

## Champions 311

### Chapter 311: When the Dust Settled Part 1

Despite the fact that Nottingham Forest defeating Manchester United was not considered an upset, the media still expressed some surprise at the result. The general view had been that the Forest team would fall behind under the attacks by the four powerhouse teams. They had not expected them to win against Manchester United instead.

For Twain, the news from the Maine Road stadium was equally as good as they had beaten Manchester United at their home ground. After they squashed Liverpool, Manchester City also leveled Everton. In this way, despite the fact that the 33rd round of the game had not been played, the Forest team completed its reversal to surpass Everton. With fifty-six points they advanced to fourth place, above Everton with its fifty-five points.

In March of this year, Kevin Keegan, who had been unable to lead Manchester City, was dismissed. His successor was the then assistant manager, Stuart Pearce. He became the acting manager of Manchester City as the club continued to look for a new manager. But while they searched, they realized that the right person for the club was right in front of them; Pearce was Manchester City's best manager. It was not necessary to search externally.

Manchester City scored 15 points in eight games under his leadership, achieving Manchester City's best Premier League results in a decade. If everything went on without a hitch, Pearce would be April's best manager.

Led by him, the Manchester City team was revitalized. It was not surprising that they had been able to level two teams from Liverpool.

Pearce was previously trained in Nottingham Forest. Twain had no evidence that Pearce had deliberately helped the Forest team. After all, Manchester City also wanted to survive, as well as to work hard to qualify for a spot in the UEFA Champions League. But he still kept his gratitude to Pearce at the bottom of his heart. He would thank him in person when he had the opportunity to meet him in the future, whether he accepted it or not.

Arsenal tied with Chelsea in the away match. This result basically meant that unless there was a miracle, Chelsea already had the Premier League championship title in the bag for this season.

To end up in this state after such a brilliant start must have been quite upsetting for the Arsenal team. They desperately need a way to release tension like volcanoes.

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On April 23, the Forest team won against another opponent in the City Ground stadium after defeating Manchester United: Liverpool. Twain also put in a lot of effort for this game, even though he knew that Benítez might not put in his full effort. This was because Liverpool still needed to face the UEFA Champions League final. The Champions League final was obviously more important than the Premier League.

However, knowing that clearly did not mean that he would relax his requirements. Twain's tactics and lineup were exactly the same as they had been for their home victory over Manchester United.

As expected, Liverpool did not send out its main forces for this game, but only half of them. Benítez conserved his forces for the Champions League final.

The Liverpool players' hearts did not seem to be in the game either. Unsurprisingly, Twain took revenge for their devastating defeat at Anfield in the previous half of the season and won against the distracted Liverpool by 1:0.

At the end of the game, Twain, who benefited from the situation, shook hands with Benítez and even wished him well in the Champions League with a radiant expression.

"I think AC Milan may have underestimated you, Mr. Benítez. You have a great chance of winning the championship." He winked at Benítez.

Benítez did not understand what Twain meant, but still, he thanked him politely with a smile.

After seeing Benítez off, David Kerslake came up quickly and said to Twain, "Everton had a draw again."

Twain turned to look at Kerslake.

His assistant manager nodded. "I just heard from Goodison Park stadium. The game ended at 1:1. They tied with Birmingham City. They almost lost the game. Five minutes into the game, Heskey from Birmingham scored a goal. Duncan Ferguson from Everton only equalized the score at the 86th minute.

After listening to Kerslake, Twain shook his head. "That's too bad. If they had lost, I could have gotten a good night's sleep tonight. But this is quite good too, David. Moyes and Everton can't hold on any longer."

Kerslake gave a firm nod.

Twain was right. After the end of this match, they were still short one game. The Forest team had fifty-nine points and was ranked fourth. After consecutive draws, Everton scored fifty-six points and was ranked fifth. They had two points more than the sixth-ranked Liverpool, and three points less than the fourth-ranked Forest team. Even if they shared the same score as the Forest team, they would still be ranked below the Forest team because of the goal difference. As a result, these three points were not just a difference in the outcome of a game.

After fighting for a season and now being in the final hurdle, Everton was just one of the many who could not withstand the constant pressure.

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On April 26, in the 33rd round of the league tournament, the Forest team challenged Chelsea in an away match. This might be the chance for Everton. As long as the Forest team lost to Chelsea and Everton defeated Arsenal in its away game, they would achieve the same score and still have a chance to compete for a spot in the final three rounds. However, while it was possible for the Forest team to lose to Chelsea in the away game and the probability of it was not low, it was somewhat difficult for Everton, in its current state, to try to defeat Arsenal in the away game.

Tony Twain obviously knew that.

He did not expect to beat Chelsea, which was in a good shape. Besides, his team had beaten Mourinho at their home game in the previous half of the season. The manager certainly wanted to get them back when they returned to Stamford Bridge. Therefore, the aim of the Forest team in the game was not to win, but just to not concede any goals. To compete on patience with Chelsea, Twain was not afraid that they would not score any goals and was also not afraid of a draw. He wanted a draw. By the time Chelsea was worn down and became irritated by his rogue tactics, this game would be a cinch.

What about Mourinho? Perhaps he would feel that he earned it if he tied with Arsenal at a home game. But he would not be happy if the home game was a draw with Nottingham Forest.

It was Twain's principle to enjoy doing things that were not to his opponents' liking. He was not a nice person who would be thoughtful of his opponents.

In this away game, the Forest team played more conservatively than Chelsea had played against Arsenal in the previous match, which was to concentrate the players in its own half of the field. Twain's purpose was very clear: holding on to one point.

Chelsea naturally was unwilling to let go of this opportunity to settle the score. Right from the beginning of the game, they continuously launched attacks on the Forest team's interior. The Forest team used Wood's extensive running and tough physique to disrupt Chelsea's midfield arrangement.

Chelsea's ace, Robben, was the type of player who needed space to sprint and make all kinds of feints. And the aim of the Forest team's concentrated forces in its backfield was to restrict such space for Robben and Duff. Without space, the threats that Robben and Duff posed would be minimized to the lowest level. They could not break through in both flanks and face intensive defense in the middle. Under such circumstances, they would require not only strength but also a lot of luck if they want to score goals.

Unfortunately, luck was not on Chelsea's side that day.

The score displayed on the big screen at Stamford Bridge had not changed since the start of the game: it was still 0:0.

## **Chapter 312: When the Dust Settled Part 2**

When the game was over, Chelsea's fans were in an okay mood. The players thanked the fans for their support on the field. They were getting closer and closer to the league title. There were only rounds thirty-six, thirty-seven, and thirty-eight left league; Chelsea was now ahead of Arsenal, which was short a game, by eleven points. They had essentially locked in the league title. If Abramovich wanted to, he could have handed out the championship bonuses to his players that evening.

Only the team manager, Mourinho, was sullen. He pursed his lips and left without even shaking hands with Twain. Twain looked at Mourinho's back and smiled mischievously. He was not annoyed at Mourinho's ungraciousness because he could fully understand the Portuguese man's mood. He had lost to a person whom he did not want to lose to; a draw was considered a loss for Mourinho. If he had been able to come up with a smile and shake hands with him, he would not have been Mourinho.

The Chelsea players were happy because they had the league championship title in the bag. This would be the second Premier League title in the history for the Chelsea Football Club and also the first in fifty years.

Twain was in a good mood because the Forest team, which had played one more game, had already widened its gap with Everton by four points. Even if Everton unexpectedly beat Arsenal in the away game, they would still be one point behind the Forest team. Provided that the Forest team did not make any mistakes in the next three rounds, they would be eligible for the Champions League next season.

He knew clearly that ever since Everton had tied the game with Manchester City in the away game, the goal that Everton had worked hard to hold on to the entire season had begun to crumble. Moyes always used the Champions League qualification to encourage his men. Now that they were overtaken by the Forest team, suddenly there was a sense of exhaustion. What had they gotten after trying so hard? Nothing.

No team was afraid of conceding a goal. They feared to feel at a loss after the loss of their target. A minor version of it would be a game, but it could be as major as a season. A team must have a goal so that the coaching team and players could have a direction for their efforts. And Everton's current situation was that they were gradually losing their goal.

What was the point of striving so hard to continue their fight when the qualification for the Champions League had been granted to others?

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On April 30, Nottingham Forest challenged Arsenal in an away game. Although the Premier League title was almost certainly Chelsea's, Arsenal had not given up their quest for victory in the tournament because they were now only four points ahead of Manchester United, who was in third place. Wenger did not feel secure with only a four-point gap in the final three rounds.

He wanted to win, and Twain did not want to lose.

However, after continuous battles with many strong teams and a tight schedule on top of that, the Forest team was finally overcome and lost by 0:2 to Arsenal in the away game. Initially, they only conceded one goal; but in the last moments of the game, the Forest players were sluggish. Only Wood could still run, but he could not do much on his own. Arsenal seized the chance due to the Forest players' exhaustion. At the 90th minute, the Brazilian midfielder Edu Gaspar scored a goal that completely sealed their victory.

After the game, Wenger was in good spirits. He shook Twain's hand and chatted with him for a few moments. This time, he asked about Mikel Arteta and Ribéry. Twain knew what the Frenchman had in mind.

"Arsène, would you like me to repeat my answer for the Chelsea Football Club?" Twain was referring to his response to the rumor that Chelsea wanted to buy Wood.

Wenger knew, and he smiled. "Well, I admire your judgment. But since you're not willing to sell to Arsenal, don't sell to Manchester United either."

Upon hearing the Frenchman, Twain burst into laughter. Wenger said goodbye to him while he laughed and turned to leave.

"I won't sell to anyone," he said in his heart after laughing.

Next to him, Kerslake's attention was caught by Twain's laughter. He asked in puzzlement, "Are you still so happy even though we lost?"

Twain smiled and nodded. "You should try it too. Smile."

Kerslake forced a smile but did not mean to laugh.

"There are still two rounds left in the league, and we've lost. We still have no idea about the outcome of the Everton game. They started half a match later than us. At this point, there's more need for us to smile, not to put pressure on the players. They've done very well. They won against Manchester United and Liverpool and tied with Chelsea. It's ok to lose one game. It's just a matter of adjusting our mindsets. I think the players are in good spirits, so let's not scare them with a straight face."

After he heard Twain's explanation, Kerslake smiled somewhat embarrassedly.

On the bus from London back to Nottingham, Twain thought about asking the driver to turn on the radio and tune into the channel that was broadcasting the Everton game so that everyone could listen. He knew that the players were also concerned about that game.

When they heard the game, it was already the second half. When the commentator reported the score, everyone cheered inside the bus. Everton was trailing behind Fulham by 0:2.

In the 76th minute, the Fulham's main midfielder, Papa Bouba Diop, was sent off by a red card; the Forest players were worried that Everton, with its advantage in numbers, would completely reverse the situation. It was not until the end of the game that Everton, dominant in numbers, showed the slightest intention of trying to equalize the score.

Cheers and whistles rang inside the bus. They knew that this score meant that the Forest team now maintained a four-point advantage over Everton.

Twain turned to look at Kerslake sitting next to him. Like the players, he laughed happily.

"Tony! Do you know how I'm feeling now?" he asked.

Twain nodded, "Of course I know."

"The UEFA Champions League... Just the thought of it... I can't control my emotions. Since the Chief, the Forest team hasn't been able to enter the UEFA Champions League. In the 140-year history of Nottingham Forest, we're the second Forest team to enter the UEFA Champions League!"

"Hey, David. We aren't sure if we can enter the Champions League next season. Even if we can be in the Premier League's top four, we still have to play in the qualifying round and win to qualify so that we can properly enter the Champions League."

Kerslake interrupted Twain. "I believe you, Tony. I believe you can do it. So what if it's a qualifying round? Before this season, who would have thought that a newly promoted team could reach this level?"

The UEFA Europa League's round 16, fourth in the Premier League, and a UEFA Champions League qualifier! No one thought we could, but we did it." He clenched his fist and suddenly jumped to his feet. He shouted to the players in the compartment who were still cheering for Fulham. "Boys! Tony is worried that we won't even pass the UEFA Champions League qualifying round next season!"

The players were stunned at first. Then they whistled and booed their assistant manager. "Come on, coach! Today isn't April Fool's Day. Do you really believe that?"

Kerslake was not annoyed at all. He looked down at Twain, chuckling in his seat.

Twain stood up and cleared his voice, "I'll say, It's a little early for you boys to be happy. There are still two rounds left in the league. Everton still has three games to play and they're only four points behind us. All right," Twain waved his hand. "Don't give Everton a chance!"

### **Chapter 313: We Are Back Part 1**

They had gotten past the most excruciating part of the match schedule. Currently, Nottingham Forest had two rounds of matches remaining, against Charlton and Birmingham City in turn. If anyone thought the two matches were merely about going through the motions, they would be making a big mistake. While the Forest team was left with two rounds in the League, Everton still had three. The two teams had a difference of four points. If Forest were to lose both rounds with Everton winning all, Forest would still end up losing the qualification rights to the Champions League.

Tang En made sure to prevent falling into such an avoidable mistake. He reminded the players not to give Everton any opportunities, and not to underestimate their next two opponents.

On May 7, the Premier League's 37th round, Nottingham Forest challenged Charlton as an away team.

In the match, Forest appeared utterly unaffected by their loss to Arsenal in the previous away match. This was despite the match similarly being held in London with the same setting as an away match. In The Valley, Forest took down the match with a decisive win of 2:0. At the same time, on Everton's home grounds, Goodison Park, Moyes' team won a tough battle against Bolton Wanderers with a score of 3:2. In that way, they managed to keep the uncertainty alive.

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May 12. Forest Team had no scheduled match. Everton was to head to London to proceed with a rescheduled match against Arsenal.

The match would take place in the afternoon. As a result, Tang En decided to cancel double training for the day. After the end of morning training, he holed himself up at home with Dunn and prepared to watch the match.

Dunn noticed Tang En grabbing a can of cool beer from the fridge before the match. After seeing him place it on the table, he asked, "Do you need peanuts?"

Tang En was momentarily startled by Dunn's question. Then he laughed. "I'm used to it. When I'm watching football in the country, alcohol's my companion. It's a combustion aid for my inspiration."

Dunn turned back to the television, mumbling to himself, "You wouldn't say that if you were burnt silly by it..."

Tang En shrugged and stooped on the chair. "Hey, Dunn. What do you guess the result of the match would be?"

"I don't ever guess the scores or who the winner or loser will be before a match."

"Pfft. What a bore. Tell me about your situation at the Youth Team, then... Have you already been promoted to assistant manager?"

Dunn nodded in response but was unwilling to continue discussing the matter. He pointed at the screen and said, "The match has started."

The two stopped chatting and focused all their attention on the match.

After 20 minutes, Tang En downed the beer he was holding in a breath and let out a sigh. "I don't think there's any need to watch this further. This is how this match is going to go."

"It's only 2:0. Everton still has a chance," Dunn said, his gaze fixed resolutely on the screen.

Tang En shook his head and stood from the chair. "It's the end. It's the end for Everton. We've won. The qualification to enter the Champions League belongs to us now."

Hearing Tang En's words, Dunn looked back at him. "You're unhappy?"

"No, it's just... after achieving any goal, there's always a feeling of emptiness. Are you still watching? I'm going out for a walk."

Dunn nodded, indicating that he was going to continue. Tang En stuffed both his hands into his pockets and headed out.

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Even though there was still a round of League matches left, Tang En already regarded today as the end of the season. No matter how they performed in the final match, it would not affect their results.

Qualifying for the UEFA Champions League.

The Champions League; tyrants, glory, money, stars... Just two weeks earlier, the thought of any of that would have excited him. But now that it had turned into reality, he could not seem to muster up any excitement. Although no one would believe him, a feeling of "Oh, that's it," of the situation being a given, arose in Tang En's heart when he saw Everton being completely decimated by Arsenal in Highbury, losing two balls within just 20 minutes and showing signs of further losses.

When everything came together in an expected manner, the jubilation naturally lessened. In reading novels, comics, or watching movies, he always hoped for more dramatics, always more. However, when he himself was in the same position, it felt better to be in a safe position. Otherwise, his heart would not be able to withstand it.

Tang En touched his chest. It had already experienced countless moments of overexcitement. The work of a manager was said to be one with a high risk of heart attacks; that was doubtlessly the truth.

Experiencing instantaneous leaps between exhilarated highs and sorrowful lows was something common among managers.

Tang En, whose mind was brimming with a mess of thoughts, had unknowingly walked himself to a place with a familiar sign. Although he had no set destination, his legs had, out of habit, brought him to the front of the Forest Bar.

Ever since Forest had begun their spurt towards attaining the qualification to participate in the Champions League next season, he had not stepped foot into this bar. Standing outside it now, he could hear the din coming from within.

“Brilliant job! Arsenal!”

“Another one! Score another one!”

The group of people was watching the match too. Hearing such yells, Tang En laughed to himself. Although it was not Forest’s match they were watching, this match would end up deciding if Forest’s goal for the next season would be the Europa League or the Champions League. The fans’ attention to the match was, in fact, the same as the attention given to their own team.

Tang En stood at the door of the bar. He felt a little thirsty and was attracted by the fragrance of the spirits emanating from the gap in the doors. As his hands landed on the door handle, hesitation overtook him and he gave up on the idea of entering.

At that point, he did not want to become surrounded by people bombarding him with questions about how he planned to play in the next season.

He wanted to sit alone somewhere, quietly.

Glancing back at the noisy bar behind him, he donned his sunglasses and turned around. He had thought of a place he should visit.

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On the green field next to the small forest, a group of children was happily playing football. Within the cemetery, however, it was still as quiet as ever.

The headstone had a layer of dust accumulated on it. Tang En had almost forgotten the place, forgotten this corner of his heart. Today, he returned. He took out some tissues and wiped away the dust on the headstone. Kneeling, he blankly stared at the words carved on the stone.

The person lying there was the beloved son of Michael Bernard and Fiona Bernard; Nottingham Forest’s most loyal fan; George Wood’s eternal supporter. Gavin Bernard.

Each time he attained success, Tang En would have thoughts of Gavin, wondering what his expression would be if he saw Forest with such remarkable results.

Hey, Gavin. Back when you declared yourself George Wood’s loyal fan outside the Youth Training Grounds, did you ever think he would become as famous as he is now? He’s a football star now. Not just a football player, a football star. A celebrity. His first signature must be incredibly valuable now...



Tang En sat down and leaned back on the headstone. He looked up, gazing at the blue skies through the lush green leaves.

If Gavin was still here, if Michael and everyone else was; just like when he had first arrived in Nottingham, would he feel a greater sense of achievement today?

What damn nonsense are you sprouting, Mr. Tony? Of course, we'll like victory. We even like returning to the Premier League after this season, and most of all, we like becoming next season's champions of the Premier League! The season after the next, we'll be the Kings of Europe!

Although it's a little late, we have not strayed from our path. Michael, can you really get used to your days without football?

Manager Tony Twain, are you intending on becoming the headlines for The Sun for terrorizing children?

That's why I admire him, because he defeated me! I have decided to become his fan!

Sign for him. George, he's your first fan. You can't treat him so coldly. Kneel and give him your signature!

Even if I have no money to buy a new jersey, I won't sell it off!

Knocking over an innocent child and then stepping over his body... this is the honor you speak of? This is your godd\*\*n honor?! Do you think you are great? Do you think you are the hero of this team? You... you bastards!

Like a movie, scenes of the past resurfaced before Tang En's eyes, replaying themselves against the backdrop of the sky.

From January 2003 to May 2005, the period of two and a half years passed by in a blink. Him... Tang En or Tony Twain had completed the transition from an average football fan who had somehow transmigrated here into a professional football manager. But, of those who had walked with him on his journey... how many were left?

Michael was gone, Gavin was gone, Walker and Bowyer were all gone. Even "Boss" was gone... And those footballers, the ones he had encouraged, severely scolded, and those he fought shoulder-to-shoulder with. The Forest of today was completely different from the Forest team of two and a half years ago. Like an iron-casted barracks, its soldiers came and went.

A ringing tune sounded from his pocket, scattering the images before him into the wind. Tang En took out his cell phone and pressed on the button to receive the call.

"Uncle Tony!" Shania's happy voice drifted into Tang En's ears.

"Shania?" Tang En asked, surprised.

"Congratulations, Uncle Tony!"

"Congratulations? What are you congratulating me for?" Tang En's mind had yet to catch up, still trying to process the surprise from Shania's abrupt call.

"Didn't Forest Team qualify to participate in next season's UEFA Champions League? Arsenal has just defeated Everton... Guess what the score was?"

“It’s over?” Tang En dipped his head to look at his watch. “I can’t guess.”

“7:0! Isn’t that amazing?”

“Wow, that’s incredible!”

In truth, Tang En was not at all surprised. He understood this to be a normal result. The difference between Arsenal’s and Everton’s abilities was not as simplistic as ranking second and fifth in the League. Just 11 minutes into the match, Arsenal had already gotten two goals. Tang En immediately knew it would not be of any surprise if the score turned out this high. He had noticed Everton’s players beginning to lose their direction and focus. With their broken dreams of attaining the Champions League, perhaps the Europa League was also a good option. In the previous season, Everton could not even participate in the UEFA Europa League.

To have lost their fighting spirit and goal, what else would there be to watch for this match? That was why Tang En chose to leave so early.

But to keep Shania from being disappointed, he pretended to be surprised. As expected, her laughter drifted in from the other end.

## **Chapter 314: We Are Back Part 2**

Tang En suddenly recalled. “What are you up to, Shania? I remember that you’re to model for some show?”

“I’m done. I heard people chattering about the match backstage, so I thought I’d call you.”

“Is it fun modeling?”

“No, not really... It’s not as fun as being with you, Uncle Tony. Where are we going over the summer?”

Tang En scratched his head. This girl. “Don’t you still have to attend shows? I thought models were extremely busy people?”

Shania giggled. “No need! I’m not a supermodel, I’m not that busy. We can take the summer off! Where to, where to, Uncle Tony? Where are we going?” she asked eagerly.

Tang En rolled his eyes. He still could not make the connection between the cold-faced model Shania and this mischievous, fun-seeking child.

“Uh, I don’t have any ideas...”

“How about this? Let’s go to Brazil! I’ll bring you to my hometown!” Shania excitedly announced the plan.

Hearing the place “Brazil”, Tang En’s heart skipped a beat... a stray thought abruptly emerged:

Meeting the parents...

The thought had only just emerged, but Tang En was already shaking his head vigorously, wanting to hurl the idea away all the way to Java.

“You don’t like the idea?” Shania did not hear any reply from Tony and thought that he was not that keen on Brazil.

“Un, no... no. I like it very much. I like Brazil...” Tang En replied hurriedly, ditching that absurd thought of his. He truly thought going to Brazil was a rather good idea. The place had produced numerous geniuses, geniuses who remained undiscovered. He could go there for a look and see if he could find a talent or two that were yet to be snatched by Europe.

While Shania was full of thoughts of sunny beaches and seaside strolls, Tang En was thinking of Brazil’s football scene abounding with talent...

“Then, it’s a deal! It’s my turn to go on-stage now. See you, Uncle Tony!”

“See you, Shania...”

After hanging up, Tang En’s somewhat depressive mood took a turn for the better.

Blue skies and green trees.

Beyond the trees, distant laughter could be heard from the children. Maybe they had scored again.

Tang En patted the headstone behind him as if ruffling Gavin’s head.

He stood up.

Champions League, here I come!

He waved his fist in the air.

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The rescheduled match of the 33rd round had just ended. Everton had challenged Arsenal as an away team and was massacred. The end score was 7:0. The 8th minute, 11th minute, 39th minute, 50th minute, 70th minute, 75th minute, and 85th minute; Arsenal scored one goal after another. Pirès scored twice, while Robin van Persie, Vieira, Edu, Bergkamp, and Mathieu Flamini each scored once. Since Chelsea had already won the Championship, Arsenal, who failed, had vented all their anger on this match. Poor Everton became their punching bag.

After the match, Moyes did not appear as down-cast as people had expected him to be. Instead, he seemed to have cast off the heavy burden in his heart. He knew that the qualification for the Champions Cup had disappeared and would not be coming back again.

Their loss to Arsenal forced him and his team to painfully accept the result. While it was hard on them, they could only accept it unwillingly. After all, football did not revolve around this match or this season alone.

Two years ago, he was still sympathizing with Tony Twain. He did not expect their roles to reverse, leaving him being sympathized. The future is truly unpredictable.

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Three days after was May 15. It was the final round of the English Premier League 04-05 season. Other than some uncertainties about which three teams would be staying in the league or getting relegated, it was certain that the Championship belonged to Chelsea. Other than that, the four teams who had acquired the qualification to enter the Champions League next season were also already locked-in. With one more match left, Nottingham Forest, who was fourth in the rankings, led Everton by four points. There was no way for Everton to come back from this.

On the other hand, the qualification for the UEFA Europa League was still filled with possibilities. Everton, with 61 points, had only a two-point difference from Liverpool. Meanwhile, Bolton Wanderers, in 7th place, had the same number of points as Middlesbrough, who was ranked 8th. Both were a mere point away from Liverpool.

Any one of them could drop out.

All this mess had nothing to do with Tang En. In the final round of the League, he sent out the entire reserve line-up, allowing those who did not usually get fielded to enjoy the cheers of the fans. Bendtner and Crouch, Kris Commons, Aaron Lennon, Gunnarsson, Wes Morgan, Piqué, and George Johnson ... Among them, George Wood still held tightly to his position as one of the starting players of the eleven.

Tang En did not care about the result of this match. In fact, he told the players before the match to play as they liked and to showcase themselves as much as possible.

He was not afraid to lose. Even if they lost 0:100, they would not lose their qualification to play in the Champions League.

Forest's fans also understood that the result of the match was meaningless. They had come to thank the team, the players, the manager; to thank them for the joy Forest had brought them throughout the season.

On such a relaxed note, both teams played the match in a carefree manner. Without any worries about relegation, and not having any desire for the UEFA Europa League, Birmingham City was happy to end the season in a laid-back manner.

Although the players from Forest were mostly made up of their reserves, they displayed an indomitable will and immense energy. Players from both teams dedicated a spectacular head-on clash to the fans. Neither side cared about their defense. Anyone who received the ball would only have one thought in their mind:

Forward! Towards the goal!

The final score of the match was 3:3. Forest shook hands with Birmingham City. Both teams and their fans were in a joyous mood.

When the match progressed to its injury stoppage time, Forest's entire team had already gathered by the sidelines. Even those who were not included in the player list were waiting there in casual clothing. They were waiting for the end of the match when they would all rush onto the field to celebrate. A grand occasion like this made it seem as if they were the Champions of the Premier League.

The live broadcast within City Ground suddenly sounded. A voice was commentating, one that had not been heard for a long while – it was the commentary from when Nottingham Forest had first become

the champions of the UEFA Champions League. It was from a time so long ago that the recording came with loud static. But every fan of Forest within City Ground knew what the voice was saying. "...Let us congratulate them, the new champions of the UEFA Champions League, Nottingham Forest! Congratulations and best wishes to them! Brian Clough has created history! Two seasons ago, this unknown team was still fighting in the Second Division. Today, they've become the European Champions, a well-deserved title..."

Ear-deafening cheers arose from within City Grounds.

Like the tides, the voice from 27 years before gradually receded amidst the fan's cheering, and a new voice rang out, "A year ago, we were still in First Division. Today, we have acquired the qualification to participate in the UEFA Champions League! Champions League, we are back! Nottingham Forest is back!"

"We're back! Nottingham Forest is back!!" A cacophony of shouts resounded in the air-space of the stadium.

Among these voices, the main referee blasted the whistle signaling the end of the match. The players amassed at Forest's substitutes' bench rushed onto the field in a drove. Waving their arms wildly, they dashed towards the other 11 players on the field.

Tang En had been standing at the back when he abruptly felt his body tilt – he was lifted by someone.

Before him were the exhilarated faces of Forest's players, and looking beyond, towards the spectators' stand, there were thousands of hands swaying along. Over there, he saw Michael, he saw Gavin, he saw Walker, Bowyer, and even the Boss...

He smiled.

### **Chapter 315: A Sunny Holiday Part 1**

Speaking of Brazil, the first thing that Tang En thought of was football. The second thing was still football. When it came to Rio de Janeiro, it still reminded Tang En of football. He was a football fan at heart; football was everything in Brazil. Brazil was football; the two equaled each other.

But when he came to Rio de Janeiro, his eyes were not drawn to football, but to its exotic atmosphere, which was different from Britain and China.

He was no stranger to football. Football was his job every day. In Brazil, he suddenly turned a blind eye to the kids who played football in the streets.

The sunny beaches, tropical weather, passionate and bold bikini beauties, and the palm trees swaying in the sea breeze. The sounds of the distant tide and rippling blue waves were in his ears.

"Too bad it's not February, or else you wouldn't be able to turn your eyes away." Next to him, Shania piped up suddenly.

"February? Why February?" Twain was puzzled.

“Because of the Rio Carnival; the world-famous carnival in Rio de Janeiro-” Shania dragged out her voice.

Twain turned to look at Shania. The young girl was looking less and less like a child. Of course, now that they were both in Rio de Janeiro’s most famous Copacabana beach, there were people everywhere on the white-silvery beach. It was exceptionally lively.

Twain stared at Shania for a while until Shania seemed somewhat self-conscious. Then he chuckled as he turned his head back. “I’m not interested in that.” He said as he laid down, “Everyone squeezed together, there’s nothing to look at. But Brazil is really a good place to be.” He opened his eyes to look at the clear blue sky and white clouds. It was basically impossible to see such a sky in the United Kingdom.

Next to him, Shania hummed gently.

“What do you think of my mother and father?” She turned to Twain and asked.

“Better than I’d imagined...” Twain continued to look up. He could not get enough of the sapphire sky.

“Huh? What’d you imagine?” Shania was very curious. Twain had never told her his impression of her parents.

Twain’s gaze remained unchanged, but yesterday’s scene appeared in front of his eyes.

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He and Shania arrived in Brazil the previous day. They had just arrived at the airport when Shania’s father was already outside of the airport, waiting with his car.

Shania’s father was as polite as he was when they had first met. And Shania’s mother was a lot nicer than when they had first met. Her manner was very consistent with the image of the wealthy middle class. There was always a smile on her face, and it made Twain feel a little less unfamiliar. Perhaps he was so accustomed to Shania’s sassiness that he was not used to a somewhat formal meeting all of a sudden.

Not knowing why, Twain was easygoing with Shania during their chats, but when he was speaking with Shania’s parents, his back would involuntarily straighten, his speech would become slower, and his tone would be even. No one asked him to do that, and Shania did not give him a fair warning in advance about how to talk to her parents. It was all his subconscious behavior.

That discovery made him a little annoyed, but he could not show it. He did not want to leave a bad impression in the minds of Shania’s parents.

They treated him like a distant visitor and took great care of him. There was nothing to complain about. Both of them worked and were very busy. So, they let Shania take care of him in Brazil and accompany him on the sightseeing. They arranged the schedule and activities on their own without the two parents’ involvement. From this point of view, they seemed quite at ease about Twain.

Early this morning, when Twain had woken up from his sleep after he got used to the time difference, he found that Shania had already made breakfast.

While having their breakfast, Shania asked Twain where he wanted to go. Twain was not familiar with Brazil, so he naturally could not say. Then Shania decided to go to Rio de Janeiro's most famous beach, and the world's most famous beach: Copacabana Beach.

This place was the first stop for nearly all visitors to Rio de Janeiro. Shania also had a little selfish motive of her own: she really wanted to go to the beach to sunbathe. In Britain, it was impossible to see such a beach in the cold, damp Newcastle.

Twain had no objections. Either way, as a coach, he was still in good shape. He was not afraid to wear his swim trunks on the beach.

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"Anyway... Your parents are more easy-going than I thought." Twain said.

"Is it because of that time when my parents went to England to fetch me that you have that impression?" Shania giggled.

"How can you still laugh about that?" Twain glared at her, "It was on you. You made a fool out of me."

His remarks made Shania giggle even more. Her feet tapped on the fine sand with her head lowered and her shoulders trembled in laughter.

Twain cleared his throat. Finally, when Shania's laughter subsided, she flipped her messy hair and smiled as she glanced at Twain. "Sometimes I think you're just too cute."

Twain huffed and reached his hand out towards Shania's underarm. "I'm going to tickle you for being so cheeky."

Shania pulled her arm away, but Twain did not give up and extended to her other side. This time, Shania could only lean towards Twain to dodge the attack from the other side. Twain seized the opportunity to move forward and blocked Shania's escape route. At this point, Shania could withdraw within his arms as she giggled and begged for mercy.

"Spare me, Tony. Uncle Tony!"

Shania laid on the beach and Twain propped himself up with both hands. Shania's face was flushed from Twain's tickling. Her breathing was ragged as she laid weakly on her back, breathing heavily. Her bellybutton was like a tiny mouth opening and closing with her breathing.

The two of them suddenly became quiet. Shania's smile froze on her face, and Twain's hands were motionless. They could hear the laughter of the young and gorgeous people around them, accompanied by the sound of the crashing waves.

He suddenly snapped out of it and turned his body over to lie down. He was afraid to look at Shania lying beside him. He could hear her timid voice, "Uncle Tony..."

When her voice reached Twain's ears, he could feel the fine hair in his ear tickled by a warm breath. It was ticklish and tingling. His heart trembled as his gaze turned to the distance and became unfocused without a focal point. He just wanted to keep his attention away from his side for the moment.

“The weather is so nice. Much better here than in England.” He gave a cough.

“Well, actually, I don’t like England at all!” Shania sat up. Her voice regained its vitality again.

“Then why did you go there to be a model? If you wanted to be a model, wouldn’t you be able to do it in Brazil? Modeling isn’t football; the world’s center isn’t in England.”

Behind him, Shania was silent for a moment, and then she softly said, “The English weather and food are very bad, but it is not all bad.”

“A place like England, you’ll get used after living there for a long time. I just thought of a joke about the weather. Do you want to hear it?”

“Yes, I want to. Let’s hear it!” Shania was always very interested in fun stuff like jokes.

“Well, it’s actually not really a joke. This really happened. It is said that somewhere in England, there’s a magical stone which can automatically forecast the weather, and it’s very accurate!”

Twain successfully piqued Shania’s interest with his words. She frowned and asked, “Is that possible? Can a stone really predict the weather?”

“Of course, it can. It goes like this... The magical stone is tied to a rope and hangs in mid-air. Behind the stone, a sign reads: Gary’s weather forecast stone. You’ll know exactly what the weather will be if you compare what he has written down line by line. It says, ‘If the stone is wet, it’s raining. If the stone is dry, it’s not raining. If the stone casts a shadow on the ground, the sun is out. If the top of the stone is covered in white, it’s snowing...”

Shania began to laugh when she heard up to that point. Her laughter started softly and became louder as her shoulders shook.

Twain was still talking about the stone with a serious tone of a weatherman, “If the stone cannot be seen, it means there’s fog. If the stone is swaying, it’s windy. If the stone is shaking up and down, that means an earthquake. If the stone disappears, there is a tornado!” He made an exaggerated expression with his hands waving like a gust of wind was blowing.

Shania sat on the ground and thumped the ground with her hands.

Twain looked at the happy Shania. He reached out to brush the fine white sand off her long hair and then used his hand to gently comb her hair. He carefully gathered and combed the scattered and messy strands of her dark hair.

Shania’s laughter gradually subsided. She buried her head between her arms, “Uncle Tony...”

“Yes?”

“I’m so happy to be with you...”

“Okay.”

“So, thank you.”

“There’s no need to thank me. I should thank you instead. Without you, my life would be boring.”



## Chapter 316: A Sunny Holiday Part 2

Shania giggled and turned to sit up.

Twain got up and adopted a posture of inviting Shania to take his hand by reaching out. Shania was also very ladylike when she held out her hand for Twain to hold. "Are we going to dance, sir?"

"Oh no, just taking a stroll, my lady. As for dancing..." Twain grinned. "I'm afraid I'll step on your feet."

"Even the blind lieutenant colonel could dance the tango well!"

"Who was that?"

"The leading man in Scent of a Woman. Have you have not watched it, Uncle Tony?"

Twain recalled a Hollywood film called Scent of a Woman in which the film's star, Al Pacino, portrayed a blind lieutenant colonel. This role won him the 1993 Academy Award for Best Actor. The scene where Pacino held a beautiful young lady to dance the tango in the hotel was a classic among the classics.

He scratched his head. "Of course I've seen it. But I can't be compared to Al Pacino."

"But you look a little alike!"

"An older man version of him?" Twain rolled his eyes.

Shania smiled and ran away.

"Let's race, Uncle Tony!" She stood in front and waved.

Twain looked around the strolling crowd and cleared his throat. "That's silly."

"Uncle Tony..." Shania looked at him and Twain put his hands up in surrender.

"All right, it's good to exercise occasionally... Wait till I catch you, you gonna pay for this!" Twain suddenly dashed. He wanted to catch Shania unawares. But, he forgot he was on the beach. He could not exert much force on the soft sand. It was completely different from running on the firm ground. He immediately lost his balance and fell forward to the ground. He even ate a mouthful of sand and laid on the ground, coughing non-stop.

Shania was in stitches. Unlike Twain, Shania grew up in Brazil and played on the beach. She had a natural instinct for how to run on sand. Twain got up from the ground and continued to stumble after her. She skipped ahead like a small rabbit and even had enough spare energy to stop and tease him.

The young girl ran easily ahead and turned back to laugh from time to time, while the middle-aged man struggled to follow with his hands and feet at the back. It was a sorry sight. This was somewhat of an odd scene on the beach, which attracted many people's attention. But Twain did not care. He did not feel like his actions would look stupid. It was enough that Shania was happy.

Tired of running, Twain sat on the beach. Even as the sea water rushed up to dampen his swim trunks, he just waved his hands weakly. "No, I'm not running anymore. I'm exhausted!"

Shania turned back with a grin and sat with Twain in the sea water. "Uncle Tony can't get up."

"Hey, to say a man can't get up is the biggest insult to him!" Twain replied as he gasped for air.

"Why?" Shania was puzzled.

Twain had responded with a joke that had a Chinese undertone that foreigners might not understand. He could only beat around the bush to explain "That means a man can't..."

That explanation was worse than no explanation. Shania was more confused.

"Can't do it means can't ...um, it means a man is..." Twain said in a low voice.

Shania cocked her ear as she heard him. She covered her mouth and pretended to be shocked as she exclaimed, "That's not decent!"

Twain was a little embarrassed and suddenly gave a sharp cough to hint that they should stop discussing the subject. He quickly found something to distract him. There was a large crowd in front of them and they were shouting strenuously.

"What is going on?" He pointed ahead and asked Shania beside him.

Shania glanced at it. "Beach football." She knew that Twain's addiction to football had reared its head again.

And sure enough, Twain got up and walked unsteadily towards the crowd, "Let's take a look."

Shania just pouted as she followed. She suddenly felt a little bit jealous of football.

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Ahead of him was a beach football game that could be seen everywhere in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro. There was no referee and no commercial sponsorship. It was just three or five good friends arranging to play with several other people in an open space on the sand. They would use clothes or shoes to create the goal and start the game with a football.

This scene was common in the feature clip which introduced Twain to Brazilian football. This was a special feature of Brazilian football, or it could be said to be a flair of Brazilian football. Playing football in the soft sand for a long time helped to enhance the player's physical flexibility and balance, as well as his explosive force. The famous star players in Brazilian professional football were often good at beach football. And here, regardless of whether they were men or women, the skills that they displayed amazed Twain.

The players who participated in this match had no distinction of age, gender, or occupation. Children, women, and old people could all play. Anyone here could basically put the Forest team to shame with their footwork.

When Twain squeezed in, a game was already over. The losers would step off and the new team on the sidelines would step up to challenge the winners. It was quite like a single-elimination tournament, where the winner stayed on till defeated.

Although Twain's football skill was lousy, he liked to watch people play. This was not an occupational hazard as a coach, but his hobby as an ordinary Chinese football fan before he had transmigrated to England. He critiqued others in his mind as he watched people play football. Why did he keep his comments to himself? Because he was afraid that it might cause a dispute if he said them aloud. He was always harsh.

Among the five new players, a tall young man caught Twain's interest. He focused all his attention on the man because he felt that the person looked familiar. But he could not recall who the man was.

He could only stand on the sidelines and observe the person's every movement in the game.

After playing for ten minutes, Twain suddenly smacked his forehead. He remembered!

Kepler Laveran de Lima Ferreira!

If anyone thought that that long and complicated name sounded too unfamiliar and had never heard of it, then he had another name which would be familiar to all gamers who had played FM 2007 before.

Pepe.

### **Chapter 317: Pepe Part 1**

Kepler Laveran de Lima Ferreira, or the youth named Pepe, stood apart from the crowd, peering somewhat strangely at the man and woman before him. The girl was tall and beautiful. The man claimed to be the manager of an English Premier League Club... Pepe found him unfamiliar. Was he truly the manager of Nottingham Forest?

Pepe's match before had ended in victory. Just when he was about to welcome the next team of challengers, the man before him approached with his name card.

Following that, Pepe casually found a substitute to take his place and headed out to have a detailed discussion with the man.

A manager from a professional football club from Europe had come looking for a professional player; what else could it be? Not everything had to be spelled out so clearly; Pepe already knew what to expect.

"Mr. Tony..."

Tang En signaled to him to wait, pointing to a row of umbrellas on the beach. "Let's take a seat there to talk," He said.

After the three sat down, they asked for three glasses of juice from the waiter who came over.

Meanwhile, Tang En took this time to think about Pepe's current situation.

As a loyal FM series player, it was impossible for Tang En to be unaware of the center back with the greatest body values in FM07 – Pepe. Whenever he had met with a formidable player in the game, Tang En had had the habit of conducting research online to uncover all the relevant information on the

player. From this, he would gain a better understanding of them. Thereafter, when he returned to play the game, there was also a greater sense of immersion.

As a result, when Pepe was still undiscovered by the world, it had seemed as if Tang En had already known him for a very long time within the world of FM07. He knew about his work history, his past in FC Porto, and even the name of the first club he had played in when he had first arrived in Continental Europe. Naturally, Tang En was also aware that it was currently a low period for Pepe.

The waiter served the three glasses of fruit juice and left. Shania took the straw and drank her juice quietly. She had no interest in the conversation between the two men and could only gaze afar, watching the people and admiring the scenery.

"I'm not one to make small talk," Tang En said, looking at Pepe. "Nottingham Forest is qualified to participate in the Champions League next season. With Hierro retired, we're looking for a fullback who can replace him; and I think very highly of you, Pepe."

Pepe was stunned. Even though he had known that the man was probably looking for him to discuss exactly this, he had not expected him to be so straightforward.

Furthermore, a particular name had struck a chord with him.

"Hierro? Real Madrid's Hierro?"

Tang En laughed. "He's Nottingham Forest's now... Well, he used to be. But he's retired. Forest is looking for his successor. Do you understand, Pepe? I think you have many commonalities with Hierro."

Pepe's idol was Hierro. Tang En's words were very pleasing to Pepe.

"A tall and sturdy body with outstanding technique and burst power... You are very similar to Hierro in his younger days. The only thing you need to improve on is your ability to assist with long passes. In terms of attacking, Hierro is an expert."

Pepe frowned. He felt that Tang En had hit the nail on the head. "Uh. I'm a center back. I would often be behind the team. But..."

"You started out as a forward, right?" Tang En suddenly asked.

"Yes." Pepe nodded. "At first, I was a forward. Then I became a midfielder. As I played, I eventually became a fullback."

Tang En chortled. "Many Brazilian fullbacks come about this way." Sensing that Pepe could misunderstand and think of it as mockery, Tang En added with a smile, "Practically anyone who walked down that path turned out to be a brilliant defender. Lúcio, Cafu... I think that in the bones of Brazilian players must be some instinct to push forward; even if the position played was the goalkeeper. What makes you think a fullback has to stay at the back?"

"Of course, uh... it's because the coach requested it of us."

"In reality, if you take Hierro as your idol, you should learn how he launches attacks from the backfield. To be honest, as the manager, he has taught me many lessons through the year I worked with him in Forest."

Tang En naturally exaggerated some aspects of what he said. However, it was true that Hierro had given Tang En much help and inspiration in many areas. In the past, Tang En had believed that the center back should always stay behind. Other than participating in the attack when there was a place-kick in the front field, the center back should always prioritize safety. Exceptions could be made when the situation was particularly unfavorable; when it was necessary to implement desperate measures. In those situations, Tang En might allow the center back to advance forward and act more like a forward; in his first season with Forest, he used that tactic twice.

After Hierro's arrival in Forest, his body could no longer keep up as well. However, the awareness he displayed in grabbing hold of opportunities to boldly cut forward during training was something Tang En had learned much from. What is the effect of a center back, a position that everyone believes should stay docilely in the backfield, suddenly taking the ball and cutting forward during a match, or launching counterattacks with long passes?

The defense of the opponents would be thrown into chaos, allowing the attack to be further obscured, and subsequently increasing its chances of success. Additionally, functioning as a rear defender who could observe the situation from the back, it was much easier for them to utilize gaps. They would always be able to find gaps that got overlooked by the players on the frontline. Then, as long as he had a good grasp of his ability to long pass, his shots held the potential to become a buzzer beater.

Such an attack launched directly by the center back would save traveling over the midfield. Not only does it save time, but it also occurs so out of the blue that it becomes incredibly challenging to defend against.

During Hierro's prime in Real Madrid, it was not merely his ability in defense that sparked admiration; it was also his talent in attacking that benefited them. Before Raul, Hierro was the highest scorer representing Spain's National Team, despite his position of a center back. In that era, he was perhaps the greatest scorer among the center backs within the international soccer scene.

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The two men, Tang En and Pepe, sat before the breath-taking view of Copacabana beach and started chatting about how a center back should participate in the offense. They looked so utterly delighted chatting that they exuded a feeling of regret for not having known each other before.

Shania was bored. The straw in her mouth started making wheezing sounds as she sucked on air; she had finished her juice. She looked around for a waiter, but there were beginning to be more and more people coming to the area to rest, so she was unable to find one quickly. A glance at Tang En's glass got her attention. It was still full without even a sip taken!

She rolled her eyes and stretched her hand out to take the glass. Poking her straw into the glass, she sucked vengefully on the two straws with a loud slurp.

Her tremendously unladylike way of drinking the juice finally caught Tang En's attention.

He turned to look at Shania, who looked back innocently. Turning his gaze downward, he noticed the empty glass before him and grinned at Pepe. The other man indicated his understanding and returned the grin.

Both seemed to realize that the conversation was at its end. Pepe had yet to agree to the matter of transferring. Since Tang En's first brief mention of it at the beginning of their conversation, there was no other further segue into the topic.

"Well... I think I should... My friends are still waiting for me." Pepe arose, pointing at a few people a distance away. They were the players on his team earlier on.

Tang En nodded in understanding. Having such a delightful chat, he had almost forgotten his original aim of finding Pepe.

Just as he was standing to send him off, Pepe suddenly turned and asked, "How did you know Hierro was my idol? I don't remember having told you that, Mr. Twain."

Tang En knew that it was a problem caused by his pre-transmigration memory.

He could only use a rather unconvincing excuse to explain how he knew Pepe so well. He said, "Didn't you feel... that we were chatting as if we were old friends?"

Pepe cracked a smile at his reasoning and waved at him. "Goodbye, Mr. Tony. It's a pleasure to know you."

"Goodbye, Pepe. You too."

"Goodbye, my lady," Pepe said, not forgetting to bid farewell to Shania.

Shania had put on a look of disinterest as she listened to the men talk, peering at whatever was around. However, after noticing signs that their talk was about to end, Shania started listening in. Hearing Pepe's goodbyes, she stood up happily and waved. "Bye, Pepe!"

After sending Pepe back to his companions, Tang En turned back to Shania. He said nothing but looked at her, his face beaming. His smile was so bright, it could almost compare with the sunlight shining down on their heads.

Seeing his expression, Shania sighed. "If I had known, I would have suggested a vacation in America!"

Tang En knew it was his fault that he had neglected Shania. A man should not be afraid of making mistakes, but must still own up to them. So, he took the initiative of inviting Shania to dine together.

"I'm not hungry! I'm full enough from the juice!"

Looking at the two empty glasses and Shania's unhappy face, Tony also made a face as he sat down. "Then I'll drink with you." He waved his hand to call for a waiter, but Shania's hands shot out to block him.

"Fine, fine. If we drink any more, we're going to turn into fruits. I know a restaurant with delicious barbeque. It's your treat!"

Hearing Shania's words, Tang En's face lit up once more.

"Alright, don't be angry anymore, Shania. I promise to keep you company throughout our time in Brazil, so much that you get annoyed."

“No way!” Shania retorted, keeping half of her sentence to herself.

I would never...

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Tang En and Shania enjoyed their day in the bustling city of Rio de Janeiro, only returning home in the late night. Shania’s parents seemed unconcerned by her wild antics. Perhaps it was because Tang En was accompanying her, but they felt no need to worry. Or it might be because Shania was usually taken care of by an even sterner Auntie Ryan in England; they figured it was not a bad thing to allow Shania to relax during her vacation. After all, she was only a 15-year-old child. With both of them so busy with their jobs and other social events, Tang En’s “free nanny” services, accompanying Shania 24 hours a day, was something they were more than happy to have.

### **Chapter 318: Pepe Part 2**

When Tang En woke up the next day, it was still only Shania and him in the gigantic house. Same as the previous morning, Shania only woke Tang En up after making breakfast. She then sat at the table and watched him eat breakfast on his own.

Just as he finished his meal, an unknown call came in. Since the time he had brought Shania for a vacation in Spain, he had learned his lesson. Regardless of what time it was, his phone would be switched on; the entire 24 hours. He was not the same guy as before, a poor football fan from China. He could afford the roaming fee now.

The number was unfamiliar to Tang En. After staring at it for a while, his mind racking for possibilities, he still could not figure out who the number belonged to.

He took the call. Thick, Latin-accented English drifted into his ears from the other side.

“Good morning, Mr. Tony. It should already be morning in Brazil, right?”

“Ah... You’re right. It’s morning now. Good morning, Sir. You are...?”

“My apologies. I forgot to introduce myself. I am Jorge Mendes, Pepe’s agent,” the voice said unhurriedly.

Tang En was stunned to hear the name. As a football fan, it would not be surprising for that name to be unheard of. However, as the manager of a team, it would be a grievous mistake. Even with Nottingham Forest’s lack of interaction with Spaniard footballers, Tang En still knew of the man on the phone.

Almost all the managers of Europe’s powerhouses and their directors would have this person’s phone number somewhere among the numerous name cards on their tables; he was the most well-known professional agent in Spain. Furthermore, he was a football agent who held tremendous influence over Europe. He maintained good relationships with people such as Chelsea’s owner, Abramovich, and had feelers in every corner within Europe.

Jorge Mendes could be considered the godfather of professional agents in Spain. He acted as the proxy for famous managers and players, such as Mourinho, Cristiano Ronaldo, and others.

The man was a hot-shot among agents; naturally, his ability to scheme was among the best. He would need to be dealt with carefully. Tang En nodded at what was said, only realizing after that his actions were not visible to Mendes. He added, "I've heard of you, Mr. Mendes. I didn't expect Pepe to be one of the footballers you represented."

A hearty laugh sounded from the other side. "I'm afraid there aren't that many managers who have yet to hear my name. I've also heard of you, Mr. Twain. In the last two years, Nottingham Forest has been on the rise, skyrocketing upwards. I think you're likely to be the youngest manager in next season's Champions League. You met up with my player yesterday?"

"Oh, we met by chance. I am taking a vacation in Brazil. Coincidentally, Pepe is too. I've always thought he was in Spain..."

Mendes fell silent for a moment. "Pepe, he... he has met with some trouble over here in Spain, so I suggested that he to return to Brazil to unwind a little."

From his tone of voice and choice of words, it did not sound as if Pepe was a player under the current manager of FC Porto, Dutch Co Adriaanse. Rather, he sounded like one of the agent's subordinates. When his player got into trouble and needed help, his first thought was of him – the agent – and not the manager of the team he played for.

"Mr. Twain, what do you think of Pepe?"

"He's fantastic. Very good indeed. He has a style I can appreciate."

"Pepe called me yesterday and told me about your discussion. He mentioned that you seemed to know him very well, even better than Adriaanse."

Tang En knew that this was thanks to his pre-transmigration memory from 2007, but he could not possibly be honest. "Well... it's like this. I actually began noticing Pepe a long time ago."

Mendes laughed again. "What a coincidence. There's another person who has been interested in Pepe for a long time. In fact, FC Porto's choice to bring Pepe from Maritimo to Estádio do Dragão was on the strong recommendation from this person. Unfortunately, before Pepe joined, he had already left. Do you know to whom I'm referring, Mr. Twain?"

"Of course, Mr. Mendes. That person must be Mourinho, former manager of FC Porto."

"That's right! It's a pity. Currently, that man is unable to utilize Pepe well. Are you interested in hearing what Pepe said to me yesterday?"

"Certainly."

"He said that his conversation with you yesterday left a deep impression on him. When he was in FC Porto, Adriaanse would never speak with him in the same manner, to try to understand his way of thinking or to help Pepe understand his. He felt very good about it... I'll be honest with you, Mr. Twain. I feel that letting Pepe play under a manager who understands him is a rather good idea. Pepe is my player. There isn't a manager out there who would wish for his players to be a substitute, to sit on the cold bench and gradually depreciate in value. He's still young. I believe there is a lot of space for his value to appreciate. However, the current FC Porto is unable to create the conditions for him to do so."



Mendes had already made it out to be clear enough. He was evidently keen on letting Pepe join Forest. What now stood between them was the transaction between FC Porto and Forest.

Tang En felt jubilant on hearing that news. He had experience in this. He knew the backstory of what had transpired between Pepe and FC Porto.

In the next season of 05-06, due to the pressure of FC Porto's unseemly results, manager Adriaanse was forced to make changes to the formation of the team. He changed it to a 343 formation, which had greater offensive power. At that point, Pepe was able to become one of the main players. He became the best candidate for their third midfielder. However, that was something that had yet to take place. Even a godfather like Mendes could not predict the future. He did not know Adriaanse would have a change of attitude towards Pepe, nor did he know what level Pepe's future value would rise to. Even Tang En himself was unaware that Pepe would become the most expensive fullback in Europe's transfer market in the summer of 07; Tang En had already transmigrated before the opening of that summer transfer market.

But Tang En knew that Pepe was currently quite unhappy being in FC Porto. The club had designated him as the substitute for Pedro Emanuel, Jorge Costa, and Ricardo Costa. In the position of center back, he was only their fourth choice.

After meeting Pepe by chance yesterday, Tang En ran through, briefly in his mind, the experiences of this Brazilian defender in recent years. Although it was a chance meeting, the timing was perfect. Tang En did not wish to let go of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. He had an indelible impression of how capable Pepe was in the game. In real life, Pepe was not at all weak either. Didn't Forest Team lack a good center back? Give him a main position, trust, and freedom. Let him join Forest!

Piqué and Pepe were the two center backs with the most impressive physiques within the game. Just the thought of such a combination filled Tang En with excitement.

"Mr. Mendes, I believe Nottingham Forest would be able to create those conditions for your player. But I'm worried about FC Porto..."

"That, you don't have to worry about, Mr. Twain. If the player is willing, you're willing, and I'm willing, we can already begin discussing Pepe's transfer fee as well as his terms and conditions."

His words made Tang En vividly aware of Mendes' level of influence in Spain. The poor Dutch man, Adriaanse...

"What do you think about a transfer fee of four million Euros?" Mendes asked.

A year before, FC Porto had bought Pepe for a million. A year after, they got to earn three million. This transaction should be able to satisfy FC Porto. But the enthusiasm showed by Mendes unsettled Tang En, so he held back from replying.

The other man evidently knew what Tang En was thinking. He said with a laugh, "Ah. Earlier, I mentioned my having noticed Nottingham Forest. That's because your team's rise to fame is too rapid. In the future, I believe that more and more people will begin paying attention to your team. As for me... I just have slightly better foresight than they do. I'm sure you know, Mr. Tony. As an agent, such foresight is crucial."

It dawned on Tang En in an instant. By using Pepe, Mendes hoped to pull the relationship of Forest and Tang En closer to himself. All of it was because he looked well upon Forest's future. This was equivalent to making a risky investment. With how the European soccer scene was set, there was only that group of powerhouses and small-to-mid scale clubs. There would not be many changes. However, the rise of Forest heralded the potential of breaking that stalemate. Mendes had spotted exactly that potential, which led him to be so proactive in contacting Tang En. Despite his honeyed words earlier, the truth was that he held the cards to various football stars under his wing. What was a single Pepe worth? By going with the flow and doing Forest a favor, he could sweeten their relationship. Before making any future movements in the transfer market, wouldn't Forest still need to consult a financial shark such as him? Through this, he could gain control over the transfers of the Forest Team, reaping greater benefits for himself.

It was difficult to ascertain if that was right or wrong. Tang En knew that everyone hoped to benefit themselves. Perhaps he should even feel somewhat honored? After all, Spain's hot-shot agent had seen that Forest's potential would further develop. Regardless, Tang En's principle was not to look a gift horse in the mouth.

Regarding control over the club... If he has the ability, then let him try!

Tang En nodded his head. "I understand. Four million is a reasonable price. Mr. Mendes; regarding Pepe's terms, we could have a face-to-face discussion."

He looked at Shania, who was clearing the cutlery. "My apologies. I'm still on vacation in Brazil. When my vacation ends, I'll call you as soon as possible."

Mendes acknowledged his words, agreeing with a laugh. After saying their farewells, they put down their phones.

Tang En looked to Shania and asked with a smile, "Where are we going today, Shania?"

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If Mendes had also transmigrated, he would not have chosen to take the same actions as he did today. If he had known that Pepe would be able to fetch a price of thirty million Euros in just two years, he would certainly wallow in regret over what he did.

And if Tang En could have transmigrated just two months later, he would be over the moon for what he had earned. Four million in exchange for thirty million; what a haul!

### **Chapter 319: So Long, Brazil**

After he took care of the matter of Pepe, Twain felt completely settled. There were indeed many Brazilian football geniuses. However, Twain did not need to add new players in some positions. Not to mention, talents who had not been targeted by the European powerhouses getting a work permit for the Premier League was a huge issue.

After Kaka was snatched up by AC Milan, Manchester United was furious. They thought it was the bulls\*\*t work permit policy of the English Football Association that had caused Manchester United to

lose non-European Union geniuses like Kaka time and time again. Kaka's first season with AC Milan was a great success, and it had also sent shockwaves through the English Football Association. They realized that if they still clung onto this old mindset, perhaps they would be cast further aside by the global football world.

As a result, an "exceptional talent clause" specifically for those non-EU players was released.

This clause was meant to provide convenience for the Premier League clubs to compete with the Continental European clubs for those non-EU talents. When a club was interested in a non-EU player who had not yet played for a national team or his number of appearances had not reached the criterion, then the club could make use of this right to apply for a work permit for him. After the Football Association review, he would be able to represent the club's team. Whether or not this player was talented and qualified enough depended on the team's public relations standard.

That was a good clause. The only problem was that every club had only one spot per season.

The Football Association always wanted reform to align with the world, but could not take the leap. That quota vividly reflected its dithering and indecisive attitude.

But now, Twain did not need to consider those problems. The troubles were for the English Football Association. Now he just wanted to spend a wonderful holiday with Shania on the picturesque Brazilian beach.

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In the past, when Tang En was still in China, he probably had not seen so many bikini-clad girls in all his twenty-six years of life. They appeared in droves in front of Twain and then ran off, giggling. However, Twain was not like he had been when he had first arrived in Brazil. Now he was more composed.

Twain turned his head to look at Shania, who was happily eating her ice cream.

Last year, he had taken Shania back to his hometown. This year, Shania brought him back to her hometown. The two of them really did have an affinity.

Twain had not seen Pepe again over the past few days. Perhaps after he knew his future, he had returned to Portugal.

At the thought of being able to work with such a player, Twain had a sense of accomplishment. He had used to play FM, and had looked forward the most to the transfer period because he could recruit his favorite players. Now that he had become a real-life football manager, that pleasure was even more pronounced and intense.

Twain smiled at that thought.

Shania, who was still licking her ice cream, gave Twain an odd look. "Uncle Tony, what are you smirking about?"

Twain turned and glared at Shania, "How was that a smirk? It was a heartfelt smile!"

"Whatever you say." Shania shrugged. "Do you feel bored, Uncle Tony?"

Twain was a little surprised at Shania's question. "Bored? Why would I feel bored?"

"I'm always dragging you to places, and I don't let you do your favorite things. It must be boring to accompany a little girl like me."

Twain smiled. He turned to look at Shania and reach out to touch her head. But he suddenly thought that that action would be the same as treating her like a child. So, he pulled his hand back. "How can that be? Hanging out with you is my favorite thing."

Shania tilted her chin up to look at Twain, "Even more important than football?"

"The most important thing. Number one. Football is below you." Twain winked at her.

Shania smiled. "My father and mother would like to invite you to dinner this evening."

"Don't we already eat dinner together every day?" Twain found it a little strange.

"No, I mean to treat you. Not to have dinner at home. We're going to a restaurant."

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It was not a fancy restaurant where he would need a jacket to get in. Many of the customers who passed by Twain and the others walked in wearing short-sleeved shirts and shorts. Some even wore flip flops as if they had just returned from the Copacabana beach.

At night, Rio de Janeiro had another kind of atmosphere. During the day, it was like a passionate young girl, cheerful and lively, and the brilliant sunshine was like a smile on her face. At night, Rio was more like a mysterious girl in black, with every inch of her exuding a seductive sensuality. The glittering lights were like priceless jewels on a young woman.

Twain turned his gaze back from the window. Shania and her mother went to the restroom. Twain was left with Shania's father, Bruce Tenório, sitting at the table.

"Thank you so much for keeping Jordie company all this time. Her mother and I have too little time." Tenório seemed to be a courteous gentleman. Twain felt comfortable with him.

"It's nothing. I like being with Shania."

Tenório looked at Twain and said, "As her parents, this is also the first time we've seen her smile so much. She smiles every day, all the time. I'm not exaggerating. Whenever she was with us before, she would always have a straight face. We could never tell what was on her mind."

Twain nodded in understanding. Every parent was the same. More often than not, they did not understand their child. "Because of differences in perspective and ways of looking at issues, parents usually have a generational gap with their children."

Tenório smiled. "Mr. Twain..."

"Call me Tony, Mr. Tenório. That's too formal. We're not talking about business, are we?"

"In that case, call me Bruce."

The two men smiled at each other and accepted it.

“Well... Tony, you seem to know a lot about this. But are you still single now?”

“I don’t have children, but I used to be a child.”

This remark made Tenório go silent for a moment; he nodded thoughtfully.

“Bruce, did Shania tell you that she did not like to train as a model?” asked Twain.

Tenório shook his head. “She did not say, but we always knew. The resentment she showed during her modeling training, running away to England and meeting you. All these were done to show us. Her mother used to be a model, so she hoped Jordie could be a model too.”

Twain smiled and nodded to express his understanding. This problem existed all over the world. Parents always wanted their children to follow their planned path because they believed that their experience could prevent children from taking detours. But the children felt that their parents interfered with their freedom, that they had become their parents’ puppets, and that their lives were hollow.

No one was right or wrong. Each had their own reasons.

Since the ancient times, even an honest and upright official would have difficulty resolving family disputes and Tang En did not wish to be one.

“But ... Jordie received her modelling training at a young age, starting with her mother. If she doesn’t become a model, what else can she do?” Tenório pointed out the essential part of the issue. Shania was not like Yang Yan, a golden standard of an extraordinary girl who was a clever and studious student since youth and capable of obtaining a foreign university’s master’s degree.

Perhaps her parents wanting her to learn to be a model was to provide her with a livelihood for her future, not to make their daughter famous and for their family to bask in the glory. After all, Shania’s parents did not seem like the kind of poor family who would rely on their daughter to support themselves.

That was why Twain thought that the issue was not black and white, and that it was impossible to state who was right or wrong.

Twain sighed softly. It was really not easy for a person to find an occupation that he liked and was good at. Compared to many people, he, Tang En and Tony Twain, was lucky. Perhaps the Heavens had sent him through to England to embark him on the correct trajectory for his life.

“I still want to thank you, Twain... Tony. You’ve made Shania’s life in the last two years richer and more colorful. You gave her a lot of things we couldn’t give her. Aunt Ryan is a very stubborn and traditional Englishwoman. Shania would definitely not be happy living with her. So... She is still going to stay there for a long time, and I hope you can continue to take care of her.”

Twain was stunned for a moment. He looked at Tenório and saw that the other man also smiled and looked at him.

“Is this a father’s request?”

Tenório did not answer; he just kept smiling.

“Then, I promise.”

“Thank you, Tony. You’re a good man. I knew it from the first moment I saw you...”

Twain made a face. It was one thing to be seen as a good person by Shania, but now Shania’s father thought so too. Am I really a good person? It doesn’t seem right. What have I done to show that I’m a good guy?

At that point, Shania and her mother came back. They seemed to have taken a long time to go to the restroom. “What are you talking about?” Shania was in a good mood. She bounced and sat beside her mother and looked at Twain and her father opposite her.

“I’m ratting you out, saying that you’re disobedient.” Twain said fiercely. The conversation just now had made him open up more in front of Shania’s parents.

Shania sniffed, but stole a glance at her father’s expression at the same time. When she saw that her father’s face was full of smiles, she put her heart at ease.

When Tenório saw that everyone was seated, he turned over an object on the table that was shaped like a common toothpick holder which Tang En often saw at restaurants in China. The originally red color on one side had flipped over to green.

Soon after, a waiter came with a long-forked skewer of meat.

“Jordie must have taken you to a Brazilian barbecue, but I guarantee that this is the most authentic.” Tenório smiled and pointed at the waiter.

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The holiday in Brazil was very enjoyable. Especially after the conversation with Mr. Tenório, Twain felt that he had a much better impression of Shania’s father.

Before, he always thought that Mr. Bruce Tenório, who was busy with work all the time, was too cold towards Shania and that there seemed to be no father and daughter relationship. Since he and Shania were on the same side, he was naturally uncomfortable to see Shania being neglected. But after that conversation, Twain knew he still cared very much about what Shania thought. That was why Shania’s parents were happy to see their daughter together with him all the time.

However, the way fathers expressed their feelings might cause their children to misunderstand. They were often not as revealing and expressive as mothers. Their love, no matter how much, could only be kept within.

Twain recalled the scene of the two of them at his doorstep in Nottingham waiting for Shania. The conduct of the two parents fit well with their respective roles. Her mother was anxious and desperate and her father was calm and collected, not forgetting to show his authority.

He smiled.

“Uncle Tony, what are you smirking about?”

Twain rolled his eyes. “Cheeky.”

His vacation was very short, but Shania's holiday was still very long. Twain had to return to England to deal with the matters in the club. A one-week holiday might not be enough to release him from the strain and pressure since the last season, but he did not want to throw his time away on personal relaxation. There were still a lot of important matters waiting for him at the club. The players' renewal contracts, the introduction of new players, the transfer of existing players... All of that required his decisions.

Therefore, today was the day that his holiday had come to an end in Brazil. He was going to fly back to England to start work and would bid farewell to Shania, who would continue her stay with her parents in Brazil.

Since Shania's parents were as busy as usual, only Shania came to send him off. But this could be the send-off Twain had hoped for.

Looking at Shania, who was waiting beside him for the boarding, Twain reminisced about the happy times of that week and was suddenly a little reluctant. He had to find a way to divert his attention.

"Shania, I think your father... um, is quite nice."

"Yes." Shania nodded, "I've always liked my dad very much."

"Do you like him and fear him as well?" said Twain with a grin.

Shania scowled at Twain. "I don't know why. Even though I spent more time with my mother growing up, I'm closer to my dad. I'm very happy whenever I see my dad. But he always looks so serious to me."

Ah, daddy issues.

Twain cleared his throat, "That's because you were still young. Now that you think about it, your dad doesn't look at you with a straight face anymore, does he?"

"It's because I haven't been in Brazil for a long time." Shania grinned. "And you're here with me, so he doesn't dare give me that look!"

Tang En thought of his childhood. If relatives and friends came to visit, he could act up a little more and misbehave without worrying about being punished by his parents. The adults called him the jester, playing and acting up all the time. If there were no visitors, he would not dare to act up. Shania was similar to himself at that time. She might be catching up to him in height, but she was still a child.

He expected that Shania would behave more obediently at home after his departure today.

When he thought of that, Twain again felt that Shania was a little pitiful, and he felt reluctant to go. He had circled back to the same mood.

The airport announcer began to inform the passengers for the flight from Rio de Janeiro to London to start boarding. Shania looked up at the ceiling of the airport hall and seemed to search for the place where the announcement had been sent from.

"Shania..." Seeing her like that, Twain said hoarsely, "I'm leaving."

Shania glanced down and her face lit up with a smile, "All right, Uncle Tony. Goodbye."

“Goodbye, Shania.”

In the end, neither of them moved.

“I’m really going.”

“Okay, Uncle Tony. Remember to call me when you get there.” Shania made a telephone receiver gesture with her hand next to her ear.

After a brief silence, the announcement came overhead again. The sweet female voice sounded particularly unpleasant to Twain. He looked up and took a deep breath. “Shania, if you... well, if you feel alone and bored in Brazil, just go back to England earlier.”

He had not expected Shania to smile and decline Twain’s kindness. “I want to stay here with them for the rest of my holiday.”

“Ah...” Twain was somewhat disappointed. But soon he realized that that was impolite. So he immediately bent down to pick up his suitcase.

Just as he put his hand on the suitcase handle, he heard Shania say, “But when I’m bored, I’ll call you. Don’t turn off your cellphone! If I can’t get hold of you when I’m bored, I won’t spare you when I get back to England!”

“Hey, when do you ever see me turn off my cellphone? I don’t even turn it off when I sleep. I’ll be on call 24/7!” Twain grabbed the handle and straightened up. His heart suddenly felt lightened. Ah, what beautiful weather, so full of sunshine...

“I’m really leaving this time, Shania. I’m really happy that I got to be with you in Brazil for the holiday; happier than when I led the team to qualify for the UEFA Champions League qualifier. Thank you.”

Twain pulled his luggage and turned to walk away as Shania was still gently waving behind his back.

“Thank you too, Uncle Tony.”

### **Chapter 320: Work Permit Part 1**

Tang En had only just set foot into the UK when negotiations between Nottingham Forest Club and FC Porto regarding Pepe’s transfer began. The other relevant issues in relation to the matter proceeded as well.

Other than the negotiation between the two clubs, there was another matter that could not be ignored: Pepe’s work permit. Although Pepe has been playing football in Spain for numerous years, he held only Brazilian citizenship and was thus considered a non-EU player. As he was never fielded as a representative of the Brazilian National Team, he could not fulfill the 75% participation rate in senior international matches. If the transfer got blocked because of the work permit issue despite all three parties (the two clubs and the player himself) not having any problems with it, Tang En would be enraged. He had not had such problems when he was playing FM.



One thing that comforted him was the fact that Pepe's application for Portuguese citizenship had been submitted.

If the application failed to go through on Portugal's end, Tang En had one more ace up his sleeve: the Exceptional Talent Clause. The sole thing he was worried about was that no defender has been successful in applying for it since its establishment. The thought of having to make nice with the disgusting officials from the English Football Association also annoyed him deeply. The more time Tang En spend in the UK, and the more interactions he had with the FA, the more he felt that they, known as the "origins of modern football" and "world's first professional football management," were, in numerous repulsive aspects, remarkably like the Chinese Football Association.

Pedantic, foolish, inflexible, opinionated, bureaucratic, old-fashioned, conceited...

All of which were the "seven sins" of the English Football Association.

Unless it was truly necessary, Tang En did not want to have any dealings with that group of officials.

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As promised by Jorge Mendes, FC Porto did not impede the transfer of their fourth midfielder substitute. The price was also exactly four million Euros. Neither party needed to waste any time negotiating the transfer fee. They immediately proceeded to the step of discussing the player's terms.

In truth, Tang En had long ago finished discussing the terms with Mendes. Pepe had authorized Mendes with full representative rights in all negotiations on his behalf. What followed was simple. Accompanied by Mendes, Pepe flew to Nottingham, England, where he received a full-body examination at Forest Club. The results of his examination took the sports medicine experts aback. Fleming's words to Tang En were, "The boy does not appear particularly strong, but his physique is, in truth, near perfection. His body has terrifying abilities."

Mendes had immense confidence in his player. Even then, listening to such an evaluation delighted him again.

Since he passed the body examination, both parties could officially sign the contract, after which the official website would announce the successful transfer of the player.

After signing, Tang En shook Pepe's hand and said, "Welcome to Nottingham Forest, Pepe."

"Mr. Twain, I am very happy to play on your team."

"Don't call me Mr. Twain. You can call me 'Chief' or 'Boss'." Tang En patted Pepe's sturdy shoulders. "In England, that's how the players address their manager. You'll have to get used to it."

"Okay... Chief." A somewhat silly smile emerged on Pepe's rounded face.

"You can continue your vacation now. The vacation period for the players has not ended yet. Additionally, if you have any requests for your future accommodations, you can let us know. The club will take them into consideration when we're searching for a house for you," Allan said, standing beside Tang En.

They had only just finished signing the papers. Pepe had not expected the club to already be considering those matters. He looked at Allan in surprise. Tang En said with a laugh, "The club has professionals in charge of managing your day-to-day issues. You don't have to worry about your living situation here. All you need to do is one thing: play soccer; and play it well. I believe you will come to like this place."

"I already like it here, Boss."

Everyone in the room laughed.

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Evan had always seriously analyzed the differences in Forest's competitiveness and loyalty-building of their players in comparison with other richer and more powerful teams. Trying to depend on their past glories and influence in the football scene to attract and retain players was clearly unworkable; Forest could not compete with the other powerhouses. To depend on high salaries for enticing players... Evan was not Abramovich. After much thought about it, they could probably, at their current stage, only put forth more effort in the minutest details to let their players feel that the club was truly thinking for them; to let them see it was a club worthy of their contributions.

Evan's thoughts were inspired by Tang En's prior request for him to fork out money in the club's name to treat Wood's mother and to arrange living accommodations for their family. Evan was a witness to its effects. Just spending some money for the medical treatment and an apartment allowed the club to gain a skilled midfielder who was on a rapid rise to fame within England. It was something that caused even Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea, and other powerhouses to be envious of them; Forest finally had something they coveted.

Although Forest's aim was to enter the ranks of G14, they were undeniably still a small club. Evan recognized this, so he needed to put in a lot of work. Tang En's mission was to train the team and play in matches. Allan was responsible for making money. And he, as the chairman, naturally had to think up ideas in his management of the club.

Tang En knew that Pepe was a player who prioritized his family. If he were to stay in a hotel after coming to Nottingham Forest, it would surely interfere with his performance. Giving him a fixed place to live in, even only a rental house, would stabilize Pepe's condition. The club made sure to consider such day-to-day issues in the greatest detail and manage them to the best of their ability. In this manner, Pepe and other foreign players would be able to give their all in training, better contributing to the team.

Tang En frequently used a saying on the training grounds: the devil is in the details.

By paying attention to every little detail during training, the players would be able to do their best in every one of them during matches. Victory would then come naturally unless their luck turned out superbly bad.

That saying was also applicable to the management of the club. Evan hoped that Forest would become one of the most unique teams within the 20 clubs of the English Premier League. Other than just their results, there were many other aspects to them that were differentiated.

For proof, one only had to think about how FC Barcelona had managed to get Messi to stay with them wholeheartedly. It was not only because they were a powerhouse. It was more because the club

sponsored Messi's treatment for GHD (Growth Hormone Deficiency) and even arranged work for Messi's father within the club to help with their financial difficulties.

Others in similar situations include Giovanni dos Santos, wherein FC Barcelona had forked out funds for the education of his brothers and provided them a place to stay. Those details, while humanizing, were often neglected. When people shone a spotlight on the outstanding performances of those geniuses, very few would realize the painstaking efforts of the club behind it. And when those details accumulated, one by one, it would unleash an astounding power when needed: loyalty.

After taking over the position of the club's chairman, Evan began a fervent investigation of the history and backstories of almost all the successful clubs within Europe. From the perspective of a businessman, the successful clubs could also be regarded as individual companies; each of the English Premier League clubs was also a type of private limited company. However, they differed slightly from a company in its ordinary meaning, as the projects managed by them and its clientele were special.

Since they were companies, they must have a corporate culture. In other words, the bearing of a club. Any successful club must have a certain something that stood apart from the others.

Unlike Real Madrid, Nottingham Forest did not have a lasting glorious history or international renown; they could not possibly set splendor or glory to be the core of their club. They were also not like Barcelona or Athletic Bilbao, who had a strong sense of regional identity. Regardless of their results, they would always have a humongous group of loyal supporters. Yet from another angle, Forest would not be able to compete with Liverpool's tradition of a KOP spectator stand, and a past that rose and fell with both glory and dishonor.

Evan conducted a thorough investigation of Nottingham Forest's history and made a depressing discovery. Other than having an ancient enough history, they did not have anything else that lasted throughout their time. Even the two consecutive years of glory winning the Champions League were not really the era of the club. It was more like the era of a sole person: Brian Clough's era. From the establishment of Forest club till now, a duration of more than 140 years, it was difficult to identify Forest's unique point.

Evan once discussed this with Allan and Tang En when they were eating together. Just as he was troubled over how Forest Team had no unique points, Tang En said something that brought him immediate clarity. "Isn't it even better to not have any unique points? We're like a piece of blank paper, you can draw or write anything you want. We can start from the beginning. You can build this club and brand with your personal flavor onto it. Some years down the road, when people think of Nottingham Forest, they will surely say that you were the one to pen its history. Won't you feel an even greater sense of achievement from that rather than just carrying on the traditions of before?"

Evan became inspired. Although Nottingham Forest was only a small club now, it was nothing to be embarrassed about. In addition, being small came with its own advantages. Each time Evan saw Tony and the players joking without any regard to status or position on the training grounds, he would be sitting alone in his office equally amused. Nottingham Forest, with its 140 years of history, was doubtless a young football team. From the chairman of the club to the main manager of the team, and even to the average age of the footballers on the team, Nottingham Forest would be ranked number one within the 20 EPL teams for its youthfulness. Bound together, they were a young team filled with vigor and hope.

Led by a manager who excelled at winning over people, they were running forward towards their goals. Without the backstabbing and politics within bigger clubs, everyone's faces brimmed with brilliant smiles. Wasn't that also remarkable?