heard interesting anecdotes before. After some sort of stimulation, a person suddenly became someone else and could easily name a street thousands of miles away, or even speak a completely unfamiliar language. These are interesting anecdotes, of course, not scientifically proven occurrences.” Constantine rubbed his chin and smacked his lips, and then he gave a wave. “Come, let us first give you a comprehensive brain examination.”

Half an hour later, Tang En and Constantine sat back in room 415 to continue this subject. The coffee was already cold, but no one cared. Tang En never even took a sip.

“From the examination, your brain’s nervous system is normal and as good as before, as if it was not subjected to any external impact... I can even pronounce you a healthy and normal person,” Constantine said to Tang En, holding a folder of computer-analyzed reports. “Of course, this is only the result of a preliminary analysis. My personal recommendation would be... I need to continue to observe you ...”

Tang En hurriedly waved his hands. “This will not work, I have a job, I can’t ...”

Constantine peered up and looked at his patient over the top of his glasses, laughing, “Don’t worry. I’m not going to put you in a secret room for my observation, using equipment to scan you all day long.”

“Then how are you going to observe me ...”

“Well...,” Constantine pushed up his glasses and said seriously, “I need to see you often, so you have to open up your work to me, including the trainings and matches.”

Tang En thought of a question. “Don’t tell me you want to watch free matches?”

“Ahem! Manager Twain, do not doubt the professional integrity of an old medical professor.”

“That’s not going to work. How do I know you’re not going to tip off the press details about our training? You have to know they are very keen to find out inside information about the team.”

“You also can’t doubt the affection and loyalty of a three-generational Forest team fan.”

Tang En still shook his head, “I feel that my head doesn’t hurt nor is it dizzy, it’s completely normal. I came to you just to make sure. Since you say I’m normal, I don’t need to have a neurologist beside me so all of Britain thinks I have a problem with my head.”

“Manager Twain, that’s only the result of the preliminary analysis, you know that computer technology is always unreliable...” Constantine was a little anxious.

Tang En looked suspiciously at him. The anxious look on the older man’s face immediately cleared, and he took a sip of the cold coffee.

This old fox. Tang En cursed in his heart.

“How about this. I’ll allow you to come during training, but you can’t show up in the technical area or on the substitutes’ bench during matches. I can give you a very good seat in the stands that is convenient for you to ‘observe’ me. You can’t come and go as you please during training. You can only come when the reporters are not present, and you need to call me to give me notice before you come.”

Constantine thought for a moment. “The grandstand won’t do. It’s too noisy and inconvenient for me to work.” He deliberately emphasized “work.” “I would need the box seat.”

Gave him an inch and now he wanted the full nine yards...Tang En continued to curse within.

